INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT SUCCESS
AT A PUBIC MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY:
A CASE STUDY

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation describes the conditions present on a campus that support student learning. Student learning is accomplished when a student persists from semester to semester and graduates from the institution (Carey, 2005). Student success is defined to include a student's admission to the university, their ability to persist from year to year, and their ability to eventually graduate with a baccalaureate degree. Institutional graduation rates are measured by the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS) and used by the general public to measure institutional success. There is growing attention to university student success measures, as politicians, the general public, and students are holding public institutions accountable for achieving measurable outcomes. Graduation rates are one of those outcomes (Carey, 2005). Universities are challenged to align all institutional goals with resources to fulfill their educational mission. Currently, fewer than six out of ten students who enter college as freshmen will graduate within six years (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010).

Many universities and colleges are struggling to achieve their educational core mission, of educating their undergraduate students (Ewell & Wellman, 2007). In addition to low graduation rates, a number of college graduates lack the skills necessary to think creatively, speak and write clearly, understand complex issues, solve challenges, and accept responsibility and accountability (Keeling & Hersh, 2011). Though student learning is the core mission of higher education, institutions have wandered from that core, and student learning is not their first priority (Arum & Roska, 2010).

Historically, the emphasis of universities was on student access to higher education but the emphasis is shifting to include student success in addition to student access (Bok, 2006).

When student access was the major focus of institutional interest, enrollment and institutional growth were the most important measures considered by the institution. Now with increased focus on student success and how students persist through the university, graduation is a critical measure of institutional success (Carey, 2005). For public universities and colleges, student access remains important. In the current environment public institutions are being assessed by the rate they retain and graduate their students (Tinto, 2012). The on-campus factors related to student success are defined to include institutional educational expectations of students, curriculum coherence, integration of educational experiences, opportunities for active learning, and assessment and frequent feedback (Tinto, 2012).

Graduation rates are based on a flawed federal reporting mechanism that collects data over a six-year period (IPEDS, 2012). For example, six-year graduation rates, as released through IPEDS, only measures first-year freshmen enrollments. Currently, over 60 percent of undergraduates attend more than one institution to achieve their baccalaureate degree (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2002). Unfortunately, once a student leaves their original enrolling institution and is thereafter considered a transfer student, IPEDS no longer statistically follows them. As a result, transfer students are not included in IPEDS graduation rate reports. Graduation rates are computed and measure the success of first-time, full-time freshmen at the school where they originally enrolled (IPEDS, 2012). Transfer students may have started at one school but had other goals in mind besides graduating from that university. These goals may include such things as, accumulating credits to transfer to other schools or learning new skills for a better job, rather than prepare for graduation. As a result these students, because they do not fit the IPEDS measure, may influence an institution's degree-completion rates (Ewell & Wellman, 2007).

Statistics provided by IPEDS unfortunately fail to account for the complexity of achieving student success and maximizing student success. Achieving student success is not a simple task, as student demographics are changing at the same time that resources become scarcer. As student bodies change, institutional curriculums and student services must be altered to meet a broader spectrum of student needs. Moreover, institutional leaders must understand the context of their institutional environment and the needs of their own students in helping them achieve academically (Bok, 2006). All school leaders are attempting to support their students to be successful, but some do it better than others (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Overview of the Study

Research indicates that high levels of student success exist on campuses where institutions align their policies, practices, and programs with their core educational mission (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005a). Additionally, on these campuses employees carry out the institutional core mission every day in their work.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the University characteristics that influence students' learning. This includes conditions present on campus that support student learning at a public Midwestern university, hereafter referred to as the "University." This research collects data using three different sources. The data types include document analysis, observation, and interviews. For each of the data types the patterns that emerged were compared and contrasted singularly and then with all three. This created overall emerging themes from the research. The document review focused on campus messages written about the University and its services that support student learning. Interviews conducted with faculty, staff, and students determined what they know and understand about factors that influence and support student learning and success.

Researcher observation provided the opportunity to shadow campus employees and observe meetings to determine what is said and expected around student learning and how professionals interact with students.

This research project uses the Documenting Effective Educational Practices study framework (DEEP). George Kuh (2005) and his colleagues conducted the DEEP study through the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University. The DEEP study assessed the conditions present at 20 high-achieving and academically effective institutions. Highly effective institutions were defined by identifying institutions that achieved success beyond their predicted levels of student engagement and graduation rates (Kuh et al., 2005a). Once the high-achieving campuses were identified, the DEEP study examined the conditions present on those campuses that supported student success to determine what similar conditions are present at all 20 campuses and reported their findings.

One central finding in DEEP is related to institutional mission. Institutions have two missions, their espoused mission (what they say about themselves) and the enacted mission (Kuh et al., 2005a). The enacted mission or "living mission" according to Kuh, is how the campus carries out its mission, meaning how the campus performs its work each day. DEEP discovered that at high-achieving campuses, there was little differentiation between the espoused mission and the enacted mission. Based on findings in the DEEP study, campuses that achieve at a high rates of retention and graduation rates have little gap between their espoused and enacted mission. In an effort to contextualize the DEEP study, this research project examined one Midwestern public institution focusing on its espoused mission and enacted mission.

Object of Study

This project focuses on factors that influence student learning at the University. This includes institutional practices that support and promote student success. This research was conducted at one public Midwestern University and the factors on that campus that influence student learning and support and promote student success. The unit of analysis was the University.

