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Examining the Implementation of a Universal Approach to Student Resilience

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U.S. college students experience stress from a variety of sources, including academic rigor, financial burdens of tuition, and social pressures (Ulbrich & Kirk, 2017; Sungkok et al., 2017; Wilks & Spivey, 2010). In addition, many students encounter mental health symptoms for the first time at college, with nearly 75% of mental health disorders appearing by age 24 (Kessler et al., 2005). Some students have also suffered adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which epidemiologists now consider nearly universal (Wiehn et al., 2018). ACEs make people more vulnerable to behavioral health and substance abuse problems (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012) and suicide (Choi et al., 2017) and can present impairments to learning (Perry, 2006).

Human development researchers recognize that college is a critical transitional developmental period for young adults (Walters et al., 2018) and that students' risk assessment and decision-making functions are not yet fully developed (Chung & Hudziak, 2017; Dahl, 2004; Van Leijenhorst et al., 2010). Such tensions among normal brain development, the experience of new life stressors, and the need to develop new coping skills have resulted in a widespread interest among institutions in creating approaches to increasing college student resilience. Resilience is the process of positive adaptation in the face of adversity or significant stress (Luthar et al., 2000). It is sometimes referred to as wellness (Fullen & Gorby, 2016) or wellbeing (Taylor, 2017) in behavioral health interventions (Peng et al., 2014; Smeets et al., 2014). Many institutions of higher learning have created strategies for enhancing student wellbeing that include modified cognitive behavioral therapy (Seligman et al., 2007), controlled student residential environments with high monitoring requirements (Hudziak & Tiemeier, 2017), peer-to-peer counseling outreach (Mental Health First Aid, 2018; Sontag-Padilla et al., 2018), and programs to build academic resilience by teaching students to "bounce back" from failure (Stallman & Kavanagh, 2018).

Differences in how certain campus groups view challenges, help-seeking, and adjustment have been revealed by prior research. For example, when minority students learn that hardship and doubt were common to every new student's experiences, their sense of competence improved (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Additionally, studies indicate that women are more willing to engage in help-seeking than men (Doherty & Kartalova-O'Doherty, 2010), and that men (Eisenberg et al., 2009; Rafal et al., 2018) and nonwhites typically experience more stigma when discussing mental health (Anglin et al., 2006; Cheng et al., 2013; Conner et al., 2009; Rao et al., 2007). An acknowledgement of the "sexual fluidity" in generation Z (Cieslik, 2017), and the diversity of sexual identities are also considerations when shaping interventions (Aparicio-García et al., 2018; Mayer et al., 2008; Goldberg, 2018).

Description of the Student Resilience Project

The current study provides the first analysis of the implementation of an online resilience program developed at a large southeastern university. The project, called Florida State University's Student Resilience Project (hereinafter "Project"), is an interactive toolkit (strong.fsu.edu) designed to address academic resilience and build skills for developmental challenges of young adulthood. It was also created as a primary prevention approach (Eisenberg et al., 2018) in response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifying ACEs as an important public health issue (CDC, 2016) and that large-scale education efforts are necessary to inform adults about the negative adult health outcomes associated with the trauma from ACEs. The Project combines behavioral health promotion, trauma education, positive psychology concepts, and stress management techniques to help students increase coping skills and protective factors for resilience (Min et al., 2013). It was created on an easily accessible online platform that complements and refers students to existing campus counseling, advising, academic, and case management resources (Oehme et al., 2019; Ray et al., 2019a).

The project was developed over 12 months with participation from 10 different colleges within the university. Student researchers conducted interviews on campus asking questions such as, "If you had a younger brother or sister coming to campus, what would you want them to know about X?" identifying the most common responses to include in the online videos and audios. In addition, faculty and student researchers reviewed aggregate university health data on the top issues that students said interfered with their academic success, and received ongoing student input in beta testing for each project component.

After the launch of the site, a university-wide survey ($N = 1,971$) was conducted by University Health Services (in conjunction with the McBee survey) in 2019 that demonstrated extensive student awareness and engagement with the Project. Of the students surveyed, 57.9% had heard about it and 67.7% of those students had visited the site at least once. Of the students who visited the site, more than 60% indicated they had used at least one strategy or resource learned from the Project. Given this information, the research team sought to determine what material students viewed and their reactions to it. These factors were relevant to gauge their interest in, and willingness to engage in, the Project. In addition, demographic information was an important variable to researchers, considering prior reported differences in behaviors by gender, race, and sexual orientation. The Human Subjects Review board approved the use of the online surveys. All participation in the surveys were voluntary.

Project Components

The Project includes a variety of online activities, including video content, audio content, and interactive skill-building sections. Only freshmen and first-time on campus students were reminded through the university's "To-do" list to take the training at some point in the semester. However, if a student did not take the training, there was no penalty. (All abilities to register for classes remained intact and no repercussions of any kind resulted.) In order to have the reminder removed from their To-Do list, students only had to watch two videos, listen to any two Real Talks, and view one new Relaxation Skill lesson, even though the Project contains eleven videos, nine Real Talks, and five Relaxation Skill lessons in addition to over a dozen pages of recorded content and resource links and suggestions. Additionally, researchers never required students to take the training sequentially; they were encouraged to explore the content and find what was useful to them in any order. Any time a student completed the minimum of two videos, two audios, and one skill lesson, they were considered to have completed the training for purposes of obtaining a Certificate of Accomplishment on their virtual resilience "dashboard," which helps students track their new knowledge.

Video Content. There are two sets of videos in the Project. One set (“Introductory Videos”) includes “An Introduction to Trauma,” and “An Introduction to Resilience,” both under five minutes long. “An Introduction to Trauma” describes adverse childhood experiences -- or ACEs -- experienced by many youth. Using colorful animated characters to make the content more friendly and non-threatening, the video depicts how human brain development is negatively affected by stress hormones released when a child experiences significant adversity, such as physical abuse, neglect, and witnessing domestic violence. An “Introduction to Resilience” also reminds viewers that they have had many positive experiences and relationships throughout their lives and describes how these positive experiences can formulate the future building blocks of strength and resilience. Viewers are encouraged to think about the nurturing adults who inspired and encouraged them, and are then prompted to think about their own abilities and those challenges they have overcome.

Another section of videos is “What I Wish I Knew My First Semester in College,” which is comprised of eight short videos (less than two minutes each) of students describing challenges faced early in their college careers. These topical videos -- “Homesickness,” “Rejection,” “Breakups,” “Burnout,” “Decisions About Alcohol” and “Everyday Stressors” -- were designed to normalize struggles and challenges and to engender a sense of connection to peers shown in the videos. This section was also designed to show that the university cares about students and has built resources to help with common problems (Oehme et al., 2019; Ray et al., 2019b). Seeking to build on this earlier research, the Project content invites students to be and feel connected to the university to increase their perceived social support and campus connectedness and to build resilience (DeRosier et al., 2013). All video content uses familiar campus scenes, students wearing university-branded clothing, and references to people and services throughout the campus. Implementation researchers measured which videos were watched most frequently by students in order to discover which topics were most compelling to students overall as well as within each demographic group in our sample.

Audio Content. To provide variety and multiple modes of communication, an audio section was used to convey important health messages. Featuring TED-talk-style audio mini-lectures called “Real Talk” (Oehme et al., 2019), the Project offers students advice and resources on issues including “Building Frustration Tolerance,” “Dealing with Intrusive Thoughts,” “Space and Wellbeing” and others. These short audios offer advice and encouragement to students while normalizing the experience of adjusting to the challenges of young adulthood. For example, “Support for Students of Color” acknowledges societal prejudices and systemic bigotry. Researchers felt that this content was important to include because some minority students’ challenges are rooted in historical racism (Powell et al., 2016) and sexism (Fleming et al., 2014). Prior studies acknowledge that stigmatization from historic discrimination can give rise to a poor sense of belonging for minorities in college (Walton & Cohen, 2007). The audios encourage the use of the university’s resources yet also recognize that stigma associated with help seeking is still common (Powell et al., 2016); thus, the Project content specifically and frequently normalizes use of campus resources and to explain how to find and use them. An audio entitled, “Support for LGBTQ+ Students” was included in this section because of research indicating that LGBTQ+ students have higher exposure to violence, abuse and health disparities (Saewyc, 2011). Positive content for LGBTQ+ students included inclusive and normalizing content on coming out, finding a community, safe spaces, and identifying campus resources. Implementation researchers analyzed student usage of the audios to determine which topics were selected most frequently across the entire sample and within demographic subsets. There was special interest in examining whether the sections specifically supporting students of color and LGBTQ+ students would engage those students.

Skill Building Content. A section called “Learn New Skills,” acknowledges that common student struggles may be embedded in developmental, social and environmental challenges, and offers lessons on developing new skills to cope with them. Lessons on mindfulness, relaxation (e.g. “Relaxation Skills”), breathing techniques, reflective writing and learning from failure (e.g. “Spectacular Failure”) are included in this section. The design team chose to use humor as a device whenever possible to make content more palatable for men, who are likely to deflect health messages and may receive them better with humorous delivery (Hendricks & Janssen, 2018).

Additional Content on Services and Resources. The final section is called “Reach Out: Get What You Need,” which lists negative emotions or conditions that a student may experience and need additional help to resolve. When students click on an emotion, they are directed to a series of activities, services, and resources that might help them manage or relieve that feeling. The options include: (“If You Feel...”) down, tired, in a rut, overwhelmed, anxious, alone, and a variety of other negative conditions/emotions. Plain language using common terms was used as an attempt to be relatable to students, despite the frequent overlap in the experiences of each option.

Participants and Procedure

The launch of the full online project was October 1, 2018. In order to determine how students initially responded to the Student Resilience Project and used the content, this implementation study was conducted in the month of October, 2018 during the full launch of the Project. Human Subjects approval was granted by the university’s Institutional Review Board. Multiple avenues of recruitment were used to bring students to the Project website: student ambassadors, who received training on the content of the Project, presented to multiple classes about the Project and how to access it; a multi-media campaign announcing the Project included posters displayed at university events; slides about the project were placed on monitors in the lobbies of many campus buildings; and all freshmen and transfer students had an electronic posting reminding them to view the site on their academic “to do” lists.

Students who participated in the Project website were invited in the final section to participate in a research questionnaire about the Project. Students were not obligated or incentivized to complete the questionnaire. A prompt indicated a request for participation, and if interested, students clicked on a link taking them to a separate webpage featuring the research questionnaire. Once on the questionnaire page, participants indicated their informed consent, were excluded if they were under age 18, were told they could stop answering any time, and were presented with items that took about twenty minutes to answer. Students were asked to indicate their: (a) evaluation of the content/website, (b) perception of website credibility, (c) expectations of positive outcomes associated with following site recommendations/using resources described on the site, (d) intent to recommend the website to peers, (e) intent to return to the website, (f) visiting/viewing of particular website content/sections, and (g) demographics. The first five variables were measured using 7-point scales (e.g. 1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

A voluntary sample of 742 students, aged 18-22 ($M = 18.20$, $SD = .49$), completed the online questionnaire after viewing the website during that time period. Of these, 70.7% were female, and 29.3% were male. Respondents predominantly identified as white (79.3%), with 20.7% self-reporting other races (e.g., African-American, Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander). Additionally, 87.2% of respondents identified themselves as heterosexual, while 12.8% reported other sexual identities (e.g., gay male, lesbian, and bisexual). The majority, 93.1%, indicated that they were

freshmen on the main campus. 64% of respondents reported that they visited the website at least once, 16.4% visited twice, and 19.6% visited the site three times or more.

Results

Overall, the majority of survey respondents evaluated the website positively (scale of 1-7, with 7 representing the most positive evaluation or highest level of agreement with a Likert-type item/statement), indicating it helped them: learn about resources available on campus ($M = 6.00, SD = 1.12$); discover where those resources were located ($M = 5.99, SD = 1.11$); and take steps to get help with struggles/challenges that they faced on campus ($M = 5.91, SD = 1.14$). They also reported high levels of perceived website credibility ($M = 5.99, SD = 1.00$). Those credibility ratings were positively correlated with respondents' stated likelihood to return to the site ($r = .33, p < .01$) and stated likelihood of recommending the site to other students ($r = .56, p < .01$).

Similarly, respondents indicated high levels of positive outcome expectations associated with taking recommended actions ($M = 5.73, SD = 1.09$). More than 85% of respondents felt that if they or others followed the advice provided, they could probably deal effectively with challenges they experienced. More than 81% of respondents indicated that the resources and strategies described would be helpful to themselves and others. An overwhelming majority, more than 82%, reported that if they shared the website with other students it would probably help them (a) deal with struggles and challenges they would face at the university and (b) help those students feel better.

Additionally, respondents indicated they were highly likely to recommend the site to peers ($M = 5.21, SD = 1.43$) and reported a moderately high likelihood of returning to the site ($M = 4.76, SD = 1.56$).

To examine differences among specific groups of respondents, dichotomous variables were created to classify gender (male vs. female), race (white vs. non-white) and sexual identity (heterosexual vs. non-heterosexual). Independent samples *t*-tests were then conducted (See Table 1).

Table 1. Sample Descriptives Using Independent Samples *t*-test

	Gender					Race					Sexuality				
	Male		Female		<i>t</i> -test	White		Non-White		<i>t</i> -test	Heterosexual		Non-Heterosexual		<i>t</i> -test
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Site Evaluation	5.74	1.14	6.05	1.03	** <i>-3.36</i>	6.00	1.07	5.79	1.09	* <i>2.20</i>	5.96	1.08	6.06	.96	-.86
Return to Site	4.49	1.65	4.88	1.51	** <i>-2.94</i>	4.76	1.57	4.76	1.53	.04	4.77	1.57	4.63	1.55	.79
Recommend Site	4.94	1.46	5.33	1.39	<i>-3.36</i>	5.22	1.43	5.15	1.43	.55	5.25	1.42	5.03	1.50	1.35
Outcome Expectations	5.51	1.15	5.82	1.05	** <i>-3.35</i>	5.80	1.08	5.51	1.13	* <i>2.78</i>	5.74	1.09	5.73	1.04	.06

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. All scales range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Despite the overall positive reactions of participants to the Project, results indicated that women evaluated the website more positively ($M = 6.05, SD = 1.03$) than men ($M = 5.74, SD = 1.14$), $t(349.16) = -3.36, p < .01$. Similarly, women said they would be more likely to return to the website ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.51$) than men ($M = 4.49, SD = 1.65$), $t(352.11) = -2.94, p < .01$. Additionally, women reported more positive outcome expectations associated with taking recommended actions ($M = 5.82, SD = 1.05$) than men ($M = 5.51, SD = 1.15$), $t(355.81) = -3.35, p < .01$.

Regarding website evaluation and outcome expectations, results also indicated statistical differences between students who identified as white and those who did not. Whites reported more positive evaluations of the website ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.07$) than non-whites ($M = 5.79$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(703) = 2.20$, $p < .05$. Additionally, whites indicated more positive outcome expectations ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.08$) than non-whites ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.13$), $t(704) = 2.78$, $p < .05$.

There were no significant differences for any of the above responses/variables based on sexual identity (See Table 1).

Content Selection. With respect to overall content selection, the most frequently selected/visited sections were: (1) the “Introduction to Trauma and Resilience” video (93.3% of respondents selected/visited); (2) the “What I Wish I Knew” section of videos from other students talking about their challenges (87.5% of respondents), (3) the “Learn New Skills” section (81.1% of respondents), (4) the “Real Talk” audio section (80.8% of respondents), and; (5) “Reach Out” (64.9%). See Table 2, which lists the most frequently selected/visited content selections overall, broken down by demographics.

Table 2. Content Selections by Demographics

Content Selections	Total % of Respondent	% Within Gender		% Within Race		% Within Sexuality	
		Male	Female	White	Non- White	Heterosexual	Non- Heterosexual
Trauma & Resilience	93.3	95.7%	95.4%	95.4%	96.6%	95.9%	93.5%
What I Wish I Knew	87.5	85.6%	89.9%	86.4%	97.2%	88.8%	89.1%
Everyday Stressors	20.6	61.7%	64.7%	63.4%	65%	64.6%	57.8%
Rejection	14%	41.5%	43.9%	44.7%	37.8%	42.5%	47%
Homesickness	13%	33.5%	42.9%	41.1%	37.1%	39.1%	50.6%
Learn New Skills	81.1	76.4%	83.9%	80.9%	84.1%	82.2%	79.3%
Relaxation Skills	31.7	57.1%	53.5%	55.5%	50%	54.6%	54.7%
Spectacular Failure	19.6	39.9%	31.6%	35.3%	27%	35.3%	24%
Yoga	18.8	17.2%	38%	33.6%	26.2%	33.2%	25.3%
Real Talk	80.8	77.4%	83.7%	80.7%	85.5%	82.4%	80.4%
Space & Wellbeing	17.3	40.5%	43.7%	46%	31.5%	44.4%	32%
Building Frustration	14.9	45.2%	33.3%	39.6%	25.4%	38.7%	24%
Intrusive Thoughts	14.1	25%	37.9%	36.6%	27.7%	35.4%	30.7%
Reach Out	64.9	58.7%	67.5%	63.9%	66.9%	64.7%	68.5%
“...Overwhelmed”	12.4%	40.5%	43.2%	43.8%	40%	43.3%	34.4%
“...Tired” “...Anxious”	10.5%	37.1%	35.7%	37.4%	34%	39%	20.3%
	10.3%	30.2%	36.6%	37.6%	27%	35.2%	37.5%

Among respondents who visited the “What I Wish I Knew” section, the three videos most frequently selected/viewed were: (1) “Everyday Stressors” (20.6% of respondents); (2) “Rejection” (14% of respondents), and; (3) “Homesickness” (13% of respondents). Considering the relationship between demographic factors and video selection, the most frequently viewed video, “Everyday Stressors” was viewed frequently by both genders (men = 61.7%; women = 64.7%), all races (white =

63.4%; non-white = 65%) and respondents with differing sexual identities (heterosexual = 64.6%; non-heterosexual = 57.8%). Another video worth noting in this section, is “Breakups,” which featured a gay main character. That video was viewed by 42.2% of non-heterosexuals as compared to 32.5% of heterosexuals. Additionally, 50.6% of non-heterosexuals selected to view the “Homesickness” video, compared to 39.1% of heterosexuals.

In the “Learn New Skills” section the top three topics selected/accessed were: (1) “Relaxation Skills” (31.7% of respondents accessed); (2) “Spectacular Failure,” which depicts well known personalities who experienced failure before becoming successful (19.6% of respondents), and; (3) Yoga (18.8% of respondents). In particular, the “Relaxation Skills” content was accessed by the majority of both genders (men = 57.1%, women = 53.5%), all races (white = 55.5%; non-white = 50.0%), and respondents with differing sexual identities (heterosexual = 54.6%; non-heterosexual = 54.7%).

The three most frequently selected audios files in the “Real Talk” section were: (1) “Space and Wellbeing” (17.3% of respondents); (2) “Building Frustration Tolerance” (14.9% of respondents), and; (3) “Calming Intrusive Thoughts” (14.1% of respondents).

The top three resources clicked on in the “Reach Out” section were: (1) “If you feel overwhelmed...” (12.4% of respondents); (2) “If you are tired...” (10.5% of respondents) and; (3) “If you feel anxious...” (10.3% of respondents). These choices correspond closely to concerns listed by students in the 2017 Healthy Campus Report, in which the top three impediments identified by students were stress, anxiety, and sleep (Florida State University Healthy Campus, 2017).

Some content within varying sections appealed more to particular subgroups of students. For example, in the “Real Talk” section 46.7% of non-heterosexuals listened to an audio titled, “Support for LGBTQ+ Students,” compared to only 8% of heterosexuals. Overall, this was the most frequently selected audio file among non-heterosexual participants. Consistent with literature suggesting higher rates of depression in LGBTQ+ populations (Saewyc, 2011), non-heterosexual students sought out resources on depression, with the audio selection “The Truth About Depression” (37.3%) the second most frequently selected audio file among this group, and in the “Reach Out” section, where 45.3% of non-heterosexual respondents accessed the resources for depression, compared to 28.1% of heterosexual respondents. An audio titled “Support for Students of Color” was the most frequently selected audio file among participants who identify as non-white (54.6%), as compared to whites (13.5%). In the same section, more women listened to the “Calming Intrusive Thoughts” audio (37.9%) than men (25%).

Discussion

The data from this implementation study provide useful information to the Project team, as well as to other institutions of higher learning that wish to develop and launch campus resilience projects. Findings indicate that, overall, users of all genders, races, and sexual identities reported very high rates of trust in the Project site and confidence that the resources and problem-solving strategies provided would help them overcome challenges that might arise during their time at the university. Although the program is new, the initial sample of student participants indicates that students who participated in the program/visited the site found the website credible -- a key to the potential long-term viability of the training. Student perception of credibility of the site is a minimum requirement for any effective student training. It may be that the “look and feel” of the site (colorful, animation-filled, pop-art style) that was chosen by the student members of the design team that ultimately increased student’s acceptance of the site, but cost concerns prohibited the team’s ability to build an online comparison group with a style more similar to the university’s (traditional) website to test that hypothesis.

The large majority (82%) of students expressing confidence in the university's resources suggests a strong likelihood that these students may reach out when they need assistance. Essential to the design of the program is the expectation that students will return to it when they need to build the skills highlighted. About one third of students reported that they used the program more than once within a short time period, which may provide additional evidence of their positive impressions of the content usefulness. It will be important for researchers to continue to ask students if they continue to use the site, and collect data on what students view.

