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Student and Faculty Senate Agenda Alignment: A Test of Comprehensive Shared Governance

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There has been a renewed interest in collaborative governance within the higher education community (Schoorman, 2018). This renewal has been based on a variety of trends, including rising administrative costs associated with managing colleges and universities, increasing tuition rates, expanding role and mission activities of colleges, and the role and inclusion of athletics. In all of these instances, administrative fiat has been seen to have grown, and the collaborative nature of the academy, which has been a defining hallmark since its inception, has been reduced in many instances to the appearance of placation. The result, as noted through traditional and social media, live protests, letter writing campaigns, and other actions is a call for better, more organized and professional approaches to shared governance (Burgan, 2006).

The shared governance process has typically been referenced in terms of faculty members speaking out on how to best resolve academic issues and challenges (Rosser, 2003). The framework for these discussions has been the academic or faculty senate, where debate and discussion help to deconstruct the complexity of problems prior to offering solutions and recommendations. Faculty involvement in governance has expanded during the past 100 years, and faculty governing bodies typically address a wide range of issues relevant to the campus community, commenting and debating everything from tobacco use on campus to technology security (Armstrong, 1999).

Faculty are not the only stakeholders important to campus decision-making, as students are equally as vested in the quality of institutional life and offerings (Miles, 1997). Some have even argued that college students typically have a larger investment in the quality of the institution and its long-term success, as their degrees are directly correlated with the quality of the institution. Additionally, students, enrolling for nearly six-years to complete a bachelor's degree, have a similar tenure length at an institution than the average college president (Seltzer, 2017), and, these students are on the front-line of the institution; they experience first-hand instruction, facilities, and services (McGrath, 1970; Miles, 1997; Laosebikan-Buggs, 2006; Miller & Nadler, 2006). Students typically organize themselves into a student government body similar to the faculty governance body, and address a wide range of issues including everything from facility management to student fee distribution (Miles, 1997).

The difficulty many governing bodies face is how they can construct and implement an agenda that accurately reflects the important topics of the campus and their respective constituents. Presumably, the agenda items addressed by a faculty senate would have some semblance of those addressed by students. These might be issues ranging from grading procedures, online coursework, fee structures, etc., yet little is known about the alignment of

these two governing bodies' agendas. Therefore, the purpose for conducting the study was to identify the topics, issues, and concerns addressed over an academic year by a student senate and faculty senate, and to identify the level of alignment between the two governing bodies.

Background of the Study

Shared governance in higher education has taken on many different forms and has assumed many different roles, often at the behest or control of institutional leaders (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). In some environments, shared governance is a process of transparent decision-making, as different constituents are included in the process to identify new, different, and creative solutions to institutional challenges, as well as charting a collective vision for an institution. In other environments, shared governance is nothing more than a process of placation so that faculty and others can be acknowledged for having an opinion, regardless of the value placed on that opinion (Miller, 1999).

Faculty governance bodies, typically called 'senates,' have engaged faculty in a variety of ways, including coordinating committee membership and their work, informing trustees of the campus morale and work environment, managing the institution's curriculum, and even determining criteria for personnel hiring. Faculty senates can provide a unified voice for faculty where no collective bargaining units exist, and importantly, can serve as a check to the administrative functioning of an institution to assure that student, faculty, and academic interests remain at the core mission of the institution. Yet despite these clearly identified roles, there are arguments that faculty governance does not work (Schoorman, 2018).

The primary argument against faculty involvement in governance is that these subject matter experts do not have the skills, broad vision, or objectivity to accurately take on the challenges of an institution. Some authors have noted that faculty senates are slow to respond and deliberate on issues, and that the bodies lack the ability to assemble all of the necessary information to make important decisions (Birnbaum, 1991). The scope of decision-making was the topic of Armstrong's (1999) decade-long review of a faculty senate at a community college, concluding that the topics discussed might at times seem trivial, but overall reflect the faculty's commitment to the life, culture, and environment of the institution.

Despite the arguments for or against faculty involvement in governance, there is a strong historical precedence for engaging faculty in determining institutional outcomes (Jones, 2011). Framed from the activities of the earliest college faculties, this precedence was codified in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Committee in 1966 (AAUP, 2018) outlining that faculty should have a meaningful role in making decisions that affect the welfare of the institution. The Association even provides a widely publicized prize to recognize institutions that engage faculty the best in decision-making.

Faculty senates have been criticized for their lack of efficiency, yet governing body leaders often claim that this deliberative process is intentionally non-efficient in an attempt to be thorough. Similarly, there have been criticisms that faculty senates do not address the key, substantive issues of institutional life and instead focus on self-serving agenda items about how senates are run, who has the ability to speak in a formal meeting, etc.

Similar criticisms have been made of student senates, where critics have pointed to significant time spent in senate meetings regarding the rules and regulations of conducting meetings. Smith, Miller, and Nadler (2016) studied a sample of student senate meetings and clustered their agenda items into the categories of campus life and business, academic

procedures, social issues, and self-government issues. In specific, a tremendous amount of time of the student senates were spent on student fee allocations to different student organizations. This model of granting power through the allocation process was found to be a common structure in the Smith, Miller, and Nadler study, although they did indicate that different structures allowed senates to address a wider variety of topics in their meetings.

The value of student senates has been described in part by the heightened attention to the quality of the institution placed on it by students. Students are the direct beneficiaries of the quality of an institution; as the quality and stature of an institution increases, so does the value of the student's degree. Similarly, students are the individuals most likely to encounter systems-based problems, including how services are provided or not provided, and these experiences lend themselves to important feedback for students to use when governing an institution.

Another argument for greater student involvement in governance is the educational nature of a college or university. As institutions, one of the primary functions is the education of students, both within and outside of the classroom. By allowing students to practice and participate in real governance decisions, the institution is fulfilling its mission. These experiences include not only 'legislative' compromise in formal senate settings, but understanding constituent needs, prioritizing time commitments, allocating scarce resources, etc., all skills students will use in their post-graduation lives (Miles, 2011).

Miller and Murry (2011) argued that governance bodies cannot work in silos, and that their goals are ultimately similar; they are designed to represent the will or consensus of their constituents, whether those are faculty, students, or staff. As such, they noted that the practice of different governance bodies should be in alignment, and that logically, the issues that face a campus would transcend an individual governance body. Faculty members, for example, take action and create policies that govern how students learn (technologies available, class times, examination schedules, etc.), and that students should similarly have a vested interest and take action on those same items. The current study was designed to assess the extent to which faculty and student governance bodies had a similarity, or alignment, of issues they decided to address in a given year.

Research Methods

A total of six public universities were selected for inclusion in the study. These institutions were selected based on the following criteria: (1) geographic diversity; (2) each institution had comprehensive and thorough faculty senate and student senate agendas and meeting minutes and materials for the 2016-2017 academic year of study available online; (3) each institution had a comprehensive curricular offering that provided for a broad range of academic faculty and student interests being represented; and (4) none of the institutions experienced a traumatic event or catastrophe (such as a natural disaster, violent crisis, etc.) that would have dictated or dominated the actions of shared governing bodies during the year of study. As a limitation of the study, only either broad student senates or only undergraduate student senates were included in data collection. Some institutions, for example, offer a graduate student senate and an undergraduate student senate, and in the case of the current project, only undergraduate senates or senates that included both undergraduate and graduate students were included.

Data were all retrieved electronically from open-access websites for faculty senates and student senates. The data included meeting agendas and meeting minutes. In some cases, institutions used a method of meeting minute taking that simply included notations or "filling-

in" an agenda with comments or notes, and at other institutions, the minutes were descriptive narratives written including quotes and detailed descriptions of the discussion.

To identify the six institutions for the study, institutional names were randomly selected for examination regarding meeting the identified criteria. On average, 11 institutions were identified to find one qualified institution. In total, 70 different colleges and universities were identified for examination, with 6 of those meeting the four criteria identified. The most common disqualifying characteristic was that institutions generally did not provide comprehensive meeting minutes on their websites for both a faculty and student senate.

As a cautionary note, all of the senates examined for the current study were reviewed during the winter of 2017-2018, drawing data from the 2016-2017 meetings and agendas. Multiple websites had changed what was included on their websites and what links were active within only a few months of the initial data retrieval.

Findings

Overall, faculty and student senate meeting agendas and minutes were not easily accessible and the quality of what was reported varied dramatically in content and format, even within the senates studied for the current research project. Faculty senate meeting minutes were more likely to be found online as compared to student senate meeting minutes. Some minutes were bulleted listings of conclusions or vote outcomes, while others were in-depth reporting of comments made by senators. For example, one Faculty Senate meeting minutes report included the following text:

> Turning to the role of the senators, President X commented that it was not so long ago that he was a new senator, sitting in the back row at his first meeting, not even sure how he had gotten elected or what was expected of him. He did not really appreciate the meaning of shared governance until he became a Faculty Senate officer.

While exploring faculty and student senates for inclusion in the study, several meeting minute repositories were particularly noted for their clarity or simplicity in presentation. Although not included in the study, the University of Montana, for example, kept and presented their records through their library using the software Scholarworks, and the University of Maine was unique in that their student senate included references on their website to the activities and meetings of their faculty senate.

Multiple student senate websites included a link to "references," a repository that included a range of items from how to purchase athletic tickets to Robert's Rules of Order, and even a history of the student senate. Few faculty senates included such a section in their online presence, although at least half of the senates did include the actual presentations (frequently Power Point presentations) made by guest speakers or from committee reports.

Midwestern Land Grant University (A)

This faculty senate held 8 meetings that lasted approximately 1.5 hours per meeting, and each meeting followed a technical, pre-determined format that included approving an agenda, approving previous meeting minutes, committee reports, and recognitions (such as remembering faculty who had died, outstanding awards, etc.). Following the technical items on

the agenda, the president provided a detailed report of happenings, events, and issues on campus. The dominant issues presented were related to the budget, replying to an institutional sanction, personnel appointment reporting, student alcohol abuse and education programs, intellectual property, and an institution wide strategic planning program. This senate provided attendance, with senator attendance ranging from 50% of the senators being present to 76% of the senators present.

The student senate at Institution A had a similar, pre-defined agenda format that began with a roll call of senators to assure a quorum was in attendance (individuals were not reported) and then an open, public access period for individuals to come forward and address the student senate. This body then divided from the whole and moved to committee work before re-conveying. The student senate met 24 times, with meetings lasting from one-hour to nearly three hours (most meetings lasted two hours). The student senate addressed no less than 16 different issues, nearly all of them related to the quality of student life on campus, including ride sharing, an umbrella checkout program, sex education for men who have sex with other men, a needle exchange program, campus lockers, and rape victim assistance. They also voted and took action on student evaluations of classroom instruction, technology for classrooms, faculty-led living learning communities, and strategic planning for the student senate. Finally, this body also addressed issues of public concern including an oil pipeline proposed to run through the state, food affordability in the community, and lobbying the state legislature for additional funding for the campus.

Common themes discussed: campus funding, strategic planning.

Northeastern Urban Doctoral University (B)

The university's faculty senate (termed "faculty council") met 8 times throughout the academic year in monthly, two-hour scheduled meetings. The senate consisted of 24 peer-elected senators, and attendance ranged from no one being absent (24-0) to 19 present and 5 absent (79% attendance rate for their least attended meeting). Unlike Institution A, senators completed a sign-in process to record their attendance rather than spending meeting time on a Roll Call attendance. These meetings followed a standard format of agenda approval, announcements, meeting minute approval, appointments, and personnel announcements termed "Departures and New Presence."

The most common topical issue addressed that was not a standing report issue was that of an institutional budget problem and its impact on areas such as the library, room and space utilization, and long range planning. The most common area for discussion at this institution was the academic management of the institution, including course approvals, degree requirements and changes, teaching loads, and block scheduling. The changes to individual courses were also debated at length as to their impact on the institution's general education program.

The student organization at this urban institution met 25 times throughout the academic year, and their meeting minutes were less detailed and did not include attendance reports, nor did they report on motions for agenda or minute approval. In every single meeting, however, the senate did take time to debate and vote on allocating student fee funding. Fee distribution funding requests were reported in different ways for different meetings, but ranged from $25 for a participation incentive gift card to several thousand dollars for event programming. The senate also discussed the institution's budget during two meetings, including a report from a

recent Board of Trustees meeting, filing senator and officer positions, and several campus life issues including a parking phone-application and food insecurity.

Common themes discussed: institutional budget.

Southeastern Comprehensive University (C)

The faculty senate at this institution met 14 times throughout the academic year and was the only senate that held morning meetings (scheduled from 9:30 AM – noon). This senate used an attendance system that allowed for pre-approved proxies to be present if a senator could not attend, resulting in nearly perfect attendance at each meeting (one meeting had 33 attend and one absent). Minutes were structured in a bulleted reporting, and included the agenda item, the individual responsible for the item, and who is responsible for the item's implementation. The meeting's agenda also included standing committee reports, including a regular report from the student senate, and had a report from each academic college each month.

In each of the faculty senate's meetings, there was recorded discussion and announcements related to the institution's presidential search and the role of the board of trustees. There was also discussion in 7 of the meetings regarding the state's budget for higher education, and in 5 of the meetings the topics of parking on campus and grades and marks were discussed. Aside from those recurring topics, senators discussed academic technology standards for classrooms and offices, student success initiatives, faculty bullying, faculty and student mentoring, concealed gun carrying on campus, and faculty work life issues such as faculty appointment procedures and tenure and promotion guidelines. One issue that came up early in the year and then again at the end of the academic year was that of faculty travel money for professional and academic society meetings. The initial discussion included a committee report disbursing the money, and at the end of the year there was a discussion of required faculty reports about what individuals learned at these meetings.

Table 1 – Frequency of Faculty and Student Senate Meetings

Institution	N of Faculty Senate Meetings	N of Student Senate Meetings
A	8	24
B	8	25
C	14	10
D	10	14
E	10	23
F	8	22
Average	9.6	19.6

The student senate at this institution met 10 times over the course of the year, with meetings lasting from just under one hour to the longest being two hours. Each meeting began with a group recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and then followed a similar format for each meeting that included guest speakers, officer reports, and in 8 of the meetings, student fee distribution legislation. In all 10 of the meetings, time was also devoted to swearing in new senators, validating elections for new senators, elections for officers, etc. The student senate also addressed topics such as scheduling class pictures, homecoming, the dance marathon, creating a free student Uber program for intoxicated students to get home, class registration dates, and

several additional campus life issues such as extending Greek-life recruitment cycles and textbook store hours.

Common themes discussed: none.

Western Land Grant University (D)

This faculty senate met 10 times throughout the academic year, with meeting lengths ranging from approximately three-and-a-half hours to nearly five hours. The body had 30 elected senators, and using a proxy system, had nearly 100% attendance at every meeting (one meeting had three absences and one had one absence). The nature of these meetings was predicated on guest speakers informing the senate on a wide variety of issues, ranging from campus sustainability, bicycling paths, the organizational structure of academic units, athletics, international student enrollment trends, and employee benefits. As a result of this structure, there were very few agenda items that carried over from month-to-month meetings, and of those that were continuous discussions, they all related to the business of operating the senate (senator job duties, welcome cocktail party planning, elections, nominations, etc.).

The student senate at this institution met 14 times, with meeting times lasting anywhere from 50 minutes to three hours. Of the 35 elected senators, all attended 11 of the 14 meetings, and of those meetings where absences were recorded, one senator was absent at two meetings, and one meeting had three senators absent. As with other senates, this body made use of a structured format for meetings, including roll call of attendance, agenda approval, minutes approval, followed by a series of executive and committee reports. The first four meetings of this senate included prolonged discussion of student fee funding distribution guidelines and the handbook that details criteria for fee awards. The senate discussed elections, appointments, and the orientation of new senators at 10 of their 14 meetings, and toward the end of their meetings, they also held discussions of issues on campus that were either pulled from executive reports or were new discussion items with motions for resolution. Topics included the campus budget, equal rights in representation for graduate students, regional accreditation, library open study space, and student athlete support.

Common themes discussed: accreditation, sustainability, and athletics.

Southwestern Land Grant University (E)

The faculty senate at this institution met 10 times over the academic year, with meetings lasting approximately one and a half hours. Of the 49 elected senators, attendance ranged from 39 present with 10 absent to 14 present and 35 absent. The senate followed a typical structure of calling the meeting to order, approving the agenda and meeting minutes, followed by a series of reports, including from the faculty senate president, the provost, and standing committees. The body's work occurred under the headings of "old" and "new" business. They debated and discussed the academic calendar in five meetings, final examination times in three meetings, and academic integrity in two meetings. Other topics addressed included the code of conduct for students, admission standards, committee composition, and open access educational resources. Each of their meetings concluded with the approval of curricular and course changes, voting on these items as a consent agenda, with something taken off that consent agenda on only one occasion.

The student senate at this institution met 23 times, and they did not record their meeting end time or attendance in their minutes. The meetings similarly followed a structured format that included a standing agenda item termed "nominations, elections, and appointments." This

item served to approve replacement senators, among other appointments, and the student senate approved new senators at 20 of the 23 meetings. As with their faculty senate counterparts, the majority of their meeting content focused on old and new business, and topics they addressed included the student feel allocation process, personal safety and the safe ride program, motor scooter safety awareness, funding for the student recreation center, hate speech opposition, guns on campus, family service for non-traditional students, parking safety and lighting, the University's strategic plan, recycling, the provost search, bands for the Chancellor's ball, and encouraging faculty to use open access educational resources to help defray the costs of a student's education.

Common themes discussed: open access educational resources.

Northwestern Comprehensive University (F)

The faculty senate at this institution met 8 times throughout the academic year, and averaged 76% of its membership attending all meetings (with 57 total elected senators). Meetings lasted from 45 minutes to two hours, with the majority of the meetings lasting one-and-a-half hours. These meetings began with the approval of minutes and then included an update from the president of the faculty senate, immediately followed by the president of the student senate. The meetings then allowed for guest speakers before introducing new business, old business, and the consent agenda. The consent agenda was exclusively curricular, and discussion items that were included in meetings included a long list of topics, such as student registration dates and times, student tuition deposits, admissions marketing, micro-scholarships, naming rights to buildings, offices, and conference rooms, fundraising in general, grade appeals, the provost search, a bus tour for new faculty, English proficiency exam options, and changing the university's recognition of Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Many of these topics were debated resolutions that included a vote of the senate, sending a message for action to the chancellor.

The student senate assembled a comprehensive post-meeting packet that included a copy of the agenda, a copy of the roll-call vote sheet, legislation that was passed, student organization funding proposals, and a narrative of the discussion of the meeting. The roll-call attendance sheet included a notation for senators who arrived late, indicating their time of arrival, and early departures. Of the 22 meetings, there were only four meetings were a senator was absent, and the meetings lasted from one to five hours in length. The student senate spent approximately half of each meeting, or more but not less, discussing and approving student organization fee requests. The body also considered, debated, and passed legislation on a wide-variety of campus life related topics, including registration processes, changes to student billing, grade appeals, the action of naming classrooms for donors, campus safety, the provost search, Columbus Day, recycling, and campus sidewalk repair.

Common themes discussed: fundraising naming, student registration, student account billing, student grade appeals, and renaming Columbus Day.

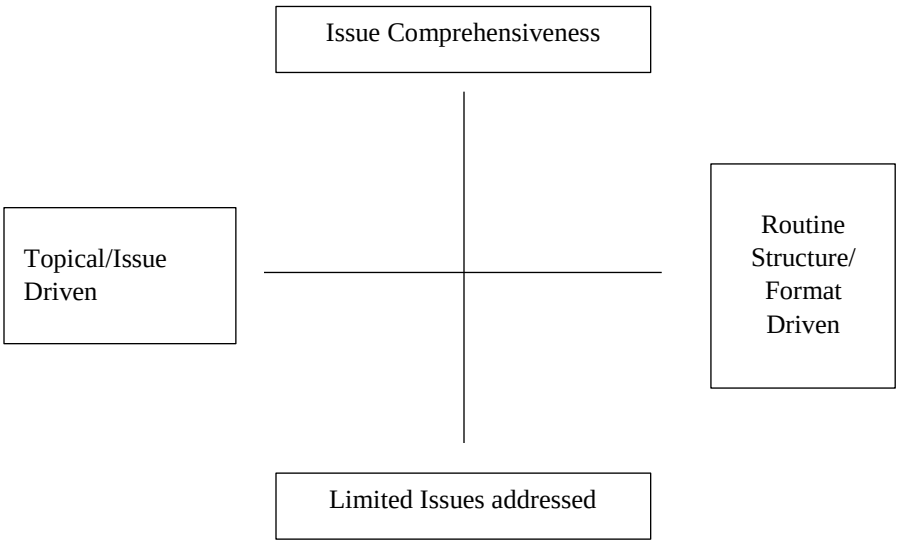
Conclusions and Recommendations

The initial effort taken to identify faculty and student senates for inclusion in the study was indicative, to some extent, of the relationships that these bodies have with their constituents. Broadly, faculty and student senates talked about different things, and they tended to be very introspective in their work. Although guest speakers and committee reports introduced

important topics, both sets of senates spent a considerable amount of time discussing their own operation. Yet despite this attention to their own detail, they did not structure or present their key findings, discussion points, resolutions, or legislation in a way that was either easy to access or read. There was, in essence, no public accountability of either senate actions (no listing of approved resolutions, motions, etc.). Subsequent research should attempt to link the actions of these senates to their related media, including both social media and traditional media (such as the student newspaper), to identify if there really was any formal pressuring of the bodies to be responsive to their constituents or to fully disclose how they used their time and resources.

The faculty and student senate meeting agendas and minutes combined to be consistent in their presentation of topics and how they were managed, suggesting a continuum of meeting styles, ranging from very topical discussions that included items or issues that could be brought up from the senate membership, to very routine, structured, perfunctory meetings. Additionally, the meetings in the study ranged in their inclusiveness, meaning the density of issues addressed per meeting, from very limited topical inclusion to very comprehensive agenda item inclusion. These two defining criteria of meetings suggest two independent but related continuous variables (structure and content), with the independent variable being the meeting structure that would or could allow for an increase in topical inclusion (dependent variable). The resulting classification would result in the placement of a senate on a graph such as is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Domains of faculty and student senate meeting work.