Rationale

The value of a college degree has become more and more important. College degree earners are more likely to participate in civic activities, use less public service, and commit fewer crimes (Tinto, 2004). Individuals earning a college degree experience a personal accomplishment and the opportunity to enhance their economic status (Johnson & Rochkind, 2009). Pennington (2004) reports that college degree earners can earn up to one million dollars more over their lifetime than non-college degree workers. In addition to the personal gain of achieving a college degree, there is a national need for more college degree earners (Carey, 2004). Universities and colleges failing to graduate enough college graduates to compete in the knowledge economy have risen to a national crisis (Hunt &Tierney, 2006).

While the nation needs more college graduates, this must happen without reducing educational rigor. Institutions must graduate more students for two reasons. One reason is economics, both personal and national, college graduates simply perform better in the workplace. The second is the moral imperative that helping students graduate and achieve academic success is the right thing to do (Carey, 2005).

America's future economic growth is related to increasing the number of successful college graduates. The knowledge economy is where knowledge or ideas is a product. Peter Drucker (1969) explained the difference between a manual worker and a knowledge worker. In his definition, manual workers work with their hands to produce goods and services, while knowledge workers produce ideas, knowledge, and information. The current global market reflects that future jobs will follow where workers can compete in the knowledge market (Hunt & Tierney, 2006). The American economy needs our college students to succeed and graduate in order to grow and prosper in the world economy. It is estimated that by 2025 America will need 20 million more college degree earners. If we are unable to reach that goal, America will lose close to half a trillion dollars each year in the form of new businesses and advances that other countries will make instead of us (Carnevale, 2012).

A college degree is viewed as a key to success and personal economic growth for the degree earner. Students expect a college degree to move them into the workforce and to participate in the new knowledge economy (Tinto, 2004). It is reported that workers with a bachelor's degree earned approximately $48,000, while high school graduates and students who attend higher education but never graduate earn approximately $27,000, and $33,000 respectfully (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). One way to reduce poverty in our country and to move into the middle class is to earn a college degree, which often results in higher personal income (Carnevale, 2012).

Students who enroll in colleges and universities expect to graduate. Each year approximately one million new students enroll in four-year higher education institutions and just over six hundred thousand graduate within six years of the initial enrollment (IPEDS, 2012). This means that each year thousands of students do not achieve the degree they work for, pay

for, want, and need (Carey, 2005). Carey, among others acknowledges that not achieving a degree is a lost opportunity for students and our country, and if reform is to occur around college degree completion, it must begin with higher education.

Increasing the number of college degree earners is a significant challenge for American colleges and universities, as there is no simple blueprint for doing so. Not all students who enroll in higher education have the motivation, finances, and circumstances to complete their degree (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Regardless, what institutions do makes a difference in student success (Tinto, 2004). Decisions that campuses make regarding curriculum, programs, and how resources are distributed, affect undergraduate learning and success (Carey, 2005).

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) acknowledged that the biggest payoff for an institution is in understanding its own values and sub-environments and their effects on students. In higher education, the most effective data used to generate change comes from research conducted on the institution itself (Bok, 2003). Faculty and staff are more concerned with research findings about their students and their institution and generally less interested in data from other schools (Bok, 2003). It is vital that a campus understands its students and their needs and aligns campus programs and policies to drive their students to use the resources they need to achieve (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

To summarize, this research project, presented as a case study, investigated the factors that influence student learning and the conditions present on the campus that supports student success. This includes what services are provided to students and how they are woven into the campus culture and subsequently promote student success (Kuh et al., 2005a). By examining a specific institution, this project can help determine what is ineffective in supporting student success. Knowing which services and programs are unaligned with the campus mission and are

failing to foster student success is vital information for the institution in the current under-resourced environment. If a program is not meeting its purpose, it can be re-purposed or cancelled. According to Kuh (2005a), for student programs to be meaningful, they must be tailored to the students in the university, resonate with the targeted students, have a degree of high quality, and reach a significant number of students in meaningful ways. Many institutions offer well intended programs and services designed to promote student success, but unless the campus culture or the underlying commitment is directed to student success, those programs will not be successful (Tinto, 2003). To be successful, the campus culture must align with campus human, fiscal, and physical resources to support student success (Kuh et al., 2005a).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the University characteristics that influence students' learning. This research will study one Midwestern university and the conditions present on that campus that promote student success. Since there is not one perfect blueprint for achieving the institutional mission, conducting an in-depth case study provides greater understanding of what that one university says it is doing, how well it is doing what it says it is doing, and what conditions could be altered to perform better if necessary (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2005b). This is accomplished through case study methodology to discover what programs, policies, and practices support and foster student success and to understand the conditions present on the campus that support student success.

The key to student success goes beyond the offering of programs and resources to support students; institutions must enlist students to use the available resources (Kuh et al., 2005a). To achieve the highest levels of student success, institutions must offer assorted programs, practices,

and policies that academically and socially support and align with their students. Universities must find appropriate tactics to attract students to use those resources (Kuh et al., 2005a). The most basic principle of student success is a clear concise institutional mission that speaks about the value of talent development and is enacted every day to develop that talent (Bok, 2006).