Having students recommend the site to others is an essential goal of the Project's dissemination plan. Peer-to-peer assistance is a core element of the design, reflecting the hope that students will share information they have learned. The responses which indicate that students are likely to recommend the site to their peers, along with the high rates of users who reported that they believe the site would help others deal with struggles and feel better, suggests the possibility of long term program efficacy. Peers may be the first to notice mental health concerns of friends, roommates, classmates, or romantic partners. The data suggest that some students may feel empowered to help friends; the project also provides language to discuss certain sensitive but important topics (suicide prevention is called "When You're Worried About a Friend") and provides an information hub to identify resources to address them. Still, it should be noted that dissemination of the Project itself -- motivating students to log in -- will be a continuing long-term effort, because of the thousands of messages on so many aspects of college life that students routinely receive.

Characters, animation, and photos in the project reflect a racially, ethnically, and otherwise diverse group to encourage students to feel that the Project is relevant to them. The data reflect a positive response to the Project across all groups. Nonetheless, and consistent with prior research on female help-seeking, women stated they were more likely to return to the website than men, although both genders regarded the site positively. In the future, more site content directed expressly to men may increase their likelihood of returning to the site. Evidence in project data that whites report more positive evaluations of the website than non-whites, consistent with prior studies, may reflect the need for more content directed at non-whites, and/or it may support findings that non-whites are less likely to seek help for mental health issues. Currently the website includes multiple peer-to-peer narratives featuring non-white students and a Real Talk section (audio files in Ted-Talk-style) highlighting "Support for Students of Color." In addition, many of the graphics feature non-white students. Consistent with the iterative nature of the project (Oehme et al., 2018; Ray et al., 2019a), the design team will add more non-whites in elements of the project; promote the project more frequently among groups such as the Black Student Union; and ensure that student resilience "ambassadors" include ample numbers of non-white students.

Although national data suggests that about 3.5% of the adult population identify as LGBT, (Gates, 2011) a much larger percentage of respondents in the student sample identified themselves as other than heterosexual (12.6%). If students who identified as "questioning" their sexual identity are not included in the sample, then about 11.9% of students in the sample identify as something other than heterosexual. This is consistent with the Kann 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Study data, finding 85.4% of high school students identify as heterosexual, 2.4% gay or lesbian, 8% bisexual, and 4.2% unsure (Kann et al., 2018). The finding that the Project was perceived positively by those who identified as heterosexual and those who did not provides possible support for the design team's inclusion of prominent materials for sexual minorities. For example, the peer-to-peer narrative about romantic breakups features a gay man who breaks up with his boyfriend, and a Real Talk includes content regarding "Support for LGBTQ+ Students." The campus Pride Student Union, a resource for LGBTQ+ students, is one resource that students are encouraged to check out after viewing the video.

Resources for a broad range of students are offered by many institutions of higher learning (Desrochers et al., 2010); thus, it is essential that students know how to obtain these services. New students receive large amounts of information at orientation, and information about services is routinely presented in the university's formal website. The Project complements and does not replace these outlets; it integrates the resources in a central location, increasing the likelihood that students will be able to access them and learn new skills. As other institutions of higher learning develop their own resilience materials (Harvard University, 2018), the sharing of information about how students receive such information will help develop the knowledge base about resilience implementation science. Active project evaluation is a multi-step process that includes investigation of both implementation (process) and subsequent outcome evaluation.

Limitations

There was no control group in the implementation study because of fiscal constraints, so researchers do not know if a traditional university website offering the same information would be regarded as highly as the Project site. In addition, the study focused on undergraduate students; the data offer no evidence regarding graduate students, although future Project content is planned for their unique needs. Lastly, the current project only examined the implementation of the Project and students' impressions and use of it. Future research will study outcomes with a comparison group of students who have not participated in the online Project.

Conclusion

This study examines the initial data set of students' specific use of and impressions about a new college student resilience project. Studying a comparison group of students who did not view the Project to discover differences with regard to their use of university resources, perceptions of self-efficacy to solve problems, and perceptions of the university's ability to help them respond to common challenges will be useful for contextualizing the results of this study. In addition, as this Project continues into the future, the development of outcome research approaches to test its components will be important. In closing, it is essential that university interventions that seek to address student problems at the cohort scale should be evaluated and considered by higher education leadership. There is no reason to believe that college student health and wellness will spontaneously improve over the years ahead without intentional, effective, and scalable health and behavioral health programming.

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Higher Education Administrators Attaining Excellence

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Context

It is imperative for higher education administrators to seek and apply information that will increase their productivity and enhance the effectiveness of those with whom they work. Colleges and Universities are in the era of accountability in the form of *performance indicators* such as graduation rates (including the time to attain a degree), student learning measures, and satisfaction measures of students' higher education experiences (Rose, Miller, & Kacirek, 2016).

Many public colleges and universities have experienced increased competition for state taxpayers' dollars with health, economic, and social agencies. Even before the impact of Covid-19, numerous state colleges and universities received lower state funding from one fiscal year to the next, though operational costs escalated. Revenues and expenditures have also been problematic for private institutions. Many higher education institutions have felt the need to increase students' tuition and fees, make staff layoffs, and not fill "open" positions. The Covid-19 environment has exasperated these factors.

Higher education administrators work in environments where institutional change is needed to retain competitiveness and continued existence in some cases (Spinelli, 2016). Higher education administrators must continuously review what they are doing to give their best possible performances and to enhance the productivity of those they supervise. They must "create work environments that encourage and empower all employees to contribute to devising and implementing creative solutions to the challenges facing higher education today and tomorrow" (Bloom & McClellan, 2016, p. 195).

This article briefly reviews positive psychology attributes for higher education administrators to consider when determining how to enhance their performance and that of others with whom they interact. The concepts of mindfulness and mindset are explored to furnish higher education administrators with reference points to reflect on how they view themselves and others in the context of improving productivity for all. The concept of humility is presented to provide higher education administrators with points for self-reflection and assessing how their behaviors can enhance their productivity and the accomplishments of others.

Basic Principles of Positive Psychology¹

The positive psychology movement offers higher education administrators reference points for reflecting on how they perceive themselves and work with staff and other stakeholders to create the most effective culture and climate for productivity. According to Seligman (2011), who coined the term in 1998, positive psychology is the scientific study of the positive aspects of the human experience. It examines the strengths that enable people to thrive and reach full potential both at work and in their personal lives. Positive psychology focuses on the well-being, satisfaction, and positive aspects of mental health, as opposed to psychology that has traditionally emphasized on negative factors such as

weaknesses and mental illnesses of people (Bartz, 2017). Positive psychology fosters the desired collegial work atmosphere needed in higher education institutions (Bryman, 2007).

Significant aspects of positive psychology applicable to higher education administrators are: (a) embracing the challenges of the job with a passion and being energized to meet them successfully; (b) learning from setbacks and adversities and not being discouraged by them; (c) engaging staff and other stakeholders in supporting institutional goals and taking actions to accomplish them; (d) viewing staff and other stakeholders as the institution's primary asset for improving productivity and helping them to be their best; (e) focusing on building positive and meaningful relationships with all of the institution's stakeholders; (f) finding fulfillment and excitement in being creative to solve problems and being more productive on the job; and (g) looking beyond themselves to help staff and others find satisfaction and enjoyment in their work, which will ultimately benefit the institution and the students it serves (Seligman, 2011; Seligman, 2002; Grenville-Cleave, 2012).

Mindfulness and Mindset

Mindfulness². Mindfulness means that higher education administrators are consciously focusing on being aware of what others are likely thinking and feeling in given situations, as well as analyzing their thoughts before speaking or taking action. Sometimes higher education administrators are on *automatic pilot* and not thinking much about others and all the factors that give context to a situation. Mindfulness is performing effectively *in the moment* by processing what others say, understanding their likely motives, and focusing on what the higher education administrator wants to accomplish in any specific situation.

Meditation is also a part of mindfulness. The modern-day multitasking and digitally-connected higher education administrator occasionally needs to call time out, clear the mind, and focus attention on one thing at a time through meditation. Meditation has moved beyond the yoga mat into offices or any quiet place. It emphasizes higher education administrators reducing stress and anxiety through relaxation. Meditation focuses upon thinking clearly about a specific problem or issue and removing *clutterful noise* from a multitude of issues out of the brain.

Mascarelli (2017) suggests newcomers use these steps to meditation: (a) find a quiet place and schedule a regular time; (b) identify what motivates you to focus on today's meditation; (c) focus on a single issue at a time; (d) although numerous thoughts may enter your mind, continue to focus on what you set out as your point of concentration; (e) relax, feel comfortable, and do not self-judge; (f) be patient; and (g) start with short sessions of several minutes and build up to extended time as one's schedule permits.

Mindset³. Higher education administrators can believe that factors such as intelligence and personality are unchangeable (fixed mindset) or think that these factors can be nurtured and developed (growth mindset) for professional and personal enhancement (Dweck, 2016). This represents the proverbial *Nature vs. Nurture* debate that has been discussed for centuries. Both impact higher education administrators, but the growth mindset will likely enhance their expertise, performance, and job satisfaction (Bartz, 2016).

Higher education administrators challenging themselves to develop existing attributes and being willing to put forth the needed effort is key to maximizing the growth mindset. Purposefully engaging in developmental activities indicative of the growth mindset is key to higher education administrators maximizing potential and enhancing their achievements—and making significant contributions to the institution's vision and mission.

To nurture the growth mindset, higher education administrators need to focus on: (a) having purpose drive their work; (b) dealing head-on with deficiencies instead of hiding from them; (c) viewing setbacks as learning opportunities for future successes; (d) viewing staff members and other stakeholders as collaborators and stressing the team approach; (e) nurturing a burning desire to keep learning new knowledge and skills; (f) finding inspiration from successes of others and learning from them; (g) understanding that everyone can change and grow through passion, effort, application, and experience; (h) being ready to take risks, confront challenges, and keep working to get better, even when feeling distressed; and (i) when relationships with people in the work environment go wrong, viewing these as learning experiences and identifying positive actions for future relationship-building.

Examples of Dweck’s Mindset – Fixed vs. Growth	
FIXED	GROWTH
ability is static	ability can be developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● avoids challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● embraces challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● gives up easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● persists against obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sees effort as fruitless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sees effort as necessary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ignores useful criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● learns from criticism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is threatened by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is inspired by others’ success

Dweck (2016) cautions that higher education administrators can inadvertently fall into the *false growth mindset* via two misunderstandings: (1) identifying attributes they like about themselves and calling them collectively a growth mindset (if these attributes are, in fact, indicative of a fixed mindset and adhering to them is counterproductive to acquiring a growth mindset) and (2) believing that the growth mindset for higher education administrators is solely about effort and praising effort.

Higher education administrators putting more effort into present fixed mindset attributes will not lead to a growth mindset. New strategies are needed. Dweck (2106) reminds us that, simply put, “growth mindset is about believing people can develop their abilities” (p. 214-215).

The Arbinger Institute (2016) also provides an excellent source for the application of mindset by higher education administrators through the concepts of inward and outward mindsets. The outward mindset higher education administrator perceives the efforts in work completed by other individuals and teams as crucially essential and meaningful. The higher education administrator demonstrating an outward mindset provides positive feedback through praise and recognition to other individuals in the work setting.

The outward mindset is represented by the higher education administrator positively assisting people in helping them improve and effectively meet work challenges that may be difficult for them. *Interpersonal sensitivity* in the form of tact, perceptiveness, and the ability to maintain positive relationships is crucial to an effective outward mindset (Witt/Kieffer, 2013). “Thinking of yourself less and focusing on others” is an essential attribute of the outward mindset as is “promoting the success of others” (Reille, 2019, p. 1; Coll, 2016, p. 2). Application of the outward mindset results in higher education administrators being regenerated through the positive feelings received from those with whom they work.

The inward mindset higher education administrator is egotistical, self-centered, and has little concern for others in the work environment. The inward mindset leader has very little—or no—consideration of the wants, needs, and psychological support of others with whom he/she works. Figure 1 represents a comparison between the inward and outward mindsets as applied to higher education administrators.

Figure 1. Comparing inward and outward mindsets for higher education administrators toward others

Inward	Outward
1. <i>Strives to control people.</i>	1. <i>Strives to cause others to be fully responsible and engaged in work.</i>
2. <i>Often blames others when things go wrong.</i>	2. <i>Takes responsibility for actions of oneself in the work environment.</i>
3. <i>Is narcissistic.</i>	3. <i>Displays modesty toward others.</i>
4. <i>Consistently defends one’s position.</i>	4. <i>Works collaboratively with others to solicit their opinions and collectively develop the best solutions for problems.</i>
5. <i>Focuses on protecting oneself in interactions with others.</i>	5. <i>Focuses on building positive relationships with and among people in interactions with others.</i>
6. <i>Uses behaviors that sometimes try to manipulate others in an attempt to improve one’s image.</i>	6. <i>Strives to facilitate “committed behaviors” collectively with others to improve work produced and achieve objectives.</i>
7. <i>Shows minimal regard for how to create “collective results” among others.</i>	7. <i>Is motivated about how to work with others collaboratively and for others to collaborate with each other and oneself.</i>
8. <i>Views others in a context as to how they can help oneself achieve goals.</i>	8. <i>Focuses on the needs and challenges of others that foster a work environment that prompts individual and team cooperation.</i>
9. <i>Assumes that to simply change one’s behavior is the best way to enhance work productivity with others.</i>	9. <i>Understands changing how oneself views the assets of others beneficial to everyone in comparison to merely changing one’s behaviors toward others.</i>
10. <i>Focuses on how to make oneself “look good” for work produced, even at the expense of others</i>	10. <i>Sees, thinks, and works on how to improve job performance through collaboration with others that incorporates their needs and wants, and gains them recognition</i>
11. <i>Often creates competition between others and causes them to work independently of each other</i>	11. <i>Focuses on other staff members as an entity having a collective belief of working with each other for the</i>

Inward	Outward
<p>12. <i>Focuses mainly on the job responsibilities of oneself.</i></p> <p>13. <i>Focuses on getting the work “out the door” with little identity for benefits.</i></p> <p>14. <i>Is inclined to step in, take over, and direct the work of others when things go wrong.</i></p> <p>15. <i>Creates conflict that keeps people embattled with each other (divide and conquer for control).</i></p> <p>16. <i>Focuses solely on personal and professional goals and behaviors to protect and advance oneself.</i></p> <p>17. <i>Advances one’s agenda at the expense of others.</i></p> <p>18. <i>Identifies what can be taken from others to achieve objectives for oneself.</i></p> <p>19. <i>Frequently tries to control the behavior of others for self-benefit.</i></p>	<p>common good of the work unit and organization.</p> <p>12. <i>Supports others in identifying their interests and being motivated to successfully achieve what they need for the betterment of the work unit and organization.</i></p> <p>13. <i>Focuses on the meaning and purposefulness of the work and the positive impact it can have on the work unit and organization.</i></p> <p>14. <i>Understands and helps others to do so, regarding working together when things go wrong.</i></p> <p>15. <i>Focuses on preventing and resolving conflict among others and self.</i></p> <p>16. <i>Focuses on the goals of the work unit and organization, and objectives and behaviors that take others into consideration.</i></p> <p>17. <i>Focuses on working together with others for “collective” results to benefit the work unit and organization.</i></p> <p>18. <i>Identifies what can be given to help others successfully achieve the work objectives.</i></p> <p>19. <i>Strives to empower others to be their best.</i></p> <p>(Bartz, Thompson, & Rice, 2017)</p>

Humility⁴

“Humility allows us to strip away our ego, to suppress the need to be visibly right at every turn, and to take the longer view”
(Davis, 2017, p. 213).

Humility is the capacity of higher education administrators to refrain from putting themselves before others, exercise acute self-awareness, accept their imperfections, and not be driven to be dominant over their colleagues, staff members whom they supervise, and other stakeholders (Stillman, 2014). Humility is an essential attribute for higher education administrators because: (a) it keeps them from being overconfident, which can cause limited input from others; (b) it keeps them from blindly pursuing the wrong course of action because they believe they are always right; and (c) it creates an

environment in which colleagues, staff members, and other stakeholders are more motivated to be innovative and produce high-quality work. *Authentic* humility by higher education administrators is beneficial to themselves as well as those with whom they interact.

Arrogance—the opposite of humility—is a huge *turn-off* to those supervised by higher education administrators, as well as their colleagues and superordinates (Silverman, Johnson, McConnell, & Carr, 2004). Warren (2017, p. 199) depicts humility and arrogance as:



No one likes a *know-it-all*. The arrogant, know-it-all higher education administrator impedes the performance of those supervised and crushes many innovative and creative ideas that contribute to a more productive work environment. As Myatt (2010) notes, "I would much rather listen to the self-deprecating humor of a confident person [higher education administrator] making fun of themselves than the mean-spirited attacks of an arrogant person [higher education administrator] waged at someone else's expense. More importantly, I would much rather work for, or alongside of, the understated than the overstated" (p. 1).

Humility is akin to higher education administrators "displaying a quiet confidence" (Myatt, 2010, p. 1). Those supervised by higher education administrators often crave positive recognition and appreciation for the work that they perform. Humility allows higher education administrators to put their egos aside and willingly and authentically give credit to staff members for their work accomplishments. As Myatt (2010) notes, "Simply put, humble leaders [higher education administrators] recognize and value the contributions of others in lieu of their self-promotion" (p. 1).

Humility allows higher education administrators to foster teamwork and meaningfully engage staff members to gain their insights and ideas, which will optimize job satisfaction and staff retention. Higher education administrators are most effective when the work climate epitomizes a *oneness* between them and the staff members being supervised. Humility prompts higher education administrators to be team players and arouses them to openly acknowledge that they are not the *know all* of the good ideas and do not always have the "correct answers." Effective application of humility by higher education administrators improves their performance, as well as the performance of others, resulting in higher quality work that benefits the institution and ultimately the students.

Prime and Salib (2014) advocate that the best higher education leaders are humble ones. They emphasize that humility is a crucial leadership factor in creating situations in which staff members—and other stakeholders from different demographic backgrounds—feel included in the work environment. As a result, they are more at ease, more confident, and more likely to work harder to accomplish the goals of the work unit and institution.

Through the effective application of humility, higher education administrators create a work environment that is centered on a top priority of helping staff members *be their best*. This contrasts with narcissistic and self-centered higher education administrators who put themselves first. Higher education administrators utilizing humility understand that "Leadership is not about what we can get them to do for us. It's about what we can give back to the team" (Fridman, 2017, p. 1). Dalio (2017) couples humility with the attribute of "mental maps." He observes that:

“Some people are good at knowing what to do on their own; they have good mental maps. Similarly, some people are more humble and open-minded than others. Humility can be even more valuable than having good mental maps if it leads you [higher education administrators] to seek out better answers than you could come up with on your own. Having both open-minded and good mental maps is the most powerful of all” (p. 180).

Humility is a vital part of the servant leadership approach. Servant leaders invert the traditional power-distance hierarchy by displaying an attitude of service to their team members. When higher education administrators use humility in the context of a servant leader approach, they stimulate greater staff empowerment and engagement which results in a better group and team productivity for the institution (Warren, 2017).

Blanchard (2010) suggests that sometimes higher education administrators need to “reign in” their egos that often represent *false pride*. He indicates that the perfect antidote for the overly egotistical leader is humility (p. 275). Blanchard (2010) recommends that higher education administrators understand the concept of *servant leader* since humility is engrained in this leadership style. Higher education administrators that authentically possess humility generally have solid self-esteem and are even willing to see the humor in their mistakes.

Kouzes and Posner (2012) caution that higher education administrators should not “get infected with the disease of arrogance and pride, becoming bloated with an exaggerated sense of self and pursuing one’s own end” (p. 340). They advocate the antidote for this infectious disease of arrogance and pride is humility. Kouzes and Posner (2012) further note that higher education administrators cannot do all the work alone and, through the use of humility, can motivate staff and other stakeholders to identify with the work to be done—and get it done effectively.

It is also essential for higher education administrators to regularly praise staff members, colleagues, and other stakeholders for their work accomplishments. Kouzes and Posner (2012) indicate that higher education administrators adhering to the effective use of humility utilize self-efficacy, humor, deep listening to those around them, and give general and sincere credit to others. They also state that higher education administrators need to have the confidence and courage to utilize humility by admitting that they are not always right and cannot anticipate every possible outcome or solve every problem by themselves. Higher education administrators displaying humility also willingly admit when they make mistakes, are honest with themselves about mistakes and continuously focus on having a realistic understanding of their shortcomings.

Modesty is an attribute that complements humility. Modesty and humility are a part of *agreeableness*, which is one of the factors in the Five Factor Model of Personality (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Modesty prompts higher education administrators to be unpretentious and not regard themselves as unique or better than those with whom they interact. Modesty causes higher education administrators to quickly share successes and accomplishments bestowed upon them with their staff members, colleagues, and other stakeholders who have significantly contributed to those accomplishments. In this context, the leader quickly shifts attention from self to team members (Seligman, 2002).

Ou’s (2011) identification of humility descriptors applicable to higher education administrators is an excellent summary: (a) accurate self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses, (b) propensity to place self in a realistic perspective to the situation and to others, (c) openness, (d) acknowledgment of weaknesses and what one does not know, (e) appreciation of the attributes of others, (f) low self-focus, (g) honest self-reflection, (h) acknowledgment of imperfections, (i) open-mindedness, and (j) eagerness to improve (p. 11).