Many of the student senates, for example, spent a considerable amount of time dealing with the routine distribution of student fee money, and similarly, many faculty senates spent a considerable time approving curricular and course changes. These types of senates would tend to fall within bottom right quadrant of Figure 1. These duties are indeed important to the

campus, yet they do not reflect the broader ideals of shared governance where the general issues of campus welfare are at the forefront of the electorate's deliberations.

Three of the senate pairs studied had some very limited commonality in what they discussed. Institutional senates in A and B both addressed some element of the university's budget situation, and the Institution E senates both included discussions of open access educational resources. Institution E, though, seemed to be one of the most incongruent for aligning agendas, as the topics addressed in the faculty and student senate both were within the interest and domain of responsibility for each other. For example, the faculty senate spent considerable time discussing the final exam times for students and on the academic calendar, including dates for the fall break. Interestingly, the student senate did not address either of those, but they did discuss the provost search, when candidates were coming to campus, the Chancellor's strategic plan, and guns on campus, all issues that would be of interest to the general faculty at the institution. Institution C had no agenda items that were similar for students or faculty, yet the topics they discussed tended to be narrowly focused on their own self-interests.

Similar to institutions A, B, and E, institution D's senates had some agenda alignment, with the issues of accreditation, sustainability, and athletics being addressed by both governance groups. Perhaps the most aligned senate agendas, however, were found with the Northwestern Comprehensive University (F) that had at least five topics similarly addressed by both students and faculty. This institution had an active voting record in both the faculty and senate, although the actual motions and supporting content for the voted upon resolutions were not included in institutional minutes, meaning that constituents (and the public) can see that they voted, for example on English proficiency exam options, but what those options were was not shown.

Overall, the study findings strongly support the idea that shared governance has become disjointed, and the true issues and challenges facing a contemporary college campus are not getting a thorough vetting from elected leaders. Further, the advantage of shared governance being a forum to advocate for campus constituent issues and concerns and to build creative problem solutions across constituents appears to not be happening among this narrow sample of institutions. Additional, broader study is certainly appropriate to expand on these findings and to examine the various categories of higher education institutions to see if some institutions might tend to perform at a higher level than others (efficiency). Additionally, research that explores how campus leadership values (or does not value) shared governance and agenda setting among institutions would be helpful in improving institutional morale, efficiency, and ultimately, overall performance.

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When Bullying in the Classroom Affects Student Academic Freedom

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Academic freedom deals with the freedom exercised by professors, students and staff to pursue knowledge wherever it may lead, without undue or unreasonable interference (Tanner, 2007). The success for executing the mission of the university depends on the freedom of questioning and researching so that there exists an effective flow of information between and amongst faculty, students and staff. Particularly, "students bring to the campus a variety of interests previously acquired and develop many new interests as members of the academic community. Students should be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately, and…always be free to support causes by orderly means which do not disrupt the regular and essential operations on the institution" (Reichman, 2015).

In fact "as constituents of the academic community, students should be free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy, and on matters of general interest to the student body" (Reichman, 2015). Consider the following examples and situations that focus on student behavior:

- Several college students are suspended for wearing black armbands on campus in support of the Iraqi war. The professor insists that students hope for peace;
- Student disagrees openly with professor's opinions in writing class and professor insists that the student agree with him. The professor eventually gives the student an F grade;
- Student interrupts an invited speaker from expressing views. Student is then escorted out of room;
- Student observes religions holiday and does not appear in class. Professor does not accommodate the student with respect to exams and other homework during time of absence for the religious holiday.
- Faculty discriminates against a student's disability in class by consistently calling on the student in class when the professor raises a question.

In each of these situations it is important for students to engage in the classroom in intellectual discourse that is free from fear of retaliation or censorship. Intellectual debate is made freely and is characteristic of comparison and contrast, and generally respects political, religious or ethical beliefs of students, and not to be imposed on students by their professors. It is significant that the university provide an atmosphere for the student that is conducive to speculation, experiment and creation (Wright, 2004). In this way, students feel comfortable

participating in class and feel they have a right to question theories and research findings presented in classroom lectures.

The boundaries of academic freedom are not clearly defined, but faculty need to be sensitive to these diffuse boundaries. Teaching faculty need to practice pedagogical approaches that:

- ensure quality education goals for student learning;
- create an atmosphere of honor and dignity;
- discipline students according to college rules to rectify behavior so that one fosters intellectual and personal development;
- give valid grades as a basis for scholastic performance;
- follow the policies and regulations that are suggested by our College mission and goals;
- encourage the mindset of liberal education which helps students to develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

By guiding students to form independent judgments, students learn to develop an openness to challenges that enhance their own ideas. A willingness to change original ideas and views, in light of attainment of new knowledge, evidence and perspectives (AACU, 2006), is what we as faculty encourage. A problem then occurs when the boundary lines of academic freedom are crossed.

- The professor undermines the stated positions of his students continuously, if they disagree with his views;
- Efforts are made by the administration to block research findings for a certain project made by students presented in class;
- Faculty harass, threaten, intimidate or ridicule a student's ideas;
- Different students receive disciplinary action and do not receive fair treatment and due process for similar violations;
- Professor belittles student's fundamentalist religious beliefs, in front of other students.

When the lines of student academic freedom are crossed in the classroom, it is conceivable that the professor is bordering on bullying to the extent that free speech is not protected (Lahee, 2012). If a professor bullies a student into keeping one's mouth shut, the student realizes expressing one's opinion can be held against the student (Wright, 2004). There clearly exists in this case an imbalance of power in the classroom between professor and student, and the retribution from the faculty is very real when the student is dealing with a professor who acts and responds with hostility. In fact, faculty in this situation exhibit bullying behaviors in this capacity which are directed at their students (Wajngurt, 2014):

- verbal abuse;
- non-verbal conduct that is threatening, humiliating, or intimidating;
- interference from allowing a student to complete a project;
- false accusations of mistakes;
- hostile glares;

- yelling or shouting;
- exclusion of individuals;
- use of put-downs or insults.

In each of these behaviors, it is clear that the professor is not respecting student academic freedom.

The goal of the professor is to enhance student academic freedom in the classroom. Freedom of opinion and expression are human rights that complement a student's right to education (Rajagopal, 2011). However when a professor does not respect this process in his/her classroom, the professor's attitude impacts negatively. The student who feels bullied in the classroom needs to seek out solutions by talking to the chairperson of the department, counselor, or student health services.

Sometimes such solutions are ineffective when the professor is notified when a student "complained" about him/her, because the student fears that the professor may retaliate against the student. In this case the student may need to drop out of the course. However, it is the responsibility of the university to find ways to reduce such faculty incidents so that ultimately student academic freedom is maximized and not compromised. We as faculty must be ready to engage in the pursuit of academic freedom for our students. If we deny one speaker, restrict one book or limit any faculty member we have abandoned the direction of our college mission statements (Bass & Clark, 2015). Students have the right to speak up and express their perspectives about a situation, with the intention of not bullying a fellow person at the college. In an academic setting it is intended that we communicate and express ideas, without censorship.

It is with this intended expression of ideas and perspectives that many colleges have created Committees of Academic Freedom which protect faculty to exercise their rights to express ideas but few institutions have created committees of Academic Freedom that protect the rights of students to express controversial opinions in class. By expressing such judgments students learn to become critical thinkers and responsible citizens (Bass & Clark, 2015). This precisely is what every college and university pursues.

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Does Performance Based Funding Make a Difference? The Relationship of Funding and Performance in the North Central Accrediting Region

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Public higher education institutions have struggled to stabilize their funding mechanisms, and in light of competition for state financial resources, have found alternative revenue to be critical in funding institutional priorities. As Universities have drawn an increasingly high percentage of their operating budgets from non-public sources, they have pursued priorities that have, at times, run counter to what state leaders consider the aims of public higher education. Within this tension, institutions have sought to establish their own priorities and methods of operation, while public leaders and policy makers have sought to force these institutions to be accountable to the public good, expecting a return on the public investment that benefits the public. The result has been, for nearly 40 years (McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton, 2006), different performance funding stipulations placed on higher education institutions (Watt, Lancaster, Gilbert, & Higerd, 2004; Cavanaugh & Garland, 2012).

Performance funding models have been seen as popular tools for states to engage colleges and universities in undertaking policies and priorities that they deem important. The trend was so popular that by the early-2000s, half of all states had in place some form of performance funding for higher education (McLendon, et al, 2006). A decade later, however, over half of those systems had been abandoned (Dougherty et al., 2012), due to a variety of reasons, including an inability to document that the performance funding model actually modified institutional behaviors or produced any meaningful changes in behaviors or results (Polatajko, 2011; Sanford & Hunter, 2011; Shin, 2010; Shin & Milton, 2004). Additional challenges to these formulas have been the number of variables that state leaders have attempted to influence, including South Carolina's attempt to load 37 different performance indicators into their model (Watt et al 2004).

Research and assessment of performance funding models have been consistently inconsistent, noting as many cases that have persisted and been effective as those that have been abandoned (Cavanaugh & Garland, 2012). And as states have closed performance funding models, new states have begun attempting them, including Arkansas, Indiana, Texas, and Louisiana (Sanford & Hunter, 2011). A significant reason for this continued interest in these formula, despite their mixed reviews, is the potential ability of state governments to assure that the institutions they finance keep some of their focus on the public good rather than private interests (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). The purpose for conducting the current study was to explore the impact and success of performance funding models in one geographic area of the

United States, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools region. This relatively large region encompasses 19 states and was intended to serve as a sample of all regions.

Background of the Study

In order to increase accountability and influence the priorities of institutions, states began using institutional performance reporting, performance budgeting, and performance funding in the 1980s and 1990s to align institutional goals more with state goals (Huisman & Currie, 2004; McLendon et al, 2006; Zumeta, 2011). Performance-based funding stipulates that a portion or all of state funding will be given based on the ability of colleges to meet state set standards of improvement of one or more performance indicator. Institutions that meet these standards will receive the funding stipulated by the state, while institutions that do not meet the standards will receive none of the funding tied to performance. Performance funding has been used in half the states, but by 2010 half of the original performance funding models were abandoned (Dougherty et al., 2012). Studies examining the effectiveness of the performance funding in different states have shown that the models have little to no impact on the performance outcomes (Polatajko, 2011; Sanford & Hunter, 2011; Shin, 2010; Shin & Milton, 2004). A study by Shin (2010) found that the impact of performance funding on quality was not statistically significant. Another study found that performance funding had little to no effect on graduation and retention rates (Sanford & Hunter, 2011). While a different study supported that performance funding has no effect on performance outcomes, but it did find that models combining both performance and nonperformance funding could have a small effect (Shin & Milton, 2004).

Some researchers assert that such models could be effective with proper implementation (King, 2007; Shin, 2010). There have been several posited reasons for the inability of performance funding to influence performance outcomes. The number of performance indicators could affect the success of the performance funding models by focusing on too many indicators (Layzell, 1998). Pennsylvania's first iteration of performance funding focused on 17 performance indicators (Cavanaugh & Garland, 2012), while South Carolina used 37 indicators (Watt et al, 2004). Focusing on too few indicators can narrow the focus too far, ignoring factors that can play a role in student success (King, 2007). States often use the same indicators for different types of institutions, which does not meet the goals of the differing student populations (Cavanaugh & Garland, 2012; Zarkesh & Beas, 2004). These models tend to focus on outcomes that are readily available (Layzell, 1998). Focusing on outcomes ignores the influence of input and intermediate indicators. The outcomes are often dependent on these ignored input and intermediate indicators. The quality of education at institutions may be negatively influenced by the lack of incorporation of other factors besides outcome indicators (King, 2007). A study by Shin (2010) found that the quality of education provided by an institution was significantly influenced by focusing funding on performance indicators, but Shin also found that input factors were more predictive of performance outcomes. Many proponents of performance funding believe that the use of performance funding models can have an effect on the success of performance indicators, but there needs to be more commitment to these models.

One of the factors that can have an impact on the success of performance-based funding is the lack of commitment of higher education and state leaders to the models. Faculty often have a negative perception of state mandated outcomes and higher education leaders may fear the loss of campus autonomy and the cost of making changes necessary to achieve performance

goals (Dougherty et al, 2012; Frolich, 2011). These concerns may be reinforced by the lack of institutional involvement in the development of the performance-based funding models (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). States developed the standards for these performance-based funding models, but often did not follow the terms originally outlined (Shin, 2010). A large portion of the states implementing performance-based funding only used the models for a short period of time, which did not allow for the full effects of the funding to come to fruition (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014; Dougherty et al, 2012). States often ignored the funding criteria set forth by the performance model and continue supporting the institutions using the standards from previous years, but some advocates assert that following the funding criteria would have a positive effect on the performance indicators (King, 2007; Shin, 2010). When states have followed the guidelines of the performance-based funding models, the impact has been blunted by the relative low funding-rate tied to performance (Sandford & Hunter, 2011). If there were more financial incentive, then institutions would be more likely to meet the goals set forth.

Performance funding 2.0 was developed to help correct many of the factors responsible for the lack of success with earlier performance-based funding models (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). These new models utilize a realistic number of both outcome and intermediate indicators. This could help to create a more complete overall picture of achievement at the institutions. The 2.0 models also increased the performance funding allotment and incorporated it into the normal state funding model. This helps to ensure that the funding has the heft to influence the performance outcomes. These state models were created to be more adaptive to different types of institutions by creating standards designed for each institution individually (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). States hoped to use these new models to correct the flaws inherent in the earlier performance-based funding approach.

Research Methods

The purpose of the study is to analyze the relationship between the types of funding and performance outcomes at four-year public higher education institutions in the North Central Association of College and Schools (NCA) to explore performance-based funding. The NCA is comprised of 19 states. Six state within the NCA were paired in this study to examine this relationship with three performance-based funding states compared to three states with Incremental funding.

Sample

Using four-year public institutions from six states within the NCA as participants, the study included all four-year public institutions with data available on the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS). Three of the chosen states used performance-based funding for an extended period, while the other three states were chosen for their lack of performance-based funding and their ability to pair well with the three performance-based funding states. In other words, those four-year public universities with similar four-year graduation rates, proportional numbers (with regards to population) of public four-year institutions, and tuition rates. The performance-based funding states were Indiana, Kansas, and Ohio, while the incremental funding states included Colorado, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. Indiana was paired with Colorado, Kansas was paired with Nebraska, and Ohio was paired with Wisconsin. The paired states shown in Table 1 were chosen from within the NCA to control for any effects influenced by methods used for institutional accreditation.

Table 1 – Paired States with Comparison Values

	Funding Type	Population	Number of Public Four-Year Institutions	Four-Year Graduation Rate	Average Tuition Public Four-Year
Pair 1					
Indiana	Performance-based	6,537,334	15	59.5%	7,990
Colorado	Incremental	5,187,582	15	54.0	5,895
Pair 2					
Kansas	Performance-based	2,885,905	8	52.8	6,676
Nebraska	Incremental	1,855,525	7	57.7	6,737
Pair 3					
Ohio	Performance-based	11,544,225	35	58.1	8,962
Wisconsin	Incremental	5,726,398	14	60.3	7,861

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac

Design

The relationship between state funding and performance outcomes were examined in this study. All states with the same type of funding were examined and compared within the NCA, which was used to explore if the relationship between funding and performance outcomes were similar or different among states with the same funding types. The sets of paired states were used to explore the similarities and differences between comparable states from both types of funding models. A five-year period from 2008-2013 was examined to thoroughly explore the relationship between state funding and performance outcomes over an extended period.

Collection of Data

This study used data collected from the Integrated Post-Secondary Education data System (IPEDS, n.d.) as well as data reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanacs* for the years 2009-2014. The data examined included financial data, institutional characteristics, categorical information, and other variables for each institution for five academic years beginning in the fall 2008 and ending in the spring 2013. When the study was conducted, the data from 2012-2013 was the last year with finalized data available on IPEDS.

Research Question 1 – What have been the state funding trends during a five year period from 2008 to 2013 for public four-year higher education institutions in North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)? The overall funding changes for the states with the NCA including the six paired states were examined over the five year period of the study. The average state allocation to higher education, the percent change in allocations per state to higher education, and the overall percent change for all states were examined for the five years of the study. The use of descriptive data in this manner allowed for some generalizations about state funding trends in the NCA (Creswell, 2007).

Research Question 2 – To what extent was there a correlation between performance-based funding or incremental funding as related to both retention and graduation rates at public four-year institutions in North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)? To examine

this question, the state appropriations given to each four-year public institution for the three performance states were examined for correlations with retention rates and graduation rates over the five years of the study. In order to control for institutional size, the state appropriation per student was used instead of overall state appropriations. The state appropriations were divided by total enrollment to find state appropriations per student; this value was tested for correlation with full-time retention rate, four-year baccalaureate graduation rates, six-year baccalaureate graduation rates, and total baccalaureate graduation rates for the five years of the study. Retention rates and graduation rates are based on the success of students from previous years and are not necessarily contingent upon state appropriations from the same year. For this reason, the study also sought to examine the relationship of state funding during the period, affecting the corresponding retention and graduation rates. The retention rate lag correlation examined the state funding for a year and compared it to the subsequent retention rate. For example, the state appropriations per student in 2009-2010 were compared with the retention rates from 2010-2011. Graduation rate lag correlation used the funding for the four years that correspond to each four-year graduation rate. For example, all the state appropriations per student for 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012 were summed together and compared to the four-year graduation rate for 2011-2012. All of the correlations were compared jointly and separately for all three performance funding states. The amount each state gives based solely on its performance-based funding model would be the best way to indicate a relationship between performance funding and performance outcome. This data is not readily available for each institution or state, however, so the overall state appropriations for each institution were used. The performance states were compared to their paired incremental states to examine the difference in effect between the different funding types. These correlations were compared between paired states and examined for statistical significance.

Findings

Research Question 1 – What have been the state funding trends during a five year period from 2008-2013 for public four-year higher education institutions in North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)? For each of the five years in the study the current *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* was used to examine the overall state funding of higher education in the NCA. The state funding for all NCA state are included in Table 2 and Table 3. There was a large disparity between the funding in each state. Illinois had the highest average state funding amount at $3,296,682,320 with the highest year occurring in 2011-2012 for a state funding amount of $3,585,962,200. South Dakota had the lowest overall expenditure for both an individual year and the average over the five year period. South Dakota had an average of $186,205,458 in state funding and a yearly low of $163,122,000 for 2009-2010. The average state funding for all the states in the NCA slowly declined over the period of the study. However, during the last year there was a slight increase in the average state funding.

The percent change over the period of the study was examined in Table 4. The average percent change for all of the states over the entire length of the study was -3.99%. Two periods saw slight increases in average percent change from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011 and from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013. However, the average percent change shows a significant decrease from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 of -6.08%. Wyoming had the highest percent change of 22.49% over the length of the study and the highest yearly percent change of 22.31% from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011. The lowest percent change for the five year period occurred in Arizona with a

percent change of -31.55%. The lowest yearly percent change was -20.58% from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 in Arizona.

Now that all of the states in the NCA have been explored, the six states in the study needed to be examined. The performance states of Indiana, Kansas, and Ohio are also shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4. During the period of the study, the performance states followed the trend of the states in general with state funding decreasing over the study with a slight increase in the final year. Among the performance state Ohio gave the most funding to higher education, while Kansas gave the least funding. The percent change values for each year correspond to the

Table 2 – Overall State Funding by Year Within NCA 2008-2011

State	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Arizona	1,227,594,000	1,103,840,000	1,025,534,200
Arkansas	858,501,000	918,942,000	915,440,578
Colorado	802,400,000	830,301,000	765,512,315
Illinois	3,011,705,000	3,133,876,000	3,185,176,200
Indiana	1,594,375,000	1,639,843,000	1,567,194,065
Iowa	935,161,000	827,395,000	758,772,875
Kansas	839,517,000	793,701,000	795,182,338
Michigan	2,061,066,000	1,905,704,000	1,869,659,000
Minnesota	1,576,292,000	1,565,412,000	1,381,065,000
Missouri	1,027,185,000	1,176,136,000	968,935,126
Nebraska	632,901,000	622,962,000	653,935,362
New Mexico	901,770,000	892,950,000	886,623,832
North Dakota	253,901,000	300,891,000	311,678,000
Ohio	2,499,847,000	2,278,285,000	2,155,276,790
Oklahoma	1,025,024,000	1,086,716,000	1,074,812,732
South Dakota	201,521,000	163,122,000	196,616,485
West Virginia	470,705,000	517,837,000	527,395,510
Wisconsin	1,292,042,000	1,191,512,000	1,420,721,709
Wyoming	313,646,000	313,858,000	383,889,743
Total	21,525,153,000	21,263,283,000	20,843,421,860
Average	1,132,902,789	1,119,120,158	1,097,022,203
Average (IN,KS,OH)	1,644,579,667	1,570,609,667	1,505,884,398
Average (CO,NE,WI)	909, 114,333	881,591,667	946,723,129

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac

funding trends. During the five years, Ohio had the smallest percent change at -18.40% among the three performance states and Indiana had the largest percent change at -2.45%. While there was some slight disparity between some states, the performance states matched the overall trend for all states in the NCA.

The three incremental states—Colorado, Nebraska, and Wisconsin—are also included in Tables 2, 3, and 4. The incremental states had more fluctuation in funding with decreases in the second and fourth years, but increases in the third and fifth years. Wisconsin provided the most funding among the three incremental states in the study. Nebraska had the lowest average state funding amount, but in the last two years of the study Colorado provided less support to higher education. The three incremental states do not follow the overall trend for the NCA. Colorado

made a slight increase in the second year, but continued to decrease through the last year of the study. Nebraska and Wisconsin both increased funding to higher education in 2010-2011, which was unusual compared to the other states in the study. Colorado had the smallest percent change for the length of the study with -20.16%, while Nebraska had the largest percent change with 4.21%. The three incremental states in the study did have slight difference from the overall trends for the NCA and from the three performance states in the study.