As cited in the DEEP study, after all campus stakeholders at one particular institution talked about how they carried out the mission every day in their campus-work, their mission was found to be "alive" (Kuh et al., 2005a). At these institutions, when faculty, staff, and students talked about their mission, they explained what it was, what the institutional goals were, and how their work contributed to mission fulfillment.

All institutions in the DEEP study developed approaches to student success based on their students' needs and their specific campus environment to enhance student success. Over time, institutions grew an operating philosophy, or the enacted mission, which is how they carried out their educational mission and tacit understandings of what is important at the university (Kuh et al., 2005a). Institutional mission also includes the values and understandings of its students and their education. These institutional philosophies become the reasons for decisions in curriculum, educational opportunities, and resource allocation (Kuh et al., 2005a). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) reported the most important objective for universities to accomplish is to use their resources in programs and services that are aligned and support their student needs. This research project will provide understanding of what that one university says it is doing, how well it is doing what it says it is doing, and what conditions could be altered to perform better if necessary.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the University characteristics that influence student's learning. This study is based on the following questions:

1) What services and programs offered on campus promote student learning?

2) What do students expect from the University regarding support for their learning?

3) What preconceived notions and perceptions do faculty and staff have about their students?

4) What do University publications and reports say about student learning

To answer the questions the study conducted document analysis, interviews, and observation. Document review included reports on the World Wide Web, institutional documents, and publications. Observation included campus meetings, shadowing, and events. The observations allowed the researcher first-hand information on what is told and shared with students around student learning. Interviews with faculty, staff, and students provided information they know about on programs and services offered to students around student learning. The research findings are presented fully in Chapter Four, Findings.

Research Design

This research project is a qualitative case study conducted with the purpose of creating grounded theory. By definition a case study is an intense, holistic, description and analysis of a singular bounded unit (Merriam, 2009). The research design and specific methodology will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, Research Methodology.

The project collected data using triangulation designed to enhance the internal validity and trustworthiness of a qualitative research study (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation of data included three separate data types. This included document analysis, conducting interviews, and observation. Each of these three data points was further internally triangulated. The details of how the research was conducted at data point can be found in Chapter Three, Research Methodology.

The first data type is analysis of campus documents and reports along with messages delivered through the World Wide Web to determine what the university says about student learning. The document analysis allows the researcher to track messages including their frequency and variety related to student learning. The research technique was used as the content analysis framework for document analysis (Merriam, 2009). Examining institutional documents helped in creating and preparing a design framework of inquiry for conducting the interviews of the research (Kuh et al., 2005a).

The second data type used was interviews with faculty, staff, and students. These interviews focused on responses to questions related to student learning and expectations of the university in assisting students academically. The questions are found in the Appendix. The findings from the DEEP study are included below:

1) The campus possessed an unshakeable focus on student learning,

2) The environments adapted for educational enrichment,

3) There were clear pathways to student success,

4) There was an improvement–oriented ethos, and

5) A shared responsibility for educational quality and student success

(Kuh et al., 2005b).

The third data source was observation. The observations consisted of shadowing professionals and attending campus meetings and admission events. Shadowing allowed the researcher to follow for a specified period of time campus personnel responsible for student learning. These observation sessions were flexible and open-ended. Observation included attendance at campus-wide town hall meetings, the Chancellors Cabinet, and admission sessions.

Data collected from the three data sources were compared and contrasted and placed in relational patterns creating institutional themes. The patterns found in each data type are aggregated and compared to each other. The patterns are then compared to each other and create themes that lead to the creation of grounded theory (Merriam, 2009). The emerging theory will be discussed in Chapter Five, Discussion.

Key Concepts and Definitions

Key concepts explained in this section are student success, student learning, student engagement, student persistence, institutional mission, mission creep, and qualitative research, including case study methodology. Each is defined for its use in this study.

Student success is often measured by graduation rates. Students are viewed to be successful when they graduate from the university, and university graduation rates, based on six years, are published for the general public to access readily (Carey, 2005). Graduation rates are based on first-time, full-time, degree seeking students (FT/FT/DS). Achieving student success is based on the institution offering quality programs and practices that drive students to use the resources necessary for their success. Kuh et al., (2005a) reported that high levels of student success are associated with campuses with high levels of student engagement.

Student learning at high-achieving institutions is determined by the intensity of focus on student learning and the focus of institutional practices and policies around student learning. Kuh and his colleagues in their DEEP study (2005a) have determined four practices that are prevalent in strong learning communities:

1) Valuing undergraduate student learning,

2) Experimenting with engaging pedagogies,

3) Demonstrating passion for talent development, and

4) Making time for students.

Student engagement is the experience the student has on campus. There is evidence that student engagement is the most important factor in determining the impact of the University on a student and is based on individual effort and involvement in academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings on campus (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is used to measure student engagement on campuses. NSSE is a voluntary program bi-annually issued to seniors and freshmen on campus and offers reports issued privately to campuses.

Student persistence is the ongoing attendance of a student, often referred to as student retention. It follows that if a student does not persist they will not graduate. Generally, persistence is reported in one of two time frames yearly, fall semester to fall semester, or by semester, fall to spring semester or spring to fall semester.

The institutional mission presents, in a concise manner the institutional purpose and priorities (Kezar & Lester, 2009). The traditional definition of mission in higher education teaching, research, and service is used in this research study (Birnbaum, 1988). The mission

provides clarity and agreement in what the organization does and why it chooses to do so; it also

serves as a framework for decision-making (Goodsell, 2011).