Closing Thoughts

Accountability in the form of performance indicators and judicious spending of funds means that higher education administrators must continuously seek an edge to improve their productivity and that of those with whom they work. The Covid-19 environment also presents a plethora of productivity challenges. Positive psychology provides a platform from which higher education administrators can operate that is likely to enhance their effectiveness and productivity, as well as the effectiveness and productivity of their staff members. The principles of mindfulness and mindset furnish higher education administrators with reference points to reflect on how they view themselves and others in the context of maximizing productivity and job satisfaction. The concept of humility provides higher education administrators with reference points to conduct self-assessments of how they might modify their behaviors to work more productively with others. Lastly, as Nelson (2017) notes: “Anyone who wishes to get better at a skill or task must develop and refine it over a period [of time]” (p. 5).

Footnotes

¹Based in part on Bartz, D.E. (2017). Applying psychology to school administrators. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 4(8), 1-13.

²Based in part on Bartz, D.E. (2017). Applying psychology to school administrators. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 4(8), 1-13.

³Based in part on Bartz, D.E. (2017). Managers using positive psychology to maximize productivity and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 8(8), 1-7; Bartz, D.E. (2019). Grit, emotional intelligence, and mindset: Three skill sets for fostering career advancement for organization members. *International Journal of Education and Human Developments*, 5(1), 1-6.

⁴Based in part on Bartz, D.E. & Bartz, D.T. (2017). Humility, patience, passion, and mindset: Attributes of the effective manager. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 8(11), 1-6.

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Leading with Mind and Heart: Managing Uncertainty and Change as a New Leader

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In higher education, faculty often find themselves in leadership roles with little or no prior management experience (Rowley & Sherman, 2006). They might have had limited professional development or training opportunities related to the topic of leadership as it is not always prioritized by higher education institutions (Scott et al., 2008). The transition from being a faculty member to becoming a new leader might also be further complicated when one finds oneself in a new leadership role during a time of acute uncertainty and change (Schoemaker et al., 2013). Such scenarios require the development and enactment of context specific leadership strategies over an accelerated time frame; however, with lack of appropriate scaffolding, such challenges may pose unique threats to one's emerging sense of self-efficacy as a new leader.

The purpose of this article is to candidly describe and explore the implications of what it means to be a new leader during a time of uncertainty and change. Past research has shown that while elements of leadership might span across an array of activities, being a highly successful researcher or gifted classroom teacher does not necessarily make for a successful academic leader (Morris & Laipple, 2015). The perceived amount of institutional support one receives while undergoing such a professional role transition is a critical predictor of the time needed to become confident and proficient in a new job (Pinder & Schroeder, 1987). In this article, I will draw upon multiple leadership perspectives as well as my own professional experiences in order to suggest strategies that new leaders might implement in their respective professional roles. I will also provide concrete suggestions for higher education institutions on the types of professional development that might help university faculty proactively, rather than reactively, make the successful transition to a leadership role during times of uncertainty and change.

Being a New Leader During a Time of Uncertainty and Change: A True Story

I have been an associate dean in a small academic unit at a public university for the last three and a half years. Prior to this position, I served as the director of our unit's accreditation efforts for about five years. I always vividly recall the day that I made the decision to take on an administrative role. I had been tenured for about a year and was seeking a new professional challenge. I was approached by one of our former deans about the possibility of either becoming the next department chairperson in our Education department or the coordinator of our unit's accreditation efforts. "You have your pick." she said to me. "Why don't you and M (another senior colleague) sit down and figure out who wants to do what and let me know." My colleague and I spoke, agreed upon a course of action, and reported back to our dean. Shortly after, we attended our next department meeting where we volunteered for each of the new vacant positions, much to the relief of our other faculty colleagues who had little or no interest in making the journey into higher education administration. They wished to remain focused on their teaching, scholarship and service pursuits.

Learning on the Job

The transition occurred so quickly. I spent the summer before the start of the next academic year embarking on a scholarly quest to learn as much as I could about the topic of accreditation. I read numerous articles, books, pored over websites, and spoke with colleagues from other higher education institutions who had some experiences with the topic. I was excited about having a new professional challenge and had grown tired of teaching the same classes each semester. Unbeknownst to me, having a Ph.D. from a reputable program, an established teaching record and program of research, numerous leadership roles on key university committees, and multiple faculty recognition awards would not adequately prepare me for the challenges inherent in transitioning to a leadership role during a time when the stakes were high. All teacher education units in the state of Michigan had been mandated to receive national accreditation within the next five years otherwise they were in danger of being shut down. I was now one of the key individuals in charge of making sure that that would not happen. In addition to having this pressure filled charge, I was working for a new dean (our former dean had stepped down) and with a new Education department chairperson. This was essentially a new leadership experience for all of us.

For our unit's accreditation, we were required to collect and analyze a minimum of three cycles of unit and program level assessment data. By the time of our site visit, we were expected to have an established system for collecting and maintaining data across our seventeen academic programs. My first task was to find out how and where my colleagues were currently housing their assessment data since we did not have a centralized electronic system in place yet. While many of my colleagues had diligently created their own systems for housing assessment data, others looked at me blankly when I asked them about their data. "What do you mean by key assessments? Can you please explain?" one colleague repeatedly asked. Yet another colleague scoffed when I mentioned the need to collect assessment data and plainly stated that we should not let an accrediting body tell us how to run our programs. Another colleague regrettably revealed that they had lost a few semesters of data when a colleague in her program area had left the university. My search for assessment data took me to locked offices in previously unexplored corners of the department. The process was challenging and stressful.

As a new leader, I not only felt that we were in a state of change, but also, possible crisis. How many "areas for improvement" would the accrediting body identify and tolerate before they would conclude that we were not capable of being accredited? Would this raise red flags for our university administration and jeopardize the existence of our unit, which had already been fragile and a bit uncertain in recent years due to several changes in leadership? Despite my best efforts to lead proactively, I found myself behaving reactively. I was not able to carve out the time and space to develop basic leadership competencies that would help me be successful in my role because I was literally learning on the job. This experience of learning on the job, however, was amplified in terms of speed, level of expectation, and pressure to achieve results. I would have likened my new professional role to learning on the job at a fast food restaurant during the busy lunch hour. I felt that I had no choice but to jump in, figure out quickly what needed to be done, and just run with it, hoping that I did not make anyone angry or resentful. And so I did, much to the chagrin of some of my faculty colleagues who sought a more inclusive and thoughtful approach.

Leading during a time of change is "not a luxury, but a strategic necessity for today's universities" (Fulmer et al., 2000, p. 59). It involves an intricate set of competencies that new leaders must assume if they are to successfully lead an organization while adapting to new demands and challenges. Furthermore, it is critical that in this process, they not only discover how to quickly respond to crisis events, but also learn how to proactively plan for and engage in reflective learning about their

experiences (James & Wooten, 2010, p. 55). In “Servant Leadership for Higher Education”, Wheeler (2012) describes the administrator role as being comparable to a fire fighter: “...administrators are so busy putting out fires that they don’t have time for important leadership activities such as reflection, visioning, planning, and investing in others development.” (p. 9). Under stressful and sometimes turbulent professional circumstances, many new leaders might also find it challenging to be effective due to stress and deep uncertainty (Coates, 2012; Kahneman, 2011). Developing institutional capacity to support and develop leaders so that they are comfortable and capable of handling such complexity is essential if we wish to retain these individuals in their professional roles.

I had been a faculty member at my institution for seven years prior to assuming an administrative role. I was fortunate to know my colleagues quite well although the content of my professional role had changed dramatically and produced a steep learning curve in this transition. We became successfully accredited when I was on sabbatical and I remember receiving many kind messages from my colleagues, thanking me for stepping up to the plate and helping us achieve this challenging goal.

Becoming a Pillar of Stability

I too felt rewarded, as I had just started a one semester sabbatical; however, I only had a few days to truly enjoy and savor this news when I received an urgent phone call from my dean. While we had been successfully accredited, he had just learned that we were now in “corrective action” with our state’s department of education mainly due to low test scores in several of our academic programs. If we did not act immediately and show improvements in our test scores within the year we could face some detrimental consequences. We suddenly found ourselves in a fragile place again, and thoughts about necessary next steps preoccupied my mind during the end of my sabbatical.

There are times when a new leader might feel compelled to act quickly, even though he or she might benefit from having more time to develop a more thoughtful approach to a situation. When I came back from my sabbatical and assumed the role of associate dean shortly thereafter, my dean asked me to be in charge of helping us address our corrective action status. I had examined test scores in each of our programs quite closely in my former role, but now it was becoming apparent that the analysis of test scores needed to be deeper and more detailed. As I pored over sub-score data over an extended period of time I was able to identify potential areas for improvement in several of our programs. Some of my faculty colleagues had routinely engaged in this level of critical analysis, while others had not at all. In all fairness, faculty at a relatively small institution wear many hats and juggle multiple responsibilities. It is not always easy to find the time and resources to engage in this type of work though it is important. I was charged with the responsibility of meeting with each of these programs and helping them develop short and long-term strategies to show improvement in their test scores. Short term strategies would include offering students workshops on select areas of the curriculum, quickly developing timelines and policies for when students were allowed to take their tests, and meeting with part-time lecturers who were not always involved in program level conversations pertaining to curriculum. Long term strategies would include reviewing each program’s current curriculum and developing strategies for ensuring that particular content was covered and making sure that the most qualified instructors were teaching the core courses. We were under some well-defined time constraints with the state, so for now, the focus had to be on short term strategies and showing some fairly immediate results.

During the earlier days of the corrective action process, I often found myself outside of my comfort zone when engaging in challenging discussions with some of my colleagues. They either did not want to make changes to their programs or were bewildered about the accelerated time frame they had been given to enact a series of short-term strategies that felt superficial to them. The decisions that

I had to make as a leader definitely had an impact on my relationships with some colleagues, and I was not used to encountering such underlying tension in my daily work life. As I met with my colleagues and provided direction about next steps, I was truly learning from trial and error. Every day, I was reminded of how different this situation was from my days as a faculty member. Back then, I had been so much more focused on my own professional priorities and had cherished the opportunity to work independently on items of my own interest. Also, if I attended a particularly stressful meeting, I could walk away, vent, and then redefine boundaries around my time and involvement in particular activities. As a new leader, my focus had to shift from my individual needs to the interests of the collective, and I knew one thing for sure: the status quo could not remain the norm otherwise we were, once again, in danger of getting shut down. The failure to achieve successful results was not what I wanted to be associated with as a new leader. I was determined to not let it happen.

Effective leadership during times of uncertainty requires leaders to function as both agents of change *and* pillars of stability (Van Knippenberg et al., 2008). There is often an underlying assumption that organizational change and transformation is highly sought after and valued by individuals and organizations (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and that leaders “are remembered for the dramatic social or organizational changes they were responsible for; rarely do people reminisce about leaders who promote social and organizational stability.” (Rast et al., 2016). However, on the flip side, some individuals who do not hold leadership duties might see the changes as being an objectionable interference with their regular professional routines (Strebel, 2006). As a result, there is an inherent tension in doing what one might need to do in order to further the organization but simultaneously maintain a healthy and respectful rapport with one’s colleagues in the process.

Strategies that New Leaders Might Use to Manage Uncertainty and Change

Strategy #1: Encourage Participative Decision Making and Create a Culture of Reciprocity

Times of uncertainty and change in the workplace can be quite isolating for new leaders. It is important to create different ways that various stakeholders can engage meaningfully in the process of moving the organization forward in conjunction with the leadership. In order for one’s colleagues to feel motivated to contribute to the collective effort, one must engage them in ways that are relevant to their respective professional roles. Creating appropriate spaces for individuals to provide input and do their best work will help one build a participative decision-making model that can alleviate the pressure that challenging times bring. As Hellriegel and Slocum (2008) state:

Get the world off your shoulders. In a crisis, many leaders act like Atlas, carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders. They go into isolation, and think they can solve the problem themselves. In reality, leaders must have all of their people to devise solutions to implement them. (p. 329)

When our unit was undergoing accreditation for the first time, issues related to policy, curriculum, and assessment needed to be addressed and were the focal point of our individual conversations and meetings over an extended period of time. We had not considered, however, the day-to-day logistics involved in hosting a site visit with a small team of evaluators. As the time of the site visit came closer and I found myself tackling my never-ending “things to do” list every weekend, I realized that the leadership model that I was enacting was not sustainable or even healthy. I needed to develop opportunities for our staff, not just faculty, to lend their expertise in managing practical details. With their involvement, I could build engagement and better ensure that the evaluation team’s time with us would go smoothly and seamlessly.

When I approached our administrative assistant with this idea I admittedly had some trepidation. I was spending more time on campus than I had before and was starting to gain a better appreciation for our staff workloads. Our staff were routinely interrupted by faculty and administrators with

multiple requests. My request was going to require a significant time commitment for the next six months. In the end, I was so thankful that I involved our departmental staff when I did. They were not only able to provide assistance with the myriad tasks that needed to be done, but also offered candid feedback when I needed a fresh perspective. We met every week for about six months. I learned some valuable lessons as a new leader about letting go of one's need for control and learning to lead "from the sidelines." I also learned the valuable lesson that every individual in the organization has something important to contribute, whether big or small. Related to this experience, engaging in ongoing and varied forms of communication with all stakeholders is also essential in creating a sense of inclusivity and reciprocity in decision making. There is a distinct difference between "routine communication" and "crisis communication" (Goidel & Miller, 2009) and more standard modes of communication may not work as effectively as the context of a crisis might be marked by a uniquely swift pace and greater need for accurate verification of information (Boin et al., 2013).

When our unit went through the process of national accreditation for the first time, we were required to submit a preliminary report and associated documentation called "preconditions" to the accrediting body in order to move to the next steps of working on our self-study report and setting a site visit date with our team of evaluators. We did not pass our preconditions during the first round and this news spread like wildfire across our small unit. While I met with some key colleagues and our university leadership to devise a plan for successfully meeting the accrediting body's expectations, there were a couple of disgruntled colleagues who had been unhappy about the recent transitions in our leadership. They were telling several of our staff that there was a good chance that they could lose their jobs. It was premature to make this assumption and it took a colleague confronting me about this possibility quite publicly in our office reception area in front of several others to realize the need to address such situations quite differently than I had in the past.

I was starting to realize that my ordinary methods of sharing news with others were not sufficient when dealing with multiple stakeholders during a stressful time. There was clearly a need for accurate information to be offered through multiple forums (email, in person with individuals and groups, and within the context of multiple larger meetings) and at a much quicker speed in order to avoid the spreading of rumors. Furthermore, because there was some ambiguity about the future well-being of the unit, it was important to provide reassurance to those individuals who were not typically involved in accreditation related meetings so they knew that plans to improve our collective situation were being enacted.

In my experiences as a new accreditation coordinator and new associate dean, I had to provide leadership during times of acute vulnerability and tension within my unit. I witnessed faculty seeming anxious, frustrated and in some cases, appearing evasive (i.e., avoiding potential hallway encounters and/or meetings for fear of being assigned extra assignments). I saw our staff being unexpectedly asked to take on additional duties and having minimal input on decisions that could have a significant impact on their workloads. I also observed the response of colleagues and community partners who were outside of our academic unit. In some cases, their perceptions of our unit's circumstances had been shaped by limited or even inaccurate information, which led to misconceptions and rumors about our circumstances.

It could have been very easy to succumb to the negativity and pressures associated with such circumstances. Over time, I have concluded that despite the central role that emotions play in human psychology, the emotional side of leadership is often not explicitly addressed in leadership training and professional development. The lack of emphasis on developing a sense of emotional intelligence can unfortunately result in avoidable communication challenges and unneeded stress in the work environment. Cultivating an awareness of the emotional context of the workplace and a commitment to an accurate self-view can enhance one's sense of self-efficacy as a new leader and create working

conditions that benefit all stakeholders.

Strategy #2: Show Your Colleagues The Respect They Deserve

Earning the respect of one's colleagues takes a fair amount of effort and trust. Colleagues who feel respected are likely to work harder to accomplish a shared goal they believe in. They might also be more engaged and interested in doing their best work because they feel that their views are being heard. As a new leader, developing a balanced perspective involves active listening and communication with a variety of different individuals. In academic units that involve multiple programs and/or departments, this process can be quite time consuming, yet instrumental in understanding faculty motivations. It can also be useful in helping one develop a sense of emotional empathy (Kellest et al., 2002). Emotional empathy is an important means by which one can better understand the contextual factors in which one is leading and as a result, be more sensitive about the impact of one's decision making.

A new leader can learn how to demonstrate emotional empathy by making a conscious effort to be present during important conversations. In this day and age, telephones and other forms of technology can often serve as a distraction and they must be minimized in order for one's colleagues to feel heard. One must actively demonstrate that one's values one's colleagues' expertise and time and being present is an important recognition of this fact. It is important to note, however, that "empathizing doesn't always mean agreeing." Telling individuals that you heard their perspective does not imply that you necessarily agree with their position, but it signals a sense of authenticity in one's leadership style that is central to building strong relationships with others (Wheeler, 2012).

I am also a firm believer in having critical conversations face to face as opposed to over email. One can learn a lot from carefully observing one's colleagues' nonverbal behavior. Also, spending time listening to colleagues with diverse perspectives does not have to indicate acceptance. Instead, it can signal that one is being respectful and is taking the time to build a "we" not "me" mentality. Relationships are an important source of leadership power (Goleman et al., 2004), and during challenging times, the insight gained from such interactions can be valuable in shaping a healthy emotional context. Leaders with honed relationship skills can learn to develop an effective rapport with many different types of individuals. Training and professional development for new leaders ought to focus more on capitalizing on existing relationships and exploring ways to cultivate new ones that are ultimately based on respect and trust. This will prove to be beneficial for all.

Engaging in active listening with one's colleagues is not only important for gaining perspective on topics pertaining to one's organization, but also in obtaining honest feedback about one's leadership. One of the most challenging things for new leaders to do is to appreciate how other individuals see them, which is often quite different than how they hope to be seen. Developing a sense of heightened self-awareness and engaging in continual self-observation and reflection is central to this endeavor. A leader's self-awareness about relevant traits, skills, and behaviors can be increased by openly receiving feedback from multiple sources and coaching can be implemented to address areas that require improvement. To gain a deeper awareness of how they are being viewed, one might choose to obtain real-time feedback by listening to one's "truth tellers," who can provide candid critiques about one's leadership. New leaders who tend to surround themselves with individuals who only tell them how well they are doing rather than being brutally honest, run the risk of not having an accurate self-view of their strengths and weaknesses (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002).

Prior to assuming an administrative role in my unit, I had built close personal and professional relationships with many of my colleagues. In some cases, these relationships underwent an awkward transition when I moved to the Dean's office. Over time, I realized that I needed to build and leverage the relationships that I had because it would prove to be both useful to me and to our organization. My

“truth tellers” were individuals who were willing to provide me with real time feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement. As Ackerman and Maslin- Ostrowski (2002) state, “this kind of person-to-person connection can offer solace, hope, and healing. Safety can come from being with others who share the burden and vulnerability of leadership” (p. 122). One’s truth tellers might feel empowered to share their concerns about one’s leadership style and help one develop a more realistic awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses as a new leader. One of my “truth tellers” commented that as a new leader, I appeared to be averse to conflict. This comment led me to reflect upon numerous instances in which I thought that I was being either “tactful” or “diplomatic” but was honestly just trying to avoid confrontation with colleagues.

New leaders may also gather feedback through regular 360-degree reviews from peers and subordinates. Shortly after I assumed a leadership role in my unit, I participated in an internal university leadership program in which I engaged in such a process. I had to provide a list of individuals who worked for me, names of colleagues, and my supervisor’s contact information. All of these individuals were asked a series of questions related to my strengths and weaknesses as a leader, and I was expected to fill out a similar type of assessment. I remember feeling nervous and a bit self-conscious when I received the final data report. This experience proved to be very helpful in my development as a leader. It challenged my perceptions of myself, helped me acknowledge overlooked strengths, and exposed some personal shortcomings that I needed to see. The information gained through this experience helped me develop a plan for self-improvement and growth based on perceptions of individuals whose perspectives truly mattered. All new leaders would greatly benefit from having exposure to such a process.

Strategy #3: Embrace Uncertainty and Change as a Learning Opportunity

Flexibility is an essential trait that one must develop as a new leader. Adaptive leaders must be able to adjust their leadership style to unpredictable circumstances and exhibit a willingness to critically examine their old behaviors in order to gauge whether new strategies or tactics are in order. This is particularly critical when a sudden or unusual event threatens to disrupt the normal operations of an organization. How effectively a leader handles immediate crises is a valuable indicator of flexible and adaptive leadership (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010), which is why being exposed to a variety of different types of challenges early in one’s leadership career can actually be instrumental (Howard & Bray, 1988).

One’s personal orientation towards uncertainty is also important to consider as one’s sense of flexibility and capability for uncertainty have the potential to go hand in hand. Bennett et al. (2016) identified five components that constitute a holistic capability for uncertainty: a sense of positive identity, an acceptance of uncertainty, effective sense-making, learning agility and relevant leadership practices during organizational uncertainty. While some of these traits might be developed through experiential learning, there is clearly a need to design professional development models that will help new leaders cultivate and fine tune methods of engaging more effectively with uncertainty during turbulent times in the workplace.