Research Question 2 – To what extent was there a correlation between performance-based funding or incremental funding as related to both retention and graduation rates at public four-year institutions in North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)? The original focus of the study was to examine three pairs of states. However, the values reported for Colorado were not consistent with the values reported for the other states in the study. All of the four-year public institutions in Colorado except for three had IPEDS reported state appropriations amounts of $0. State funding was clearly reported differently for Colorado on IPEDS, which made it impossible to compare it to the other states in the study. Since the

Table 3 – Overall State Funding by Year Within NCA
2011-2013 and State Funding Averages 2008-2013

State	2011-2012	2012-2013	State Average
Arizona	814,457,600	840,320,500	1,002,349,260
Arkansas	903,589,798	906,500,781	900,594,831
Colorado	647,496,274	640,628,978	737,267,713
Illinois	3,585,962,200	3,566,692,200	3,296,682,320
Indiana	1,549,460,261	1,555,282,625	1,581,230,990
Iowa	739,051,670	787,419,692	809,560,047
Kansas	739,612,189	759,215,686	785,445,643
Michigan	1,641,658,900	1,596,324,500	1,814,882,480
Minnesota	1,283,690,000	1,285,247,000	1,418,341,200
Missouri	930,089,844	931,239,665	1,006,717,127
Nebraska	650,437,323	659,571,367	643,961,410
New Mexico	798,972,305	799,405,505	855,944,328
North Dakota	343,964,303	343,805,783	310,848,017
Ohio	2,013,797,074	2,039,964,448	2,197,434,062
Oklahoma	945,260,277	981,069,415	1,022,576,485
South Dakota	179,516,376	190,251,431	186,205,458
West Virginia	536,382,781	545,760,686	519,616,195
Wisconsin	1,153,558,680	1,182,780,084	1,248,122,895
Wyoming	336,097,525	384,199,290	346,338,112
Total	19,793,055,380	19,995,679,636	20,684,118,575
Average	1,041,739,757	1,052,404,191	1,088,637,820
Average (IN,KS,OH)	1,434,289,841	1,451,487,586	1,521,370,232
Average (CO,NE,WI)	817,164,092	827,660,143	876,450,673

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac

study was focused on comparing paired states, Indiana was removed to focus on the other four states that could still be compared. The correlations for state appropriations per student and the four performance outcomes for the four states remaining in the study are shown in table 5.

The first correlations indicated the correlation values for all the data for the five years of the study. All states together yield statistically significant correlations values ranging from 0.484 to 0.548. The correlations for the performance states and the incremental states were also statistically significant when considered as groups. The performance correlations ranged from 0.490 to 0.602, while the incremental correlations ranged from 0.275 to 0.462. The first paired states compared were Kansas and Nebraska. Both states had statistically significant correlations for all four performance outcomes with Kansas having larger correlations for full-time retention rate, graduation rate total, and graduation rate six year variables with $r = 0.890, r = 0.828$, and $r = 0.856$, respectively. Nebraska had a larger correlation for graduation rate four year with $r = 0.764$. The second paired states were Ohio and Wisconsin. Ohio had statistically significant correlations for all four performance outcomes, while Wisconsin was only statistically significant for full-time retention rate and graduation rate four year. Ohio had larger correlations for full-time retention rate, graduation rate total, and graduation rate six year with correlations of $r = 0.407, r = 0.523$, and $r = 0.550$, respectively. Wisconsin had a larger correlation for graduation rate four year of $r = 0.477$. Ohio showed a stronger correlation for graduation rate total and graduation rate six year.

The following section examines the correlation between money given one year and the full-time retention rate the subsequent year. This helped to assert the relationship between money given to the class of students that was measured in the full-time retention rate the next year. This will be referred to as retention rate lag. These correlations were statistically significant for all states considered together as shown in table 6. The retention rate lag correlations for the performance states and the incremental states were both statistically significant. The performance states correlation of $r = 0.521$ was higher than the incremental states correlation of $r = 0.315$. The first paired states of Kansas and Nebraska both had statistically significant correlations with Kansas having the larger correlation at $r = 0.901$ compared to $r = 0.625$ for Nebraska. The second paired states of Ohio and Wisconsin both had statistically significant correlations, but Wisconsin's correlation of $r = 0.332$ was only statistically significant for a significance level of α =0.05. Ohio also had a larger correlation than Wisconsin with $r = 0.434$.

The next correlations utilized the money from all the years that correspond to the graduation rate four year. This correlated the total funding used for the students counted for the four-year graduation rate, referred to as the graduation rate lag. The correlation for all states appropriation per student and graduation rate lag was statistically significant as shown in table 7. Both performance states and Incremental states as a whole has statistically significant correlations for graduation rate lag with $r = 0.526$ for performance-based funding states and $r = 0.457$ for the incremental states. The first paired states of Kansas and Nebraska were both statistically significant with Kansas having a slightly larger correlation at $r = 0.917$ compared to $r = 0.845$ for Nebraska. The second paired states of Ohio and Wisconsin were both statistically significant, but Wisconsin was only significant for $\alpha = 0.05$. Ohio was higher than Wisconsin with $r = 0.494$ compared to $r = 0.471$. Given the numbers being compared, individual states had a small number of observations, which affects the value of these correlations for inference to larger or different samples or groups.

Question two examined the correlations between state appropriations per student and four performance outcomes including full-time retention rate, graduation rate total, graduation rate four year, and graduation rate six year. The first comparison will be focused on retention rate. The correlations in all of the performance-based funding states in the study were statistically significant for full-time retention rate, while the states that did not use performance-based funding were also statistically significant for full-time retention rate. However, Wisconsin was only statistically significant for $\alpha = 0.05$. The full-time retention rate lag was also explored and the results were the same with all being significant, but Wisconsin still remains only significant for $\alpha = 0.05$. The states that have performance-based funding had higher correlations, but both types were statistically significant. For this reason, no conclusion about performance-based funding states being more strongly correlated with full-time retention rate.

Three different graduation rates were examined. Graduation rate four year was the percent of students that graduated in exactly four years. The graduation rate six year was the percent of students that graduated in exactly six years. Finally, graduation rate total was the percent of students that graduated in four to six years. All three correlations were statistically significant for all of the states but Wisconsin. Wisconsin was only statistically significant for graduation rate four year. Wisconsin had a p-value of 0.053 for both graduation rate total and graduation rate six year. The performance-based funding states had higher correlations for graduation rate total and graduation rate six year than their paired state, but the performance-based funding states had lower correlations for graduation rate four year. The graduation rate lag correlations were also explored and were significant for performance-based funding state and the states without performance-based funding. However, Wisconsin was only statistically significant when considered with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Performance-based funding states were more strongly correlated in a few instances, but examining all of the correlations as a whole it could not be concluded with confidence that the performance-based states were more strongly correlated with graduation rate overall.

Discussion

Performance funding models are public reflection of the discourse in contemporary higher education. The guiding notion of the academy has shifted from knowledge preservation, generation, and student development increasingly to satisfy public policy maker viewpoints and desires, who often see higher education as a training ground for employment, based on models of corporate efficiency. The creation of models that tie resources to specific non-academic or developmental outcomes reinforces the emerging idea that institutions are tools for individual professional advancement.

Public policy makers do indeed have a need for concerns about efficiency in higher education, as institutions have struggled to contain costs and have experienced academic program degree duplication. With the advent of online learning, in particular, residents of many states can choose a degree program from any number of publicly supported institutions, and while such an approach does accentuate a free-market based economy of public services, it can result in a waste of scarce public resources.

Performance funding models have had moderate success in changing the behaviors of higher education institutions, although the results of the current study do not support their overall effectiveness. The results of the current study supported the premise that performance funding did not significantly improve graduation or retention rates, the very rationale identified

by policy makers in creating such regulations. This suggests, then, that policy makers should look to identify new and creative ways to enhance institutional effectiveness. This search for alternatives might be coordinated by state agencies, professional associations, or even higher education institution leaders who have the most to gain (or lose) from such funding models.

The body of research based literature broadly supports the finding of this study and further creates a need for research and creative problem solving about how to align higher education institutional work with public priorities and legislative interests. Future research might take the form of evaluating different levels of funding tied to performance indicators, revising performance indicator identification, and even creating experimental studies that place free-market based institutional operations in comparison to a more heavily regulated and controlled approach to the higher education industry.

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Appendix

Table 4 - Percent Change in State Funding Within NCA 2008-2013

State	Percent Change 08-09 to 09-10	Percent Change 09-10 to 10-11	Percent Change 10-11 to 11-12	Percent Change 11-12 to 12-13	Overall Percent Change
Arizona	-10.08	-7.09	-20.58	3.18	-31.55
Arkansas	7.04	-0.38	-1.29	0.32	5.59
Colorado	3.48	-7.80	-15.42	-1.06	-20.16
Illinois	4.06	1.64	12.58	-0.54	18.43
Indiana	2.85	-4.43	-1.13	0.38	-2.45
Iowa	-11.52	-8.29	-2.60	6.54	-15.80
Kansas	-5.46	0.19	-6.99	2.65	-9.57
Michigan	-7.54	-1.89	-12.19	-2.76	-22.55
Minnesota	-0.69	-11.78	-7.05	0.12	-18.46
Missouri	14.50	-17.62	-4.01	0.12	-9.34
Nebraska	-1.57	4.97	-0.53	1.40	4.21
New Mexico	-0.98	-0.71	-9.89	0.05	-11.35

North Dakota	18.51	3.59	10.36	-0.05	35.41
Ohio	-8.86	-5.40	-6.56	1.30	-18.40
Oklahoma	6.02	-1.10	-12.05	3.79	-4.29
South Dakota	-19.05	20.53	-8.70	5.98	-5.59
West Virginia	10.01	1.85	1.70	1.75	15.95
Wisconsin	-7.78	19.24	-18.80	2.53	-8.46
Wyoming	0.07	22.31	-12.45	14.31	22.49
Total	-1.22	-1.97	-5.04	1.02	-7.11
Average	-0.37	0.41	-6.08	2.11	-3.99
Average (IN,KS,OH)	-3.82	-3.21	-4.89	1.44	-10.14
Average (CO,NE,WI)	-1.96	5.47	-11.58	0.96	-8.14

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac

Table 5 - Correlations Between State Appropriations per Student and Performance Outcomes

	Observations	Full-Time Retention Rate	Graduation Rate Total	Graduation Rate Four Year	Graduation Rate Six Year
All States	284	0.484**	0.526**	0.494**	0.548**
Performance States	194	0.495**	0.570**	0.490**	0.602**
Kansas	35	0.890**	0.828**	0.731**	0.856**
Ohio	169	0.407**	0.523**	0.454**	0.550**
Incremental States	90	0.291**	0.275**	0.462**	0.275**
Nebraska	25	0.605**	0.736**	0.764**	0.736**
Wisconsin	65	0.305*	0.241	0.477**	0.241

* Statistically significant for $\alpha = 0.05$ ** Statistical significant for $\alpha = 0.01$

Table 6 - Correlation Between State Appropriations Per Student and Subsequent Retention Rate

	Observations	Retention Rate Subsequent Year
All States	228	0.512**
Performance States	156	0.521**
Kansas	28	0.901**
Ohio	128	0.434**
Incremental States	72	0.315**
Nebraska	20	0.625**
Wisconsin	52	0.332*

* Statistically significant for $\alpha = 0.05$

** Statistically significant for $\alpha = 0.01$

Table 7 - Correlation Between State Appropriations Per Student (Four Year Total) and Graduation Rate Lag

	Observations	Graduation Rate Lag
All States	114	0.517**
Performance States	78	0.526**
Kansas	14	0.917**
Ohio	64	0.494**
Incremental States	36	0.457**
Nebraska	10	0.845**
Wisconsin	26	0.471*

* Statistically significant for $\alpha = 0.05$

** Statistical significant for $\alpha = 0.01$

Addressing the Academic and Institutional Challenges of Community College Adult Learners Using Advising Practices

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Introduction

Community colleges play a vital role in providing academic services to adult learners given their flexibility in program offerings such as, but are not limited to, basic general education services, workforce development certifications, and English as a second language services (Miller et al., 2016). These educational services, along with traditional academic programming, make community colleges a destination for adult learners who are seeking an opportunity to pursue a postsecondary educational credential. Adult learners tend to view community college academic offerings as an inexpensive way to change career paths or gain access to new labor markets which they otherwise would not have access to given their current educational credentials (Snyder, 2013). Finally, community colleges offer adult learners flexible and financially responsible options to transfer to private and public colleges and universities to pursue baccalaureate degrees and beyond.

However, when examining the challenges adult learners face within a traditional postsecondary setting, Sissel, Hansman, and Kasworm (2001) acknowledge that some higher education institutions fall short when considering the interests, needs, and support for adult learners to persist in a postsecondary environment. A recent study by the American Association of Community Colleges has reported the completion rate for adult learners within a six year timeframe was only 37% (Juszkiewicz, 2015). This is concerning considering that Radwin, Wine, Siegel, and Bryan (2013) state that 49 % of the entire community college student population in the United States is between the ages of 22 and 39 and the traditional student population is declining. Therefore, it is imperative that community college administrators take into account the specific academic needs of adult learners when developing and shaping higher education polices and assessing institutional practices to support adult learners.

The focus of this paper will be on identifying and discussing several academic institutional challenges adult learners face within a community college setting. Also included will be additional recommendations for institutional practices to support adult learners in community colleges using effective advising practices.

Adult Learners in Higher Education

Adult learners are typically described as students who are at least 25 years old who are attending a postsecondary institution seeking an educational credential (Kasworm, 1990). There are approximately 62 million adult workers who lack a postsecondary educational credential in the United States (Bosworth, 2008). Van Noy and Heidkamp (2013, pg.2) report that between

2009-2019 "adult college enrollments are expected to increase by 22.6 % compared to the 9.6 % increase in enrollment of traditional age students". Furthermore, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2014) predicted that in 2020, there will be over eight million adult learners within the postsecondary educational system.

The term "non-traditional" has been commonly associated with adult learners in academic literature, government publications, and news articles over the last 30 years (Ross-Gordon, 2011). Adult learners share similar characteristics with the non-traditional student populations such as they are typically students whose entry into college was delayed by at least one year following high school, have dependent(s), are or may be a single parent, are or may be employed full time, are or usually financially independent, are or may be attending part time, (Ross-Gordon, 2011). Although adult learners may share similar characteristics with non-traditional students, adult learners are now increasingly becoming the more traditional student population in community colleges given the increased postsecondary enrollment patterns of adult learners over the last ten years (Ross-Gordon, 2011; Van Noy and Heidkamp, 2013).

The postsecondary experiences of adult learners have become much like the experiences of traditional undergraduate students (Kasworm, 1990). With the increase in enrollment of adult learners in community colleges, adult learners are participating alongside undergraduate students in traditional and non-traditional course settings such as evening, online, and weekend options (Kimmel, Gaylor, Grubbs, & Hayes, 2012). Furthermore, even traditional students are now experiencing a wide range of academic, personal, and social issues related to attending college. This includes, but is not limited to, outside financial obligations and work related scheduling issues. This new narrative of describing adult learners, who are specifically within the community college setting, is looking very similar to the way we now describe our traditional community college student population today.

A Brief Review of Historical Themes Associated with Adult Learners

The historical domains surrounding adult learners can provide academic administrators and faculty members with a deeper understanding of the challenges adult learners face in postsecondary education. Kasworm (1990) identified several domains from historical studies which focused on adult learners before 1990. One of the first domains articulated by Kasworm (1990) included multiple studies questioning the academic proficiency and cognitive skills of adult learners within the traditional postsecondary setting. This notion has largely been discredited by several studies which demonstrate that adult learners have the ability to produce grade point averages at or above their traditional student counterparts (Kasworm, 1990; Lucas & Meltesen, 1994; Moffatt, 1993).

Another historical domain according to Kasworm (1990) was the notion of student entry and adaptation. Many early studies in the 1980's identified in Kasworm's (1990) meta-analysis concluded that there were no distinctive motivational patterns for adult undergraduates enrolling in postsecondary institutions and future research should focus on the motivations of adult learners to reenter the postsecondary environment. At the time, theories existed as to why adult students would enter a postsecondary including Sewall's (1982) research which attempted to link triggering events as a key motivator for adult postsecondary entry (Kasworm, 1990). However, research now indicates that there are several motivational factors that are indicative of adult learners entering or returning to a postsecondary institution which include, but are not limited to, potential pay increases, new career opportunities, learning new skills, and role

modeling for children (Kimmel, 2012). Also, the changing shift and motivation for adult learners to enroll in and participate in the postsecondary educational system represents a changing belief in the value of postsecondary education and how necessary it is for most adults to obtain the financial stability and career mobility they desire (Kasworm, 2003).

One final historical domain according to Kasworm (1990) was the notion of description and characterization. Several assumptions were identified through Kasworm's (1990) meta-analysis which included the notion of adult learners entering a youth oriented environment would cause adult learners to experience institutional prejudice and ageism. Although postsecondary institutions have made vast efforts to revamp their academic programming, course offerings, and marketing efforts to accommodate and attract adult learners, Sissel et al., (2001) argued that the experiences of adult learners in postsecondary institutions, their learning interests, and needs still largely go neglected or unnoticed. Even today, this notion of ageism within the context of higher education is still being researched with colleges and universities attempting to reverse the prejudice that exists within the classroom setting (Simi & Matusitz, 2016).

Issues with Degree Completion and Adult Learners in Community College

According to Bosworth (2008) there are approximately 62 million American adult workers who lack a postsecondary educational credential. Due to the labor market conditions which more than ever require a postsecondary education credential, college enrollment for adult learners is likely to increase significantly. This large percentage of adults in the United States who lack an educational credential, and are expected to enroll in the postsecondary educational system, has prompted higher education institutions and particularly community colleges to offer affordable and flexible educational programming opportunities such as workforce development classes, certificate training programs, and modified traditional crediting bearing academic programs (Miller et al., 2016). However, what is concerning is that most adult learners who enroll in traditional postsecondary institutions never graduate within a six year timeframe (Bosworth, 2008). When focusing specifically on community colleges, a report produced by the American Association of Community Colleges in 2015 stated that 50.4% of full-time adult learners and 63.5% of exclusively part-time adult learners were without an education credential after a six year enrollment period (Juszkiewicz, 2015). Although it is not uncharacteristic for adult learners to enter traditional credit bearing programs that community colleges offer to learn new skills or enroll in only a select number of courses, the graduation rates for part-time and full-time adult learners is well below traditional college students. Even more concerning is the fact that over the next decade, there will be no national growth of high school graduates and by 2018, nearly two thirds of the jobs in the United States will require some form of postsecondary education (Kelly & Strawn, 2011). With the combination of declining high school graduates entering the postsecondary educational system and the high number of adult learners failing to graduate with an educational credential, this will leave community college administrators, faculty, and policy makers with an interesting dilemma on how to support and retain their students. One way to address these issues would be to incorporate unique academic advising strategies to support adult learners.

Academic and Institutional Challenges Facing Adult Learners

It is well documented in postsecondary literature that adult learners have additional socioeconomic and personal challenges as opposed to traditional students in a postsecondary environment (Kasworm, 1990; Kimmel, 2012; Ritt, 2008). These additional socioeconomic and personal challenges make adult learners more susceptible to drop out or fail to complete their postsecondary education (Park & Choi, 2009; Ritt, 2008). The focus of this next section will be on identifying several academic and institutional challenges that adult learners face within a postsecondary environment which include, but are not limited to, challenges with online education, degree completion issues, program access issues, and challenges with academic advising will be discussed.

Adult Learners and Challenges with Online Education

Community colleges are educating more adult learners than any other type of postsecondary institution and online education has played a critical role in providing more access to postsecondary education for adult learners (Castillo, 2013). This online platform provides adult learners with the flexibility to earn a postsecondary credential while attempting to provide minor relief to the already additional socioeconomic and personal challenges adult learners may be encountering by eliminating or easing travel costs and classroom time commitments (Park & Choi, 2009). Many adult learners have developed distinctive characteristics related to how they learn and process information which can make the online postsecondary platform, which relies heavily on time management and self-direction, an appealing option for adult learners (Castillo, 2013). Although online education can provide educational benefits and flexible options for the entire postsecondary student population, there can be some additional academic challenges that exist with this method of instruction for adult learners.

For example, Park and Choi (2009) identified that adult learners are less likely to persist in online postsecondary education without additional support from the institution regardless of their academic preparation. Support from the institution, as mentioned in Park and Choi's (2009) study, includes additional attention from a faculty member who likely is the only postsecondary agent able to recognize immediately if a particular student is struggling in an online course. Lack of support from the institution, and specifically a faculty member teaching the course, can result in higher levels of adult learner attrition in online courses (Park & Choi, 2009).

Another academic challenge related to adult learners and online education is the design of the online platform in which the course content is delivered (Cercone, 2008). Examples of common online platforms include Blackboard and Moodle. Adult learners may be unfamiliar with how to navigate online platforms that postsecondary institutions use to deliver their course content. Furthermore, some of the physical components of the online platform which include the course menu and navigation features can easily intimidate an adult learner who may not be as computer savvy as more traditional students (Cercone, 2008).

Teaching style and its relation to preferred learning styles may be another academic challenge facing adult students who participate in online courses (Kazis et al., 2007; Rovai, 2003). Adult learners who enter the online postsecondary educational environment for the first time may expect a specific teaching pedagogy or style that is relative to their last educational

experience. Since online learners are required to be self-directed learners who are able to work independently and oftentimes overcome technological obstacles by themselves, adult learners may become overwhelmed and choose to give up on their coursework (Kazis et al., 2007) Rovai, 2003).

Program Issues with Adult Learners in Community College

Traditional associates degree programs generally range from 60-70 credits and typically take anywhere from two to three years to complete for traditional full-time students. Heath programs such as nursing, radiography, and other health related programs, which are commonly competitive at community colleges, can range from three or more years for traditional full-time students to complete. For adult learners who often cannot afford to enroll full-time, the degree completion timeline can last up to six or seven years (Kazis et al., 2007). This can create serious challenges for adult learners who are returning to a postsecondary institution intent on changing careers or trying to improve their socioeconomic status with an educational credential in a reasonable timeframe (Berker, Horn, and Carroll, 2003).

Three out of the top five majors for community college students in the United States were health related majors (Chen, 2008). Several, if not most of the courses for these heath majors are typically offered during the traditional school day and not during non-traditional hours such as evenings or weekends. This can present challenges for adult learners who work full-time or even part-time during the day and cannot manage to leave work or leave their employment to pursue these popular majors. This can limit the postsecondary options adult learners can pursue. This also limits options that adult learners have to receive an associate's degree which will offer the most economic benefit after graduation. According to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) 44% of the highest paying associate's degree occupations were health related programs which typically offer major courses during the traditional school day. Furthermore, adult learners may start to take pre-requisites courses, attempt to gain access to a competitive health program, and never get admitted; leaving adult learners with several semesters of coursework and potentially hundreds if not thousands of dollars in debt with no educational credential.