Mission creep is defined as broadening the scope or purpose of the educational institution

(Longanecker, 2005). Institutions have become complex organizations, and because of this

complexity, there are indications that student learning has been overlooked within institutions to

focus on other matters such as developing research agendas, soliciting development

opportunities, and supporting premier Division I athletic programs (Aronwitz, 2000, Bok, 2006).

Longanecker (2005) identifies two definitions of mission creep as the result of society's high

expectations and lower resources in higher education, or the result of institutions acting

opportunistically to meet the goals society asks public education to represent.

The research questions asked were best answered through a qualitative study. Qualitative

research is the investigation of answers to research questions using methodology designed "to

focus on discovery, insight and understanding" from the viewpoint of the personnel being

studied (Merriam, 2009, p.1). This study investigates the characteristics of an institution that

support student learning. Case study research is research conducted on one specific subject as an

in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). The bounded system or

the unit of analysis is the University. A characteristic of case study research is that it is heuristic

in nature, which means that the researcher's understanding of the bounded system comes into

play during the research (Merriam, 1998, 2009). This case study uses inductive reasoning to

draw conclusions from the data collected (Leedy, 2005). Merriam (1998, 2009) explains that

inductive research includes gathering data to build theories, concepts, or hypothesis.

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Limitations of the Study

The most predominant instrument of qualitative research is the role of the researcher, who is the collector and the interpreter of the data. The researcher, acting as the human instrument, naturally has biases. As the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the researcher understands their role to create a descriptive research project with rich data and produce an unbiased study (Merriam, 2009).

The second limitation of this study is found in the method of case study research itself. Because this research focuses on one particular case, its value for generalizing can be questioned. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain that qualitative research is used to understand specific social conditions and, by its nature, is difficult to replicate in another study; thus the case research is not viewed as generalizable. Case research is more interested in the process than the outcomes, the context more than variables and discovery more than the confirmation (Merriam, 2009). The researcher must possess the ability to compare data and generate categories that lead to the hypothesis, and subsequently apply the hypothesis to a specific aspect of a process or structure (Merriam, 2009).

In the use of document analysis, Merriam points to another limitation. The shortcoming in assessing campus conditions from public documents is that the documents were not created as research documents and may provide insufficient description or explanation (Merriam, 2009).

Observation in qualitative studies is open-ended and flexible; this is both good and challenging. It is challenging by having many objects occurring at the same time so that the researcher may focus on trivial matters and miss more important aspects (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). Another challenge in observation arises with the presence of the researcher. The researcher's presence may cause participants to behave differently (Merriam, 2009). Observation

is flexible and the observer is immersed in the event and can experience it from the participants' viewpoint.

Summary

The research design for this project was to determine conditions present on the campus that support student success using case study methodology. Data collected for this research includes document analysis, interviews with faculty, staff, and students, and observation. Additionally, each data point is further internally triangulated. The data collected was sorted into relational patterns resulting in themes and establishing grounded theory.

Chapter Two reviews research and leading theories on student success and institutional mission, Chapter Three explains research methodology. The research findings and data collection is presented in Chapter Four, and results and conclusions derived from data collection and analysis are found in Chapter Five.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Each year more than one million students begin school in a four-year university or college. Six years later fewer than 60 percent of these students graduate with a college degree (Carey, 2005). For underrepresented minorities the graduation rate is lower at 40 percent (Carey, 2006). Losing this many potential college graduates each year is bad economics for America and an economic hardship for students as many incur debt to attend (Carnevale, 2010). Universities have a significant role in the process of students' enrolling in the university and persisting to graduation they must understand their students and employ strategies and tactics to assist in their students' success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). At institutions with highly successful graduation rates, all campus personnel understand and carry out their role in student success (Kuh et al., 2005a). This literature review will discuss student success, how that success is measured, research conducted on successful universities, and an overview of student retention theories and student engagement.

The second section in this chapter discusses the intricacies of a utilitarian institutional mission and the important role the mission plays in setting institutional priorities for a campus (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Once institutional priorities are set, they align with the mission in order to reduce costs, achieve goals, and improve institutional efficiencies.

Student Success

George Mehaffy (2010), Vice President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), states that higher education was designed to educate the wealthy in another century and does not work in today's market with today's student. He says clearly, "it is

the *institutions*, not the students, who is failing" (p.5) because of poor graduation rates. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) in order to succeed universities must examine and understand the conditions on campus that foster student success. By knowing and understanding the factors that underlie student success, universities can focus their efforts and resources in areas of the university that both directly and indirectly result in greater levels of student achievement. Derek Bok (2006), former President of Harvard University, points out that admission policies, residential living arrangements, and extracurricular life are some of the many factors that affect student achievement.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) acknowledge that the biggest payoff for an institution is an understanding of its own values and sub-environments and their effects on students. In order for each institution to truly understand what its students need to succeed, the institution must look inside itself for the solution. Each institution and its culture vary and what works well for one institution may or may not work well at another institution. Bok (2006) states that the most effective use of data to generate change comes from research conducted on the institution itself. In addition, faculty and staff are more concerned with research findings about their students and their institution and generally less interested in data from other schools (Bok, 2003). Faculty members are key to instituting change related to student success, as student success is related to student learning in the classroom and the faculty manages their classroom (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Student success measurement

Student success is based on students attending the university or college, persisting to graduation, and achieving a college degree. It follows that for students to graduate, they must be

retained. That is, students that drop out are discounted in IPEDS reporting and accordingly can never graduate based on current data collection methods. It follows that improved retention rates produces higher graduation rates. Student success is measured in graduation rates as calculated and reported by Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS data is limited to students achieving a degree in six-years at a four-year institution and measures first-time, full-time, freshmen (IPEDS, 2012). IPEDS does not include students who start as part-time students, begin mid-semester, or transfer from one institution to another and this results in the general public's discounting of the published IPEDS graduation rates.