As a new leader, I often received positive feedback in my evaluations that focused on my attention to detail and sense of organization. While these are certainly helpful attributes to have in any leadership position, the ability to tolerate ambiguity and to effectively manage the emotions that are associated with an uncertain situation is absolutely paramount. In both of my leadership roles, I have encountered situations when faculty and staff are experiencing heightened emotions about stressful circumstances that we have found ourselves in. I myself have not always known what the outcome will be but I firmly embrace the principle that although you cannot control others, you can control your reaction to others. In heated discussions amongst faculty or in open conversations in public spaces, it is essential to

effectively manage intense emotions and model emotional self-control. Providing training on ways that new leaders can learn how to exhibit emotional self-control, self-monitor their words and actions, and carefully model the behaviors that are needed to achieve a desired outcome is absolutely essential.

It is also essential to create spaces in which one can meaningfully reflect about challenging leadership situations that one has encountered. A stressful workday that is jam packed with meetings is not the ideal time or place to engage in this critical reflection. The key is to find a time and space where this reflection can happen but will ensure minimal interference with one's life outside of work. At times, I have had to force myself not to make phone calls or turn on the radio during my daily commute to and from work; instead, I have granted myself the opportunity to be present and reflect upon the situations I have encountered in order to process the range of emotions that come with complex circumstances. In higher education, we encourage our students to engage in critical reflection and bringing that same type of intentionality to our daily professional practices has the potential to strengthen what we do as new leaders. Processing the emotions associated with a challenging professional situation can help one come one step closer to not just leading with one's mind, but also, with one's heart.

Lastly, several researchers (Fiol & Connor, 2003; Sauer & Kohls, 2011) have recently studied how the practice of mindfulness can help enhance one's ability to manage change and uncertainty. New leaders should be encouraged to embrace ways of being that help them achieve a realistic attitude of acceptance. This will ultimately enhance their emotional intelligence by making it easier to "go with the flow" and further build a tolerance for ambiguity (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2011). Higher education institutions should provide new leaders with guidance on how to incorporate mindfulness in their daily professional rituals and practices. Helping new leaders reduce anxiety and stress by encouraging them to work at a slightly slower and more reflective pace and finding ways to disconnect from work during the evening, weekends, and/or vacation not only can help them be more present, but also, become more productive. It also models to one's colleagues that it is possible to assume a leadership role and achieve an appropriate personal life/work balance.

As a new leader, I could have benefited greatly from this type of guidance. Early on in both of my roles, I encountered pressure filled circumstances in which the stakes were quite high. I witnessed fellow colleagues in leadership roles succumb to the stress and either leave the university or decide to retire much earlier than originally planned. I immersed myself in my professional obligations with little to no balance with aspects of my life outside of work. This type of behavior is risky because it can lead to less productivity and in a worst-case scenario, burnout. Professional development and training in higher education should encourage new leaders to set healthy boundaries that will anchor the notion that a responsibility to one's personal life is equally worthy as a commitment to one's work.

In short, professional development and training for new leaders in higher education should aim at promoting the understanding that dealing with uncertainty and change is a normal part of becoming a leader. As Maslin-Ostrowski and Ackerman (2002) describe, "Conflict and dilemma are a constant and natural part of leadership life, as are leadership wounds, and they may even be useful" (p.111). New leaders must be taught to exercise their competence, remain calm, and show that they are able to maintain appropriate control of a challenging situation. Dealing with challenging circumstances should also not occur in isolation. If a leader is engaging in logical and responsible decision making and in concert with others, he or she is more likely to gain support in dealing with potential crises.

In Conclusion: "To Thine Own Self Be True"

As Morris and Laipple Kintla (2015) explicated in their article about leadership challenges involving deans and department chairs, most academic administrators prepare for the position merely

by talking with colleagues or through reading about leadership. More active development strategies may be pursued less frequently due to perceived unavailability, lack of time, or cynicism about potential gain. In my professional transition from a faculty role to an administrative position, I was fortunate to receive a wealth of support and mentoring from my dean as well as other senior colleagues at the university. I also had the opportunity to participate in two professional development programs which provided me with the time and space to delve deeply into my early experiences with leadership and think critically about how I might engage in my new role more effectively. My experiences as a new leader during some particularly tumultuous times in our unit's history have definitely provided me with some food for thought about what type of training I would like to see future leaders in higher education receive in order to experience a greater sense of self-efficacy in their new roles.

The notion of "being and becoming yourself" rather than trying to cultivate the image or persona of a leader is an important developmental task for all new leaders (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002). It is through this process of remaining connected to one's authentic identity that one can find a sense of personal coherence during times of disequilibrium which may occur during one's leadership experiences. Bennis and Thomas (2002) describe, crucibles, or "defining moments" in leaders' lives which might lead to the development of new definitions of self. In my view, engaging in the process of being and becoming yourself is what "leading with mind and heart" is all about. It is not just about enacting the role of a leader but having the willingness to open one's mind and heart to be a learner during challenging professional times. While there might be a steep learning curve or some degree of personal sacrifice involved, one must remember that ultimately, being able to utilize this experience as a basis for thoughtful and productive change is really what effective leadership is all about.

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Using Conjoint Analysis to Prioritize College Student Preferences in the Time of COVID-19

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Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, most college students in the U.S. experienced a sudden transition from face-to-face classes to online instruction during spring semester 2020. With the persistence of the pandemic, campus leadership continues to face challenging decisions regarding public safety, course delivery formats, enrollment, and budgets, etc. Surveys of students who experienced the transition last spring provide useful information on how institutions of higher education can proceed in the future. For example, Top Hat's (2020) survey of college students in mid-April of 2020 finds that 78 percent of students do not find online classes engaging and 75 percent miss face-to-face interaction with professors and other students. As a consequence, more than a quarter are undecided about whether to return to their school in the fall. A supplemental survey of college administrators finds that 85 percent of college and university presidents are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on student attrition. A Niche Partner (2020) survey administered prior to March 25, 2020 confirms that a majority of students (67 percent) do not feel online education is as effective as in-person instruction. Almost all students (93 percent) are increasingly concerned about being able to pay for their education in the future. Over 50 percent of parents are less-able to support their child's education as a result of the economic consequences of the pandemic. In sum, these surveys indicate that most students prefer face-to-face classes to online instruction. The impact of COVID-19 on the economy has increased concerns about how to pay for college. The effect of the health crisis on course delivery options and the state of the economy have students and administrators concerned about future enrollment.

While the information obtained from these surveys is informative, the methods used are limited in that it is not possible to prioritize issues that are most important to students. The ranking of preferences is important as this additional, nuanced information may inform specific plans for campus leadership. For illustration, consider the following question that can be used to prioritize course delivery and college affordability options:

Which is more important to students at your institution: access to face-to-face classes or the ability to pay for college?

If financial conditions (tuition and scholarship support) are more important than face-to-face instruction for students, this suggests that students can be encouraged to enroll in online classes if the financial burden of their college education is reduced. On the other hand, if face-to-face instruction is more important than affordability concerns, the implication is that costs associated with the safe delivery of in-class instruction can be passed through to increased tuition. The response to a trade-off question that is structured to rank preferences provides insight into specific actions campus administration can consider and pursue. It is not possible to determine a ranking of preferences with many traditional approaches such as a Likert scale. In the example above, it is possible that all

respondents may indicate that affordability concerns and access to face-to-face instruction are both very important as a Likert scale. Even if more respondents indicate one consideration is more important than the other, this method does not provide the clear distinction obtained from a trade-off question that results in a ranking. The method of conjoint analysis is uniquely suited to obtain a ranking of respondent preferences through a trade-off survey approach.

This paper illustrates how conjoint analysis can be used to inform campus decisions regarding instructional offerings, tuition, and financial support in the time of COVID-19. For demonstration purposes, a conjoint analysis survey was administered at the end of spring semester 2020 to students attending Colorado State University-Pueblo. All of these students experienced a transition from face-to-face classes to online instruction on March 16, 2020. Survey results indicate that, on average, face-to-face instruction is preferred to online options, is almost as important as tuition, and more important than scholarship support. However, additional analysis indicates that about 50 percent of students would forgo face-to-face instruction if fees were eliminated from overall tuition charges. Furthermore, all students are willing to either forgo in-class instruction, or to consider alternative course delivery methods with the elimination of fees and more generous scholarship support. These results indicate that even though in-class instruction is important, financial incentives can be used to encourage students to accept other instructional formats. Following sections of this paper include an explanation of conjoint analysis and software. An illustration of the results from the demonstration survey is presented with implications for decision making. The paper concludes with suggestions on how conjoint analysis can be used to address other campus concerns in the time of COVID-19.

Survey Background

For demonstration purposes, a conjoint analysis survey was administered to students enrolled in face-to-face sections of Principles of Microeconomics at Colorado State University-Pueblo (hereinafter, CSU-P) during finals week of spring semester, 2020. On March 16, face-to-face instruction at CSU-P was replaced by distance course delivery. Sophomores represent the largest percentage of students in this economics course. Some of these students were also enrolled in online courses in the spring of 2020, but the majority were enrolled in face-to-face classes. After March 16, students were typically exposed to either synchronous video conferencing (Zoom) classes, or asynchronous recorded video instruction. On this campus, as elsewhere, students were concerned about the payment of fees (for use of on-campus technology services, the library, and the gym, etc.) when campus was closed. The approximate \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law by President Trump on March 27. This act included approximately \$14 billion in aid to colleges and universities through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (U.S. Department of Education 2020). This funding provided emergency financial aid grants to students who faced financial disruptions due to COVID-19. Institutions had responsibility for calculating and distributing grants to students.

Given this setting, the survey inquired about student preferences for course delivery options (face-to-face, video conference (Zoom), or recorded video lectures), tuition and fees, versus tuition only, and different levels of federal CARES stimulus scholarship support. The survey could be completed in less than five minutes and 53 of 103 students responded. The survey, that is described in more detail below, targeted students who revealed their preference for face-to-face instruction. Since the survey was administered during finals week, respondents did not know their course grades before taking the survey. The particulars of CARES Act funding were not known to students or administrators at the time of the survey with funding allocated to students at CSU-P after the end of spring semester.

Method

Conjoint analysis is widely used in marketing research and is based on the trade-offs consumers face in everyday life (Wikipedia). For example, shoppers are constantly confronted with the trade-off between product quality and product price. Similarly, one of the trade-offs consumers of higher education face is between the reputation and prestige of an institution and tuition. The typical conjoint study consists of three parts. First, a trade-off survey is administered to the appropriate decision makers to determine which product attributes, or features are most important. The educational “product” attributes examined in this illustration are instructional delivery methods, tuition, and scholarship support. The second step involves the quantitative analysis of how respondent choices are made and the development of relative weights measuring the importance of each attribute (tuition level and course delivery type, etc.). In the language of conjoint analysis, these weights are called ‘part-worth utilities.’ To reduce the burden of jargon, the more intuitive term ‘importance scores’ will be used when referring to relative weights. Importance scores are the basis of an additive point system that can be used in the third step that involves simulations. For example, these scores can be used to determine how many respondents would prefer different scenarios, or product concepts. In this application, respondent-level importance scores can be used to determine the share of student preference for:

Educational Concept X: The choice of face-to-face classes with high tuition and low scholarship support

Or

Educational Concept Y: The choice of only online classes with low tuition and high scholarship support.

In sum, the purpose of a conjoint survey is to determine a ranking of respondent preferences and then use the results of this ranking to determine how respondents would score different “product” configurations.

There are a variety of conjoint techniques and quantitative methods used to obtain respondent rankings and importance scores. Some are based on econometric modelling, have sample size restrictions, and ask respondents to choose from several product descriptions that contain numerous attributes (see Sawtooth Software as an example). The PAPRIKA method – an acronym for *Potentially All Pairwise Rankings of all possible Alternatives* (Hansen & Omblor 2008) – implemented by 1000minds software (1000minds) is used in this illustration. This approach is based on respondent selections of pairwise options for detailed product attributes with importance scores obtained through a linear programming technique. This method was selected for the demonstration survey due to the relative ease of creating, administering, and completing a conjoint survey.

The basic format of the conjoint survey is presented in Table 1. The three relevant educational attributes associated with the switch from face-to-face classes to online instruction during spring of 2020 are presented in the first column of the table. The levels for each attribute are presented in the second column of Table 1. The levels for course delivery are based on the experiences of students during spring 2020. The order of the attribute levels is important and represents the movement from less to more desirable options. For course delivery, more options are preferred to fewer. The choice of an array of course delivery options that include face-to-face, conference (Zoom), or recorded video lectures is preferred to the limited option of recorded video lectures only. So, in Table 1, level C is preferred to A and B whereas B is preferred to A for the course delivery attribute. Similarly, tuition

without fees (\$4,000 per 15 credit hours at CSU-Pueblo) is preferred to tuition and fees (\$5,200, per 15 credit hours). These figures are based on the student’s share of base tuition and fees at CSU-P for the 2019-2020 academic year (Colorado State University-Pueblo. n.d.). Finally, federal CARES scholarship support of \$1,200, per 15 credit hours is preferred to no support. At the time of the survey, the amount of CARES funding and its distribution at CSU-P was not known to students. Hypothetical values of \$1,200 and \$0, per 15 credit hours were used in the demonstration survey. The use of hypothetical levels in conjoint analysis is common and considered a useful means exploring ‘what-if’ scenarios for products that have not been introduced to the market (Sawtooth Software). In May of 2020, CSU-P distributed \$1.8 million in CARES funding to students. The distribution was not equal. The average, one-time allocation per student was approximately \$530.

Table 1 – Attributes and Attribute Levels

Attributes	Attribute Levels
Course Delivery	A) Recorded video lectures only B) Choice of recorded lectures or Zoom classes C) Choice of recorded lectures, Zoom, or face-to-face classes
Tuition and Fees	A) \$5,200 tuition and fees, per 15 credit hours B) \$4,000 tuition only, no fees, per 15 credit hours
Federal CARES Scholarship Support	A) \$0 per 15 credit hours B) \$1,200, per 15 credit hours

The attributes and levels arranged in the manner presented in Table 1 form the basis of the pairwise-trade-off survey method employed by the 1000minds software. Trade-offs are created by pairing the least desirable level from one attribute with the most desirable level from another attribute and comparing that to an opposite pairing of attribute levels. For illustration consider the following choice for a student respondent:

Which would you prefer?

#1: The least preferred level under Course Delivery: A) Recorded video lectures only; and, The most preferred under Tuition and Fees: B) \$4,000 tuition only, no fees, per 15 credit hours

Or

#2: The most preferred under Course Delivery: C) Choice of recorded lectures, Zoom, or face-to-face classes; and, The least preferred under Tuition and Fees: A) \$5,200 tuition and fees, per 15 credit hours

Or, they are equal

The respondent who selects #1 considers the listed values for tuition and fees to be more important than the listed course delivery option. If a respondent perceives no difference between #1 and #2, “they are equal” is selected. Let’s assume the student prefers #1 to #2. The next pairwise comparison determines the ranking of course delivery and federal CARES scholarship support:

Which would you prefer?

#3: The least preferred level under Course Delivery: A) Recorded video lectures only; and, The most preferred Federal CARES Scholarship Support: B) \$1,200, per 15 credit hours

Or

#4: The most preferred under Course Delivery: C) Choice of recorded lectures, Zoom, or face-to-face classes; and, The least preferred under Federal CARES Scholarship Support: A) \$0, per 15 credit hours

Or, they are equal

If this respondent continues to rank financial arrangements as most important and selects #3, we know that this respondent considers tuition and scholarship support to be more important than course delivery options. A final comparison determines if tuition or scholarship support is more important:

Which would you prefer?

#5: The least preferred under Tuition and Fees: A) \$5,200 tuition and fees, per 15 credit hours; and, The most preferred Federal CARES Scholarship Support: B) \$1,200, per 15 credit hours

Or

#6: The most preferred under Tuition and Fees: B) \$4,000 tuition only, no fees, per 15 credit hours; and, The least preferred under Federal CARES Scholarship Support: A) \$0, per 15 credit hours

Or, they are equal

Note that the net payment difference between option #5 and #6 is the same, \$1,200. In #5 the student pays \$5,200 in tuition and receives \$1,200 in scholarship support for a net payment of \$4,000. This is the same net payment for #6 (\$4,000 in tuition without fees and no CARES scholarship funding). In this case, it is possible that the respondent could select that the two alternatives that are equally desirable. If the net differences were imbalanced, say #5 resulted in lower net costs for a student, there would not be a trade-off decision as a respondent may select the option that is most financially beneficial. In the demonstration survey, options #5 and #6 were structured to reflect the decision of students with different behaviors and circumstances. For example, a pay-as-you go student who does not wish to accumulate debt while in college may select #6 since the out-of-pocket expense is lower (\$4,000). On the other hand, a student who is interested in maximizing income while in college may select #5 if the student depends on loans and wants the extra CARES funds to augment income. This alternative may be appealing to a working student who lost their job due to the shutdown of the economy during the early stages of the pandemic. These trade-offs were structured in this manner to examine an economic motivation to attend college during the time of COVID-19. About 21 percent of the sample that faced this trade-off question rated #5 and #6 as equal. This implies that the remaining 79 percent of surveyed students employed financial strategies when answering this pairwise

comparison. Approximately 33 percent selected #5 with the remaining 46 percent of students selecting #6. These findings indicate that a significant percentage of students, about one-third, view college attendance as a means of supplementing income. Combining these results for 79 percent of respondents implies that scholarship support and low tuition can be effective tools in encouraging enrollment during the pandemic.

For the purpose of determining the overall ranking of priorities, let's assume that our respondent prefers option #6 over #5. Taking results from the three pairwise comparisons presented above, the respondent ranks low tuition over course delivery options and CARES scholarship support. This respondent also ranks CARES funding over course delivery.

For the attributes and levels presented in Table 1 there are hypothetically 12 (i.e. $3 \times 2 \times 2$) combinations of these factors. The objective of a conjoint survey is to rank the 12 combinations through pairwise comparisons. In the absence of the PAPRIKA method (and the 1000minds software), this would require 66 pairwise comparisons ($(12^2 - 12)/2 = 66$) and a very long survey. However, some of these possible pairwise comparisons can be eliminated when two of the most preferred levels (say, choice of recorded lectures, Zoom, or face-to-face classes and \$4,000 tuition only, no fees, per 15 credit hours) are compared to the least, or lower preferred levels (say, recorded video courses only and \$5,200 tuition and fees, per 15 credit hours). There is no need for a decision to be made in such comparisons because the two most preferred levels dominate, by definition, the two least preferred levels. The PAPRIKA method also applies the logical property of transitivity to reduce the number of pairwise comparisons (Hansen & Omble 2008). For example, if alternative A is preferred by the respondent to alternative B, and B is preferred to alternative C, implicitly, alternative A is preferred to alternative C. As a consequence, respondents are not asked about pairs that can be implicitly eliminated. Because dominated and implicit pairwise comparisons are eliminated, the number of comparisons and time to complete the survey is significantly reduced. For example, there was an average of 4.5 pairwise comparisons presented to the sample of economics students who completed the survey. This is significantly lower than the hypothetically possible 66 comparisons.

Results

Average importance scores for the levels of each attribute are reported in Table 2. These scores are reported as percentages and represent relative importance, or weights. The importance score for a particular attribute is indicated by the highest value reported in bold in the second column of the table. These scores sum across all attributes to 100 percent ($48 + 29.9 + 22.1$). Consequently, for the sample considered as a whole, course delivery is the most important represented by an average importance score of 48 percent out of a total of 100 percent. Importance scores can also be interpreted in relative terms. For example, Course Delivery (48 percent) is more than twice as important as Federal CARES Scholarship Support (22.1 percent).

The score for each level within an attribute indicates a level's relative importance on that attribute. For Course Delivery, recorded video lectures are the least desirable level for this criterion with an importance score of zero percent. At the other extreme, the choice of recorded lectures, Zoom, or face-to-face classes is most preferred with a score of 48 percent. The level between the two extremes (choice of recorded lectures or Zoom classes) is a fraction of the most preferred level (23 percent). The preference value for each level within an attribute represents the level's 'degree of performance.' For example, when face-to-face classes are added to the choice of recorded lectures or Zoom classes, the importance score for the most preferred option increases from 23 percent to 48 percent, or by 25 percentage points. While course delivery is the most important of the three attributes, the incremental increase associated with the addition of face-to-face classes (25 percentage points) is larger than the

total for the scholarship criterion (22.1 percent) and almost as large as the total for tuition and fees (29.9 percent). In sum, the average importance scores reported in Table 2 indicate that course delivery is the most important criteria and face-to-face instruction is more important than CARES scholarship support and almost as important as tuition and fees. This is not a surprising result as these students selected primarily face-to-face courses during spring 2020.

Table 2 – Average Importance Scores for Course Delivery, Tuition and Fees, and Federal CARES Scholarship Support

Attributes and Levels:	Average Importance Scores
Course Delivery	
Recorded video lectures only	0% (0%)
Choice of recorded lectures or Zoom classes	23.0% (11.0%)
Choice of recorded lectures, Zoom, or face-to-face classes	48.0% (15.2%)
Tuition and Fees	
\$5,200 tuition and fees, per 15 credit hours	0% (0%)
\$4,000 tuition only, no fees, per 15 credit hours	29.9% (13.7%)
Federal CARES Scholarship Support	
\$0 per 15 credit hours	0% (0%)
\$1,200, per 15 credit hours	22.1% (11.1%)

Source: Conjoint survey of CSU-P students, April 2020. Standard deviations in parentheses. Number of respondents equals 53.