Degree Completion Issues with Adult Learners

Adult students who drop out of traditional 15 week courses or other non-traditional courses due to non-academic obligations oftentimes forfeit academic credit for that semester and are at a higher risk of failing to maintain satisfactory academic progress (Kazis et al., 2007). In order to maintain federal financial aid eligibility, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout their enrollment at a higher education institution (Satisfactory Academic Progress, 2015). When students fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress, they are at risk of losing their eligibility to receive federal financial aid (Satisfactory Academic Progress, 2015). The result of this could lead to serious financial implications such as a loss of Pell grant eligibility or institutional academic probation. This is especially concerning for adult students coming from lower economic backgrounds given the loss of financial aid will likely result in the loss of access to a postsecondary education.

Academic Advising Challenges with Adult Students

Adult learners need additional academic support from college administrators and faculty in order to navigate the academic and institutional challenges of the postsecondary environment (Kazis et al., 2007). This is especially true for low-income, minority, or first-generation adult learners who may come to a community college academically underprepared or have limited knowledge of higher education (Kazis et al., 2007). Although academic advising services are offered to all students on college campuses, for adults learners, having access to advising services during non-traditional hours may pose a challenge at certain community college institutions. Traditional academic advising services are usually offered during the day with some academic advising offices attempting to accommodate students with more non-traditional hours such as early evening times. Some community college academic advising offices have even employed online advising services to students which also typically operate during the early evening timeframe. However, adult learners face employment and family obligations which make traditional or even some non-traditional hour's tough to integrate into their schedule. Furthermore, traditional academic advising services are typically not offered on weekends which oftentimes may be the only flexible time adult learners have to focus on their academic studies.

Another additional challenge associated with academic advising is that adult learners may be assigned to faculty or adjunct faculty as their primary advisor who may have limited experience and/or little interest in academic advising (Habley, 1994). Community colleges are now integrating adjunct or part-time faculty into additional roles on campus to provide supplementary support to students (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). This integration may have an effect on the quality of academic advising services offered to adult learners since academic advising is not a main responsibility of adjunct faculty, and therefore, exposure to academic advising policies and practices may be minimal for that individual (Pisani & Stott, 1998). Also, academic advising may be more challenging for adjunct faculty since adjuncts may have limited knowledge of advising theory or may have underdeveloped academic advising skills. This is of particular importance given that much research has been dedicated to understanding adult learning theory (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011) which can be applied to support adult learners when integrated with effective advising practices.

Strategies to Support Adult Learners in Community College Using Effective Advising Practices

Developing and enhancing academic advising services and policies will not entirely eliminate the academic and institutional challenges of adult learners. As mentioned previously, there are numerous socioeconomic, personal, and academic challenges that adult learners face during their tenure at a postsecondary institution such as, but are not limited to, employment conflicts, familial obligations and financial responsibilities (Kasworm, 1990; Kimmel, 2012; Ritt, 2008). However, according to Light (2004) academic advising may be the single most underrated characteristic of a success college experience and when postsecondary administrators and faculty focus on providing quality and accessible academic advising services to adult learners, this leads to greater retention and persistence of the adult student population. There are several focus areas which will be addressed in the remainder of this paper on how community college institutions, postsecondary administrators, and faculty can develop, alter,

or implement academic advising policies and practices to support adult learners. The first area of focus will be on consistent and accessible academic advising services for adult learners.

Consistent and Accessible Advising Services for Adult Learners

Community college adult learners may be more susceptible to stop-out enrollment patterns given the additional financial, and personal challenges that exist with adult learners persisting with their postsecondary education (Kazis et al., 2007). However, what is important to acknowledge that when adult learners return to complete their postsecondary education, they may be assigned to another advisor based on how that postsecondary institution assigns new or returning students to academic support staff and faculty caseloads. When academic administrators assign new and returning students to faculty and staff caseloads, they should be mindful of returning adult students by attempting to flag these students using their enrollment management software. This would allow for some consistent advising services and provide the adult learner with a familiar staff or faculty member in which a relationship may already be established. This established relationship can play a major factor in retention and student satisfaction with their advising experience as demonstrated by research conducted by Hale, Graham, and Johnson, (2009).

Adult learners need access to quality advising services. However, the availability of these advising services may be limited given the financial restrictions and personnel resources available at each individual postsecondary institution. While taking into account these barriers for postsecondary institutions, providing quality academic advising services to adult learners beyond the traditional hours of operation is one important thing to consider (Kazis et al., 2007). One possible way to provide some fiscal relief for postsecondary institutions is to hire professionally trained faculty or support staff willing to work per diem or contractually to undercut the cost of hiring a traditional hourly or salary employee to provide these academic advising services. Professionally trained tenured or even adjunct faculty may be willing to provide advising services during non-traditional hours to adult learners. This provides adult learners with access to advising services quickly during non-traditional operating hours with trained professionals who understand the academic, personal, socioeconomic, and institutional challenges of adult learners.

Specialized Advising to Support Online Adult Learners

Research by Tinto (1997) indicated that the classroom environment and experience can shape and influence the persistence of students in a postsecondary environment. Therefore, it's imperative that faculty and staff who academically advise adult learners be aware of the academic challenges that adult learners face within the online postsecondary classroom. These academic challenges include, but are not limited to, difficulties adapting to teaching pedagogies (Kazis et al., 2007; Rovai, 2003), additional support from faculty in the classroom (Park & Choi, 2009) and challenges navigating the online platforms of courses (Cercone, 2008). Academic advising services can assist the adult learners' transition to postsecondary online coursework through personalized academic coaching. Academic advisors who are professionally trained and understand different teaching pedagogies, student learning styles, adult learning theory, and how to navigate online learning platforms can academically coach adult learners through the challenges that may arise during their educational tenure.

Furthermore, academic advisors who are assigned to adult learners can also monitor and follow up with faculty teaching online sections to ensure additional support and outreach is happening during the semester. Academic advisors can also coordinate with other support staff on campus including, but not limited to, online instructional support staff and technology specialists on campus to assist with any technological issues beyond the advisors immediate knowledge.

Transparent Advising Around Degree Completion Options

For adult learners who cannot attend classes during the traditional community college hours of operation, several majors may not be available for adult learners to complete during non-traditional hours (Kazis et al., 2007). Unfortunately, not all community college institutions display on their website or in their course catalogues which specific majors may or may not be completed during traditional operating hours. This is where transparent academic advising plays a large role in ensuring that adult learners are aware of their degree completion options and can make appropriate decisions as to what they can complete. Normally this is the role of admissions representatives to ensure that students are fully aware of the program guidelines and expectations of their intended major, however, with the growth of online entrance applications, students can now select their major and be accepted without ever receiving entrance counseling from an admissions representative. This now puts the responsibility on academic advisors to be conscious when advising adult learners who may be unfamiliar with the degree completion options at the time of registration.

Strengths-Based Advising for Adult Learners

According to Schreiner and Anderson (2005) individuals who solely focus on their weaknesses and attempt to remediate them, will only at best achieve average results. However, individuals will achieve greater levels of success if they focus on their talents and apply them to different situations. This idea is called strengths-based advising. Strengths-based advising can have a tremendous impact on all students, but in particular for adult learners. For example, one of the principles in Knowles (1974) research states that adult learners typically enter to the postsecondary environment with an extensive depth of experience which heavily plays into the foundation of their self-identity. This depth of experience, combined with the fact that adult learners tend to be more task and goal oriented, can be incorporated into a strengths-based advising session. By reflecting on the successful experiences of adult learners outside of their postsecondary setting, and applying those successful characteristics or traits to current academic challenges, academic advisors can provide adult learners with quality academic coaching services and utilize their strengths to create possibilities for their postsecondary future (Schreiner & Anderson, 2005).

Conclusion

Supporting adult learners in community colleges is one of the most important discussions postsecondary administrators must have given the current low graduation rates of adult learners (Juszkiewicz, 2015). More importantly, the mission of community colleges is not only to provide open access education to all students, including diverse populations such as adult learners, but to enhance the support available to help traditional, non-traditional, and all students

of diverse backgrounds complete their postsecondary objectives (Mullin, 2010). This may require postsecondary administrators to rethink and/or implement new advising policies and practices to support adult learners. One way to rethinking postsecondary policies and practices to support adult learners is to examine how academic advising can play a vital role in supporting adult learners in community colleges.

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The Using Strategic Planning to Transform Undergraduate Research Infrastructure

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Introduction

The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) defines undergraduate research (UR) as an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline (Osborne and Karakstis, 2009). UR is mentored by faculty, but the primary focus is on student learning – not the faculty mentor's research. Undergraduate research, as a high impact educational practice (HIP), has been shown to be beneficial for college students due to the positive associations with student learning and retention, particularly in underrepresented populations (NSSE 2007, Kuh, 2008, Huber, 2010, Pawlow and Sleeper, 2018, Vincent-Rux et al, 2018, Russell et al., 2007, Schneider et al, 2015, Sell at al., 2018, Samura 2018, Chan et al, 2018). In addition, some research has measured learning gains in disciplinary skills, research design, data collection and analysis, information literacy and collection (Lopatto, 2010, Russlee et al., 2007, Samura 2018) along with personal development in self-confidence and independence of work and thought. The perception that higher education is not preparing students for the workforce points to UR as a strategy to train students in desirable workforce attributes such as innovation, critical thinking and teamwork (Moran et al., 2013). Other high impact practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds, especially historically underserved students who often do not have equitable access to high-impact learning, include first-year experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, global learning, ePortfolios, service learning, community-based learning, internships and capstone courses and projects.

With declines in state funding for higher education, public universities have become more dependent on revenue from tuition. However, many regional comprehensive universities like our university also face declining enrollments due to a decline in high school graduates (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017). Thus, there is an increasing interest in focusing on high impact practices as a means to increase student retention and thus fiscal sustainability. Our premise is that UR is an HIP that needs to be moved to the center of student's educational career, rather than the periphery only experienced by the most highly motivated, financially supported, and engaged students. Thus, undergraduate research should be viewed as an investment, rather than an expense, and planning strategically can be a useful tool for addressing challenges (Pierce, 2017). Unfortunately, on almost all campuses, utilization of HIPs, including UR is unsystematic, to the detriment of student learning (AACU, 2008). In order to facilitate campus wide implementation of these HIPS, we need to increase awareness among faculty and

administrators, and make assessment at the core of our planning efforts. The implementation of HIPS needs to be a university priority, as evidenced through a strategic planning process that includes regular evaluation of goals and objectives, with the allocation of resources as needed.

Our university, a public regional comprehensive university, is located in the Midwest. Total enrollment at our institution is over 14,000 students, with over 12,000 undergraduate students and more than1500 graduate students served by more than 550 full time faculty. Our University, founded in 1968, is the youngest of our state's eight state universities. One of the metrics used by the Council of Post-Secondary Education our states' statewide postsecondary and adult education coordinating agency; to evaluate our university is the number of students participating in undergraduate research. Furthermore, commitment to undergraduate research is part of the university's strategic plan. In 2018, we had 1393 undergraduate students participate in research and creative activity; guided by 145 faculty. We hold an annual celebration of student research and creative activity, with 431 student participants in 2018. We also have a number of other student presentations throughout the year, both internally on a college level and at regional and national conferences. Despite our university's commitment to undergraduate research, there was no way to support these efforts centrally. Thus, we decided to create the Institute for Student Research and Creative Activity.

Creating new center or institute focused undergraduate research is a daunting task - even more so when it comes to building the infrastructure and developing a strategic plan. Student research experiences, without a doubt, culminate in transformative learning for our students. Students have the opportunity to explore new ideas and make discoveries with their faculty mentors. They learn to ask questions, solve problems, and to articulate their ideas. In doing so, they acquire workforce skills (consistent with Mezirow's model) and engage more deeply in their educational experiences (Wallin 2017). We designed and launched the Institute for Student Research and Creative Activity (ISRCA) at our university to increase the transformative learning opportunities for our students.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the process used in strategic plan development and implementation for a university wide student research center that will serve to support, develop and celebrate student research and creative activity.

Strategic Plan

A well designed and implemented strategic planning process regarding HIPS, and specifically UR can provide a forum for campus-wide conversations and be organized to make assessment, resource allocation, and accreditation easier (Hinton, 2012). These plans should be grounded in a clearly articulated vision for the future and include cost-benefit analyses and a realistic financial plan (Pierce, 2017). As faculty members who were heavily engaged with undergraduate research, and now administrators committed to strengthening and formalizing our institutions commitment to undergraduate research, Characteristics of Excellence in Undergraduate Research (COEUR) (Council of Undergraduate Research, 2012) provides a helpful set of guidelines and is based on the collective experience. Over many years, CUR members who have engaged undergraduate students in research developed undergraduate research programs, mentored new faculty to include undergraduate research in their teaching repertoire, and coached universities in the development of undergraduate research programs.

COEUR is a summary of best practices that support and sustain highly effective undergraduate research environments. Best practices include a campus mission and culture that

is supportive of student research, such as faculty that are research active, and committed to including students in their scholarly work, institutional commitment evidenced by internal budget support to support student research experiences and a student research coordinator. Further, faculty credit/reassigned time for supervising research students, adequate space and equipment, availability of professional development opportunities for faculty and students, recognition of faculty engagement though promotion and tenure guidelines, an annual student research conference, internal student research publications, learning communities for students engaged in faculty scholarship, research supportive curricula are necessary for faculty engagement. Regular assessment is required for continuous improvement.

However, these best practices and guidelines are lacking in detail with respect to using strategic planning as a tool to develop and sustain the student research enterprise. In addition, it is difficult to locate examples of strategic planning tools for creating and sustaining the undergraduate research culture and structure. However, we know that strategic planning, especially in the ever-increasing resource constrained environment of higher education, is crucial in sustaining funding, developing metrics and assessment tools, and institutionalizing assessment (Pierce 2017). Thus, based on our research we determined that the development of a strategic plan to guide our new institute was critical to its long-term success.

In the creation of our plan, it was critical that we be aspirational and set high goals but not unachievable goals. The mission of ISRCA was to engage, support, enhance and acknowledges the involvement of students and their faculty mentors in research, scholarship and creative activities throughout campus. ISRCA assists in growing the number and breadth of research, scholarship and creative activity opportunities for all students at our university. ISRCA also facilitates programming to support faculty-student collaborative scholarly work and to further integrate research into the curriculum. To accomplish this mission we brought together faculty from each college on campus. This team is our advisory board; we collectively determined goals, outcomes and structure. We went through several rounds of discussion and revision to arrive at our vision and goals as well as consulting other similar institutes. From these goals, we developed, in concert with the advisory board, a strategic plan to implement our goals. This strategic plan with through revision and narrowing to ensure that we were focused and committed to implementing our goals in a short term (3 years). Further, we must be aware of the obstacles that could limit our abilities to succeed. Next, we explore the six tenants of our strategic plan and the obstacles to realizing the plan.

These six tenants are communication, baseline data, involvement, funding, dissemination and assessment. Upon examination of the COEUR guidelines and university planning, we felt that these were critical to the success of the institute. Being able to determine our baseline of student involvement, secure funding to expand opportunities, disseminate the students' work and assess our progress were the desired functions of the institute.

Communication

Developing a communication plan is perhaps the most important aspect of developing an institute. Communication planning is necessary to facilitate buy-in and to engage faculty mentors and students. No matter what is accomplished or planned, unless stakeholders know about it, it is irrelevant! We have a multipronged communication plan. We developed a comprehensive website – with links to internal and external events; resources for faculty and students; a comprehensive list of all funding opportunities on campus; and a calendar of events on campus. Further, it is critical to have a social media presence. We developed accounts for

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. These all use the same handle and we link these together using Hootsuite. The hashtags all connect together to cross promote on different platforms. We also send out monthly newsletters to students about the activities in our office. We post updates on two faculty listservs, a student listserv, and send email communications frequently through Departments and Chairs.

Additionally, we conducted a listening tour with each of the academic departments, student support services, and student government. We found that students as much as faculty drive interest in ISRCA; so a comprehensive communication plan on all levels is necessary. The communication aspect of our strategic plan provides information to students and allows them to engage in research outside of their curriculum and engage with their faculty on different projects. For example, if students want to participate in service activities they will be aware of different activities happening on campus; if they want to participate in applied learning they will learn about different opportunities for fellowships or even external opportunities and finally, we will create a community around this type of communication to foster support amongst the students.

The obstacle to communication is that faculty, staff and students are so inundated with emails that they often ignore information they receive. Furthermore, social media is an ever-moving target. The popular media among students changes and may not be something that lends itself well to parlaying information about an institute (think Snapchat, Reddit or even Instagram). We incorporated a student intern familiar with social media to assist with the development of a communication plan to make sure that we are connecting with students and grounded in their reality. Additionally, each requires a following to be successful and that can be challenging to acquire and maintain.

Baseline Data

Our strategic plan focuses on broadening student experiences and participation in research and creative activity. In order to assess success, we have to collect data on current participation on campus, and develop tools for routine data collection. We collected data from our institutional research office who tracks enrollments in research-intensive courses. We then reached out to individual departments to compile a list of student researchers over the course of the last year, and then reached out to the organizers of different celebrations of student research on campus to collect student names. In addition, we contacted different offices/centers around campus who include student researchers in their work. Finally, we contacted the comptroller's office for the names of students being funded by grants over the year. We then added all of these names together and sorted/coded to determine duplicates as well as coded for different types of experiences – honors capstone, conference presentations, presentation on campus of research, etc. Once the redundancies were removed, we created a report showing who was conducting research, what type of student work was being done and how much was being funded.

This data serves as a starting point for our conversations about expanding experiences and funding these experiences. Additionally, to clarify the data collection process in the future, we proposed the use of new special topics/research courses in each discipline that would be variable credit so that students can receive recognition on their transcript of their research experiences. This will also allow us to track those students, and will simplify the data collection process. Further, existing courses that are designated as research intensive must also be reviewed through a rubric and evaluated regularly.

There are a number of obstacles that occur when collecting this type of data. First, making sure we have collected all the data – as there are many sources and opportunities for missed data. Second, the tendency to duplicate our counting. The arduous process of counting and evaluating each piece of data is challenging to make sure you really have a representation of what our students are actually doing. Third, how do you replicate the data? It would be great to have an institutional process where we can easily access this data but unfortunately, that is superficial and needs additional refinement and analysis. Creating a codebook format enables us to duplicate our efforts each year and by focusing on the individual student not just numbers, it limits the duplications and redundancies.

Expanding involvement

Our long-term plan is to develop three different levels of research experiences. The freshman (or introductory) experiences will introduce students to research and creative activity in their discipline through observation and limited direct experiences. The second level is collaborative projects between faculty mentors and student researchers where students would become engaged in the research by working on projects for their faculty mentors. The third and final level of our vision are university scholars who with funding get to work on their own projects and contribute to scientific or creative discovery with innovation.

To execute this, we developed a multipronged approach to engage students. First, we need to recruit faculty and students who are interested in participating in student research and creative activity. Second, we need a way to connect interested students and faculty. Third, we need a system to connect students to opportunities beyond the borders of our university. Thus, we developed a relationship with an external partner to provide a single place/clearinghouse for students to search for opportunities and faculty to post opportunities. The challenge of course, is to get buy in from faculty and students to utilize the system - even when they have already selected a project and a student. Faculty have many responsibilities/obligations and adding additional steps/applications/processes can be met with resistance. Asking faculty to take on additional tasks without any compensation is also problematic. Nevertheless, the utilization of this clearinghouse can assist us data collection regarding student and faculty involvement that could reduce workloads in other places (filling out forms) and result in additional supports for faculty and students.

By providing different avenues of involvement through our strategic plan, students have the opportunity to participate in research and creative activities in a number of disciplines as well as in service learning practices.

Funding

Funding is critical to any strategic plan. Base budget resources for ISRCA are limited, thus our strategic plans details a comprehensive funding strategy for long-term success. Our university, like many public universities, faces ever-tightening budgets. Thus, when developing a new institute it was critical to determine a funding plan for longevity.

We took a holistic view and identified the co-curricular university support services that are critical for student success. There are some areas where our institution currently serves our student population well, and other areas where additional supports and resources are needed. This allowed us to target our funding plan to those areas where additional resources could make the biggest difference.

We identified 7 major areas where ISRCA could be instrumental.

1 – Increasing retention of students
2 – Increasing diversity of students attending our university and participating in research experiences
3 – Helping create pathways into majors and recruiting students into the University
4 – Career training
5 – Providing funding for lab and equipment needs
6 – Reassigned time for faculty
7 – Direct funding for student experiences

Next steps included developing specific actions steps for each area, and connecting with the appropriate campus partner. Finally, we identified funding options – grants, corporate sponsorships and donors for each area. This enables us to be able to prepare white papers and write grants that will specifically target our needs for funding. Further, it demonstrates to the University that we are making plans to diversify our funding model and make us less reliant on base budgeted funds.

There remain some challenges to funding. An operating budget is necessary to providing staff to run the institute as well as startup funds to fund students, social activities, advertising material, etc. Thus, having some funds provided by the university upfront is critical to the success of the institute. Furthermore, grant funding and fundraising efforts are not immediate and require active support from university administration.

Dissemination

Dissemination is critical to the ongoing nature of the Institute but also to support student research and creative activity on campus. Some dissemination is outlined in our communication plan. However, the focus of our dissemination plan includes the development and annual publication of a student journal. Students are encouraged to publish in external peer-reviewed journals, and some do, but the development of an university-wide journal provides an opportunity for student to share their work with a larger audience, and may be an opportunity for students' whose work is not quite at the level of a professional journal. Our emphasis is on publishing student work but also including students in the review process and editorial decisions to engage them in the professionalization of researching. Our journal includes original analysis of experiments, surveys, and explorations using the scientific method, literature reviews, as well as applied projects such as business models, communication strategies and marketing schemes. Furthermore, the development of our journal enables us to communicate scientific knowledge and develop professional practices in our students. The dissemination of our student work is critical to demonstrating the value of student research to intellectual inquiry. Further, this provides a tangible product for us to demonstrate to the university community (and external stakeholders) the important contributions of our students to research, scholarship and creative activity on campus. This increases the spectrum of fundraising/donor opportunities as well as enhances the reputation of the university.