Challenges

Because IPEDS graduation rates exclude students who transfer to another institution or those who drop out and return at a later date, the IPEDS data is often viewed as inaccurate (Asum & Roska, 2011). For example, if an institution's population is 25 percent first-time, full-time, degree seeking students and 75 percent transfer students, the reported graduation rate only represents 25 percent of the institutional population. In this example, the graduation rate based solely on 25 percent of the population is not an accurate assessment of the campus, as 75 percent of the population is not measured or included in the data. Regardless of the weakness of the measurement tool, the public is interested in understanding the graduation rates of institutions. The public uses this measure to determine the effectiveness and efficiencies of an institution (Carey, 2005). Education Trust developed a website, *CollegeResults.org,* where the general public can compare graduation rates between four-year institutions. Additionally, the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) is an initiative by four-year public universities to supply clear, accessible, and comparable information on the undergraduate student experience to important

constituents through a common web report: the College Portrait. This information is available to the general public by accessing the website of the public institutions involved.

With all this interest on student success and graduation rates, one would think universities could organize their resources to improve graduation rates, and many are. There is concern that institutional incentives and priorities are not aligned to support efforts for achieving student success (Arum & Roska, 2011). Derek Bok (2006) laments that universities do not focus their attention on student learning and teaching, and until they do the deficiencies will not improve. Universities must find ways to enable students to attain their college degree regardless of changes in student demographics, changes in the role and composition of faculty, alternative methods of instructional delivery, and the diversity of institutions to attend (Arum & Roska, 2011). Student success and learning must be the overarching goal of higher education (Bok, 2006).

Call to action

One of the greatest attributes of America is its system of higher education. American higher education has been a source of economic improvement, social mobility, and opportunity (Carey, 2004). Student success in higher education is increasingly important in today's society. More students are expected to attend universities and earn a degree to improve their economic status and develop skills necessary to compete in the new knowledge economy (Lumina Foundation, 2011). Unfortunately, many students begin college but never finish. Political leaders are calling for more college graduates. President Obama set a goal for the United States to produce the most college graduates in the world by 2020 (Education Trust, 2010). Governors are announcing state goals to achieve higher percentages of college graduates as they know their economic future is based on availability of knowledge-based workers, as jobs will follow

workers (Carnevale, 2010). The ongoing globalization of the American economy is altering lower-skill manufacturing jobs that historically allowed for middle-class jobs. These jobs are more and more frequently requiring postsecondary education (Carey, 2004). Thus, it is even more imperative that students acquire a postsecondary education if they want to be successful in the new global economy.

Student Success Research

What students do in college matters more to their success than who they are, where they came from, or where they go to college (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The most convincing predictor of student success is the amount of time and energy a student invests in educationally purposeful activities. For example, learning communities, first-year classes or seminars, service learning, and internships are educational purposeful activities that are often associated with high levels of student success. Each institution must decide what programs are best for their students based on studying the demographics of their students (Pascarella & Terenzinin, 2005). The key to program success is how those programs are implanted in order for the largest number of students to participate in the activities. The more time students commit to these activities, the more likely they are to learn and develop personally; these educationally purposeful activities are referred to as student engagement (Kuh, 2001). Specific institutional practices lead to increased levels of student engagement and these activities are known to contribute significantly to student learning (Astin, 1991; Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991). Effective universities and colleges drive students toward engaging in educationally effective activities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Student engagement and university status

Research on student engagement addresses the prior understanding that where students attended college had less to do with what they learned than the effort put into their college work (Carey, 2004). Accordingly, attending a prestigious university does not guarantee a quality education, and similarly, attending a university or college of perceived lesser quality does not automatically imply poor education. The quality of the educational outcome is determined by the student involvement and resulting experiences regardless of the status of the institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). High levels of student engagement on a campus leads to higher levels of student satisfaction, and highly engaged students generally perform better, persist at a higher level, and graduate sooner (Light, 2001). Institutions that engage their students at high levels can claim to be of higher value compared to universities that do not engage their students (Kuh, 2001).

Research studies examined institutions to determine what they do to assist students in their efforts to succeed and graduate. Using the institution as the unit of analysis, studies examined how resources are allocated and what practices and policies support student engagement. There have been many studies of high-performing institutions. The focus of this research project will center on the findings of the Developing Effective Educational Practices (DEEP) study, and those findings will be used to determine what conditions are present on that campus that foster student success.