Simulations

Importance scores for each student respondent differ from overall averages and respondent-level scores can be used to evaluate preferences for different educational concepts. For example, consider the following two possible concepts or configurations of the attributes:

Concept A) \$5,200 per 15 credit hours in tuition and fees, a choice of face-to-face classes, conference (Zoom) instruction, and recorded video lectures, and no federal CARES support for students.

Or

Concept B) \$4,000 per 15 credit hours in tuition (no fees), a choice of only conference (Zoom) instruction and recorded video lectures, and no federal CARES support for students.

Combined respondent-level importance scores for these two concepts indicate that 49 percent of students prefer Concept B whereas 42 percent prefer Concept A. Since the scores for A and B are the same for nine percent of respondents, these students are considered to be indifferent between the two concepts. These results indicate that even though students, on average, express a strong preference for face-to-face instruction, about 50 percent are willing to forgo face-to-face instruction for lower tuition.

When more generous CARES scholarship support is added to Concept B, the preference for Concept A continues to decrease. Revised Concept B (below) includes \$4,000 in tuition (no fees) and

the choice of only conference (Zoom) or recorded video instruction, but is altered to include \$1,200 in CARES scholarships.

Revised Concept B) \$4,000 per 15 credit hours in tuition (no fees), a choice of only conference (Zoom) instruction, and recorded video lectures, and \$1,200 in CARES scholarship support, per 15 credit hours.

By definition Revised Concept B will be preferred to, or dominate the original version of Concept B due to the addition of more favorable scholarship funding. Consequently, 100 percent of respondents prefer Revised Concept B over the initial option. When total scores for Revised Concept B are compared to Concept A, 74 percent of respondents prefer Revised B to A. The remaining 26 percent are indifferent between either concept.

Results from the conjoint analysis survey indicate that, on average, face-to-face instruction is preferred to online options, is almost as important as tuition, and more important than scholarship support. However, results from simulations indicate that about 50 percent of students would do without face-to-face instruction if fees were eliminated from overall tuition charges. Furthermore, all students are willing to either forgo in-class instruction, or to consider alternative course delivery methods with the elimination of fees and more generous scholarship support.

This is very useful information and indicates that students are sensitive to a mix of strategies. These findings imply that university leadership can, and perhaps should use lower tuition and increased scholarship support to offset undesirable consequences when eliminating face-to-face instruction. This type of insight is unique to conjoint analysis. Other survey methods cannot provide a quantitative analysis and actionable information on combined strategies. This result is based on an illustrative sample of students at a regional comprehensive university that serves a relatively low-income population. Results may differ for other colleges and students. Results will also vary depending on the range of choices and the levels of tuition and other financial information that is included in the survey.

Conclusion

Conjoint analysis is a malleable tool that can address a variety of choices and trade-offs. While the survey discussed here is based on the preferences of mostly first and second-year students, the analysis can be expanded for advanced students who may be less sensitive to course delivery if degree completion expectations can be met. Surveying advanced and beginning students may inform a plan that encourages the progress of all students, while identifying those with the highest priority to be on campus, as well as the use of financial incentives to maintain student interest in an institution. The method can also be used to assess faculty preferences for safety and various course delivery options, as well as staff choices concerning flexible work schedules. Conjoint analysis complements other information gathering methods that contribute to informed administrative decisions during and after the time of COVID-19.

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Feeding the Hungry: The Impact of Leadership Development on Mid-Level Leaders in Higher Education

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*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.*

In their 2007 study, Mumford, Campion, and Morgeson concluded that senior leadership positions within an organization require higher levels of leadership skills and that providing emerging leaders with time and opportunity to develop leadership skills is critical to their future leadership success. Inman (2011) agreed, pointing out that learning to lead is a gradual process with years of experience required to gather needed knowledge and skills. This may seem fairly obvious. Yet, within higher education, institutions regularly put leaders into positions without having first allowed them to develop the leadership skills needed for them (Garza & Eddy, 2008).

Higher education is in the business of educating for the future, which makes the failure to develop and prepare its leaders somewhat paradoxical. Riccio (2010) stated, “it is ironic that the higher education environment that prides itself on continuous learning and forward thinking spends very little time identifying future leaders” (p. 17). Betting the future on an ability to maintain a steady stream of individuals willing to accept leadership without the full knowledge and skills for the role creates a short sighted view of leadership focused on today, rather than the lifetime of the institution (Frost, 2015). In other words, handing emerging leaders a position, title, and responsibilities without proper development is simply giving them a fish without the skills to continue fishing. The result is many higher education leaders are hungry and, perhaps worse, those they lead are starving too.

When addressing the development of new leadership skills for emerging leaders, it is not unusual to focus solely on which skills are important, rather than how those skills will actually be learned. By providing early and intentional focused leadership development at all levels, institutions can be assured their future leaders are allowed the time and means necessary to acquire the skills needed to lead their institutions prior to assimilating those roles. Time for leadership skills development is significantly evident when considering those in mid-level positions in higher education. Rosser (2004) coined the term “unsung heroes of the academy” for those holding such positions, pointing out that these individuals often find themselves performing the functions of leadership without means to grow in their leadership roles. In 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that nearly 24 million individuals hold mid-level leadership roles in the United States with titles such as manager, supervisor, and administrator. Within four-year universities in America, mid-level leaders make up the largest portion of professional staff (U.S. Department of Education NCES, 2018). Nevertheless, mid-level leaders also rank in the bottom quarter of U.S. employees being provided professional learning opportunities (Busteed, 2018). By virtue of their current role, mid-level leaders have already demonstrated their commitment to the organization and make ideal candidates for leadership development (Rosser, 2004). They are primed for leadership development because they are already

leading. Yet, Wolverton, et al. (2005) found that only 4% of individuals holding positions considered mid-level had received leadership preparation.

Higher education currently faces challenges of rising tuition costs, declining enrollments, a changing student demographic, and ever-advancing technology (The Aspen Institute, 2017). To meet these challenges, institutions must take a fresh look at those they move into leadership roles and preparation of these leaders during these exigent times. Higher education must shift its paradigm of practice to include the development of emerging leaders from a variety of roles, even those not traditionally considered on a leadership trajectory. Viewing leadership potential through a wider lens will build a stronger pipeline of prepared leaders and reduce the risk of valuable people walking out the door (Luna, 2012). Higher education institutions would be remiss to forego the advantage received from development of the future leaders in their midst by overlooking the career paths of mid-level leaders and their potential for senior level positions (Garza & Eddy, 2008). A wide net of potential leaders can enhance strategic leadership development, build capacity and stimulate leadership transformation (Luna, 2012). Intentional development allows a broader range of individuals the opportunity to practice and rehearse leadership prior to being placed into significant leadership roles and may also nurture leadership in individuals who may not have been identified as future leaders (Garza & Eddy, 2008). Optimum leadership development requires an institution to understand the leadership skills critical to leadership success and the best practices for development of those skills.

Study Description

This phenomenological research study explored the lived experiences of participants in the Leadership Development Institutes (LDI) offered by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), providing insight into their perceptions of the impact of LDI on the development of the leadership skills needed to perform as leaders. CCCU has offered LDI experiences for emerging higher education leaders for over 20 years and provides a meaningful basis for this study. Study participants held mid-level leadership roles defined as those below the Dean level, including titles such as Director, Manager, Coordinator, Advisor, Counselor, and Department Chair, during their LDI experience.

Interviews with 14 study participants from seven institutions in four states used questions designed to elicit information about participants' LDI experience and their perceptions. Said questions were designed to answer the "how" question of leadership development and provide practical application for leadership skills development in higher education. Study validity and reliability were achieved through member checking of interview responses, as well as triangulation through observations and artifact collection. Double coding was used to confirm themes and frequency counts of collected data, achieving an inter-coder reliability rate of 88%.

Study Results

Six major findings emerged from the study, indicating that mid-level leaders develop leadership skills when they:

1. Maintain a broad network of professional relationships.
2. Create time for reflection about leadership aspirations.
3. Acquire confidence through personal affirmation.
4. Experience close interactions with senior leaders.
5. Receive feedback to build awareness and executive presence.

6. Develop a clear path to guide leadership development.

These findings were the result of data received from an overwhelming majority of study participants. With the exception of Finding 4, 93% of participants (13 of 14) mentioned each of the remaining findings as significant to the development of the skills needed for their leadership growth. Finding 4 was identified by 86% of study participants, which is no less significant. The data clearly identifies that specific circumstances will enhance opportunities for leadership development among mid-level leaders and provide motivation for said leaders to focus their leadership development in preparation for advancement into senior positions.

Maintain a Broad Network of Professional Relationships. With a frequency count of 77 and appearing in 93% of study interviews, the establishment of a broad network of professional relationships was the most frequently cited theme making it a significant finding of the study. A broad network of relationships is critical to leadership success because network relationships provide feedback, insight, information, and resources that may not be readily available elsewhere (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). Study participants described the connections made and relationships built as extremely meaningful and providing significant impact to future leadership opportunities, an impact that is extremely important to mid-level leaders who may lack awareness of these opportunities without connections made through professional relationships.

The individualized culture of many higher education institutions may leave mid-level leaders without the means to develop or strengthen their leadership skills. Networks can provide a broader context of leadership which multiplies skills needed to make better decisions and find better solutions (Ziskin, 2016). Participant 9 would agree with Ziskin, stating that broadening one's network of professional relationships "helps get you out of your own world ... which, in turn, propels you further in your leadership." Findings from this study showed that a broad network of professional relationships allows leaders to expand their leadership perspective and shifts an individual's leadership knowledge outside of the self-contained walls of academia. Succinctly stated by Participant 6, currently a Chief Diversity Officer, as "connected to a world that was bigger than my own institution," a broad swath of professional relationships expanded her view outside of her current small university world. A broad network of professional relationships allows emerging leaders to multiply their knowledge base, establish valuable connections, and become more successful in their careers (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007).

Experience Close Interactions with Senior Leaders. When establishing a network of support, it is important that emerging leaders build relationships with those in senior level leadership roles. Close interactions with senior leaders enhance identification of leadership potential and optimize the development of that potential (Meyers, 2007). This study's findings indicate that the opportunity to interact with senior leaders provided individuals the "ability to have some modeling" (Participant 3) for future roles. Study participants were provided a personal view of leadership from senior leaders, giving them greater understanding of the true leadership picture and allowing goals and vision to be adjusted to a more realistic ideal if necessary.

Mid-level leaders often do not know what they do not know. Providing a personal view of leadership and access to the knowledge and leadership skills of senior level leaders has an incredible impact on emerging leaders. As stated by Participant 12, a self-described mid-level leader who was "grasping for an example of how to construct herself as a leader," the leadership stories and experiences of senior leaders provide a "huge, huge impact" to those with further to travel in their leadership journey. Beyond knowledge alone, this impact is effective as 57% of participants advanced to senior leadership positions following opportunities that included close interactions with senior leaders.

Authentic and purposeful interactions between senior leaders and emerging leaders in higher education builds the leadership skills needed to prepare mid-level leaders for future leadership roles.

Receive Feedback to Build Awareness and Executive Presence. Through their LDI experience, study participants received feedback regarding the leadership skills they possess, those skills needing improvement, and skills that were lacking altogether. When provided by trusted individuals, feedback identifies leadership strengths, enhances leadership development, and builds executive presence (Bates, 2016). Thirteen of 14 participants specifically mentioned feedback as being beneficial to their self-awareness and their ability to grow as a leader by understanding the executive presence needed to lead at senior levels. Feedback designed to build awareness of leadership potential is essential to development of executive presence; yet, because of the managerial nature of their roles, mid-level leaders typically receive feedback associated with specific job performance rather than leadership. In her interview, Participant 10 explained that “when you’re in mid-management, you’re primarily thinking about what are you getting done ..., but it was good for me to shift and reframe some of my thinking around leadership..., so much of how you are viewed when you’re a leader has to do with perception...it is not enough to just hunker down in my role...the presence piece has changed that for me.” Feedback reframes the focus from what one is doing to how it is being done.

Self-awareness is the first step toward building leadership skills and feeds the perception of an individual’s leadership ability. Feedback and awareness are notably significant to mid-level leaders who may lack opportunities in their current positions to display the executive presence and gravitas needed for greater roles. CEO Coach Jack Craven (2018) describes feedback as wisdom being shared by senior leaders with those who need leadership growth. The soft skills of leadership are among the most difficult to learn, and also the most critical to leading others. Understanding these less tangible characteristics of leadership is impossible without feedback, or as stated by Participant 7, “you are brilliant, you have a strategic mindset, but you lack the executive presence needed to be successful. . . It’s in those kinds of characteristics that leaders sometimes fail. If someone isn’t brave enough to call it out, then where is it going to be learned?”

Build Confidence Through Affirmation. Affirmation may be a part of feedback, but it certainly isn’t the same. Affirmation intentionally acknowledges leadership skills and validates leadership ability, which is important to building confidence. This confidence was evident in participant interview comments such as “it’s just really good to have someone outside your system see you and say – you can do this’ (Participant 2) or this from Participant 7, “you need to have people who believe in you and say you need to be a leader.” Appearing in 93% of study interviews, participants overwhelmingly agreed that affirmation increased their confidence and allowed them to lean into their own leadership potential. Many understood they possessed leadership gifts, but affirmation from other leaders provided confidence to take steps forward in leadership, including active pursuit of leadership advancement. Employee engagement increases when individuals feel confident in their roles and abilities (Pati & Kumar, 2010). Since mid-level leaders may not be in roles specifically recognized for leadership, intentional recognition and affirmation of those abilities often provides significant results.

Develop a Clear Path to Guide Leadership Development. Mumford, et al. (2007) recognized that leaders must have time and opportunity to develop leadership skills needed for future leadership roles. Having a clear plan for leadership development increases opportunities for leadership advancement (Little, 2016). However, higher education often lacks intentionality within leadership development and may fail to develop plans that allow future leaders the time to develop the skills needed for senior level positions (DeZure et al., 2014; Klein & Salk, 2013). By nature of their positions, mid-level leaders

lack the time and resources to develop leadership skills on their own, which requires institutions to intentionally build development into the position requirements. Identifying budding leaders and developing the potential within them is the heart of leadership development today (Zisken, 2016). However, identification alone is not enough; emerging leaders must be provided with a plan and pathway for achieving their leadership goals.

All study participants were provided a leadership development plan through their LDI experience as described in this study, and 71% indicated that this plan guided their development of specific leadership skills needed for their advancement. Participant 3 related that continual review of her leadership plan helped her to be intentional about leadership development and was used to “launch [her] into the next area of where [she] wants to be.” To best guide leadership development, leaders must be identified for their potential and then provided a plan to develop that potential for leadership success.

Create Time for Reflection About Leadership Aspirations. The leadership journey for many mid-level leaders in higher education is rarely straight with leaders arriving at their roles from many different paths. This form of unplanned leadership is not uncommon in higher education, and the literature reveals that many find themselves in leadership roles unintentionally and without the leadership preparation needed for these roles (Garza & Eddy, 2008). Study data revealed that personal reflection about leadership goals fosters individual growth and preparation for leadership positions. Occurring in 93% of study interviews, study participants cited many stories of professional transition and as described by Participant 3, the need for time and space to “reflect on areas of growth and to be more intentional about how the [leadership development] experience could launch me into the next area of where I want to be.” Intentional reflection about leadership goals can be difficult for mid-level leaders who find themselves isolated from formal leadership development opportunities necessary for career advancement (Little, 2016; Rosser, 2004).

Lacking leadership direction, mid-level leaders often end up in positions for which they did not plan (Grotirian-Ryan, 2015). Taking time for reflection about leadership aspirations addresses this unintentional and accidental leadership trajectory. An understanding of the importance of reflection does not make it occur, and although often recognized as important, “personal time is very important to leaders, but it is probably the one thing we do so poorly” (Participant 7). Personal reflection allows developing leaders to assess their leadership skills, identify gaps, and align leadership development to intentionally target individual developmental needs.

Summary and Conclusions

Walseth (2009) recognized that institutions who give thoughtful consideration to the identification of future leaders while early in their careers are able to cultivate and nurture that talent for the future success of the institution. The practice on many university campuses, however, remains that leadership skills development is a personal endeavor rather than an institutional one (Luna, 2012). This study makes conclusions that support early identification of leadership potential and intentional development of leadership skills to strengthen leadership among emerging leaders in higher education, especially those currently holding mid-level leadership positions. Developing clear leadership paths increases the stream of talent being developed for senior level leadership positions (Klein & Salk, 2013).

By following study conclusions into action, institutions are provided a full picture of leadership skills development for those who will hold future leadership roles, including methods to support leadership development for emerging leaders. A fully developed leader is confident in their leadership ability and a more engaged team player (Pati & Kumar, 2010). Therefore, institutions who invest in

early identification and development of emerging leaders increase institutional engagement and capitalize on the impactful result of leadership development. By looking closely at the lived experiences of study participants we understand the means through which mid-level leaders in higher education gain the leadership skills necessary to inform their leadership practices and lead institutions into the future and are able to identify best practices for incorporating these actions into institutional programming.

To be sustainable in today's complex and changing higher education environment, institutions must identify and develop the leaders currently within their halls. Developing emerging mid-level leaders for future senior positions allows institutions to develop human talent specifically fit for their unique mission. Perhaps, the importance of this study is best described by one of its own participants:

If we are going to grow in those areas [of leadership], we need to look back and ask what kind of people do we need and then innovate programs that allow people to grow so they can get your school to that destination... what kind of talent pool do you need and how are you going to build it? (Participant 7)

In other words, each institution must evaluate who they are and where they are going, and then use the creative and innovative thinking characteristic of higher education to identify and develop existing talent to sustain their institutional objectives.

Creating a growth and learning culture seems an obvious outcome of an industry whose goal is education; however, evidence from this study demonstrates that without intentionality, leadership growth in higher education will continue to flounder into the future as it has in the past. Higher education is currently facing several daunting realities and strong leadership is a critical component of institutional viability. It is imperative that leadership development becomes a primary institutional objective rather than an institutional afterthought. This study provides the impetus needed to embolden institutions to prioritize leadership development among mid-level leaders who demonstrate leadership potential. Because people are an institution's most valuable resource, investing in the development of people today will ensure they become the leaders needed for tomorrow. Calling upon the resources inherent in the practice of higher education, institutional leaders must remember their responsibility is not to simply provide leaders a single meal; rather, it is their responsibility to develop fishermen and women who will be able to feed themselves and others long into the future.

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Slamming the Brake on College Closures: The DNA Kit for College Survival

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A review of national statistics reveals that over 600 colleges/universities have closed during the past several decades. These closures have been in the six US regional accreditation agencies. For example, the report by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), which is the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, reflects approximately 90 college closures through 2017. The closures of these colleges/universities have led to the termination of the jobs of quite a number of administrators along with a sizable number of faculty—thus negatively impacting the white color job market in addition to disrupting the future careers of thousands of students facing closed doors. While we, as Americans, have been aware of factories closing and the government coming to the aid of General Motors and other firms to save blue color jobs, we were not as aware of the closure of four-year colleges and the impact on the white color jobs. Therefore, who are these colleges? What happened and why did they close? What does this mean to the future generations that are currently required to have a college degree for entry level positions? Sure, the endowments of these colleges have been depleted, but some of them have existed for decades, and their continued survival and existence are important to their graduates, alumni, and enrolled students. Who is at the helm? Why couldn't this have been avoided? What kind of planning or lack of planning has occurred? College leaders must become aware of the fact that strategic plans need to be developed and implemented to meet the needs of the institution. This leads us to planning strategically by the president/leader of the institution to guide his/her team towards first survival and then into continuous growth, excelling in offering the curricula needed by the stakeholders in the community, region, national or international markets.

A few presidents of private colleges have started thinking out of the box in order to edge over their financial crisis and move on with their continued delivery of educational programs to the communities and the regions they serve. This way of thinking by these presidents led to the evaluation of their current curricula offerings—thus shifting their emphasis from the liberal arts curricula to professional programs. This type of plan has helped a handful of colleges while the remaining are still struggling. To those that are struggling financially and wondering why some of these quick fix-it approaches have not been effective, the solution is to use thorough techniques in strategic planning.

What are these thorough techniques in strategic planning and how can small private colleges apply them to avoid any future closure? Here is a list of comprehensive questions that can be utilized as a DNA Kit for College Survival. Therefore, colleges should try to answer the following questions prior to embarking on a strategic plan.

How has the college changed relative to its mission statement?

What are the current financial resources of the institution?

What are the socio economic changes in the market or region the college serves?

What is the composition of the current faculty relative to the curricula being offered?

How has the operating philosophy of the faculty changed relative to competition, college image, and the method and quality of course delivery?

What is the technological impact on the delivery of the current curricula offerings and does the college have the financial resources to support the continued delivery of the current curricula?

How dependent is the college on tuition revenue?

What barriers are in existence that are hindering growth in enrollment?

How long would the current financial resources sustain the current operation and support projected revenue generating programs?

How do the current stakeholders view the institution?

What are the president's aspirations? Is he/she transformational or transactional? What institution is being used as a benchmark?

What are the remote environmental factors that may create a negative or positive impact on the college operating budget?

What changes are taking place in the US educational system, including federal and state, or the internal college operating environmental system that may impact the continued operation of the college?