There remains some obstacles with dissemination. Faculty often have already identified publication locations or feel that the work is not publication ready. These two obstacles lead to challenges in getting buy-in of a new journal and new way of dissemination of their students' work. Further, students are not familiar with the publication process and may not realize the

revisions and reviews required. Thus, they may take longer to respond to email communication and revisions slowing down the process.

Assessment

There are a number of tools we can use to evaluate, measure, and document the success of our strategic plan and our institute. The assessment aspect is critical in the new environment of higher education but also critical to being able to demonstrate the impact and value of the institute. Perhaps the most important quantitative measure is the collection of annual metrics of student involvement in research, scholarship and creative activity. The plan is comprehensive but the challenge of collecting data relies on many moving pieces, faculty reporting, student reporting, chair reporting, Institutional Research and of course our office to track and maintain numbers.

Next, it is critical to work with institutional research to track specific students who participate in student research to examine their retention rates, GPA, and activities after graduation. Additionally, CUR has provided a self-review of the 12 characteristics of excellence in undergraduate research to provide additional assessment of what we are doing to achieve excellence in student research and creative activity.

Finally, assessment enables us to examine how well we are delivering services that assist our students. We have designed a survey instrument to be used to assess our strategic plan. This survey instrument will be sent at the end of spring semesters to those students and faculty who have participated in research and creative activity for the past year. The list of who participated will be generated through the data collection methods discussed above. Students and faculty will be asked about the type of activities they participated in, the barriers they faced and suggestions about future activities of the institute. These will then be integrated into the programing for the next year – closing the loop of assessment. A clear obstacle to our assessment plan is participation in surveys and ensuring that we are able to measure our outcomes.

Conclusion

Undergraduate research is an important component of the student experience, and the literature regarding the efficacy of research experiences to student recruitment, retention and learning is robust. However, the process of planning for and implementing a centralized campus organization structure to support student research is not well documented. The development of our strategic plan included a design process that took into account the goals of the university, faculty and students, along with the available resources and the items that would be important for assessment. We undertook the collection of baseline data of our current offerings and participation, and our plan included the development of assessments that will foster an environment of continuous improvement and increase support for faculty and students. While the plan continues to evolve and be refined, the process outlined in this paper was institutional in nature, rather than piecemeal, with an eye to sustainability, and may be helpful to other institutions faced with similar challenges.

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The Crises are Coming: Social Media Challenges Facing Higher Education Leadership

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Social media has become a central part of U.S. culture. The number of American citizens active in the space has expanded at remarkable levels. According to Statistica (2018), about 81% of the population had a social network profile in 2017. Naturally, universities are as exposed as anyone to this growing phenomenon.

One of the main areas that social media has permeated is the dissemination of information and news. According to Shearer & Gottfried (2017), two thirds (67%) of Americans report that they get at least some of their news from social media outlets. More than half (55%) over age 50 report getting news from social media sites, with 78% under 50 getting news from such outlets. While Facebook is the most common source, Twitter, no doubt partially due to having a president active in the space, is experiencing the greatest growth as a news source - 74% of Twitter users get news there (Shearer & Gottfried, 2017).

What has popularly come to be known as "fake news" is a vexing problem facing social media. A Pew Research Center survey (Mitchell et al., 2018) found that distinguishing between factual and opinion statements in the news was challenging for Americans. A recent study by Kavanagh and Rich (2018) for the Rand Corporation, "Truth Decay," lamented the disagreement over facts that is prevalent today. While the authors identified four causes of the decay, a key was what they termed "changes in the information system," highlighting social media's spread that increases the amount and rapidity of information flow, promotes opinion as well as fact, along with the rapid transformation of new forms of media and common dissemination of false information.

This problem is best captured in recent research by Vosoughi, Roy & Aral (2018), who analyzed 126,000 stories spread by three million people on Twitter more than 4.5 million times. They found that falsehoods were 70% more likely than the truth to be retweeted. They argued, "we do find that false news is more novel and that novel information is more likely to be retweeted" (p. 5).

It is in this environment of spreading social media activity and challenging veracity of information dissemination that higher education leaders operate. Not only is the challenge related to the veracity of information, but also with the power of social media to spread information of any kind – whether rumor, falsehood, truth, scandal, political, promotional, research, etc. And the fallout of negative information can be disastrous – both for individuals and universities.

Universities and funding agencies are interested in widely sharing and promoting faculty research, awards, accomplishments and positive news as a way to promote the work of their universities. Note the development in 2006 of the now defunct Faculty Media Project, which ranked schools, departments, even individual scholars in terms of citations in the public media drawn from Google News Archive (Faculty Media Project, 2013). This has largely been replaced by the National Alliance for Broader Impacts (NABI), which is used for guidance by NSF for its 'Broader Impacts' criterion (NABI, 2015).

Across higher education, faculty and students are increasingly engaged with social media, impacting the workspace in new and unique ways. A survey of 8,000 faculty members (Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013) found that 70% reported having visited a social media site within the previous month, with 55% reporting they used it for professional reasons. That was over five years ago. Carrigan (2017) argued that academia has experienced an explosion of social media-activity, with widespread use in student affairs and communications. He added, "more surprising, perhaps, is how faculty have taken to social media – both to talk among themselves and to engage with wider publics beyond the academy." (p. 1)

Many issues related to the emerging media impact leaders in higher education. Certainly student recruitment, faculty and student interactions and sharing ideas are all affected. Sacred components of the academic culture, such as promotion and tenure, are also being shaken. Veletsianos & Kimmons (2012), for example, referred to a new form of scholarship they term as *Networked Participatory Scholarship*, where scholars often participate in online social networks, "to share, reflect upon, critique, improve, validate, and otherwise develop their scholarship" (p. 766; see, also, Veletsianos, 2016). Stafford & Bell (2012), commenting in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, argued that, "Social media are currently a frontier for scientific discussion." (p. 490)

Social media has permeated many college classrooms, and been a tool for advancing both personal and group agendas. In examining student activism, LaRiviere et al. (2012) argued that social media provides distinct opportunities for creating more distributed leadership, keeping the costs of organizing low, and connecting diverse groups of students.

Perhaps the most well-known higher education event where social media was prominent involved events at the University of Missouri following the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in August of 2014. The fall, 2015 semester began at Missouri with graduate student protests over health insurance (about the time the police officer who shot Mr. Brown was not indicted). Then a group of 11 students, referred to as Concerned Student 1950, organized to begin protests related to institutional racism. The group's name, Concerned Student 1950, referred to the year the university admitted its first black student. Tensions were running high when the Missouri Student Union President posted on Facebook about his experiences being called racial slurs from people riding in the back of a pick-up truck.

That post went viral, as the events in Ferguson and those at the university campus linked race-related frustrations. Throughout September, multiple protests arose on campus. In late October, the Concerned Student 1950 disseminated a list of eight demands on social media including the resignation of the President. On November 2, one member of Concerned Student 1950, a graduate student, announced that he had initiated a hunger strike until the President resigned. Students set up tents on campus to support their peer and explained that they would not leave until all of the demands were met. A few days later, university football players of color announced on social media that they would not participate in any practices or games until

the President resigned or was terminated. Missouri's Legion of Black Collegians posted a statement on behalf of the team with a picture of some players unified in support of the boycott.

Throughout the unfolding crisis, through Facebook, Twitter and other venues, social media was a vehicle for both individuals and groups to mass support, publicize events, and for detractors to mobilize. For example, things took a turn for the worse when threats began to appear on social media (i.e, YikYak). The next several days, a variety of hate groups and Russian bots used social media, texts, and campus printers to launch calculated organized attacks and to distribute propaganda involving false claims about shootings, bricks, stabbings, and cross burnings. News media shared these tweets. Jarred Prier (2017), an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, reported how Russian bots were used:

> These bots also used the trend-distribution technique, which used all of the trending hashtags at the time within their tweets, not just #PrayforMizzou…The plot was smoothly executed and evaded the algorithms Twitter designed to catch bot tweeting, mainly because the Mizzou hashtag was being used outside of that attack…." (p. 68).

Many people believed false information first appearing on social media which was then distributed across traditional media as if it were all true.

This episode clearly reflects the level of racial tension lingering within American culture. However, it is also clear that the non-stop attention of all forms of media, and the speed and power of social media in particular, enabled the spread of news, inaccurate information, videos, events, etc. in ways rarely experienced before in a college setting. Due to social media's ability to quickly spread information, whether accurate or not, university leaders were left having to grapple with incidents that emerged quickly. The reality of the need for crisis intervention, control plans and skills were evident – especially since the events typically driven by social media are beyond the control of academic leaders.

This paper aims to help clarify the current situation for university administrators by focusing specifically on some of the realities they face - what we refer to as, "social media ooze." It is recognition of the growth and spread of social media, and along with this, its power to infiltrate and impact nearly all areas of academic work and leadership. The paper begins with describing key issues more fully, including a sense of the landscape on campuses from data collected from 100 Deans at research universities. Finally, we offer conclusions and recommendations.

The Landscape

Issues related to freedom of speech are at the core of what universities represent. Academic freedom, for example, is central to the missions of teaching and research. In the 1940 Statement of Principles, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 1940 Statement) wrote the following:

> College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations…. (p. 14).

As with any first amendment protection, there is always a balance of competing interests that courts address in interpreting individual behavior, in this case, the freedom to speak or write versus the protection of the university's interests. The case that courts rely on most frequently in considering issues involving speech for workers like public university faculty members is Garcetti v. Ceballos (547 U.S. 410, 2006). A deputy DA in Los Angeles was asked by Defense Counsel to review the accuracy of an affidavit in support of a search warrant. Ceballos did so, found misrepresentations, and forwarded his findings to his superiors in the Prosecutor's office suggesting the dismissal of the case. His superiors chose to proceed with the prosecution. Ceballos was called as a defense witness.

After the case was decided, he was transferred, reassigned and denied a promotion, and subsequently, filed action claiming that his superior had violated his First Amendment rights by retaliating against him for the contents of his memo. The Supreme Court ruled that when employees speak in the course of their official duties they are not acting as citizens but as employees of their employers. The court put it this way: "The First Amendment does not prohibit managerial discipline based on an employee's expressions made pursuant to official responsibilities (p. 411)."

For colleges and universities, this creates the question of when faculty communicate through social media, even if not on a university sponsored site, are they to be considered citizens or employees? The AAUP is clear in its interpretation, arguing that academic freedom for faculty should be protected, even when the communication is electronic (AAUP, 2013). Others don't necessarily see the distinction between a faculty member's personal views and public pronouncements so clearly. Don Eron, for example, a retired instructor who was an active AAUP participant at CU-Boulder, suggested that, "The nature of social media makes it impossible to completely separate personal opinions from professional image" (Kauffman, September 28, 2016, p. 4).

What remains problematic for many involved in higher education is how to best use and control this new media. The emerging trend of individual faculty members being targeted, harassed or disciplined for their behavior online is perhaps the best example of this. McMillan Cotton (2015b) argued that universities are, "woefully unprepared…to deal with the reality of public scholarship, public intellectuals, or public engagement." She also examined the situation where faculty attain the status of "microcelebrity," a social media brand, where the problems of private social media and university expectations for being more visible to the public can come in conflict (MacMillan Cotton, 2015a).

Media outlets like *Campus Reform* (https://www.campusreform.org/about/) target faculty members on college campuses. This conservative-leaning watchdog group identifies many of its stories by scanning twitter sites, Facebook stories, blogs and other social media outlets for information that runs afoul of the organization's ideals. Websites like the *Professor Watchlist* (https://www.professorwatchlist.org/), which identifies faculty who supposedly discriminate against conservative students, lists names of professors with identifying information making them easy targets for those wanting to harass. The AAUP's statement on "Targeted Online Harassment of Faculty" phrased its concern this way, "ongoing and new efforts by private groups to monitor the conduct of faculty members have heightened concerns about the impact of the political climate on academic freedom" (AAUP January 31, 2017).

Multiple faculty members have been targeted by various groups. Anya Kamanetz's report on NPR (April 4, 2018), found that, "Across the country, in the past year and a half, at least 250

university professors…have been targeted via online campaigns because of their research, their teaching, and their social media posts." It can be so severe that some faculty members indicated that they lost their jobs or feared for their families' safety. Kamanetz was clear that these attacks can come from the political right or the political left.

Many states and campuses have identified social media policies to offer direction for administrators and faculty members. Kansas, for example, developed a policy for all public universities in the state guaranteeing 1st Amendment free speech rights. However, particularly noteworthy (Kansas Board of Regents, 6/20/18) is that the policy also permits disciplinary action if speech, "when made pursuant to (i.e. in furtherance of) the employee's official duties, is contrary to the best interests of the employer" (p. 99). Building on the rationale from the Garcetti case, this policy leaves faculty vulnerable, since how *an employee's official duties* will be defined for faculty isn't clear, and the meaning of *contrary to the best interests of the employer*, isn't explained. This ambiguity leaves open the possibility for varying interpretations.

University leaders are becoming aware of the potential for problems. The most recent survey of Provosts conducted for *Inside Higher Education* (Jaschik & Lederman, 2018) found that 59% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Professors are being unfairly attacked by conservative websites and politicians," while 83% agreed or strongly agreed that faculty members sometimes do not pay enough attention to how their ideas may be understood or misunderstood. It appears that the recipe for potential problems for university leaders is ripe.

Where We Are

To more fully understand how issues related to the use and understanding of social media are playing out at universities today we administered a survey to Deans at research universities across the U.SSpecifically, we focused on Education Deans at research universities who make up the Council of Academic Deans from Research Education Institutions (CADREI). We distributed the survey to 177 deans, with 100 responding (56.5%). Sample size analysis indicates that of the 3004 universities with education programs in the U.S.; the sample of n = 177 with a 56% response rate has an acceptable margin of error equal to 9.6% at a confidence level of 95% (the probability of the sample accurately reflecting the total population). The responding Deans primarily represented public universities (i.e. 85.5%). Along with seeking demographic characteristics of the institutions, the survey included six Yes/No questions with space for open-ended comments if they answered "Yes."

The questions focused on: (1) whether or not institutions had social media policies in place; (2) if their specific schools/colleges had procedures to respond to social media crises; (3) if they had any policies or practices for recognizing social media responses to scholarly work in annual performance or promotion & tenure processes; (4) if they were using social media to promote research; (5) if they had experienced any kind of social media generated incidents involving students, faculty members, researchers or staff members; and, (6) if their institution had provided any professional development to equip them with handling any negative social media incidents. There was a final for any other comments about social media pertaining to faculty, staff, students, and researchers.

As seen in Table 1, the first question asked about whether or not their institutions had a social media policy. More than half responded that they did (54.4%).

In order to better understand what these policies offered, we reviewed the policies from 20 Deans who responded positively to Question 1. We found that most of these were guidance oriented, or "how to" guides related to best uses of various social policy media venues. Typical were statements like this paraphrased example from one university - *These are our best practices, guidelines, advice and practical suggestions for employees/students of (X) University who want to create an official social media account which will represent a part of the official (X) University brand.* These "how to" guidelines typically are aimed at university generated social media sites, not individual or personal sites a faculty or staff member might maintain. There wasn't much guidance in terms of what an individual might choose to do on their own, or how to avoid problems.

Table 1 – Deans Responses to Questions Regarding Social Media

Question	YES	NO
1. Does your institution have a social media policy	54.4%	45.6%
2. Does your school/college have any established procedures to respond to social media crises or incidents that emerge?	35.4%	64.6%
3. Twitter Facebook, blogs and other sorts of media have become venues for sharing scholarship. Does your unit have a way to recognize social media generated responses to scholarly work in annual performance or P&T processes?	13.1%	86.9%
4. Does your school/college use social media to promote research?	83.6%	16.4%
5. Has your school/college had an incident involving a faculty member, researcher, staff member or student through social media?	38.3%	61.7%
6. Has your institution offered professional development to equip you or others to handle negative incidents on social media?	34.4%	65.6%

Understanding that nearly half the institutions had no social media policies, we classified social media policies into four categories:

1. No policy
2. Minimal guidance – Very general, primarily prepared for Communication Offices and University Sponsored Media Relations employees. Much of the focus was on protecting university interests and brand (e.g. logo use) or focused on university-controlled media and approval processes
3. Expanded guidance – provided some strategies for using various forms of social media - - typically aimed at helping both faculty and students
4. Guidance and support – offered all the above plus assistance for dealing with problems when they occur as well as strategies for support

If we include the 45.6% of institutions with no policy, the vast majority of institution policies would fall into the first two categories. Based on what the Deans described to us, a growing number of institutions are developing policies that could be classified into the "Expanded Guidance" area. A number of Deans explained that more expansive policies were coming. A small number, (approximately 10%), had more fully developed policies, what we labeled as "Guidance and Support."

The second question dealt with procedures to assist leaders when a social crisis incident might occur. Approximately two thirds of those responding indicated they did not have any procedures in place. The open-ended responses provided a bit more detail for the one third who did indicate that procedures were available. The percent of institutions with clear guidance was small, with little offered to assist when a crisis occurred. The most common approach described was to have an individual whose assignment included this task. One institution described using a commercial monitoring and management software package (Hootsuite) to assist them, where they can identify brewing problems and contact university officials to intervene. Others simply explained that they rely on their institution's communications office who typically monitors the social media space. Several comments by Deans highlighted the need for these kinds of policies:

- "This is a growing issue. We are all one tweet/post away from an incident. Policies are important to protect the college and the faculty member."
- "It does seem like college policies regarding the use of social media are on the horizon and would be useful in the event of a crisis."

It was clear in responses to question three that few institutions have developed policies or practices for integrating social media responses to scholarship into their P&T policies. Approximately 87% of those responding indicated they did not use social media this way. Of those that did respond positively, we couldn't determine if any institution actually has a system for recognizing social media generated responses to scholarly work. One institution reported classifying scholarship as essential (e.g. refereed publications, books, etc.) and other – ostensibly this was where social media counts might be reported. Another institution indicated there was no formal process, but that faculty were encouraged to report such information. One Dean explained, this is something under consideration, "We have some very active faculty who report things such as 'likes' in their evaluation materials. Many conversations about the dangers of impact indices and the role of social media."

Question four showed that most institutions are utilizing social media to publicize faculty research. About 84% of those responding indicated this. There were multiple responses to the open-ended question associated with this issue, typically highlighting use of Facebook sites, Twitter, Linkedin, Instagram (less often) and other social media channels. In the majority of cases, a Communications Director or office was responsible for this work. Some Deans mentioned daily, weekly or monthly social media blasts they produced. Others highlighted their newsletters which were shared through social media channels. One Dean wrote, "We put faculty publications on Facebook and Twitter, especially if it is in the media." Another explained, "When a faculty member posts information on their personal social media and tags the college, then the information is re-posted on college social media."

For question five, the majority of Deans responded that they had not experienced a social media-related incident, with nearly 62% responding "No." The majority of incidents that did occur – greater than half – were from students posting inappropriate messages or content, usually on a school/college's site. Very few faculty incidents were reported that generated much publicity. There were a few, and once these get on the national scene they quickly spread. The other kinds of incidents that were reported included: inappropriate use of hashtags, faculty sharing disparaging information about other faculty, spreading extreme political views, threats in a blog, and publicizing a confidential matter.

The final question dealt with whether or not any professional development was being offered to help Deans. About two thirds indicated there was no training provided. The training that was offered typically was provided by central office staff, focusing on the proper use of social media, branding, best practices in promoting the university, etc. Some training was described as part of larger professional development efforts on issues like free speech/hate speech and dealing with potential political activity on campus. A number of Deans mentioned plans for future training.

Our data reveal a dynamic space where social media are being used in multiple ways, with specific areas under-developed. Social media policies either don't exist, or are relatively uninformative for an academic leader potentially dealing with problems. The policies that do exist are primarily aimed at protecting the university, not supporting individual faculty members or administrators who will need to deal with their experiences. The area of performance reviews and P&T for faculty haven't yet dealt with social media as a vehicle for sharing scholarship. Institutions do use social media as a means of advertising their faculty's scholarly accomplishments. Most incidents that have occurred involving social media were driven by student-related behavior. Training or support for faculty and leaders is sparse.

It was also clear that Deans recognize that the social media space will need to be a future focus. One explained, "We have met with faculty about the power of social media and how we are leveraging it to recruit high-quality students. We have stressed that it is a way to build their personal brands as researchers and subject matter experts." Another indicated that, "more and more resources are being allocated toward this medium of communication." One summed it up this way, "it is here and will grow."

Conclusions and Recommendations

The use of social media is ubiquitous across American culture, and its spread, what we refer to as an "ooze," has permeated the halls of academia. Universities like to employ social media for marketing and public relations purposes and rely on social media to attract students and spread their messages. But as concerns emerging about possible Russian interference in U.S. elections illustrates, social media can be used for purposes contrary to any university's best interests. It is necessary and at the same time often the bane of a leader's existence because it is much more than a simple PR tool. Students, faculty and staff are active on social media for both personal reasons and as part of their academic experience or work. It is new, it is different, and for many, rather scary.

Our research suggests that social media's use and abuse is in a very dynamic state in higher education. Luckily, the number of incidents leading to crisis situations is small, with less than 40% of the Deans reporting any kind of incident, most of which do not elevate to the level of a crisis. Our data suggest that guidelines for best use of social media are emerging, but how

social media might eventually alter practice, especially in areas like promotion and tenure, remains unknown. But as one faculty member recently argued in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "I've advocated publicly that the tenure process should integrate this type of work." (Chronicle of Higher Education, August 1, 2018).

As a result, most of the universities we surveyed are just starting to provide guidance regarding the use of social media, that support is minimal, that professional development is often lacking, and that use is way ahead of policy. We can say with a 9.6% margin of error that these data are representative of universities and colleges across the U.S. Outside of the marketing function for promoting institutions' successes, universities have not yet figured out how social media might be used for key functions like faculty assessment. In a period of growth for sophisticated technology, universities are largely in the dark ages as to how to best harness the potential of social media. We expect a lot of policy development, training and changes on campuses in the near future.

The experience at Mizzou clearly depicted how social media can intensify any situation. Since there are no external validity checks on anything posted, information, whether factual, fantasy, or outright confabulation (Schultz, 2010), can be spread at warp speed.