Developing Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)

The DEEP study, which resulted from the work of Kuh and his associates, was conducted on twenty high-achieving institutions, all very different in size, mission, and location, to

determine what made them successful. High-achievement was defined as a school with higher than predicted graduation rates and higher than predicted scores on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Kuh et al., 2005a). NSSE is an assessment tool that can be used to measure student engagement on campuses. The NSSE survey determines patterns of student behavior involved in educational practices that are found to enhance their learning (Kuh, 2001). NSSE provides survey analysis reported in means and frequency reports, benchmark results, and demographics of students responding (NSSE, 2012). The DEEP schools were studied using an individual case study for each institution conducted by over twenty researchers on each campus for two years. The results were compiled and reported to determine what conditions are present on successful campuses that foster student success (Kuh et al., 2005a). There are many roads to student success but the most important is offering student programs that are aligned with student needs and match the institution mission, culture, and the campus stakeholders (Kuh et al., 2005a).

Student Learning

The purpose of the DEEP study was to discover and describe what educationally effective institutions were doing to improve the undergraduate persistence and graduation rates (Kuh et al., 2005b). At DEEP schools where student engagement is the highest, "The institutional mission is stable in that it provides a consistency of purpose and direction" (Kuh et al., 2005a, p.26). The DEEP Study found six common educational principles present at each campus, though in varying degrees. The educational conditions at high-achieving institutions that foster student success include:

1. a "living" mission and "lived" educational philosophy,

2. an unshakeable focus on student learning,

3. an environment adapted for educational enrichment,

4. a clear pathways to student success,

5. an improvement–oriented ethos, and

6. A shared responsibility for educational quality and student success.

Living missions and educational philosophy

The living and lived mission at DEEP schools refers to whether the institutional mission is clearly stated and whether the mission guides campus decisions (Kuh et al., 2005a). Institutional mission is the core purpose of an organization and establishes the priorities of the institution (Kezar & Lester, 2009). The articulated mission of higher education consists of three components: teaching, research, and service (Birnbaum, 1988). Keeling and Hersh (2011) are quite clear on this matter, stating that higher education must make student learning its first priority and that what is needed is more pressure on institutions to make changes. In addition to a strong clearly articulated mission, institutions need an operating philosophy that guides its decisions (Kuh et al., 2005a). Two researchers of institutional theory, Erving Goffman (1974) and Kenneth Burke (1972) view institutions as theater, meaning that day-to-day work at institutions is scripted, has prescribed dress codes, and daily activity is carried out by acceptable and assigned roles (Goffman, 1974). Institutions with a strong operating philosophy that focuses on student success play their institutional roles each day while conducting their work. This is how everyone knows what is both individually and institutionally expected. At these schools the institutional mission and operating philosophy are aligned and permeate everyone's work on a daily basis (Kuh et al., 2005).

Unshakeable focus on student learning

An unshakeable focus on student learning is developed when the institutional focus on student learning is understood and carried out daily, while at the same time institutional policies and practices reflect that focus (Kuh et al., 2005a). Bok (2006) believes that today's universities are not true learning organizations due to inertia and complacency. At many institutions change and reform of undergraduate education is a difficult task. He adds that for institutions to become true learning organizations an external force that provides needed energy must be introduced. One possible solution is for an external agency to examine in depth what institutions are doing to assess their own performance and what they do with the results of those studies. Bok believes this process would do more to encourage faculty to pay attention to student learning than state administrated competency tests (Bok, 2006).

At DEEP schools an unshakeable focus on student learning has four strong practices that define the learning environment: 1) high value of student learning, 2) experimenting with engaging pedagogies, 3) a passion for talent development, and 4) making time for students. At these institutions the teacher and learner are equally appreciated. These schools believe teachers must engage students so they can learn. There is also a strong philosophy that given the correct conditions every learner can learn.

Environments for educational enrichment

DEEP institutions use their physical settings to create learning environments. Arum and Roksa (2011) report undergraduate education is basically a social experience, where academic work is referred to as work and social learning is fun. DEEP schools understand this and create learning environments through creative use of their facilities. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005)

cite research on learning environments indicating that when students are actively engaged and challenged they learn. That learning can occur at any place at any time. DEEP schools know this and invest in gathering places, where students can get together to study and socialize. Campus residence halls are designed to assists with student learning by enriching and supporting learning. At some DEEP schools residence halls include laboratories, learning centers, or mini-libraries with coffee pots and computer access (Kuh et al., 2005a). Other DEEP schools seek learning environments throughout the local community. Students are given the option of taking classes at a community organization headquarters. For example, nursing students completing their clinical at a hospital could enroll in a university class at that hospital or student teachers could take classes at a local site instead of travelling back to campus.

Clear pathways to student success

DEEP schools provide to students early on in their career clear distinct pathways that if followed help the student to succeed. It is reported that faculty do not want to relinquish their control of curriculums to students but students do succeed in environments where the expectation of students in classroom and to degree completion are well articulated and understood (Rothman, Kelly-Woessner, & Woessner, 2011). It is the institution's responsibility to inform its students what its values are, what is expected of students, and how to use campus resources to their advantage (Kuh et al., 2005a). Kuh (2005a) reports that student success is closely tied to students understanding what they need to do and how to perform to be successful. Students must understand the pathways to success at their institutions that make them successful.

Universities have long been interested in whether they can and do effectively create learning environments. DEEP was created to determine what conditions were present at the high-achieving schools that made a difference (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004). Quality student engagement opportunities formed through collaboration by sharing resources and expertise can make student engagement happen; shared responsibility among the entire campus for student learning does matter (Kuh, 2009).