The college must answer the aforementioned questions and start with an internal analysis of its own operation in order to determine the strengths and the weaknesses for its continued existence. This is an essential step in the initial planning process, starting with the review of the mission which should portray to potential students, the majors the college offers, the primary target market it serves, and the technology it utilizes for the delivery of its curricula. Colleges should be treated like any other business organization since their initial motive is to survive, make a profit, and grow while at the same time serving their constituents. Someone may question the concept of profit in an academic setting since the majority of colleges are organized as non-profit institutions serving students as their customers/clients and delivering educational programs to enhance the knowledge of their stakeholders. While serving the student population in their market, colleges must be aware of the competitive market and the major areas of studies that the competitors are delivering, just as a regular business would. The competitive market should determine the method and the quality of delivery as they are essential in the competitive process. Structuring competitive strategies would assist higher education leaders in maintaining their market share and differentiating their colleges from others that offer the same programs in order to achieve their goals in support of their mission. Therefore, before embarking on strategy development, colleges should complete a thorough internal analysis coupled with an external analysis—thus completing a SWOT of the college's total operating environment. The term SWOT goes

back to the late 1960s when it was originally used by Albert Humphrey at the Stanford Research Institute. The “S” stands for strengths, the “W” reflects weaknesses, the “O” stands for opportunities, and the “T” reflects threats that the college may be facing. This SWOT analysis involves the following:

Analysis of the resources available for the college to deliver its programs to its target population in a manner that differentiates its capabilities and image by meeting the needs of its stakeholders. This should list the strengths that the college possesses.

Analysis of the limitations or lack of resources relative to similar colleges offering similar programs that may put the college at a disadvantage in effectively delivering the majors it offers to meet the students’ needs. This should reflect the weaknesses or the college’s deficiencies.

Analysis of the major opportunities that exist that can utilize the college resources in delivering programs that meet the needs of potential students--thus generating an increase in revenue and enhancing the college’s overall image among its stakeholders. These opportunities are favorable situations that the college must tackle immediately, based on its strong resources.

Analysis of the situation that puts the college in an unfavorable position in delivering the majors it offers—thus losing market share to the competition. This should identify the threats facing the institution that may impact its continued existence if not overcome by a creative strategy.

Once this analysis is complete the college can more easily and more accurately answer the following questions:

What are we great at?

Where can we improve?

What threats do our weaknesses expose us to?

What advantages do we have over other similar institutions serving our market area?

How can we turn our strengths into productive opportunities by offering the right majors needed by current and future generations?

By responding to the above mentioned questions in sequential order, the college can thoroughly evaluate its position as a business delivering quality education to its customers who are its target student body. In doing so it will be utilizing some of the techniques that Fortune 500 companies are using.

While this analysis may seem burdensome, incorporating the SWOT analysis can be a thorough time-tested method of preventing the next college closure. Hopefully, by answering the questions presented in the DNA Kit, struggling colleges will not be added to the growing list of institutional closures that have dotted our landscape for the past four years.

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Research into graduate level higher education frequently focuses on pedagogy (e.g., Fey, Fritchie, & Trout-Haney, 2017), curriculum (e.g., Briscoe, Glickson, Roberts, Spinrad, & Yoder, 2015), outcomes (e.g., Geven, Skopek, & Triventi, 2018), and sociological issues (e.g., Posselt, Reyes, Slay, Kamimura, & Porter, 2017; Posselt & Grodsky, 2017). In contrast, very little research has addressed administration of graduate studies. Holdaway (1994) wrote a paper titled 'Organization and administration of graduate studies in Canadian universities,' but focused on factors affecting completion rates. Holdaway, Deblois, & Winchester (1994) studied the activities and perceptions of graduate program coordinators, but did not consider the administrative structure of the programs that they oversaw. Siegel, Sowell, Sullivan, Tate, & Denecke (2004) suggested that universities with graduate programs need a chief academic officer for graduate education and a separate graduate unit, although the title and role of each may vary greatly. The range of titles for these administrative units and officers, as well as the situations in which they are applied, have not been studied systematically.

Over twenty years ago, Holdaway (1996) noted that graduate schools within universities are far more common in North America than in other countries. Yet how much more common, and how this has changed in the intervening decades, remains unknown. Borchert & Simms (2005) recognized administrative units including divisions, schools, and colleges, and administrators including deans and academic vice presidents. They proposed that schools and deans are the most common, but with no supporting data. Information about the administrative structure of graduate studies is needed especially for master's level institutions. In the United States, doctoral research universities almost invariably have a graduate college or school administered by a dean (who is also often an associate or assistant provost). In contrast, there seems to be much more variation among master's level institutions, although there is no information about patterns within this variation.

The fact that no common or best practices have been identified often results in struggles at master's level universities to define the place of graduate studies in the administrative structure, as well as the position of the person who is in charge of this unit. For example, administration of graduate studies at my home institution was initiated in 1957. The administrative unit has changed from an office, to a school, to a college, to nothing, back to a college, then back to an office, and we are currently returning it to the status of college. The administrator in charge of this unit has been a director, dean, assistant provost, assistant vice president, associate vice president, and vice president, with the title changing 16 times in 61 years. Apparently, it is not quite clear what to do with the organization or administration of graduate studies at this public, comprehensive university.

Although upper level administrators at public, master's institutions need to make decisions about administrative structure of graduate studies, no information is available that would allow them to place

their needs and situation into context with how other similar institutions deal with these issues. Consequently, I identified these entities at all public master's institutions in the United States and analyzed them for patterns that might indicate best practices.

Methods

I obtained a list of all public, master's level institutions in the United States from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, which is produced by the Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University School of Education (http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/index_construct.php) and based on 2017-2018 data. These 272 institutions are categorized in the Carnegie Classification as small (N = 42), medium (N = 68), or large (N = 162) with categories defined as follows:

Masters program size was based on the number of master's degrees awarded in 2013-14. Those awarding at least 200 degrees were included among larger programs; those awarding 100-199 were included among medium programs; and those awarding 50-99 were included in smaller programs. The smaller programs group also includes institutions that awarded fewer than 50 master's degrees if (a) their Enrollment Profile classification is Exclusively Graduate/Professional or (b) the Enrollment Profile classification is Majority Graduate/Professional and they awarded more graduate/professional degrees than undergraduate degrees.

Undergraduate and graduate enrollment was obtained from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS; <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>) for Fall 2017 data. Total enrollment is simply the sum of undergraduate and graduate enrollment. The level of the academic unit that managed graduate studies and the title of the administrator who was in charge of that unit were identified by searching institutional websites. If this information could not be obtained from websites, it was obtained by telephone conversation with the chief academic officer's office. When graduate studies was combined with some other function (e.g., Graduate and Extended Studies or Graduate Studies and Continuing Education) the level of the academic unit for the combined unit was used. When the administrator in charge of the academic unit had multiple titles (e.g., Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School or Director of Graduate Studies and Assistant Vice President of Academic Programming Support), the title associated with graduate studies was used. Administrators just below provost or vice president for academic affairs (assistant provost, assistant vice president, associate provost, associate vice president, vice provost) were combined and referred to as 'sub-provost' when in the same category. Similarly, those just below dean (assistant dean and associate dean, termed "sub-deans") were combined for descriptive purposes, but were not common enough to be used in statistical analyses. Where no administrative unit or administrator for graduate studies could be identified, these characteristics were listed as 'None.' Statistical analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel 2016 and SPSS version 25.

Results

Data did not meet parametric assumptions and so were analyzed using equivalent nonparametric tests. The number and percent of administrative units in each Carnegie size category and in total are in Table 1. Whether the name of the administrative unit for graduate studies was dependent on Carnegie size category was addressed using a Chi-squared contingency table. Only College, School, Office, and None were common enough to meet the requirements of Chi-squared analysis. This showed a significant association between an institution's Carnegie size category and the title of the administrative

unit for graduate studies ($X^2_{(6df)} = 13.69$; $p = 0.03$). The difference between the expected value and the observed value as a percent of the expected

Table 1 — Number and percentage of administrative unit titles in institutions within Carnegie size categories

Carnegie Size	Office Name	N	%
Large	College	21	13.0%
	School	61	37.7%
	Division	1	0.6%
	Center	2	1.2%
	Office	50	30.9%
	None	27	16.7%
Medium	College	8	11.9%
	School	17	25.4%
	Division	2	3.0%
	Center	1	1.5%
	Office	26	38.8%
	None	13	19.4%
Small	College	1	2.3%
	School	7	16.3%
	Division	2	4.7%
	Center	1	2.3%
	Department	1	2.3%
	Office	18	41.9%
	Extended University	1	2.3%
	None	12	27.9%
All	College	30	11.0%
	School	85	31.3%
	Division	5	1.8%
	Center	4	1.5%
	Department	1	0.4%
	Office	94	34.6%
	Extended University	1	0.4%
	None	52	19.1%

value is shown in Table 2. This is intended to show how much more or less frequent than random each administrative unit is in a given Carnegie size category, regardless of varying sample sizes.

The number and percent of administrator titles in each Carnegie size category and in total are in Table 3. Only sub-provost, dean, director, committee, and none were compared in order to have large enough expected values in the Chi-squared table. There was not an association between Carnegie size and administrative title ($X^2_{(8df)} = 12.91$; $p = 0.11$).

Table 2 —Observed frequency of administrative unit in each Carnegie size category minus the expected frequency, then divided by the expected frequency (i.e., how far from the expected frequency is the actual frequency?)

	College	School	Office	None
Large	15%	18%	-13%	-15%
Medium	9%	-18%	13%	2%
Small	-77%	-43%	32%	59%

The number and percentage of schools with each combination of administrative unit and administrator title are in Table 4. Whether the frequency of administrative titles is associated with administrative unit was addressed using a Chi-squared contingency table. Only college, school, office, and none were used for administrative unit, because other units were uncommon enough to produce very small expected values. Similarly, only sub-provost, dean, director, committee, and none were used for administrative title. Unit name was strongly associated with administrator title ($X^2_{(12df)} = 242.55$; $p < 0.0001$). The difference between the expected value and the observed value as a percent of the expected value is shown in Table 5.

Carnegie size categories are based on the number of graduate degrees awarded. This may or may not be associated with student enrollment. Therefore, undergraduate, graduate, and total enrollments were compared across institutions with different graduate administrative unit titles as well as graduate administrator titles (Table 6). Data did not meet parametric assumptions and so were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis H test. Undergraduate and total enrollment did not differ between institutions having various graduate administrative unit titles ($H_{3df} = 4.32$, $p = 0.229$ and $H_{3df} = 4.98$, $p = 0.173$, respectively). However, graduate enrollment differed significantly between institutions having various graduate administrative unit titles ($H_{3df} = 8.35$, $p = 0.039$). Similarly, undergraduate and total enrollment did not differ between institutions having various titles for the administrator in charge of graduate programs ($H_{4df} = 7.83$, $p = 0.098$ and $H_{4df} = 9.24$, $p = 0.055$, respectively). However, graduate enrollment differed significantly between institutions having various graduate administrative unit titles ($H_{4df} = 14.16$, $p = 0.007$).

Discussion

Though a small number of public master's institutions housed graduate studies within unusual administrative units such as Center, Division, Department, or Extended University, by far the most common, in descending frequency, are Office, School, College, and None. Carnegie large institutions tended to have schools or colleges of graduate studies, while Carnegie small institutions tended to have offices of graduate studies or no administrative unit in charge of graduate studies. At Carnegie medium institutions, graduate studies were housed in schools infrequently, while graduate offices and colleges were more common.

For all Carnegie size categories, dean, director, or no administrator in charge of graduate studies were the most common administrative titles, while sub-provosts and committees were much less common. Rare titles for administrators of graduate studies included provost, sub-dean, deputy director, and coordinator. When the administrative unit was a college or school, the administrator in charge was very likely to be a dean. Offices of graduate studies tended to be run by directors, but sub-provosts

(associate or assistant provost or vice president) were much more common than would be expected. This was usually because managing the office of graduate studies fell under a broader range of duties

Table 3 — Number and percentage of administrator titles in institutions within Carnegie size categories.

Carnegie Size	Administrator Title	N	%
Large	Sub-provost	9	5.6%
	Dean	87	53.7%
	Sub-dean	6	3.7%
	Director	27	16.7%
	Deputy Director	1	0.6%
	Committee	7	4.3%
	None	25	15.4%
Medium	Provost	2	2.9%
	Sub-provost	5	7.4%
	Dean	32	47.1%
	Director	11	16.2%
	Coordinator	3	4.4%
	Committee	4	5.9%
	None	11	16.2%
Small	Sub-provost	1	2.4%
	Dean	13	31.0%
	Sub-dean	1	2.4%
	Director	12	28.6%
	Committee	4	9.5%
	None	11	26.2%
All	Provost	2	0.7%
	Sub-provost	15	5.5%
	Dean	132	48.5%
	Sub-dean	7	2.6%
	Director	50	18.4%
	Deputy Director	1	0.4%
	Coordinator	3	1.1%
	Committee	15	5.5%
	None	47	17.3%

managed by a sub-provost level administrator. When there was no administrative unit managing graduate studies, there was usually no administrator in charge of graduate programs. In this situation, individual graduate degree programs were generally managed by directors within the departments that offered associated course work. Occasionally, these program directors come together to form university-wide graduate committees or councils that manage graduate studies above the department level.

Institutions with graduate colleges tended to have large graduate enrollments. Somewhat surprisingly, this was also the case for institutions with no administrative unit for graduate studies. The latter situation was affected largely by six schools in the City University of New York system and the Pennsylvania State University World Campus. These had large graduate enrollments, but no graduate

Table 4 — Number and percentage of administrator titles within variously titled administrative units.

Administrative Unit (N)	Administrator Title	N	%
College (30)	Sub-provost	1	3.3%
	Dean	27	90.0%
	Sub-dean	1	3.3%
	Director	1	3.3%
School (85)	Provost	1	1.2%
	Sub-provost	1	1.2%
	Dean	66	77.6%
	Sub-dean	2	2.4%
	Director	10	11.8%
	Coordinator	1	1.2%
	Committee	3	3.5%
	None	1	1.2%
Division (5)	Dean	2	40.0%
	Director	2	40.0%
	Committee	1	20.0%
Center (4)	Sub-dean	1	25.0%
	Dean	2	50.0%
	Director	1	25.0%
Department (1)	Dean	1	100.0%
Office (94)	Provost	1	1.1%
	Sub-provost	12	12.8%
	Dean	33	35.1%
	Sub-dean	3	3.2%
	Director	35	37.2%
	Coordinator	2	2.1%
	Committee	3	3.2%
	None	5	5.3%
Extended University (1)	Dean	1	100.0%
None (52)	Sub-provost	1	1.9%
	Director	1	1.9%
	Deputy Director	1	1.9%
	Committee	8	15.4%
	None	41	78.8%

administrative unit. In the former case, this occurred because oversight was handled at a central system office and in the latter case because it is an entirely on-line enterprise with much of the administration handled by the main campus. Large graduate enrollments were found at institutions where the

Table 5 — Observed frequency of administrator title in each type of administrative unit minus the expected frequency, then divided by the expected frequency (i.e., how far from the expected frequency is the actual frequency?)

	Sub-Provost	Dean	Director	Committee	None
College	43%	84%	-82%	-100%	-100%
School	-80%	61%	-35%	-34%	-93%
Office	126%	-26%	111%	-39%	-70%
None	-67%	-100%	-90%	179%	326%

Table 6 — Enrollments (Mean \pm SD) at institutions having various administrative units and titles for graduate education.

Unit / Title	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
College	8723.5 \pm 6556.8	1385.8 \pm 1123.1	10,109.3 \pm 7547.4
School	6450.7 \pm 4134.5	1290.4 \pm 1424.1	7741.0 \pm 5184.6
Office	8880.0 \pm 7364.3	1176.6 \pm 1207.8	10,056.6 \pm 8088.3
None	7895.5 \pm 6006.4	1374.1 \pm 1558.9	9269.7 \pm 7325.0
Sub-Provost	8180.6 \pm 6796.0	1417.5 \pm 1946.4	9598.1 \pm 8440.3
Dean	8751.0 \pm 6624.6	1431.4 \pm 1435.5	10,182.3 \pm 7747.6
Director	8191.1 \pm 7127.2	957.6 \pm 957.4	9148.7 \pm 7630.8
Committee	7077.5 \pm 5337.5	966.8 \pm 1012.0	8044.3 \pm 5844.4
None	6031.6 \pm 4239.8	1233.1 \pm 1407.4	7264.7 \pm 5386.8

administrator for graduate programs was at the sub-provost level or a dean, while institutions whose graduate programs were administered by a director or committee tended to have smaller graduate enrollments.

Borchert & Simms (2005) suggested that schools were the most common administrative unit and deans the most common administrator for master's level graduate institutions, although no data were reported to support this perception. While they were correct that dean is the most common title for a graduate administrator within all Carnegie size categories, the number of directors and no administrator were very close to the number of deans at small master's institutions. Furthermore, graduate schools are actually less common than graduate offices across all master's level public institutions. Schools were most common only within the large master's category, while graduate offices are most common in the medium and small master's Carnegie categories.

The pattern appears to be a shift from no administration or an office toward a school or college with increasing size of graduate programs. Similarly, there is a decrease in the frequency of no administrator or a director and increase in the frequency of deans with increasing size of graduate programs. Of course, it is not clear what is the cause and what is the effect in these relationships.

Graduate programs could be large because housing them within schools or colleges that are managed by deans has a positive effect on enrollment and number of degrees awarded. Alternatively, the administrative unit and administrator could be at an elevated level because that is necessary to properly manage large graduate programs. Furthermore, there is much variation, with most units and administrators appearing in all size categories, and almost every combination of administrative unit and administrator title occurring.

In the United States, the number of students seeking master's degrees is about three times greater than the number seeking doctoral degrees (Baum & Steele, 2017; Okahana, Augustine, & Zhou, 2018). In contrast, the focus of most research into graduate level education is at the doctoral level. For example, one peer-reviewed journal that focuses on this aspect of higher education (*Studies in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education*) published 30 research articles in the past two years. Twenty-five of those were specifically about doctoral or post-doctoral education, while only one was specifically about master's level education. Similarly, the Council of Graduate Schools has published eight monographs to establish best practices in graduate education. Four are specifically about doctoral programs, while only one is about master's programs. Given that master's level graduate education receives less attention than issues relevant to doctoral education, it is not surprising that there is almost no actual data about how these programs are managed in the published literature. Although the current analysis provides some information to help understand a pervasive, recurring, and basic aspect of graduate studies management, it is difficult to assess the causes of patterns and variation shown here, or whether they impact effectiveness of graduate education.

The titles of common administrative units in charge of graduate studies could be ranked in order of stature within the bureaucratic hierarchy from highest to lowest as College, School, Division, Center, Department, Office, and None. Similarly, we could rank the title of the administrator in charge of this unit as Sub-provost, Dean, Sub-dean, Director, Coordinator, Committee, and None. Where administrative units and administrators fall along these continua at each institution is likely to be influenced by a balance of several factors.

Egos and bureaucracies encourage titles to migrate to higher positions in the hierarchy. Some administrative personalities are likely to be more adept at positioning titles at higher levels. And once this has occurred, there is significant resistance to demotion of either administrative unit or administrator title, producing a strong historical effect. There is no real financial cost associated with any specific administrative unit title. So it is likely that these are commonly matched to the administrator's title (see Table 5). Titles of administrators carry with them market driven salary structures and, often, time commitments that have substantive financial impacts. Deans tend to have no teaching duties and high salaries, while directors tend to have part-time administrative responsibilities and lower salaries. Potentially positive effects of higher level administrative titles include more time to devote to program development and greater authority to effect change. Of course, these sources of influence bring greater expectations for positive effects on the university. All of these factors interact when top administrators repeatedly and independently decide how to administer graduate programs. For example, at my own institution, administrative unit and administrator titles tend to gradually climb the hierarchy until some budget crisis knocks them back, after which they repeat their gradual climb.

It is likely that titles of graduate studies administrative units and administrators change regularly and are quite variable among public master's institutions for a number of reasons. Graduate studies are relatively new to master's level institutions, are changing rapidly, have lower enrollments than undergraduate programs (and so have less clout and resources), do not have clear boundaries (are often combined with other duties such as oversight of research, grants, and extended studies), and have not developed a data-based set of best practices. This leads institutions to create their own solutions for their specific problems, within their unique culture and history. With regard to graduate administration,

institutions tend to reinvent the wheel repeatedly, based primarily on intuition, hopeful advocacy, and budget shuffling that minimizes institutional pain. Guidelines for administration of graduate studies from a coordinating body, based on clear duties and goals, could help to clarify what is needed to properly guide graduate education.

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International Student Integration on an Arab Higher Education Campus: Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Study

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Introduction

The number of students pursuing higher education abroad is increasing throughout the world (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2017); as such, university campuses have come to represent key spaces of cross-cultural communication. Yet physical proximity and routine contact do not necessarily result in constructive interactions between diverse social groups (Wessel, 2009), particularly in higher education settings (Gareis, 2012; Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2013). Lack of connection between international and domestic students has frequently been attributed to international students' unwillingness to associate with their domestic counterparts. Nonetheless, Ryan (2011) contended that international students do not represent 'problems' that require intervention from university administrators; rather, these students offer an opportunity for the "co-construction of new knowledge and more collaborative ways of working and thinking" (p. 642). Without underestimating the research emphasis placed on the many challenges international students encounter, scholars should reconsider existing and new courses of action to promote meaningful bonds between international and domestic students. Given current social psychological and cognitive trends, researchers have focused on addressing international students' needs along with the factors that might inhibit these students from adjusting to a new culture (Smith, 2016). Recent studies have indicated that the more contact international students have with their host culture, the more their well-being benefits during their studies (Belford, 2017). Thus, research related to such issues has been approached from various perspectives.