How can administrators respond? Being pro-active seems to be a wise place to start. Universities need to offer professional development. What is certain is that distinguishing between what is considered on campus and part of an employee's work, and what takes place at home off the job site, aren't as distinct as one might think. The legal system hasn't yet offered great guidance. Leaders need supports they can rely on if situations get out of hand. Part of this future development needs to include considering how social media's unique ability to share information can impact calculations about faculty productivity. Many scholars are moving to this space as a means of engaging with their relevant communities. How this "counts" is something that will need be explored and defined.

Protecting those most vulnerable from attacks and sanctions is a major area for continued development. Un and non-tenured faculty, and faculty of color (FOC)–whose isolation on many campuses often pushes them to create networks of supports (Alexander & Moore, 2007; Jackson-Weaver et al., 2010) – are at greatest risk. Some warn that the challenges FOC face can lead to what they call Racial Battle fatigue (Ford 2015, Arnold, Crawford & Khalifa, 2016). This is particularly noteworthy for many FOC, since faculty from marginalized groups are disproportionately involved in the kind of engaged scholarship that utilizes social media (MacMillan Cotton, 2015a).

Anything new causes varying levels of cognitive dissonance. The emerging and expanding social media world is no exception, and the speed of change in the area can facilitate potential problems. This dynamic demands the attention of university leaders if they are to successfully navigate what will confront them in the future. There is a large learning curve ahead as leaders strive to deal with the new realities. As Schultz (2010) distinctly argued in writing about being wrong, "To be blind without realizing our blindness is, figuratively, the situation of all of us when we are in error" (p. 96).

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Lessons on Effective Leadership from Eight Deans of Schools of Education

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The quality of pedagogical excellence in today's classrooms is in part dependent on the preparation aspiring teachers receive in their schools of education. Society relies on schools of education to prepare exemplary teachers to meet a range of needs from diverse students in Kindergarten through 12th grade classrooms. Strong leadership is needed at the university level as schools of education bear a significant responsibility of fortifying a teaching force that is facing a shortage of qualified teachers in today's schools. "[This] increased demand for K-12 teachers in California comes at a time when the supply of new teachers is at a 12-year low. Enrollment in educator preparation programs has dropped by more than 70 percent over the last decade" (Darling-Hammond, Furger, Shields, Sutcher, 2016, p. i). Leaders within today's universities recognize this shortage and feel an urgency to develop strong programs to attract more students into their teacher education programs and effectively equip them to fill this void.

The person most responsible for the strength of any school of education is the dean. The academic dean is an instrumental pillar in today's institutions of higher education who creates policies and implements procedures to provide relevant curriculum and effective pedagogy for the sake of students. Stellar schools of education that develop effective teachers are led by exemplary deans. The dean is asked to lead from a "middle management position" (Buller, 2007, p. 1) as he/she supervises the efficacy of a given group of faculty and staff while at the same time reporting directly to an academic vice president, provost, or president. This intermediary leader possesses unique skills and characteristics to cause positive changes within today's schools of education to develop requisite numbers of highly trained teachers.

The goal of this research was to gain salient insights on leadership from eight respected deans of schools of education in southern California. It was the researcher's assumption that leaders can learn from successful leaders' characteristics and practices to optimize program effectiveness. The perceived relevance of this study was that best practices found within the leadership of peer institutions would help inform decisions to enhance leadership within similar institutions. Leadership improvement is paramount as schools of education are called to prepare a new cadre of talented teachers with eclectic skills to teach today's youth.

Research Design/Methodology

This research project utilized a multiple case study method where the researcher visited eight colleges/universities to conduct semi-structured interviews with talented deans of highly respected schools of education. Each institution, like the researcher's home institution, was a member of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU). The researcher selected a *manageable* number of eight subjects to interview during a limited 16-week sabbatical from an administrative position in a school of education.

Interview/Research Protocol

A formal letter was sent in January 2017 to each dean asking for their voluntary participation in this study. It was hoped that the deans would be intrinsically interested in contributing to the body of knowledge associated with excellent leadership in today's schools of education.

Once each participant assented, a mutually convenient time was established to visit their campus and conduct a semi-structured interview. The researcher gained permission from each participant before the interview to record the conversation. Comparable data were acquired from each dean and then carefully coded for analysis around each question posed in the interview. The researcher took personal responsibility to transcribe all recordings to ensure complete confidentiality and anonymity of each institution and dean involved in the study.

Questions to be posed in the study

Eleven questions were drafted in collaboration with the researcher's dean of the school of education to collect relevant insights to enhance the leadership within the researcher's school of education and other institutions that avail themselves of the completed research findings. This collaborative effort in formulating questions increased the validity of each question. Each question was designed to be a "substantive theoretical question" (Bogdan, Biklen, 1992, p. 156) to collect specific information about deans and their roles in schools of education. To increase the validity of the data acquired and conclusions presented, the researcher utilized audio recordings and hand-written field notes to ensure accuracy of each respondent's insights. The researcher personally transcribed all recordings within 24 hours after each interview to heighten the accuracy of all findings.

Anticipated benefits of the study

It was anticipated this research would provide rich information to strengthen future leadership to ultimately increase student enrollment in today's schools of education and enhance the overall educational experience for those seeking a teaching credential or advanced degree in education.

How did the Deans become a Dean?

There are numerous paths one can take to become a dean of a school of education. The eight deans interviewed for this study were bright people with eclectic skills and circuitous paths taken to their leadership positions. Five of the eight deans began their careers teaching in K-12 classrooms where they developed first-hand knowledge of the importance of strong teaching skills needed to promote student success. Three of those deans went on to serve as an administrator of an elementary or secondary school before moving into higher education. Serving as an administrator provided a platform on which to develop a wide array of leadership skills and created opportunities to experience future success as a dean. As one dean explained:

> The early experiences I gained as an assistant principal and then principal gave me the needed experience to be successful as a dean as I dealt with teacher supervision,

facilitated curriculum, engaged in looking at student growth, and was also part of the management of supervising classified staff working with unions and dealing with difficult parents.

All eight deans first served as a faculty member in higher education. It is logical to expect that previous time teaching in the college classroom would be a prerequisite to serving as a leader of faculty members. Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, Nies (2001) report: "Today, more than 60 percent of deans across four disciplines studied had been chairs. Almost 60 percent were hired as deans within their own colleges" (p. 10). 50% of the deans interviewed in this study were at one time on the faculty of the institution in which they are now serving as dean, and the other 50% of the deans did their teaching in classrooms at previous institutions where they had entered as junior faculty members.

Another common denominator in the career paths of these deans is that they eventually began to differentiate themselves by saying "yes" to serving as leaders within their universities by writing policies, directing programs, chairing departments, developing new academic programs, leading innovative projects, or monitoring assessment/accreditation documents. There was a natural and predictable progression in their careers towards becoming a dean. Five of the eight deans had the opportunity to first hone their leadership skills as an Assistant, Associate, or Interim Dean before being appointed Dean. Those who aspire to become a dean need to demonstrate a strong work-ethic and quality work as each assignment can potentially open up or close future doors of opportunity. As excellence is demonstrated in one's work, credibility or believability is heightened in the eyes of those who ultimately make decisions on the advancement in rank within institutions of higher education. The eight individuals in this study exuded both excellence and credibility throughout their careers which now gave them the opportunity to influence many lives as deans.

It was interesting to learn from the deans what the motivation was that led them to eventually reach a point in their careers to interview to become a dean. Was this a life-long ambition of theirs to become a dean or something they backed into? Research by DeZure, Shaw, and Rojewski (2014) found that acting administrators in institutions of higher education described they were "initially ambivalent" when first asked within their institutions to enter their current leadership roles. Many administrators admitted they agreed to lead "because they saw their engagement as service to their department, or it was 'their turn.' Some did so because they believed, or others convinced them, that there was no one else who could or would do it" (p. 7). This researcher noted a refreshing dose of humility in all eight deans as they conveyed it was a privilege to lead. None of the deans spoke about setting an aggressive goal early in their careers seeking to become the leader of a school of education. But rather, each dean saw their current position as being something that was a natural progression of their professional service in education and something they were called to do at this point in their lives. Multiple deans were encouraged by colleagues to apply to become dean after recognizing valuable leadership characteristics and skills. The deans articulated poignant reflections to describe their ascent to the dean's office such as the following:

* Leadership is something I am "entrusted" with more than being "hired" to do.
* I did not seek to be a dean – but was rather I pulled into leadership.
* I got tapped to lead at this point in my career and recognize it is now my turn to lead.
* Somebody has to step up and lead. Leadership is really hard work – but it is very important work.

* I saw poor leadership in action and became motived to step up into leadership.
* I think leadership is a service to my colleagues.
* I see leadership as a noble calling.

This study revealed various galvanizing prompts and career paths taken to become a dean in today's schools of education. However, a constant observed in all deans is they initially had gained valuable experience as a teaching professor and were willing to step out of their comfort zone to lead in some capacity with their eclectic skills to cause positive change in their educational settings.

What do Deans see as their most important role as a Dean?

The job description of the academic dean has evolved over time. "At one time or another, deans in U.S. colleges have been expected to be 'all things to all people.' Faculty leader, scholar, student adviser and disciplinarian, admissions officer, bookkeeper, personnel manager, fundraiser – deans have done it all" (Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, Nies, 2001, p. 12). Deans today are charged with handling both internal and external demands as they have increased responsibility for "personnel, budgetary, policy, governance, development and fundraising, and other oversight functions (Tucker and Bryan, 1988 as cited in Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, Nies, 2001, p. 16). This diverse set of responsibilities can be daunting and requires careful prioritization for even the most talented and committed dean.

The eight deans clearly identified what they thought was their primary role or responsibility as the leader of the schools of education at their respective institutions. Five deans believed their primary role was to personally set a positive tone and proactively interact with those under their charge. There was a firm belief it was essential for them to be in charge of their contagious attitudes and behaviors throughout their communities. "If people see that things are positive – this can cause a positive snowball effect where others want to be part of that community." Strong performance and the pursuit of excellence by the group was seen to be galvanized by positive leadership at the top.

One dean described his/her role as being the "emotional center" of the school of education and knew his/her reaction to events would ultimately define the culture of the organization. "If I get inflamed by every conflict – conflicts will get blown up. If I see every mistake we make as a problem – then they become problems. I constantly must have this symbolic but emotionally centered response." Another dean emphasized there was an emotional investment for success: "It is important to love and care for them [faculty/staff] as individuals – understand them. People want to know that you care." Providing this emotional support and stability as a leader is admittedly difficult and can take a personal toll over time. "I think leadership is about emotional management of self. I think leadership is all about ethics every day. I think that is the hardest part of leadership." A leader needs to wrestle with their attitude daily as it will be quickly assessed and become contagious by all.

This study revealed that deans proactively invested time to develop a positive culture of collegiality among faculty. The tension caused by competition and isolation among faculty members can be common in the academy. One dean saw that his/her primary role was to help faculty "enjoy being together and working together more effectively." Another dean used formal and informal verbal interactions with faculty and written communication in newsletters to convey that: "Everyone is sacred, and everyone is valued, and we should respect each other.

Ultimately, every single person has something really important to offer the community." The deans embraced their role to foster collegial relationships to help individual faculty flourish and reach their maximum potential.

The second most highlighted role assumed by the eight deans was to establish and cast a vision for those they led. The deans were personally involved early in their leadership tenure to create a compelling vision to guide their schools of education. The importance of this process as articulated by one dean is to "position the university with a long-term vision for success as opposed to being managerial and continuing to do the same things we have always done." Another dean asserted that "without that [vision], you lose your mooring. The dean guides where the organization is heading and leverages the strengths of the team to create programs that will serve the community as needed." Visionary leadership for any organization is critical for optimal success.

There are multiple benefits derived from visionary leadership in an organization. One dean asserted that having a vision not only serves as a template for an organization but also empowers individual performance and development:

> I give them the vision, I empower them to go forth and I then check in with them. I do not hover. I do not micromanage. I give them the vision and give them the latitude to do what they do. If you micromanage as a leader that does not work. If you can step back and let others do–allow them to grow–they prosper–they flourish and you do as well as a leader.

There was a consistent pattern in the leadership style of all eight deans to "empower" rather than "micromanage." However, these strong leaders were not averse to "counseling people to either agree with the vision or disagree with the vision and, when appropriate, seek alternative opportunities." Successful leadership ultimately requires both "empowerment" and "accountability" for maximum performance in an organization.

A third role highlighted by the deans was their obligation to help faculty grow personally and professionally. One dean succinctly noted: "My number one role is to cultivate people whether it be cultivating applicants for positions or cultivating people to cultivate applicants." A talented faculty does not come together randomly. It requires an investment of time, energy, and resources to develop or improve faculty. One dean established a faculty scholarship forum where faculty "meet once a month and bring in the topics they are researching and lead a discussion on it." This same dean has established an annual fund of $10,000 to support and incentivize faculty who present scholarly papers at national or international conferences. Supportive leadership from the dean's office for faculty members' professional development (cultivating), will ultimately translate into better educators for children in today's communities.

A final role of a dean noted from the eight respondents was that of assuming an "entrepreneurial" posture to create new programs at their universities. One dean estimated that "60% of my job involves being entrepreneurial since we are enrollment driven and enrollment sensitive. I must make time to ensure we are growing programs and having program excellence." As competition for enrollment increases among universities across the country amid rising tuition costs, leaders throughout the university are going to be required to develop new programs and modes of delivery to increase revenue.

What consumes most of your time as a Dean?

It is hard work being a dean. There are numerous demands on their time. It is a continual challenge for deans to meet the requests from countless constituents and maintain personal equilibrium. The tacit expectation of deans is to be "all things to all people" as they are charged to answer to "faculty, students, staff, central administration, corporate sponsors, alumni groups, and outside funding agencies and must conscientiously serve all masters if they are to succeed in the role" (Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, Nies, 2001, p. 16). Today's conscientious deans struggle to strike a balance between their professional and personal lives. Deans must not be tempted to overlook essential personal needs and fall into the trap of feeling guilty when spending well-deserved time relaxing or having fun.

The demands on a dean in a typical work day are unrelenting and diverse. Like teaching, it can be said that a dean's job is never done. There is always something more a dean can do as a leader to make improvements within the team of people they lead. It is imperative for deans to be intentional on how they organize their time – otherwise, the job can become all-consuming. One dean wisely cautioned: "You need to have intentional spaces for mental breaks as a leader. You have to decide how much you are willing to give. The organizations want us to sustain our energy over multiple years. Leadership is not a sprint." Balance and organization of time are prerequisites for longevity in serving as a dean.

Each interview in this study revealed that a primary focus of a dean's time was meeting with "people." Informal and formal meetings with faculty and staff are a common staple in each dean's day. One dean reported: "Some days, every single hour is scheduled meeting with people. A typical day is seven out of eight hours working with people." These meetings vary from those that seem to simply "pop up" to discuss miscellaneous topics to those of a structured nature with carefully planned agendas. One dean described the importance of taking proactive steps as a leader to affect a positive outcome of each planned meeting: "I try to make my meetings meaningful, so there is some specific communication, agenda, and analysis of data before the meeting. It is important to make sure all people have the appropriate information needed, so it [the meeting] is most productive." The planned meetings often include participants such as associate deans, department chairs, and faculty members to coordinate efforts within complex accreditation and enrollment demands.

This heavy onslaught of meetings may be quite a change of pace for professors who suddenly find themselves promoted to serving as a dean. Professors who advance to becoming a dean will have to forfeit some of the solitary autonomy enjoyed in their offices conducting research, planning lessons, and occasionally meeting with individual students. Three deans described having an introverted personality which requires them to intentionally "stretch themselves" to meet with the many people that the job requires. Effective leaders cause positive change in "people" – and the number one medium to do that seems to be through "meetings."

A second medium used today as a dean to cause positive change in those being led, and the second most highlighted drain on their time is e-mail. As helpful as e-mail is in heightening communication in our world today – it can also become cumbersome and overwhelming. One dean describes it this way: "50% of my time is responding to e-mails and routine things that need my attention. This aspect can seem like a prison sentence." Another dean succinctly articulated: "I respond to a ton of e-mails." While there are no magic bullets on how to handle the voluminous amount of e-mails received each day - two contrasting suggestions were posed

for consideration. One dean's approach was the following: "I try not to respond to e-mails first thing in the morning as my mind is most fresh then for more productive and creative projects. I am far more productive if I block out time later to respond to e-mails rather than throughout the day." While another dean suggested: "I typically spend a few minutes in the early morning before getting to school to address any pertinent e-mails and alert my administrative assistant if there is anything important." Both systems work well for these two successful deans – showing there are no absolutes in keeping up with e-mails. The only absolute that one can count on as a dean is that there will be seemingly infinite e-mails that will require a workable philosophy and predictable system on how to handle the daily requests to communicate with multiple constituents.

Studies reveal that successful deans expend time to set a tone for professors to embrace excellence in pedagogy. Bassaw (2010) asserts that: "an effective dean conveys a sense of excitement about teaching to colleagues, and is willing to introduce new ideas about teaching" (p. 1002). However, the sad reality is that once one becomes a dean, the time actually spent on research and teaching diminishes. Even though deans need to encourage and challenge their faculty members to be devoted teachers and disciplined researchers, the demands associated with being an administrator usually preclude those actual endeavors as a dean. Three out of eight deans were still able to carve time into their schedules to teach and/or research. One dean described an intentional disciplined approach to research: "I take every other Friday to work from home and do scholarship. I have a research agenda. I spend 20-30 hours/month on scholarship." Another dean enthusiastically described the joys of co-teaching a course in the summer where connections are made with students as they studied abroad in China. Even though each dean was at one time a professor who enthusiastically taught students and conducted seminal research, these two components of the typical academic life took a back seat to the endless daily demands of administration.

Another notable area that deans spend their time on is recruiting and developing talented people for their team. An organization is only as strong as its weakest link. Leaders must be willing to invest time to carefully *recruit* and *mentor* as optimal success will not happen accidentally. Effective deans do not delegate their intimate role in the hiring process of all faculty and staff as they carefully "search either internally or externally for the right kind of people, [and] make the success of the people who work with them their highest priority" (Buller, 2007, p. 150). Securing talented faculty and staff is a time consuming, yet, critical piece of the job description of today's dean.

The effective dean devotes time to clearly and frequently highlight the vision for the group. The vision is the overarching goal for where the group is headed. Vision can serve as a predictable template in which to gauge behavior. One dean highlights his/her important role relative to leadership and vision: "I can't tell you how many times in the month or semester that early intervention with faculty and staff is essential to maintain focus on institutional direction [vision]. It is about making subtle changes in personal behavior." Another dean asserted: "I am continually directing and redirecting people towards my vision. I am helping to advance people or helping them find a better calling because they may not be working well in this setting. My responsibility to our institution is to let some know when they are not working well here and let them go." Success in any organization is not a one-day event, but rather a byproduct of visionary leadership over a long period. Any school of education known for excellence will have at the helm a dean who tirelessly commits their energy and time to visionary leadership.

How were the Mission, Vision, and Core Values Established?

Strong organizations define their purpose or reason for their existence through a clear mission statement. These same organizations have a vision statement that presents a noble and compelling goal for their future. Once mission and vision statements are carefully crafted, successful leaders will position hierarchically three to five core values that indicate where the organization should expend time and resources so the vision can be realized. The eight deans each had clear leadership plans in place where the mission, vision, and core values were communicated through framed documents in lobbies, promotional materials, and/or websites. Each dean recognized the importance of mission, vision, and core values to the overall success of their leadership in moving those in their charge to greater heights of excellence.

There was an interesting variance in how the actual mission, vision, and core values were formed in each institution. Four of the deans in this study came to their institutions as new deans. The other four individuals rose to become the dean from another position at their institution (i.e., Department Chair, Assistant Dean, Associate Dean). Of the four deans that were new to their institutions, three of them analyzed the culture that existed and thought it wise to leave the mission and vision statements alone. Only one dean thought it necessary to make significant changes through deliberate facilitation and discussion among faculty members. Conversely, among the four deans that rose to their position from within their institution, three of these deans thought it was important to make changes to the mission, vision, and core values. Only one dean thought the leadership plan that was in place presented an adequate view of the desired future.

Much has been written in leadership books about the power of having a mission, vision, and core values to galvanize positive change within an organization. What is missing from leadership literature is a time-tested template of ideal specific steps to actually develop these components. This study revealed there is some wisdom for a new leader to spend some time in an organization before quickly enacting a process to change an accepted mission and vision. Several of the deans who restrained from making changes to the mission and vision statements did, however, develop specific core values to clearly define goals for their leadership. One dean reflected: "When I came to the school, the mission and vision were in place. I then developed five core values to complement what was part of the culture when I came. I presented these to the faculty and showed them how they connected to the present SOE mission/vision and the university's mission/vision." The dean who did facilitate change in the leadership plan at the beginning of his/her tenure could tell that faculty members were eagerly expecting changes to be made to the mission, vision, and core values. It is imperative for a new dean to carefully "read the road signs" to ascertain what changes are needed for optimal success.

The deans who as neophytes made changes to existing mission, vision, and core values saw from personal experience that either all or a portion of the leadership plan needed to be revised. These revisions were most frequently made by involving the entire faculty (under ten members) or a subset of the faculty (department chairs, associate deans, and/or directors) in formal discussions to craft statements that encapsulated where they realistically saw the organization was today and in the future. This collaborative process generated a sense of ownership and excitement among colleagues as they refined their purpose, goal for the future, and endeared values.

What is the Leadership Structure of your School of Education?

An essential responsibility of deans is to surround themselves with talented individuals who can help the organization realize its compelling vision. Organizational structure and personnel charts differ slightly, but there is a universal pursuit by the deans to find just the right group of leaders who will enthusiastically support and enhance their efforts. "Administrators frequently speak of seeking *synergy*, creating a staff that's greater than the sum of its parts" (Buller, 2007, p. 144). Building an exemplary administrative staff goes beyond paying attention to job descriptions. Deans must scrutinize intangible factors that make a person a valuable team member rather than simply filling spots on an organizational chart.

Leadership structures are ultimately developed with an end goal of providing an outstanding educational experience for all students. The eight deans utilized similar organizational structures where they were assisted by one or two associate deans or assistant deans and then anywhere from three to seven department chairs. The departments formed were based on logical curriculum areas. One dean summarized how their school ultimately organized their faculty structure: "The structure continues to evolve as people change. As people grow in their unique ways according to their gifts – they will ultimately shape the structure of leadership within the school of education." There does not seem to be anything that is sacrosanct about the structure of leadership within a school of education. There is, however, a strategic diffusion of power from the dean to trusted colleagues to carry out the plethora of administrative tasks required by their institution and the California Teacher Commission to best meet the needs of students.