A mission sets the educational purpose of an institution and affects policies and practices related to student success (Kuh et al, 2005b). This research project will focus on the espoused and enacted mission of one Midwestern university because in high-achieving universities there is little gap between the two missions (Kuh et al., 2005a). To assess and understand student success, the institution must understand its educational mission and align its decisions, programs, and policies to achieve that mission (Kuh et al., 2005a). DEEP schools have strong academic and co-curricular programs designed to help students learn using a holistic perspective of learning and offering numerous approaches to learning (Kuh et al., 2005a). DEEP schools demonstrated four valued practices surrounding student learning evident on their campus and include:

1. valuing undergraduate learning;

2. experimenting with engaging pedagogies;

3. demonstrating a cool passion for talent development; and

4. making time for students.   (Kuh et al., p. 65)

The findings of the DEEP study were published in 2005 along with a partner-piece template, the Inventory for Student Engagement and Success (ISES), for institutions to assess their student engagement and determine campus conditions that support student success (Kuh et al., 2005b). This research project will highlight many of the tactics used in the DEEP study. The

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espoused mission will be assessed by examining what the campus says about itself in written

documents and by conducting a site visit to pose questions to faculty, staff, and students similar

to the ISES regarding the institution and its students. (see Appendix). Each assessment tool,

NSSE and ISES, will be more fully explained in Chapter Three, Research Methodology.

Graduation Rates

Higher education graduation rates are a national disgrace with levels below 60 percent

which means fewer than six in ten admitted freshmen graduate within six years with a bachelor's

degree (IPEDS, 2010; Carey, 2004). Graduation and retention rates serve as an assessment tool

often used to measure university effectiveness and efficiencies (Walvood, 2004).

Universities can improve their retention and graduation rates by admitting brighter and

more motivated students, but it is impossible, since there are not enough bright or academically

prepared students to populate all universities (Kuh et al., 2005a). Students entering college are

more diverse and come from a larger and deeper pool of students wishing to attend the university

(Carey, 2005). Additionally, over 80 percent of high school graduates will need some form of a

college degree in order to develop the skills and competencies to compete in the new global

economy (Carnevale, 2011). The more ideal strategy for improving graduation and retention

rates is for the university to focus their resources on current students to make those students'

educational experiences rich and satisfying (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Much research has been conducted on undergraduate education and the most important

element in student's achieving success is determined by individual student effort. The amount of

time and effort students put into their studies is vital to student success (Pascarella & Terenzini,

2005). For students to learn effectively, they must be engaged actively in academic and

extracurricular activities. Students bear the responsibility for their education; however, they are not alone in the process. How universities organize themselves and engage students in these activities have a direct bearing on student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Campuses affect the learning process by the organization of their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular activities to encourage student engagement (Kuh et al., 2005a). Another significant finding in the research indicates that college students learn through both in-and out-of-college experiences (Pascarella & Terenizini, 2005).

Student Retention Research

It follows that for students to graduate they must be retained at the university. Improving student retention is vital to institutions improving their graduation rate. The following section will highlight some of the most pertinent research on student retention leading to modern theories on student engagement. Student engagement differed from prior theories of student success that were based on student attributes, including individual student intelligence and location of the institution.

Alexander Astin

Early studies on student retention were conducted by Astin. The Astin model the input-environment-outcome model (I-E-O) identifies college outcomes as a result of three sets of variables: inputs, environments, and outcomes (Astin, 1984). Input includes student demographics, family background, and academic and social experiences the student brings to the institution. Environment relates to all the experiences a student has while on campus including such things as people, programs, policies, and cultures they can have on or off campus. The

outcomes include students' skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors after graduation. Astin (1984) also suggested that the purpose of higher education is talent development, and therefore, all institutional practices and policies can be determined effective by the level of involvement they create in students. The basic Astin concept was that students learn by doing and being involved in the college experience (1984). This research project will attempt to focus on how the students are involved and what learning activities they are involved with.

Vincent Tinto

Vincent Tinto studied student retention (1975, 1993, 2003, 2004 & 2012) by following Astin's research. Tinto attempted to define why students withdraw from campus; his research was called the departure model. Tinto's theory of departure (1993) is based on the belief that students attend the university with intentions and commitments constantly undergoing revision. Each formal and informal experience students have with the university, either positively or negatively supports their intentions and commitment to their college attendance. The Tinto model represents the institutional effects the university has on the student including student experiences with faculty and other students. Tinto also studied Durkheim's theory of suicide (1951) where students who committed suicide were students that did not interact with others. These early research studies began to see the value of students being engagement and active participation in their learning.

Ernest Pascarella

In 1985, Ernest Pascarella created a causal model to determine the effects the institution, including structure and environment, had on a student. He developed five sets of variables driving student growth. Student growth was based on three variables and that in turn drove the

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fourth and fifth sets of variables. The first three variables include student background and precollege characteristics, the second set includes structures and organizational features of the university, and the third set is a combination of the first two, making the college or university environment. In other words, the student's background and experiences with the size and residential characteristics of the university help design the third variable, institutional environment or culture. The fourth variable is the frequency and content of student interactions based on the first three variables. The fifth variable is the quality of student effort based on student background and institutional environment, along with influences by faculty and peers. According to Pascarella (1985), student growth is based upon all these factors and how they interact.