Research on international students has mainly examined challenges these students face when transitioning to a host community education system. Several studies have focused on how international students navigate differences in cultural and social norms, attempt to connect with others, and cope with isolation and feelings of loneliness (Gareis, 2012; Georges & Chen, 2018; Smith, 2016; Smith & Demjanenko, 2011). However, scholars have argued that this viewpoint perceives international students through a deficit-focused lens, namely one that emphasizes the "adaptation, acculturation, and assimilation of international students to the dominant host culture" (Thomas et al., 2018, p. 1387). Other studies have focused on aspects associated with the quality of students' study abroad experiences, such as academic stressors including language proficiency; resource-related stressors such as financial shortages; and experiences of discrimination (Belford, 2017; Mamiseishvili, 2012). Despite the importance of examining international students' acculturation challenges, relevant findings remain limited and have tended to frame international students as passive reactors to surrounding circumstances. Thus, "it is equally important to extend scholarly knowledge on how international students develop patterns of social interaction and friendship that contribute to their overall well-being within their adjustment process" (Belford, 2017, p. 500).

Zhang and Goodson's (2011) extensive review of related studies revealed that the disconnect between domestic and international students is correlated with negative psychological outcomes for the

latter group. In an exploration of how cosmopolitanism influences the inclusion of Fulbright international students, Metro-Roland (2018) noted that membership in particular communities should not stand as a barrier to engagement, and values are not necessarily seen as obstacles but rather a facilitator of intercultural engagement. Metro-Roland (2018) thus called for creating communities built upon shared values through various approaches, one of which is organizing groups of international students to foster a sense of community. Overall, additional studies may provide a clearer understanding of the key tenets of student engagement in diverse contexts. This study attempts to fill this gap by examining student engagement in an Arab higher education setting, a context that remains underexplored in the literature.

Literature Review

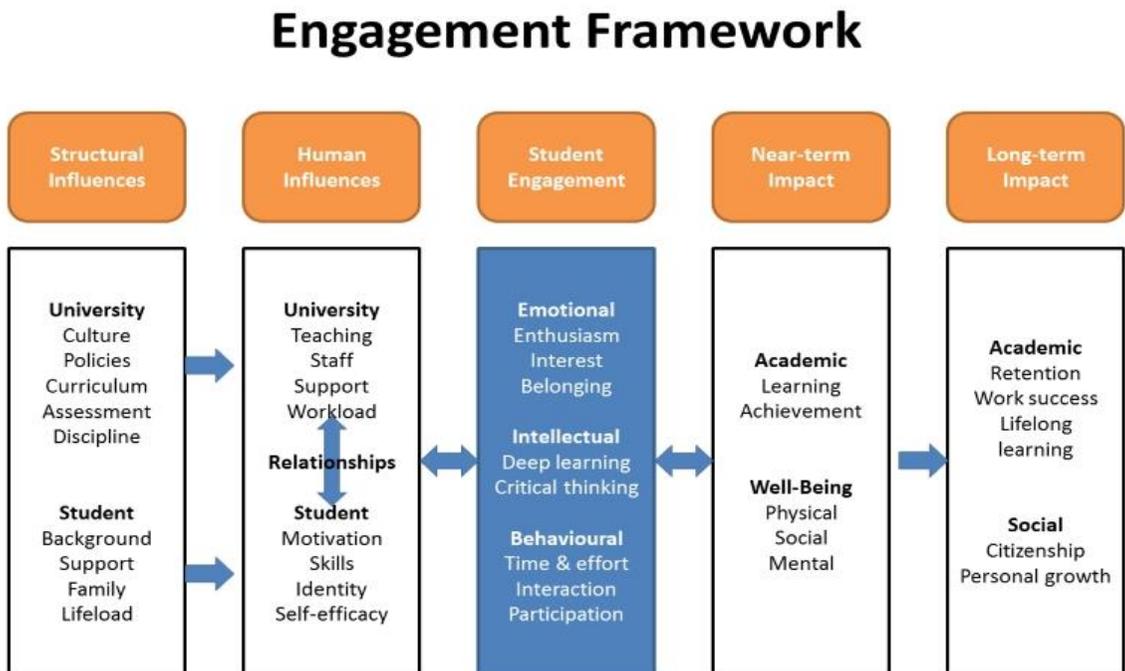
Student engagement is an important aspect of higher education (Westman & Bergmark, 2018). Specifically, student engagement in higher education is thought to critically influence achievement and one's overall university experience; it has been associated with positive academic outcomes as well as broader benefits to students and their institutions, particularly with respect to students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional development (Kahu, 2013; Westman & Bergmark, 2018; Zepke, 2014). However, the concept of student engagement remains ambiguous in higher education research (Westman & Bergmark, 2018). Zepke (2014) called for further exploration of student engagement, as the concept warrants close examination. Evaluation of such a complex construct is difficult and has largely been conducted via surveys (Dyer, Jackson, & Livesey, 2018); such instruments "predominantly focus on student [behavior] and have been questioned ... for overlooking the complexity and dynamic nature of student engagement" (Dyer, Jackson & Livesey, 2018, p. 30). Given the belief that much is left to explore about student engagement, scholars have called for the application of other research paradigms to capture the diversity of students' engagement experiences. Such findings could deepen our understanding of student engagement and promote the development of appropriate initiatives to maximize the prospective advantages of engagement (Dyer, Jackson, & Livesey, 2018; Kahu, 2013).

Kahu (2013) classified the literature on student engagement into four distinct but overlapping areas: behavioral, psychological, sociocultural, and holistic. She discussed the key assumptions of each area along with their respective strengths and weaknesses and then proposed a comprehensive conceptual framework to serve as a reference for future research. Kahu's (2013) framework consists of the following components: structural and psychosocial influences on engagement; student engagement as a state of being; the proximal and distal consequences of engagement; and the sociocultural context within which these components are embedded. The framework attempts to address some of the weaknesses of the broader behavioral, psychological, sociocultural, and holistic categories. Specifically, Kahu (2013) alleged that the state of being engaged as a student is not mechanical but dynamic and situated within a larger sociocultural context; she also acknowledged that engagement is influenced by various factors and produces distinct consequences. Overall, her framework focuses on the interaction between influences on engagement, the state of being engaged and associated consequences, and feedback within and across these factors.

Scholars have agreed that being engaged as a student requires an investment of time and effort on the student's part along with participation in the learning process (Coates, 2007; Hu & Kuh, 2002; Kuh, 2009). Yet student engagement, as a concept and practice, continues to be questioned in the literature. In explaining the state of being engaged, Kahu's (2013) framework includes three characteristics

identified by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004): (a) behavioral engagement, including participation in educational and social activities; (b) emotional engagement, encompassing affective reactions involved in learning; and (c) cognitive engagement, which emphasizes motivation and investment in learning concepts and skills. The proposed framework thus incorporates a psychological perspective and accepts that engagement is not simply a set of behaviors; instead, the concept includes emotional aspects and is conceptualized as a dynamic process affected by external elements that can either promote or hinder engagement (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of engagement, influences, and consequences (Kahu, 2013).



(Framework adapted from Ella R Kahu, 2013)

Kahu (2013) extended the definition of engagement by emphasizing a sociocultural, holistic perspective. Her additions include structural and psychosocial factors as potential influences resulting from student engagement on university campuses. As such, her model combines many factors that have been cited as benefits or obstacles in the growing literature on factors affecting student engagement. Kahu’s (2013) framework was based upon Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) seven principles for sound practices in undergraduate education and their numerous related factors. For example, at the university level, factors such as organizational culture (van der Velden, 2012); resources and opportunities available for engagement (Coates, 2005; Strange & Banning, 2001); how curricula are designed and delivered (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2011; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005); interactions between students and their universities, including staff and student peers (Bryson & Hand, 2007; Smith,

2007); and a sense of belonging and value within a learning community (Zhao & Kuh, 2004) have been reported as key influences on student engagement. At the student level, factors conducive to engagement include motivation and aptitude for self-regulation and accepting challenges (Coates, 2007; Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Kuh, 2003; Yorke & Knight, 2004). Barriers to engagement include ‘lifeload’ factors (Kahu, 2013) such as financial and social pressures (Yorke, 2000).

The relevant literature has also revealed many outcomes for students and institutions when engagement is successful. Strong engagement has been associated with students’ personal growth (Mercer, 2007), active citizenship (Zepke, Leach, & Butler, 2010), and efforts to develop their skills and improve their learning (Coates, 2005). At the institutional level, universities benefit from student engagement through improved student retention (Kuh, 2009) and academic reputation (Coates, 2005). Kahu (2013) classified these outcomes as *proximal* and *distal*, referring to academic and social consequences, respectively.

Despite a growing body of research, alternative approaches are needed to foster relationships between international students and their host university community. Rose-Redwood and Rose-Redwood (2013) noted that “[engagement] programs would be more effective if they abandoned the assimilationist doctrine of adjustment to the dominant culture and instead promoted the programmatic goal of mutual engagement” (p. 426). In a similar vein, Wang and Brckalorenz (2018) examined large-scale and multi-institutional datasets about student engagement and found that faculty approaches and behaviors when connecting with international students can promote engagement among international students and the overall student body, especially during student–faculty interactions. They also discovered that the engagement of international students may benefit faculty, such as by enhancing intercultural communication skills and promoting cultural awareness. Thus, Wang and Brckalorenz (2018) recommended that academic institutions and departments provide the necessary resources to encourage faculty and staff to engage all students—not only international students per se—in an inclusive environment.

The present study employs a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach to understand the conditions that promote international student engagement on a higher education campus and the outcomes resulting from such conditions. To achieve this objective, the study is framed by Kahu’s (2013) broader sociocultural framework. The model postulates that the environment in which students and a university interact influences all aspects of engagement (Kahu, 2013). This broader environment represents the context in which students are studying (i.e., an Arab higher education campus in this case). As such, this study provides empirical data from the perspective of international students studying at an Arab university and contributes to discussions around the dynamics of student engagement as depicted in Kahu’s (2013) model. In line with this general purpose, our main research question is as follows: How do international students in an Arab context perceive their engagement on a university campus?

Method

Study Design.

To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of international student engagement at an Arab higher education institution, this study used a convergent parallel design, specifically a mixed-methods design (denoted as **QUAL+QUAN**). A convergent parallel design involves conducting quantitative and qualitative studies concurrently (i.e., in the same study phase). Then, the researchers assign equal weight to each method, analyze the methods independently, and interpret the results collectively (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This design allows for triangulation of the research methods and direct

comparison of the quantitative and quantitative results to enhance validation. The approach requires the two datasets to be collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and finally compared (Figure 2).

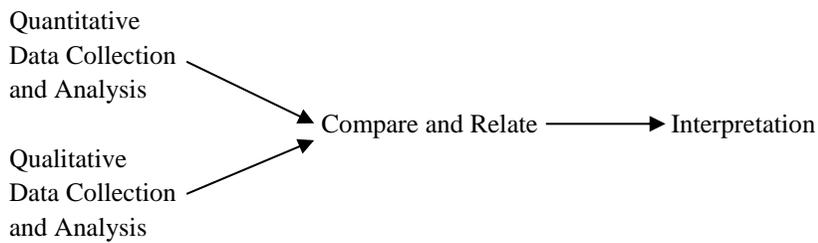


Figure 2. Research process in a convergent parallel study design.

Participants

In this study, international students are defined as those who are not Kuwaiti but enrolled in a higher education institution in Kuwait. International students are eligible for fully sponsored scholarships by the Kuwaiti government.

Qualitative participants.

This study was conducted at an Arab higher education campus in Kuwait during the spring semester of 2018. Criterion sampling, a purposeful sampling technique, was used to select participants. Participant selection criteria included being a fourth-year international student, as the researcher believed that senior-level students would provide a rich source of data. Thirteen male and twelve female international students volunteered to participate in the study. Maximum diversity in terms of nationality, age, and gender was considered during the sample selection process. Participants' identities were kept confidential by using the letter "P" accompanied by a number from 1 to 25 (i.e., P1, P2, ... P25). A nonprobability, purposive, voluntary sample of 25 international students participated in this study. Participants were required to be either junior- or senior-year students, as the author believed that more experienced students would provide richer data than more recent university enrollees. This sample was also diverse in terms of gender, nationality, and major. Twenty-five students (12 women [7 seniors and 5 juniors], 13 men [7 seniors and 6 juniors]; age range: 20–25) who fit the inclusion criteria voluntarily agreed to participate. The population was diverse based on the general population of 'low-income' countries, to which the study location belonged. Consequently, in addition to common stressors of university life, many students may have also faced socioeconomic challenges.

Quantitative participants.

As of November 2018, I had access to all international students ($N = 120$) at the selected higher education institution. The average student age was 20 years old, and 65 were male students while 55 were female students. Students' ethnic distribution was as follows: 60% African, 35% Asian, and 5% Caucasian; most came from low-income countries. Students were contacted via email using SurveyMonkey, a cloud-based survey development program.

Data Collection Tools.

Qualitative data collection. Because a qualitative design was adopted for the phenomenological portion of this mixed-methods study, the study was positioned within a narrative framework (Creswell, 2014). Under a narrative inquiry approach, the researcher gathers, reviews, and analyzes participants' personal accounts of experiences and events (Riessman, 2008). As participants are considered embodiments of lived stories, a narrative approach attempts to discover the multiple layers of participants' experiences and qualitative meanings articulated through their stories. Thus, narrative inquiry was suitable for this study as a means of exploring and understanding international students' perceptions of engagement on the chosen university campus.

Data were collected using naïve sketches. Giorgi (1985) described naïve sketches as documents written by participants, depicting their experiences with and perceptions about a given theme. In this study, participants were instructed to write about their university experiences and to think of other students they knew on the current campus to generate sketches reflecting the three elements of Kahu's (2013) framework (i.e., the state of being engaged, influences, and consequences). These components were measured via participants' responses that identified 'words and phrases [describing] being an engaged student,' 'barriers and enablers to engagement' (i.e., influences), and 'benefits of being engaged' (i.e., consequences). Next, participants were instructed to draw a picture or provide a paper cut-out of an image that illustrated the process of engagement on university campuses. Participants were then asked to write an essay about the picture or image they provided, specifically what the picture or image represented for them and how influential their chosen engagement experience had been in interacting with domestic students. Participants were also asked to include personal examples to enrich their answers. The 25 naïve sketches varied in length from 4 to 13 pages, and all sketches were included for analysis. The goal of this part of the study was to construct meaning through storytelling.

As with other types of qualitative data, participants' sketches were expected to reflect a basic tenet of the phenomenological approach: diversity (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). However, it is unrealistic to continue collecting data simply for the sake of diversity; data collection should stop once saturation is reached, after which data interpretation can begin (Creswell, 2014). According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006), saturation is reached in an exploratory study with a homogeneous sample when newly collected data cease to reveal new insights for interpretation. In the current study, data saturation was reached once all naïve sketches were reviewed and provided no new insights.

Quantitative data collection. Data were collected using Marôco, Marôco, Bonini Campos, and Fredricks' (2016) English-language 15-item University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI). This measure conceptualizes student engagement as a multidimensional construct, including cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects (see Table 1). The questionnaire includes sociodemographic items (i.e., regarding age, gender, major, and nationality) in addition to questions pertaining to student engagement. Items are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

All required permissions were obtained prior to conducting this study. Any identifying information (e.g., participants' names) was kept confidential and removed prior to data analysis. No benefits or reimbursement of any type were offered for participation. Participants were informed of these parameters, along with the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw without penalty, in the written informed consent form that all participants signed. The final survey sample consisted of 120 respondents (response rate: 100%), and all surveys were complete and retained for analysis.

Data Analysis.

Qualitative data analysis. A narrative thematic approach was used to examine the qualitative data collected in this study (Creswell, 2014; Riessman, 2008). Data were organized and analyzed with respect to the following three questions: “What does ‘an engaged student’ mean to you?”, “What facilitates or impedes students from being engaged?”, and “What are the benefits of being engaged?” This approach enabled the researcher to decode data into themes that informed international students’ lived engagement experiences at the selected higher education institution. The following five interrelated steps guided data analysis: (1) familiarization; (2) inducing themes; (3) coding; (4) elaboration; and (5) interpretation and checking (Riessman, 2008). All steps were guided by the headings of Kahu’s (2013) framework (i.e., *structural* and *psychosocial* influences of engagement, *student engagement* as a state of being, the *proximal* and *distal* consequences of engagement, and the *sociocultural* context). Extracted themes were quantified using the following formula:

$$\text{Narrated theme} = (\text{number of relevant responses} / \text{total number of responses}) \times 100$$

A higher score indicates that the theme was more prevalent in students’ responses (see the Results section for more details).

The researcher followed Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) guidelines for qualitative research to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. In the current study, six steps were followed to verify the credibility of data analysis and interpretation: (a) collecting rich data through narrative sketches; (b) seeking an independent coder experienced in qualitative research; (c) participant verification; (d) using an audit trail to record what was done in the study from the start of the study’s development through interpretation of findings; (e) providing rich descriptions of the research method and procedure; and (f) engaging in ongoing reflection.

Quantitative data analysis. In the quantitative stage, participants’ responses to the USEI were processed in SPSS version 25. Only descriptive analyses were performed on the data. Descriptive findings from the qualitative data were then compared with those from the quantitative data. Given the lack of a uniform way to present data analysis in this type of mixed-methods design, data can be analyzed using different approaches (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher began with the qualitative data and then examined the quantitative dataset for the sake of data comparison and confirmation. This technique is called the side-by-side approach (Creswell, 2014).

Results and Discussion

The findings reported in this section should be considered in light of Kahu’s (2013) model. Qualitative and quantitative findings are presented separately.

Qualitative Findings.

The following subsections present findings that support the elements of Kahu’s (2013) model, including themes and statistics, on the basis of participants’ responses to survey categories.

Question 1: What does ‘an engaged student’ mean to you?

Most participants noted personal characteristics indicative of student engagement, such as being polite, intelligent, punctual, and self-reliant. These characteristics and similar attributes support the cognitive dimension of Kahu’s (2013) framework. Many naïve sketches revealed that participants envisioned ‘an engaged student’ as one who demonstrates participation and interaction reflecting the essence of engagement: a commitment to investing time and effort into engaging with others. Yet

participants did not limit the notion of ‘an engaged student’ to study-related behaviors, such as participating in classroom discussions or discussing course-related issues outside of class; participants’ conceptualizations also included behaviors related to social bonding, such as attending extracurricular activities, volunteering within the host university community, or sharing future plans or career opportunities. Some participants also described emotional characteristics relevant to engagement, such as cultivating friendships with others within the physical sphere of university campuses, whether with students, faculty, or staff.

Question 2: What facilitates or impedes students from being engaged?

Kahu’s (2013) framework could potentially serve as a universal model of student engagement. The four types of barriers and enablers in the model (Figure 1) were reflected in international students’ essay responses; however, many responses were connected to students’ perceptions. *Psychosocial* factors were most often mentioned as either facilitating or impeding the engagement process. To illustrate, over half (56%) of written responses focused on *approach–avoidance*, such that international students approach engagement when they perceive it to be a process that satisfies their needs (i.e., enabler), including academic-related needs, self-confidence, a sense of belonging, or interest/enjoyment. For example, Participant 5 explained, “*I like to get into engagement with others within the university premises when this act satisfies my own needs, all my legitimate needs.*” Conversely, international students in this study tended to avoid engagement (i.e., barrier) when it was seen as a stressor. Participant B wrote, “*When I feel that engagement causes me stress of any kind, I tend not to get engaged. I would keep myself away [from] any sort of engagement that might affect my study.*” Overall, student-related structural influences were diverse and indicated that diverse personal characteristics can affect the quantity and quality of engagement. With regard to university characteristics, participants noted psychosocial influences (e.g., the approachability of faculty and staff along with faculty members who are inspiring). Extracurricular activities with the host university community were also cited as crucial to being engaged.

Question 3: What are the benefits of being engaged?

The four types of benefits of engagement as depicted in Kahu’s (2013) framework were reflected in international students’ responses to this question. As indicated by theme quantification, participants most often mentioned benefits related to knowledge, skills, satisfaction, and well-being. Benefits also frequently involved academic achievement, such as earning higher grades and greater knowledge, as well as extracurricular gains such as developing communication skills. *Proximal* and *distal* consequences clearly overlapped in Questions 2 and 3, suggesting that the various elements in international student engagement interact in dynamic loops, representing “a multifaceted concept” (Lee, 2013, p. 177). To illustrate, Participant 13 wrote “*being an engaged student means that I could have various benefits on more than one level or dimension.*”

Quantitative Findings.

Quantitative data supported the qualitative data (Table 1). Overall, international students in this study perceived engagement in terms of behavioral and cognitive aspects. Thus, engagement manifested as a process of skill development that led to tangible gains. However, engagement is not necessarily limited to tangible benefits such as academic achievement; it is also helpful in acquiring emotional gains. Based on the aggregate mean of all items in the category, engagement appears to be least conducive to emotional benefits. Behavioral and cognitive engagement may be more correlated to barriers that hinder engagement, leading to fewer emotional benefits.