The dean, who serves as a "middle manager" within the university, must be a strong advocate for their faculty and staff between senior administration (i.e., Provost and President). Buller (2007) reminds us that deans are tasked not only to focus on the needs of students – but also their faculty and staff. "As counterintuitive as it may seem, your [dean's] office can actually serve students better by putting their interests second and the interests of your chairs, faculty members, and staff first" (p. 147). An important truism of leadership suggests that the manner in which deans humbly equip and support those within their leadership structure will have a trickle-down effect to the students. "What a dean does as an individual is not nearly as important as what a dean does to enable others to do" (Daugherty, 1998, p. 652). The eight deans were keenly aware of their importance of being actively involved in collaborating with the assigned leaders in their schools to achieve desired outcomes.

How do you cope with/stay ahead of CTC changes?

Today's dean in schools of education face numerous challenges such as setting and balancing budgets, recruiting and retaining stellar faculty members, establishing external relationships with school districts and donors, and increasing student enrollments. However, one formidable challenge that is ever present is meeting evolving accreditation standards presented by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). Today's dean recognizes that accreditation is "critically important" – but also, is often something that does not particularly "excite them" but is essential work and a "necessary part" of their job.

It was interesting to note that six out of eight deans in this study delegated the main responsibility for monitoring specific CTC documents and writing reports to a trusted

colleague. The "trusted colleague's" title ranged from Senior Credential Analyst, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, to Assistant Dean for Accreditation and Assessment. One dean expressed this delegation process in the following analogy: "I want the 30,000-foot view [of accreditation], but I don't want to baby sit it. I will ask the big questions. That is why I attend the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) and California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) meetings to get the 30,000-foot view." Another dean endorsed the "trusted colleague" model in these thoughts: "The unending nature of accreditation is unappealing to me to know all those things and to be abreast of each little change."

These assigned delegates are responsible for monitoring what is going on within CTC by carefully reading weekly PSD E-News reports for updates from the Commission and listening to recorded CTC meetings held in Sacramento. The delegates, who are empowered to write CTC documents and create websites reviewed by accrediting teams do not do their work in isolation. But rather, these delegates meet regularly with their dean and faculty members who are involved in individual program documents. "We want faculty members to know what is in their program documents so they feel accountable for how their programs operate and to look at program quality to see if they are meeting or exceeding standards."

The ongoing state accreditation process and palpable pressure that it casts throughout today's schools of education is an inherent variable that will never disappear. One dean encouragingly reminds all faculty and staff: "The state is our friend… The state is our friend… The state is our friend." Another dean wisely did not see the accrediting process as something to be feared or intimidated by but saw the CTC standards as a "minimum baseline for performance, and their goal was to strive to excel far beyond the standards. We want to do everything we can do to be one step better."

The majority of the deans delegated the primary accreditation analysis and paper work to a respected colleague, or as one dean described their - "secret weapon." This act of delegation was not to be construed as the dean's apathy towards the accreditation process. In fact, one-half of the deans were certified by the Board of Institutional Review (BIR) and had served on accrediting teams at other institutions. Each institution had at least one member of the faculty in addition to the dean (if certified) that was BIR certified. The deans discovered it was very advantageous for someone from their institution to review other programs to learn new ideas to infuse into their universities. The deans highlighted how important it was for them to meet regularly with their "secret weapons" to provide overall direction for the accreditation process and steer future changes and innovation.

What type of symbiotic relationships do you have with specific school districts and schools?

One important lesson reinforced in this study is that deans of today's schools of education must invest time to create relationships with superintendents of districts and principals of schools. Every dean in this study reported a concerted effort on their part to personally meet with superintendents and/or principals of schools to foster strong professional relationships. The deans carved time into their busy schedules to visit with superintendents at their district offices or principals at their schools or to invite these "partners" to their campuses for special meetings and events. One dean emphasized that "part of the dean's job description is to put

these visits on the calendar and set specific goals for these meetings or these visits just won't get done."

There are mutual benefits derived by the university and schools from these symbiotic relationships. One primary benefit to the schools of education is they have predictable sites for their students to be placed for clinical fieldwork and student teaching experiences. Schools of education are dependent upon schools opening their classrooms so aspiring teachers can have a place to observe exemplary teachers in action and have opportunities to refine nascent pedagogical skills with students.

A second benefit derived from these partnerships for the university is that deans have a natural platform to share with superintendents and principals the relevant graduate programs available to the practitioners in their schools. One dean noted that their university has "Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with districts that if they partner with us, their employees can get a 10% discount on tuition and a 15% discount for returning alums." This type of interactive relationship provides a mutualistic benefit to both university and schools.

One-half of the deans in this study described a third benefit from these partnerships as they were able to create specific "lab schools." These lab schools are sites where professors from the university meet throughout the semester in designated spaces (i.e., classroom, library, conference room) to teach their college students and then go into the school's classrooms to observe and/or practice specific pedagogical skills with actual elementary or secondary students.

The symbiotic nature of these school/university partnerships provides noted benefits to the individual schools as well. The teachers who work with university students observe the latest pedagogical practices taught in today's university classrooms. Classroom teachers are often energized by having an additional set of hands, eyes, and ears working to help their students succeed. University professors are available to serve as guest speakers for professional development in individual schools and/or districts. Another noted benefit to school districts is when deans collaborate with superintendents on grant proposals to secure funds to enhance education from multiple vantage points.

It is clear that these important relationships between schools and universities are a function of expending "time." The strategic use of "time" included ideas such as: visiting two superintendents a month; hosting a meeting of invited deans on campus six times during the year; attending superintendent meetings at the county office of education; empowering their field experience coordinators to visit local schools with cookies, small tokens, or personal cards to say thank you for their partnership, and hosting a special event at the end of the year for partner teachers, principals, and superintendents. Effective deans consider partnerships to be worthy of their time and energy for the success of today's students in schools of education and school districts.

What is the Dean's involvement today in fundraising?

Today's dean was typically at one time an esteemed faculty member noted for helping students succeed through their scholarship and pedagogical skills. Few deans have spent time fundraising during their progression through the academy. Deans naturally then are often eager to abdicate the responsibility of raising money for their programs to trained development staff in university advancement offices. However, due to fiscal pressures in many universities today, there is a concerted push to decentralize the fundraising process by increasing the collaboration

done between the dean and advancement team. University presidents and deans increasingly "play a key role in creating and sustaining a vibrant culture of philanthropy and private support. Leadership in the area of fundraising is quickly becoming an expectation rather than an extracurricular activity" (Hodson, 2010, p. 39-40). As fundraising becomes more of an integral part of the dean's job description, it will be important to demystify the process as it becomes more of a shared responsibility within colleges and universities.

Hodson (2010) asserts that an important part of the job description for today's dean will be to dedicate a specific amount of time on a regular basis to fundraising. The eight deans described various levels of personal involvement in fundraising over and above their other responsibilities. Four of the deans had relatively little involvement in the fundraising efforts for their programs as development officers still took the lead in securing needed funds. At the other end of the spectrum, one dean reported working much like an advancement officer having a "portfolio of 5-7 major donors on whom he/she was spending time with to develop a deep relationship with to be able to eventually ask for money."

All eight deans in this study worked with relentless conviction to ensure that the quality of their programs was at the highest level for the sake of their students. There was a noted correlation between perceived excellence of their program and donors' eagerness to financially support student scholarships, innovative leadership institutes, learning centers, or actual building renovations. Excellent programs pique the interest of potential donors and pave the way for critical financial support.

One dean summarized a sentiment that is probably shared by most deans in today's academy in the following assertion: "I need to do more in the area of fundraising." It is often not because of a lack of interest, but rather because of a lack of time as deans take care of the minutiae involved in their complex academic unit and work to promote students' academic success. Deans need to look at the inevitable request to fundraise more as a *compliment* to their abilities rather than a *burden.* Today's deans are better positioned to describe how philanthropic support would enhance their specific college's programs and to articulate the overall vision with more passion than a professional fundraising staff member could do. Today's deans will need to evaluate how much they are willing to integrate the critical aspect of fundraising into their complex job descriptions.

What are the biggest challenges faced by today's Dean?

Today's dean faces a myriad of challenges in the evolving landscape of higher education. Systemic challenges differ at each institution – but surprisingly several common themes are shared. Serving as a leader at any level poses a challenge for well-intentioned individuals to maintain a balance in life while navigating through lists of countless daily responsibilities. One dean in this study encapsulated this challenge of finding balance as he/she recalled words from a friend after being promoted to a dean: "The first year as a dean you will stop writing. The second year you will stop reading. The third year you will stop thinking." This poignant caveat on the surface may bring a smile, but on the other hand, serve as a sad reminder of the daunting challenge of rising in the academy to the office of a dean.

This research study highlighted two significant challenges faced by today's dean. The first is how to advance their school's vision and core values while managing fiscal constraints. The second challenge is how to manage the complex personalities of faculty and staff. These challenges are congruent with those described by Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, and Nies (2001)

who discovered in a national survey of academic deans that "thirty percent of all respondents rated fiscal challenges number one and fourteen percent suggested faculty issues as paramount" (p. 28). These two pressures posed ongoing challenges by many of the deans interviewed in this study.

First, a challenge that permeates the life of dean – particularly those serving at an institution with a small endowment is the pressure to increase student enrollment to meet fiscal constraints. This challenge is compounded today as "students and parents fully expect that a wide range of up-to-date facilities, outstanding faculty and staff, services, programs, and amenities will be available when they enroll at a particular college" (Flanagan, 2006, p. 77). Deans must lead their institutions to develop innovative academic programs, laser-sharp marketing strategies, and state of the art facilities to recruit today's selective students. College presidents feel a perpetual pressure to compete for students which will naturally have a trickle-down effect to individual deans who all rely on student enrollment for survival. "Deans must be in partnership with other campus leaders in determining what is best for their institution. When resources are scarce, these discussions and decisions are complex and difficult" (Flanagan, 2006, p. 78). Forty percent of the deans in this study highlighted daunting financial pressures as being a primary concern of their leadership. They were fully aware of the institutional financial constraints and were working hard to do their part to increase student enrollment by increasing efficiency within their schools and delivering innovative programs.

Fifty percent of the deans interviewed for this study described that the job of managing faculty and staff was the biggest challenge of their job. Specific challenges faced by the deans included: "hiring excellent people" …. "getting people in the right spots" … "getting people to get along with each other" … and "changing the mindset of some [faculty/staff] who do not trust administration." The majority of a dean's daily calendar is filled with interacting with people striving to galvanize excellence within the organization. Working with people is one of the most rewarding callings in life – but also, can be one of the most challenging.

How do you turn your students into "raving fans" of your college/university?

In Ken Blanchard's seminal book titled *Raving Fans* (1993), he challenges leaders of today's organizations to go beyond the efforts of attempting to create "satisfied" customers content with mediocrity – and instead, to strategically focus on the few extra things needed to create "raving" fans. In the college setting, *raving fan* graduates tell their friends and employers that their experience was outstanding and a program they should become part of or be eager to support as donors. In today's competitive higher education market, it behooves deans of schools of education to look at the "extra" things that can make their students' educational experiences truly extraordinary.

The eight deans realized the need to develop a competitive advantage by creating "raving fans" of their programs to attract students to support their revenue driven budgets. One dean summarized this quest by succinctly stating that "creating raving fans is not about doing glamorous things – but rather, taking care of the fundamentals or basics." The comments provided by the eight deans could be encapsulated in the following three fundamental areas as being essential to creating raving fans: pursue excellence throughout their programs, provide outstanding student service, and develop meaningful relationships with students. None of these three areas require seminal amounts of ingenuity, but rather a dedicated and deliberate focus.

Excellence can be hard to define – but it is easy to see it when it exists. Deans need to embrace their role in making sure that students who easily shop around on the internet from a smorgasbord of universities see a commitment to excellence in all that their university does. Google reviews of programs from constituents can either attract or turn off prospective students. It is because of this competitive climate that one dean asserts that "all those within their school of education must be committed to excellence – with no pockets of mediocrity. We celebrate excellence! We don't want to create flashy promotional materials without substance." Mediocrity, which abounds today, leads to "satisfied" customers. The goal for today's dean is to take intentional steps to analyze the smallest of details to create a palpable sense of excellence translating into "raving" fans.

Outstanding personal ***service*** to students is at the heart of creating raving fans. Service begins as students gain their first impressions of the university and specifically the schools of education. Websites, which frequently serve as entry points for students into universities must be stellar. Students' needs are initially served as questions are clearly answered through efficient web designs. Once students' interests are piqued through websites, they communicate with admissions personnel to enroll. A humbling reality is that initial conversations with people at any organization can either impress or repel. One dean described the concerted efforts being made at his/her institution to provide optimal service to impress or create raving fans: "Our efforts [to serve students] begin with our admission officers and advisors who strive to provide quick responses to student questions, carefully listen to student needs and then provide honest information to guide students in a direction that is in their best interests." Another dean was so committed to the notion of service that he/she led faculty and staff through a book titled *The Disney Touch* to generate ideas on how they could be of better service to students before entering and after enrolling in their programs. Another dean committed time to send an e-mail message to all students each Monday to provide relevant information such as when students need to register for classes, meet with advisors, highlight valuable student resources available to them, announce upcoming workshops, and to communicate to students the eagerness of faculty and staff to be of service to them.

The third point of emphasis noted from these eight deans is they saw how important it was to build ***relationships*** with students to create raving fans. There is no substitute for *t-i-m-e* in the forging of relationships. It was perceived as an advantage when admissions personnel, academic advisors, professors, and even the deans themselves spend more time with students. Several deans still carved time into their busy schedules to teach a class or guest speak in classes within their programs to help build a personal relationship with students. Relationship building takes commitment and work. "We invest deeply in creating relationships between students and students and between students and their professors. Our students are known and loved here." The quality of students' educational experience can be enhanced when leaders take the time to shake a hand and offer a smile. These genuine acts of kindness help create lasting relationships with valued constituents who will one day have the opportunity to become *raving fans.*

What successes have the Schools of Education enjoyed under the Deans' leadership?

Today's dean is expected to nurture their faculty and staff towards professional growth, ensure students' academic success, and position their school to be in a more prominent position in society for the overall viability of their institution. Deans are tasked with daunting responsibilities and seemingly never-ending lists of challenges. These pressures and demands

placed on today's dean can lead to frustration and burn out. It is critical for leaders to experience measurable successes to fuel their intrinsic sense of motivation to persevere as leaders.

The final question posed to the eight deans provided an opportunity for these leaders to reflect on some successes they have enjoyed within their schools. A common theme highlighted by each dean involved the creation or enhancement of academic programs to attract more students to their schools. Innovative programs developed varied from early childhood concentrations, single subject waiver programs, induction programs, masters in leadership and organizational structure, masters in higher education leadership, to Ph.D. programs. The deans had taken time to assess the needs of their schools and the market and then strategically enhanced or created programs to meet the demands posed by potential constituents. Deans experience pressure to increase student enrollment and overall institutional revenue and feel successful when able to contribute to this perpetual challenge.

Three deans described success in shaping a more positive culture within their school of education from what it was when they first began their leadership tenure. Investing time to meet with individual faculty and staff to discuss personal goals and expectations helped improve what one dean noted as a culture with "very deep personal issues." These proactive efforts from the deans helped "improve the overall climate and culture in the school of education to be a more positive place to work with a more engaged faculty and staff." Cohesion is an essential ingredient for optimal success within any organization. Wise leaders astutely ascertain whether or not cohesion exists and take intentional measures to develop a cohesive culture when absent.

In the interviews conducted for this research study, it was noted that each dean worked with an unwavering pursuit of excellence for the sake of their students, faculty, and institutions. They were active, dynamic, and relentless in looking for ways to improve. One dean captured this commitment through this observation: "We received our seven-year accreditation from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and then began asking – 'What can we now do to get better?'" Great leaders do not settle for mediocrity – they instead want to excel.

Leadership in higher education today is not for the faint of heart. There is rising pressure on academic deans as "college students' academic success and their employability are no longer perceived as the personal affairs of individual students; they are the collective responsibility of HEIs [Higher Education Institutions] in collaboration with Prekindergarten-12 school systems and industry" (Hyun, 2009, p. 92). There is added pressure on the shoulders of deans of schools of education as our society grows impatient in seeking solutions to the many woes associated with schools in America today.

It takes courage, wisdom, determination, and eclectic skills to be willing and able to serve as a dean. There is not a surplus of professors eager to trade the autonomy and joys of teaching for middle management positions at the university level. Existing deans would be wise to proactively inspire, encourage, and mentor junior faculty members early in their careers to consider the merits of someday serving as a dean. As challenging as the role of serving as a dean is, it is still a very noble calling. Hartley and Kecskemethy (2008) attempt to capture the grandeur of this calling as they assert: "The deanship provides an unparalleled perch from which to engage some of the most complex and important educational issues of our time" (p. 445). The deans of this study were impressive individuals who embraced their leadership positions and worked tirelessly to meet the complex demands from multiple constituents. The deans were keenly focused on providing a culture that promoted students' academic success which ultimately translated to developing talented teachers for today's K-12 school children. It was

an honor and pleasure for this researcher to spend time with eight deans who have experienced admirable success and lasting accomplishments because of their dedication and talents. The institutions where these deans serve have enjoyed increased notoriety today because of their exemplary leadership.

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Internationalization and the Roles of Professional Staff: A View via International Offices

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Approximately four million postsecondary students across the globe made the choice to study somewhere outside of their home country in 2016, with many attending higher education institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Altbach, 2016; UNESCO, 2017). In the U.S. alone, over one million international students enrolled in higher education institutions during the 2016/2017 academic year (Witherell, 2017). International students in these three countries represent a nearly $50 billion-dollar industry which is expected to expand considerably within the decade (Altbach, 2016). In response, the capacity to serve international students has become an important mission for postsecondary institutions that face decreased financial support from the state and increased competition caused by globalization and internationalization trends in higher education. While globalization is viewed as the 'economic, political, and social forces pushing 21st century higher education toward greater international involvement,' internationalization focuses on the specific policies and programs academic systems use to cope with these forces (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). Reflecting this definition, higher education institutions have increased their focus on international student recruitment and program development to serve an international student body that is estimated to reach seven million students by 2025 (Knight, 2015). Questions remain, however, as to who will help lead these efforts and how they will affect the organizational structure and workforce of higher education.

In response to globalization, many higher education institutions have formed new offices and policies designed to support international student enrollment, representing a change from a reactive approach to internationalization to a more proactive strategy (Knight, 2015). These efforts, however, have often focused on the needs of students or academics, with little attention paid to professional staff who regularly interact with international students (Brandenburg, 2016). For some, this may not be a surprise. Indeed, much of the literature on organizational change leadership in higher education has focused on those in positions of authority, though some have begun to explore how lower-level staff help implement change (Kezar, Gallant, & Lester, 2011). A lack of information on how professional staff affect internationalization efforts is a significant oversight since all staff have roles to play in supporting internationalization initiatives (Arthur, 2017).

This paper explores the roles that professional staff within international offices play in internationalization efforts as well as the ways in which staff and services of international offices are represented via office websites. We begin by discussing what little research exists on the roles of professional staff in higher education and internationalization. Then, using the theoretical lens of institutional theory (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983), we discuss the results of an

exploratory case study that examines changes in international office websites across three institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The case study aims to understand how international offices respond to the expansion of international programs and reflect the isomorphic processes outlined by institutional theory.

Professional Staff and Their Roles in Internationalization

In a 1998 piece on higher education support staff, Gary Rhoades and Christine Maitland noted that much of the research on the labor contracts of employees outside the category of academic staff were largely ignored, despite the fact that academics comprised only 29% of the campus workforce at that time. Twenty years later, little has changed. Even the nomenclature used to discuss these employees remains contested, though the term professional staff, used throughout this paper, has been largely adopted by institutions within Australia and the U.K. (Graham & Regan, 2016; Sebalj, Holbrook, & Bourke, 2012; Szekeres, 2011).

When considering international student support, strategies for success have also commonly focused on the academic professional, though some have begun to look to the roles of professional staff. Barbara Kehm explains that professional staff are becoming more important to higher education in response to the 'evolution and differentiation of functions…between administration, top level management, and the core academic business of teaching and research' (2015, p. 102). Whitchurch (2009) identifies these employees as blended professionals, and international offices can often be homes to these employees whose responsibilities bridge the management/services divide (Kehm, 2015). Yet we still know little about the roles of professional staff within international offices, despite the impact they may have on the international student experience. This may be due, in part, to the variety of ways campuses approach internationalization. Strategies ranging from internationalizing the curriculum to conducting internationalization research are popular initiatives (Wood & Kia, 2000), but may not necessarily bring to mind the roles of professional staff.

When considering the impact of professional staff on internationalization, what little research exists may be found in the student affairs literature. Efforts to internationalize higher education campuses are typically housed in administrative units whose titles include some iteration of 'international education' or 'international student affairs' (Wood & Kia, 2000, p. 55). These offices are located throughout campuses and interact with departments ranging from student affairs to financial aid (Perozzi & Ramos, 2016). The traditional role of staff within these offices has been to ensure international students successfully obtain a degree or fulfill the requirements of an international program, though this often requires more than just academic advising. Many international students require help with visa processing, housing, or social support (Wood & Kia, 2000). This poses questions about the roles and training of international office staff and is complicated by the fact that internationalization efforts may be managed differently across institutions (Perozzi, Seifert, & Al-Sharif, 2016). Beyond an expectation to develop intercultural competencies (Perozzi, et al., 2016), there is no real agreement as to what skills and services international office staff require across institutions or countries. And while some associations provide valuable networks of support for staff working in international offices (e.g., the European Association for International Education or NAFSA), these associations may be limited by regional focus or their ability to address concerns at the institutional level.

Institutional Theory and Internationalization

In the era of globalization, most countries have developed higher education institutions, though not all institutions are created equal in the public eye. In the discourse on internationalization, institutional status is often discussed via a center-periphery model, in which select institutions occupy educational centers that 'provide models' and 'function as the pinnacles of the academic system' (Altbach, 2016, p. 150). These institutions have longstanding reputations for excellence, dominate global rankings, and are primarily located in English speaking countries with high per capita incomes (2016). Peripheral institutions are often located in developing countries and look to central institutions for guidance. These institutions attempt to mimic the actions of central universities and, in doing so, participate in a kind of academic isomorphism to achieve global relevance. The idea of isomorphism stems from Institutional Theory, which argues that institutions obtain legitimacy through competing for political, social, and economic resources (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983). This is done via normative, mimetic, or coercive forms of isomorphism, in which organizations model one another to achieve homogeneity in structure and output, as well as culture (1983). Higher education institutions are particularly influenced by the norms and values of society, and so are likely to place significant value on institutional norms (Wilkins & Huisman, 2012).

While we know that there may be a tendency for peripheral institutions to copy the strategies of those at the center, we do not fully understand the ways in which universities internationalize (Seeber, Cattaneo, Huisman, & Paleari, 2016). Rationales for internationalization at the macro-level range from institutional desire for increased prestige to the belief that internationalization can improve teaching and learning (Seeber, et al., 2016). Isomorphic behavior can also be found within institutions at the micro-level. In a study on faculty sensemaking, Gonzales (2013) found that academics often looked to social and structural norms to define their roles, causing their behaviors to converge which, ultimately, changed the goals of their institutions. To date, little has been written about whether professional staff influence their organizations in similar ways. Some have posited that actors within middle management positions, to include international office staff, are correlated with an institution's decisions to adopt specific methods for internationalization. These staff may look to the resources of their competitors and, in doing so, steer their organizations towards a common model of management (Seeber et al., 2016). As international offices expand, this behavior could easily occur among professional employees as an attempt to make sense of their often-ill-defined roles. The remainder of this paper explores this idea via the staffing and service patterns offered by three higher education institutions within the U.S., U.K., and Australia.

Internationalization and Higher Education Staffing in the United States

The United States is currently the largest host country for international students in the world, hosting over 900,000 students that contribute more than $27 Billion to the U.S. economy each year (Altbach, 2016; UNESCO, 2017). This has changed the focus of U.S. institutions notably over time. A recent survey of over 1000 accredited, degree-granting institutions, conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE), found that 51% of U.S. institutions refer to global education or internationalization in their mission statements, with 52% identifying it as a top five priority. Yet the same survey found that only 26% of institutions

have a campus-wide internationalization plan (ACE, 2012). Nevertheless, U.S. institutions have increased the use of offices responsible for international programs, with 99% of doctoral institutions, and 70% of all institutions, having one or more office designated to internationalization efforts. 40% even employ a full-time staff or academic position to direct international efforts (2012). These figures represent a strong commitment to internationalization administration and signify that international students will likely have frequent interactions with professional staff, However, the approach to utilizing these employees in the U.S. remains a point of debate. Staff within international offices are often responsible for activities ranging from international program quality assurance to management of program funding (Whalen, 2015). This can create ambiguity as to the institutional roles these offices play and the services their staff are expected to provide.

Internationalization and Higher Education Staffing in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has been a forerunner of internationalization in higher education (Altbach, 2016). Primarily a host country, the U.K. educates nearly 430,000 international students (UNESCO, 2017). Investment in international education in the U.K. has been historically backed by government support, beginning with Tony Blair's Prime Minister's Initiative in 1999 that encouraged increased international student recruitment and promotion of U.K. institutions abroad. The first phase of the initiative exceeded its recruitment goal by 116,000 students, prompting a second phase in April of 2006 that aimed to position the U.K. as a leader in international education (Prime Minister's Initiative, 2009).

The impetus for internationalization of higher education in the U.K. is largely economic for both universities and the state. Tuition revenue from international students is often used to subsidies undergraduate education of U.K. students and international student recruitment is seen as an investment in 'human capital which will enhance competitiveness and rewards to the individual, corporations, and the national economy' (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008, p.78).

Like the trends seen within the U.S., 77% of institutions in the U.K have incorporated internationalization into their strategic plans (Woodfield, 2015) and professional staff within U.K. institutions made up over 50% of working classifications in 2016 (HESA, 2016). Despite the large number of professional staff participating in internationalization efforts in the U.K., 'significant gaps remain in comprehensively documenting and sharing' the expertise and practices of professional staff who are integral in developing international programs (Henderson, Barnett, & Barrett, 2017, p. 17).

Internationalization and Higher Education Staffing in Australia

Within the past 30 years, Australia's higher education sector has expanded rapidly from an elite to a mass higher education system (Teichler, Arimoto, & Cummings, 2013). Currently, Australia hosts over 265,000 international students, many of which come from the Asia-Pacific region (UNESCO, 2017). International education initiatives have also been largely led by government policies aimed at marketing Australian education to international students (de Wit, Hunter, Howeard, & Egron-Polak, 2015). Moreover, Australia was one of the first countries to partner with academic and private institutions abroad to provide tertiary degrees for international students (Altbach, 2016), the economic benefit of which has been significant. In 1993, international students in Australia generated $1.4 billion in tuition and

living expenses, placing international education only slightly behind wheat as an export earner (Mazzarol, 1998). In 2015, international education was estimated to contribute $17.1 billion to Australia's GDP (Department of Education and Training [DET], 2017). It is a top-two service export and one of five super-growth industries identified by the nation (Colbeck, 2016). This has led Australia to develop a Council for International Education, consisting of public officials, academics, and private sector CEOs. The main goal of the council is to support the implementation of Australia's National Strategy for International Education 2025, which aims to ensure Australia remains a leader in international education (DET, 2017). While this initiative references the need to recruit and support academic staff to meet its goals, there is no mention of the role professional staff will play. However, actions within the plan, such as increasing student support systems or promoting international programs, implies that professional staff will play a key role in the execution of this initiative. This implication is backed by the fact that professional staff in Australian institutions make up 55% of working classifications and have increased on average 2.6% since 2007 (DET, 2017). Unsurprisingly, researchers have noted that the literature on how these employees contribute to institutional effectiveness of international programs in Australia is limited (Stafford & Taylor, 2016).

Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative, instrumental case study methodology to explore whether international offices in centrally-positioned institutions illustrate isomorphic trends related to their staffing patterns and services provided. Instrumental case studies are particularly relevant for testing existing theory through comparative analysis (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010).

The three countries included in this study, The United States, The United Kingdom, and Australia, were chosen for their high levels of international enrollment and status as central countries in the center-periphery model. Independent variables used to choose institutions included similar rankings in the 2016 Academic Ranking of World Universities, size, as defined by student enrollments that exceed 20,000, and public university status. This produced three universities which we have given the following pseudonyms; U.K. University, Australian University, and U.S. University. We used website analysis to observe staffing trends and services of international offices over time. Website analysis was a useful method of analysis as websites are a key influencer for college choice among international students (Rhoades, 2016; Winter & Chapleo, 2017). To observe and analyze website content over time, we utilized the Internet Archive's online archival tool, the *Wayback Machine*. The timeline for analysis chosen was the five years prior to the beginning of this study (2012 through April 2017).

The first author began data collection and analysis by extracting text directly as it appeared from each university website across each year of analysis. While minor changes to international office websites occurred at different times throughout the period of analysis, we targeted major changes in website content, many of which occurred in the final or early months of each year. The text extracted from each website included information on staff, both number and title, as well as services provided by international offices within each university. The first author organized archived text for each year of analysis in a separate spreadsheet so that data for each office could be placed side-by-side for ease of comparison. To analyze staffing trends, the first author counted the number and titles of staff within each office, across years, and documented all changes. The researcher then charted changes in staffing titles and number of staff across years to provide a clear picture of how staffing patterns changed over time. Finally, text

pertaining to services provided by each office was pulled from each website, by year, and organized side-by-side in a separate document. To analyze services provided by each office over time, the first author used an analytic approach similar to the constant comparative method used in grounded theory research (Glaser, 1965). The researcher first read through the text of services offered and conducted open coding to identify common themes. Once common themes were identified, the researcher reread the data to identify major themes, a process similar to the delimiting process used in grounded theory. The researcher then conducted a final review of the data to determine the major ways in which the services of each office changed over time.

Findings

Staffing

U.S. University. Throughout the period of analysis, employees within the Office for International Students and Scholars at U.S. University generally increased, and classification of staff became more diverse. In 2012, the office was staffed by 35 employees across four operating categories; a Management team, Advising Staff, Support Staff, and a Front-Desk Staff made up of international student representatives from various countries. Management consisted of a Director, two Assistant Directors, and a Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Program Coordinator. SEVIS is a web-based system run by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) to maintain information on international students and exchange visitors in the U.S. (ICE, 2017). Advising staff in 2012 consisted of a variety of positions responsible for academic advising and student orientation services. Titles of advising staff ranged from International Student Advisor to Community Outreach Coordinator. Support Staff in 2012 consisted of a front-desk supervisor and several student interns, such as a graphic design and community health intern. The Front-Desk Student Staff consisted of student representatives from multiple countries. In 2012, student representatives from the US made up a majority of student representatives, though students from seven other countries were also represented, including representatives from the middle-east, Africa, Asia, and one Canadian representative.

In 2013, staffing of the Office for International Students and Scholars fell slightly to 30 employees. This was primarily due to a decrease in the number of front-desk staff. Few other changes in staffing occurred. However, the staffing structure was reorganized to place interns into their own operating category, and front-desk student staff were reclassified as simply front-desk staff. It is unclear whether this was an indication that front-desk staff may not always have been students.

In 2014, staffing increased to 39 employees, and the position of an Associate Director was introduced into the management team. Additional front-desk supervisors and an office and program assistant were also added. Several new internship positions were created to focus on J-1 and H-1B visa programs. During this year, front-desk employees representing countries in the middle-east disappeared and did not return during the period of analysis.

In 2015, staffing increased again to 44 employees and staffing patterns had three notable changes. First, the Office for International Students and Scholars removed the Associate director position introduced in 2013. Second, the SEVIS coordinator was given a dual title of Office Manager. Third, 2015 marked the first point in which U.S. representatives did not represent the majority of front-desk staff. Instead, representatives from Mexico and China held an equal number of positions and held majority representation. In 2016, staffing increased

slightly to 45 positions, and only changed via the reinstatement of the Associate Director position.

2017 saw a decrease in staffing to 39 positions. This was due primarily to a decrease in intern and front-desk positions. It should be noted, however, that intern responsibilities moved further away from visa program positions toward communications and community relations responsibilities. Front-desk staff also became less diverse, with U.S. representatives again holding the majority of positions accompanied by only two other countries, China and Venezuela.

U.K. University. Staffing at the International Office within U.K. University remained relatively stable during the period of analysis. In 2012, the office was staffed by 44 employees under the single category of Administrative Staff. Titles of staff ranged from Head of Study Abroad to Partnership Development Administrator. The office also employed International Officers for the Middle East, North Africa, South America, Europe, Mexico, Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, India, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Staff for two international offices in China and Malaysia were also listed, and consisted of 17 total staff, though no official titles for these employees were apparent.

In 2013, staffing of the international office increased slightly to 45 employees and two positions were created to support the International English Language Testing System. 2013 also marked the first appearance of a marketing position in the U.K. home office, as well as the highest level of recruitment related positions (five). After 2013, Positions with the word recruitment fell to no more than two positions between 2014 and 2016, and increased to three in 2017.

In 2014, positions decreased to 44 employees and marked the first appearance of an International Relations staff, consisting of eight new positions within the international office. It is possible that these positions represented a rebranding of the international recruitment role.

Administrative staff in U.K. University's China and Malaysia office decreased from 19 to 14 positions in 2017. However, titles were given to staff in the Malaysian office, defined exclusively by marketing and student support services. Malaysia represents a top-five country for international students in the U.K. and a top-three country for Australia, consisting of approximately 15,000 students for both (UNESCO, 2017). Marketing and student support positions in the Malaysia office may have been developed to compete for student recruitment. According to UNESCO data (2017), mobility rates of students from East Asia and the Pacific who enrolled in U.K. institutions in 2010 were notably lower than those in Australia. Between 2010 and 2015, however, students from these regions in U.K. institutions increased to parallel those within Australia (2017).

Australia University. Website analysis of the international office at Australia University between 2012 and 2017 produced some distinct and interesting trends. In 2012, the office consisted of 23 employees and its website provided an organizational chart of the titles and reporting structure for staff. The office was managed by a Director of Finance and an Administration Officer. Two marketing units fell under these managers for communications and regional management, as well as a study abroad and exchange unit, and an international admissions unit. However, In August of 2013, the Australia University website underwent a considerable transition, indicated by a change from one office of international students to three distinct operating units: an international office, an international student center, and a global engagement office. Between the years of 2013 and 2015, only one staff member was noted

throughout these websites, an unidentified International Pro-Vice Chancellor. By 2016, however, the website was revised again to include the names and titles of office staff.

In 2016, the Australia University international office indicated the presence of 18 employees within two operating units; International Admissions and International Recruitment. The international admissions unit consisted of 13 employees, an Associate director, three international compliance positions, six admissions officers, and three administrative support positions. The international recruitment unit consisted of a manager and four regional coordinators responsible for recruitment across the globe. By 2017, two director positions were added, an Associate Director for Student Recruitment and a Director for Student Recruitment and Admission, bringing the total number of employees to 20. In 2017, the titles of Regional Coordinators were also changed to Country Managers, possibly indicating a change in recruitment focus to target specific countries or regions.

Services offered

United States. Services provided by the Office for International Students and Scholars at U.S. University were broken into services for students, scholars (i.e. international scholars), and campus departments. In 2012, the type and tone of services offered for students was very administrative and primarily concerned with visa processing and helping students maintain full-time status. Beyond these services, the international office acted as a central hub to direct students to services offered by departments across campus. Links and directions were provided to departments such as the admissions office, registrar, and health services. Services for international scholars and departments were almost exclusively focused on visa processing and visa classifications. Services remained unchanged in 2013, apart from a resource focused on assisting prospective employers in understanding work options for international employees. This service appeared to target university departments, however, and not outside employers.

By 2014, services provided by the Office for International Students and Scholars began to focus more on student support. The tone of the office's website became more personal and concerned with helping students acclimate to a new environment. Orientation materials were provided, including a welcome handbook and directions to community resources such as grocery stores, places of worship, and international organizations. Two videos were also placed on the website, a welcome message from the office director and a student-to-student video in which international students discussed their experiences at the university. An announcement of a partnership with Delta Air Lines was also introduced in 2014, offering international students discounts on flights. This could be interpreted as an indication that international student programs are increasingly viewed as a commodity in which commercial forces have a 'legitimate or even dominant place in higher education' (Altbach, 2016, p. 106). By 2015, however, the partnership with Delta no longer appeared on the website and no major changes in services were apparent during the period of analysis.

United Kingdom. Similar to the office at U.S. University, the tone of the international office at U.K. University in 2012 was very administrative. Significant focus was placed on overseas partnerships, transnational education initiatives, and recruitment. Academic or student support services were cursorily mentioned but overshadowed by recruitment and administrative support for the offices in China and Malaysia. Few changes were made to the website regarding international support services between 2013 and 2016, except that recruitment language was changed from Non-U.K. students to international student recruitment. References to any specific country were almost entirely removed.

Throughout the period of analysis, services cited on U.K. University's website remained relatively unchanged. However, in 2016 the international office provided a new service worth noting; international staff training. Training services include an international training week in which staff were given the opportunity to learn about international education and share practices. Bespoke courses were also offered and individually contracted at the request of international visitors. An example of a Bespoke course in 2013 was a six-day course commissioned by Sunland International for a group of 27 senior staff from Chinese universities. The purpose of this course was to train the attendees on international aspects of university strategy and covered topics ranging from alumni campaigns to internationalization strategy. The international office also offered a U.K. Summer School open to students studying at the China and Malaysia campuses that focused on developing business and management skills.

Australia. Services offered by the Australia University International Student Centre in 2012 paralleled those in the U.S. and U.K. Thematically, the services of this office centered on travel arrangements, visa requirements, and services needed upon moving to Australia (e.g. housing, healthcare, etc.). However, in 2013 the tone of the office website became more concerned with the psychosocial and academic needs of international students. Examples of new services included one-on-one support for students in crisis, counseling services, facilitating interactions with other students, and researching the experiences of international students. Moreover, social functions such as morning tea on Fridays were introduced. Responsibility for government compliance issues, such as the Education Services for Overseas Students act, were also added.

Few changes were made to services mentioned on the International Student Centre website between 2014 and 2016, apart from a weekly blog outlining information relevant to international students. In 2017, however, the office changed its name to the Office of International Student Support, possibly indicating an increase in investment from the university as staffing for this office also increased.

Discussion and Implications for Institutional Change

In a 2016 article on marketing practices among international office websites in the US and U.K., Gary Rhoades noted an 'ironic and seemingly counterintuitive pattern of isomorphism… that cuts across boundaries of region, country, and type of governance' (para. 2). The pattern Rhoades found was not defined by attempts among offices to look unique, but to become strikingly similar. In reviewing the changes in staffing and service of offices within this study, we found similar patterns of isomorphism that we grouped into three distinct themes. The first describes a decentralization and diversification among office staff. The second describes a move away from administrative support to a customer service and recruitment orientation. The third notes a perceived move toward identifying specific markets for student recruitment.

Theme #1 - Decentralization and expansion of staffing roles

Each office within this study showed some level of decentralization and diversification of staffing during the period of analysis. The Australia University international office transformed from a centralized department, with one director, to a three-tiered administrative structure that utilized multiple directors to manage admissions and recruitment services. Concurrently, the international offices in the U.K. and U.S. experienced similar periods of staff reorganization and reorientation. At U.K. University, new positions were established for staff in the Malaysian

office that focused on recruitment and marketing, and titles at the home campus changed sporadically across years, implying diversification of responsibilities. In the U.S. University office, the roles of interns, support staff, and advisors expanded to reflect increased focus on communications and community engagement, with less focus on visa processing. These trends are illustrative of coercive isomorphism, wherein institutions face "informal pressures" or "cultural expectations" that create a desire to conform to the standards of similar organizations (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150).

Theme #2 - Expansion and redefinition of services

In this theme, isomorphic processes between offices were uniquely apparent. In 2012, the language and tone of each international office website was clearly focused on practical, administrative support for international programs and students. Services focused largely on visa processing, international agreements, compliance, and travel aid. As time passed, however, the language of each website increased focus on academic and social support systems to improve student experience and recruitment, creating a tonal shift toward a customer-service orientation. This trend aligns with research on international education that indicates professional staff are being expected to increase social support and academic advising services if they hope to recruit and retain additional international students (Arthur, 2017; Winter & Chapleo, 2017). This aligns with the normative pressures of isomorphism in which organizations strive to create "similarity of orientation" among professionals (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 152).

Theme #3 – Markets and economic development

The final theme identified by this study is a perceived move for institutions to target or compete within specific global markets. Over time, each university developed staff positions related to the recruitment of international students from specific regions or countries. Australia University created new management roles for student recruitment from explicit regions and countries when, in 2012, recruitment positions were not defined by either. Similarly, at U.K. University, international relations positions assigned to specific countries in 2012 (e.g. Mexico and Pakistan) were no longer cited on the 2017 office website. In 2012, interns and front-desk staff at U.S. University's Office for International Students and Scholars represented eight countries. Upon completion of this study, only students from three countries, one of which being the U.S., held these positions. While the causes for these changes cannot be determined by website analysis alone, each office appeared to increase focus on students from specific regions or countries over time. This could represent an increased trend for institutions to position themselves within specific international markets to increase prestige or economic benefit (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2012; Rhoades, 2016). Institutional theory argues that ambiguous goals often motivate organizations to mimic the behaviors of successful organizations (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983). If institutions are unsure of where or how to recruit international students, they may look to regions in which other institutions have been successful and, in doing so, attempt to identify their own regions of recruitment.

Organizational Implications for Professional Staff and Higher Education Institutions

While we argue that the staffing trends and services of the offices in this study adhered to the tenets of isomorphism described by institutional theory, these findings should not be viewed as evaluative, but rather an attempt to raise awareness of how international offices relate to their

global colleagues. It is important to remember that the changes among international offices within this study may be shaped by institutional contexts beyond the control of the institutional offices (e.g., budget cuts, centralization efforts, etc.). Leaders should consider the observations of this study via the knowledge they have of their own organizational contexts. What is applicable to all institutions, however, is that organizational websites are one of the most influential tools international students use when considering which institution to attend (James-MacEachern & Yun, 2017; Winter & Chapleo, 2017). Therefore, the choices international offices make as to what information is published on their websites can effectively signal values and resources that may or may not align with those of their institutions or target audience. Based on the findings of our comparative analysis, we suggest that institutional leaders should engage international offices to ensure that the staffing and services provided by these offices are accurate and vertically aligned with the goals of their institutions. Moreover, staffing positions and services should be reviewed to determine if the services of international offices are horizontally supported by services across campuses. If no formal campus-wide internationalization strategy exists, staff within international offices should be empowered to help develop that strategy. Analysis of website content can be used in this process to determine what messages are being sent to international students and where gaps or misalignments exist. In this way, international office websites can serve as living documents that outline an institution's international strategy, resources, and values.

While little has been written about the roles of professional staff on internationalization efforts, research efforts such as the Erasmus Impact Study and the Bologna Process follow-up working group have begun to explicitly note the need to explore the role these staff play in higher education internationalization (Brandenburg, 2016). Directly or indirectly, these staff will affect the experiences of international students, especially those within international offices. International office websites that do not identify the number, roles, and services of staff within their offices run the risk of appearing impersonal, under resourced, or overly focused on the pecuniary benefits of internationalization. This may contradict the espoused missions of international programs that focus on building intercultural competencies or advancing the global good (Hudzik, 2015; Rhoades, 2016).

As internationalization efforts become an increased focus of higher education, we argue that websites for international offices will become the face of the institution for many international students. Moreover, international offices that can implement and effectively promote unique services via their websites are more likely to stand out among institutions that appear to simply converge around common themes. International offices, and their supporting institutions, must consider what the content of their websites conveys to incoming and existing international students, as well as how the services of these offices align with student needs and university missions. Regular content review of websites should also be implemented to allow feedback from international students and staff alike. Moreover, considerations should be made as to who these offices staff and why. These simple considerations can not only increase the value of services these important offices provide, but also help create an environment that feels more welcoming and inclusive to international students.

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