Table 1.

*Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of International Students' Perceptions
about Engagement on an Arab Higher Education Institution Campus (N = 120)*

Dimension	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I. Behavioral Engagement	3.7	0.5
1. I pay attention in class.	4.6	0.3
2. I follow the university's rules.	4.3	0.2
3. I usually do my homework on time.	3.9	0.7
4. When I have doubts I ask questions and participate in debates in the classroom.	2.4	0.5
5. I usually participate actively in group assignments.	2.6	0.7
II. Emotional Engagement	2.5	0.6
1. I don't feel very accomplished at this university.	3.1	0.9
2. I feel excited about the university work.	2.8	0.4
3. I like being at university.	2.2	0.7
4. I am interested in the university work.	2.2	0.7
5. My classroom is an interesting place to be.	2.4	0.6
III. Cognitive Engagement	3.9	0.4
1. When I read a book, I question myself to make sure I understand the subject I'm reading about.	4.6	0.5
2. I talk to people outside the school on matters that I learned in class.	2.6	0.3
3. If I do not understand the meaning of a word, I try to solve the problem, for example by consulting a dictionary or asking someone else.	3.1	0.6
4. I try to integrate the acquired knowledge in solving new problems.	4.6	0.2
5. I try to integrate subjects from different disciplines into my general knowledge.	4.6	0.3

Note: Item responses scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

These quantitative findings indicate that international students in this Arab context may lack a sense of an inclusive environment that enhances a sense of belonging, value, or interest/enjoyment within their learning community. This aspect of emotional engagement, which is fostered through intercultural communication, promotes cultural awareness.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examined international students' perceptions of student engagement in an Arab higher education context. The research involved a convergent parallel mixed-methods design in which a qualitative and quantitative dataset were each collected and analyzed simultaneously. Overall, the behavioral and cognitive dimensions of engagement were emphasized more than the emotional dimension, although the emotional dimension was still applicable. Consequently, academic-related benefits and cognitive benefits were more apparent than other types.

In light of Kahu's (2013) model, our findings offer several implications. First, the results of this study collectively support Kahu's (2013) model in explaining the nature and process of student engagement. Second, although international students can maintain a high academic profile, they do not necessarily develop other aspects (e.g., societal) of being an international student; that is, admission

policies around student mobility and scholarship are not limited to academia but extend to centering the marginal and stretching boundaries in terms of bridging diverse cultures (Alqahtani, 2012). Diverse interactions have been found to promote student development in a variety of domains (Kuh, 2009). According to Jones (2016), “higher levels of interactional diversity have been correlated with increased cultural knowledge, greater cognitive and affective development, more positive intergroup attitudes, increased critical thinking skills, increased intellectual and social self-confidence, and greater student satisfaction with the college experience” (p. 82). However, given the benefits of international student engagement in an Arab context, further attention needs to be paid to the extent and quality of such engagement.

Nonetheless, the results reported here must be interpreted with caution and a potential limitation should be noted- conflicts arising from cultural bias and other personal issues. Although the problem was stated and the data-gathering process was carried out appropriately, international students’ responses might be biased due to their cultural backgrounds or perspectives of certain phenomena. This can thus affect the generalizability of findings to students from other cultures or institutions.

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Re-Engineering Open and Distance Learning Programmes Towards Improved Access to University Education in Nigeria

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One of the most recurring and debated issues in education, particularly higher education has been access. Access crisis is seriously threatening the nation's education industry, and has been one of the greatest obstacles to the development of Nigerian education. It is perhaps, the most single difficult task asked especially of the education sector in Nigeria today.

The increasing importance attached to higher education as a means of not only availing individuals opportunities for personal development, but also strengthening the nation's economy has intensified the demand for university education the world all over. The need for the increase in demand for university education is not unconnected with the fact that it is fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society. It is to this end that Ehiemetalor (2005) argued that there seems to be a general perception among Nigerian people that only a university degree can promise a good future. According to him, the demand for university education has reached such an unprecedented high level that more than double the current number of universities in the country will be required to meet this demand. But Nigerian higher education has not been able to meet this ever increasing demand for place in the university. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2008) argued that making higher education accessible to every Nigerian should be a top priority. Thus, Nigerian citizens who are qualified to receive university education should be provided with opportunity to do so without hindrance (Ehiemetalor).

Access to education reflects the universal declaration of Human Right which provided that everyone has a right to education. It provides a guarantee for everyone entitled to education to receive it. It means rights, opportunity or means of making education available within the reach of every citizens of nation (Enaohwo, 2008). A critical look at demand and supply of university education in Nigeria shows that there is excess demand for university education. Hence, access crisis persists.

Demand and Supply of University Education in Conventional Institutions

The nation's conventional institutions are at present, being faced with the challenge of their inability to absorb pressures that emanate from expansion in student enrolment. In a survey of literature, Thomas (as cited in Aderinoye, 2002), reported that formal education's ability to meet the educational needs of people all over the world is very limited, hence the need for alternative way of providing education for those that actually demand for it. Ajayi and Adeniji (2009) opined that in order to underscore the phenomenal development that has taken place in university education in the recent years, the picture of demand and supply of university education in Nigeria is necessary. The scramble for admission into the existing universities in Nigeria is well documented. For instance, Table 1 shows the situation of demand and supply of university education during the 1983/84 and 1992/93 academic sessions in Nigerian universities.

Table 1 – Accommodation Student Demand in Nigerian Universities, 1983-1993

Year	Number of Applications	Number Admitted	% Change in Number Admitted
1983-84	191,583	25,891	
1984-85	201,140	27,482	6.1
1985-86	212,114	36,163	32.8
1986-87	193,729	39,915	10.4
1987-88	210,625	36,456	-8.7
1988-89	191,482	41,700	14.4
1988-90	255,639	37,425	-10.3
1990-91	299,503	43,726	16.8
1991-92	398,222	61,479	40.6
1992-93	357,959	57,685	-6.2

Source: JAMB Annual Reports; and JAMB News vol.1, Jan/April 1994.

Table 1 shows that the number of applicants and the number of admitted students is increasing yearly, but also reveals that only a small fraction of those applying for university education actually achieve admission. This lends credence to the observed problem of the inability of our nation's conventional universities to serve all those who wish to attend. Even in the recent times, the situation has not changed. Table 2 reveals similar situation of excess demand for university education in Nigerian universities.

Table 2 – Accommodation Student Demand in Nigerian Universities, 2011-16

Year	Number of Applications	Number Admitted	% of Applicants Admitted
2011-12	1,585,522	192,809	12.2
2012-13	1,452,874	386,308	26.5
2013-14	1,668,224	262,510	15.7
2014-15	1,576,257	359,559	22.8
2015-16	1,424,628	384,442	26.9

Source: JAMB Annual Report 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015.

Table 2 shows demand and supply of university education during 2011/12 and 2015/16 academic sessions in Nigerian universities. From the Table, it was revealed that universities were only able to provide space for just 12.2%, 26.5%, 15.7%, and 26.9% of the entire applicants in 2011/2012, 2012/2013, 2013/2014, and 2015/2016 academic sessions respectively. This is an indication that the level of access to education in Nigeria is far below the 40 percent recommended ratio for any nation to make appreciable impact on the economy according to UNESCO (as cited in Aluede, Idogo, & Imonikhe, 2012).

The apparently limitation of the conventional institutions in the provision of educational opportunity to many desiring it, paved the way for the introduction and acceptance of distance education as an alternative form and standard component of education. In the submission of Aderinoye

(2002), the best alternative to the limited conventional system is non-formal, and of course, the best way to reach millions who are unserved is through the distance learning approach. There is therefore the need to re-engineer this mode of educational delivery with a view to addressing the access crisis in Nigerian university system. This is the motivational factor behind this paper.

Conceptual Clarifications

Inherent in this paper are certain concepts that need to be conceptually clarified so as to have better understanding of the main thrust of the paper. These basic concepts are Access to Education, Re-Engineering, and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) respectively.

Access to Education. Access, according to Akintayo (2004) refers to opportunities and avenues, which are open to prospective students to enroll into a course of study of individual choice. Access to university education is therefore, the extent to which people have access to or unhindered opportunity to pursue university education in Nigeria. Access to education implies making “it possible for everyone who is entitled to education to receive it” Education Sector Analysis (EFA, 2003:p.6).

Access to education in its full and broad sense means free and unlimited/unhindered/unfettered opportunities at each level of education to obtain knowledge, skills, and abilities available at that level needed to optimally participate and contribute to development in the society (Okeke, 2009). According to Ehiametalor (2005), access to education is the opportunity to participate in education sector whether formal or informal In the context of this presentation, access to education would mean the extent to which people have unhindered opportunities to acquire university education in Nigeria (Aluede, et al., 2012). It can therefore be submitted that access to (university) education is the ability of educational institutions, that is, universities to admit and accommodate those who are willing, able, and ready to acquire university education.

Re-Engineering. The historical development of the concept of re-engineering could be traced to the era of management theories developed as early as the 19th Century. During this era, technology was not sufficient to allow large companies to design processes in a cross-functional or cross-departmental manner. In the 1880s, an American engineer, Frederick Taylor suggested that managers could discover the best processes for performing work and re-engineer them to optimize productivity. Essentially therefore, the purpose of re-engineering is to make all processes the best possible.

Re-engineering however, became popular in the early 1990s even though, the methodology and approach were still not fully understood or appreciated. In the 21st Century, re-engineering became effective tool for organizations striving to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. Much attention was given to "best practices" that are the outcome of re-engineering strategies. Within the contexts of this paper, the adoption of global best practices which will make Nigeria's ODL programme properly re-engineered is the focus.

Hammer and Champy (1993) are credited in the literature as defining re-engineering as “the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical temporary measures of performance such as cost, service, quality, and speed” (p. 46). Prior to the Hammer and Champy work, Penrod and Dolence (1992) had earlier defined re-engineering as “using the power of modern information technology to radically redesign administrative business processes in order to achieve dramatic improvements in their performance” (p. 8).

In his own submission, re-engineering according to Kerry (1999) is the provision for better quality in a changing environment; but it is more than tinkering with the structures to achieve marginally more

acceptable results. It is a mindset that uses creative thinking in a focused way to achieve quite different ways of working. It is anticipatory rather than reactive. However, re-engineering is most commonly defined as the redesign of business processes—and the associated systems and organizational structures—to achieve a dramatic improvement in business performance. It should be quickly added that re-engineering is not the same as downsizing, restructuring, reorganization, and/or new technology. Rather, it is the examination and change of five components of the business strategy, process, technology, organization, and culture. The author of this paper simply define re-engineering as the process of changing and improving the design of a system or programme.

Re-engineering emphasizes quality better than the previous one. Also, it shows that we are in a dynamic environment, which calls for the need to always be updated in order to cope with the modern challenges (Okunoye, Frolick, & Crable, 2006). Finally, re-engineering is futuristic as it takes into consideration, future needs rather than reacting to the already existing phenomenon, with certain focal points in terms of areas that require re-engineering.

Open and Distance Learning. The terms ‘*open learning*’ and ‘*distance education*’ according to UNESCO (as cited in Oladejo, 2018) represent approaches that focus on opening access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners. Essentially therefore, the main goal of ODL is to create access to education. Open and Distance Learning has come with different nomenclatures such as wellness education, correspondence education, independent study, home study, flexible education, directed private study, individualized learning, and so on.

In terms of definitions, there have been some classical definitions from the Founding fathers in the field. For instance, Peters (1973) defined distance education as a method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes, which are rationalized by the application of division of labour and organizational principles as well as by the extensive use of technical media, specially, for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching material which makes it possible to, instruct great numbers of students in the same time wherever they live. It is an industrialized form of teaching and learning. Distance education, according to another founding father, is a systematically organized form of self-study in which students’ counselling, presentation of learning materials and securing and supervising of students’ success are carried out by a team of teachers each of whom has responsibilities (Dohmen, 1977).

In his own view, Keegan (1986) was of the opinion that ODL is a systematic educational activity, which encompasses the choice, preparation and presentation of teaching materials as well as supervision and support of students’ learning, which is achieved by bringing the physical distance between the students and the teacher by means of at least one appropriate technical medium. It has also been described according to Holmberg (1989) as that kind of education which covers the various forms of study at all levels which are not under continuous and immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms on the same premises, but which nevertheless, benefits from the planning, guidance, and tuition of a tutorial organization.

Recently, Jegede (as cited in Oladejo, 2018) defined ODL as the provision of education by mode other than conventional face-to-face method but whose goals are similar to, and just as noble and practical as those of on-campus full-time face-to-face education .Also, the UNESCO (2000), described distance education as any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from the learner, with the effect that all or most of the communication between teachers and learners is through an artificial medium, either electronic or print. By implication, in distance education the normal or principal means of communication is through technology. According to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL, 2012), Open and Distance Learning (ODL) refers to a system of teaching and learning characterized by separation of teacher and learner in

time and/or place; uses multiple media for delivery of instruction; involves two-way communication and occasional face-to-face meeting for tutorials and learner-learner interaction. In his own submission, Oladejo opined that open and distance learning is an educational provision that is mediated through the use of information and communication technologies due to non-simultaneous presence of both the tutors and the learners in time and space.

ODL Initiative: The Nigerian Experience

In Nigeria, the history of ODL system can be traced to the pre-independence era (that is, Pre-1960) when some Universities and Colleges (mostly from the United Kingdom) established Study Centres and even conducted examinations in few of the Nigerian cities like Lagos and Ibadan (Oladejo, 2018).

In 1947, the Oxford University, established extra-mural studies at the then University College of Ibadan in Nigeria. This enabled few of the Nigerian elites to obtain their degrees through correspondence education. In fact, the premier University in Nigeria, that is, the University of Ibadan was a former extension of University College, London, until 1948 when it became autonomous. However, the first distance education course by Radio was inaugurated by the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in 1960. The then National Television of Nigeria (NTV) also aired Educational Television Programmes in all their stations. Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria became the first institution to carry out a special training programme in form of distance education system when, in 1972, she launched her Teachers In-Service Education Programme (TISEP).

In 1974, the Distance Learning Institute (DLI), then known as Correspondence Open Studies Unit (COSU), was established at the University of Lagos to produce university graduates in those disciplines where there were serious national shortfalls in higher level manpower production in Nigeria. This was followed by the establishment of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) in 1976 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It should be noted that the Federal Government of Nigeria initiated the idea of establishing a National Open University in May 1980, during the Second Republic. This idea became reality in 1983 with the establishment of a National open university, but the military regime of General Muhammadu Buhari scrapped this university in 1984.

The University of Ibadan in 1984 established the then Centre for External Studies (now Distance Learning Centre (DLC). In 1988, the then scrapped national Open University transformed into University of Abuja, and subsequently became a dual mode university with the establishment of the Centre for Distance Learning and Continuing Education (CDL&CE) in 1990. The Federal Government of Nigeria in 2001, under President Olusegun Obasanjo re-established an ODL-dedicated national university and named it the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to run some programmes. According to Oladejo (2018), in March, 2002, the National Open University invited experts from Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges and Industries for a one-month Structural Design and Course Materials Development in Lokoja, Nigeria. Today, NOUN admits over thirty thousand students annually.

National Workshop on Distance Education Development. The Federal government of Nigeria, in conjunction with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) organised a national workshop on distance education in September 2000. This national workshop, which has as its theme the '*Development of a Plan for a Decade of Distance Education in Nigeria*' was held at the Secretariat of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Its objectives according to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, ADEA (as cited in Oladejo, 2018) are to:

1. Enact a national policy on distance education, as a component of the national policy on education;
2. Establish a solid institutional framework for distance education in Nigeria, following a carefully conducted needs assessment studies;
3. Establish distance education as a core component of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program to jump-start the UBE delivery process;
4. Reopen the National Open University of Nigeria to address access and equity issues in higher education;
5. Provide higher education to a minimum of one million qualified candidates through the distance and open learning modes involving public and private sector participation, in areas of high manpower needs;
6. Establish a national open school (secondary) to address access and equity issues in secondary education;
7. Train 20,000 distance education operators including course writers, support service providers, producers, managers, instructional designers and technicians; and
8. Establish a virile ICT-driven distance education delivery system

ODL in the National Policy on Education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, in pursuance of the efforts to enact a national policy on distance education which will form a component of the national policy on education, makes provision for open and distance learning in the National policy on education (2014). It recognised lifelong education as the basis of the nation's education, and thus, defined ODL as the mode of teaching in which learners are removed in time and space from the teacher. The policy also highlights the goals of ODL which are as to:

- provide access to quality education as well as equity in educational opportunities to those who otherwise would have been denied;
- meet special needs of employers by mounting special certificate courses for their employees at their work place;
- encourage internationalization especially of tertiary education curricula; and
- ameliorate the effect of internal and external brain drain in tertiary institutions by utilization experts as teachers regardless of their locations or places of work.

Table 3 shows the list of approved distance learning centers in Nigerian conventional universities. Out of 43 Federal universities, only eight run ODL programs, two State universities to run ODL programs out of 48, while only one private university out of 79 according to the National Universities Commission (NUC). The only ODL-dedicated University in Nigeria is the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). As it is, and in view of the access crisis currently being experienced in the country, the number of the approved conventional universities running ODL is low, if the problem is to be addressed. The existing ones also need to be re-engineered for better access creation.

Focus Areas in Re-Engineering ODL Program in Nigeria. The authors have identified four major areas need to be focused while re-engineering ODL so as to create more access to quality university education. These areas are:

1. Effective Teaching-Learning Processes: In this focus area, there are some issues to be properly addressed so that there would be improvement on the quality of teaching in the program. This is premise on Herbert and James (1996)'s argument that successful re-engineering in higher

education must begin with teaching and learning, rather than administrative processes. Efforts in this regard will demand for training and re-training of participating academic staff, whose quality an experience will go a long way at predicting distance a/students' academic achievement. There should be the provision of much needed students supports services that will stimulate students; interest in the program. A more conducive learning environment needs to be put in place. All these have impacts on students; academic achievement, which is the major determinant of the productivity of any educational program including distance education.

Table 3 – Approved Distance Learning Centers in Nigerian Conventional Universities

Universities	Names of the ODL Centers
University of Ibadan, Ibadan	Distance Learning Center
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	Centre for Distance Learning
University of Lagos, Akoka	Distance Learning Institute
University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri	Centre for Distance Learning
Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola	Centre for Distance Learning
University of Abuja, Abuja	Centre for Distance Learning and Continuing Education
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho	LAUTECH Distance Learning Center
Ahmadu Bello University Zaria	Distance Learning Center ABU, Zaria
Lagos State University	Lagos State University Open and Distance Learning and Research Institute
Joseph Ayo Babalola University	JABU Center for Distance Learning
University of Nigeria Nsukka	UNN Center for Distance and e-Learning
Federal University of Technology, Minna	Centre for Open Distance and e-Learning

2. **Technological Infrastructure:** A distance teaching system needs to have the best technological infrastructure it can afford, namely in data processing for academic and administrative management, and internal circulation of information and technologies for producing and publishing learning materials. However, in distributing these materials and assuring good communications with students, some other considerations must be taken into account. Ellen (1996) proposes that universities first apply technology to improving the delivery of distance education courses and then transfer those methods to the campus-based course.
3. **Adequate Resource Injection:** Adequate injection of all vital resources into distance education programme as well as judicious utilization of these programmes success vis-à-vis students; academic achievement. In education programme if it will be able to compete favourably with traditional-face-to-face educational system.
4. **Private Sector Participation:** Private sector participation in the provisions of distance education as done in private sector's communication sector be sought. This however, requires effective monitoring by the appropriate agency.

5. Strict Compliance with Policy Provisions: In this focus area, we all need to get our bearing right. Which educational policy are we actually practicing? Do we actually need distance education? Can we really monitor and supervise it properly? Is it going to sandwich, part time, or real open learning? Our educational policies as regard distance education need to be stable to a very large extent. This will enable us to be able to do a critical evaluation of the programme.
6. Learner Support Services: This is another very critical area that should be re-engineered in ODL. How effective these services are, will go a long way at promoting students' programme satisfaction. This will further enhance the status of the programme, and thus, attracts more students.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that ODL programme has come to play invaluable complementary roles to conventional formal system in providing more access to educational opportunities for those previously unserved. It however needs to be re-engineered so as to create more access to university education. All hands must therefore be on deck with a view to re-engineering the system for higher access creation.

Recommendations

In line with the main thrust of this paper, the author hereby recommends the under listed as suggestions for re-engineering ODL program towards improved access to university education in Nigeria.

- The Federal Government, through the National Universities Commission, should encourage, other conventional universities to go duality by establishing Distance education centers.
- There should be strict compliance with national policy on distance education within the already existing national document.
- Similarly, there should be the establishment of a National Commission on Open and Distance Learning that will see to the proper monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of distance education program in Nigeria.
- Adequate provisions of all necessary resources, especially funds should be ensured. Government should therefore, without further delay, implement the aspect of Tertiary Education Tax Fund that deals with the funding of distance education.
- Improved technological infrastructure is a must, if ODL is to be properly re-engineered. This is because the relevance and importance of technologies cannot be over emphasized in ODL. Related to this is the need for stable power supply that will enhance the success of program.

- Participating academic staff undergoing training and re-training in distance education program must be exposed to ways, techniques, and methodologies of teaching in distance education programme. To this end, workshops, conferences, and seminars need to be regularly organized for them.

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