These theories include student inputs but place significant emphasis on the value of the campus environment on student development. The aspects of the campus environment include institutional policies, practices, structures, and services along with the values and beliefs of persons on campus the student comes in contact with. All of these variables are related to student retention. Student retention is everyone's business on a campus. Each contact a student has on campus has an impact on the student and his or her decisions to remain enrolled and persist to graduation.

Student Engagement Research

Uri Treisman

Dr. Treisman taught undergraduate calculus at the University of California, Berkeley and became interested in how students learn calculus, and specifically, the failure rate of Black and Hispanic students (Treisman, 1992). His hypothesis stated that students entering UC-Berkeley

are academically ready for college and should succeed. However, year after year, Treisman found that Chinese students did much better in calculus than did Black students and wanted to study this to find out what was going on

Triesman's study examined 20 Black students and 20 Chinese students; he looked at their work in calculus and examined their life globally. He attempted to discover why one group of students successfully passed calculus over the other group. What was discovered was that Black students typically worked alone on their calculus homework and class work, while the Chinese students worked together in groups to solve problems. They learned from each other. The Chinese students asked each other question, edited each other's work, and asked each other about how much time they spent on calculus problems. The Chinese students knew where they stood in class in relation to their friends, the Black students had no idea what was going on with the other students or where they stood in relation to the class on test scores or grades.

Based on this research, Triesman encouraged Black students to study in groups and thus received significant results. The students' grades improved dramatically, and additionally, they were more likely than other Black students to remain as science majors and graduate from the university.

This research underlies the student engagement aspect of learning that students can learn inside the classroom from faculty and outside the classroom from fellow student.

George Kuh

George Kuh, (2005a) found that what students do in college effects what students learn, and learning drives persistence. He calls this *student engagement* and it is based on Chickering and Gamson's (1987) *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education.* These

principles include student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt

feedback, time on task, high expectations, and respect for diverse talents and ways of learning.

According to Kuh (2005a), for student engagement to be effective, there are two aspects to

consider. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies, including

additional learning opportunities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The second is what universities

do when assigning resources. How universities organize themselves and engage their students in

these activities has a direct bearing on student success, which is defined as persistence and

measured in graduation rates (Kuh et al., 2005a; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). University

influence on student success can be seen in how the curriculum is designed, faculty expectations

of students, and the availability and quality of leadership programs and co-curricular

opportunities (Kuh et al., 2005b).

Kuh's research on student engagement lead to the creation of the National Survey of

Student Engagement (NSSE), which serves as an institutional assessment tool to determine the

student behaviors and institutional factors related to student learning. NSSE can be used to

compare universities to determine the quality of the student experience, but is unfortunately a

voluntary program whose results are private (Bok, 2003; Kuh, 2003).

NSSE is administered every two years to campus seniors and freshmen. NSSE submits a

comprehensive report to the surveyed campuses including means and frequency reports,

benchmarks, and characteristics of the seniors and freshmen taking the test. NSSE results

provide information related to the educational conditions of the campus and how students use

student services and programs by measuring student behaviors related to student success (Kuh et

al., 2005a). NSSE is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, Research Methodology.

Student Engagement: Key to Student Success

Student engagement is an effective predictor of success and is becoming a proxy for quality education (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004). More important to students is the quality of the experience they have on campus and the level of student engagement expected by the campus and used by students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Ewell (2008) explains that the choices students make regarding learning opportunities available to them on the campus matters more to student learning than the differences between campuses.

The key to student experience is not how much money is spent per student but rather how intentionally the resources are allocated to support student success. In high-achieving schools as examined in the DEEP study, a higher percentage of resources were spent on academic support leading to student success, including tutors, counselors, faculty development, and learning centers (Kuh et al, 2005a).

NSSE clusters

Kuh's work led to the development of five clusters of effective educational practices; participation in these activities has been identified with high levels of student success, and when measured through NSSE, is called student engagement. The clusters include level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, and student interaction with faculty members, educational experience enrichment, and supportive campus environment.

Definition of clusters

- Level of academic challenge: Students must be challenged intellectually and creatively. Universities must set high expectations and must set the value of

student effort to affect student performance. Academic challenge is thought of going beyond adding more work or merely increasing academic rigor for students. Academic challenge is setting and holding students accountable for expectations and at the same time providing levels of academic support they need to succeed.

- Active and collaborative learning: Kuh's research found that when students are actively involved in their studies and opportunities, students learn. Additionally, when students collaborate with others on issues and difficult concepts, they learn skills they will use later in life.

- Student interaction with faculty members: Through interacting directly with faculty inside and outside the classroom, students learn to think about and solve practical challenges. Faculty members also become role models and mentors for life.

- Enriching educational experiences: This refers to a variety of learning activities that are more active in nature than a student sitting passively in a classroom listening to lectures. This includes learning activities inside and outside the classroom. Specifically, it addresses learning opportunities such as technology, internships, community service, and senior capstone experiences. The goal is to provide opportunities for students to synthesize, integrate, and apply knowledge.

- Supportive campus environment: For students to succeed, they need to feel supported, both academically and socially. Students need resources, and the institution must create a culture that encourages students to use those resources.

Benefits of student engagement

Research on student engagement indicates that weaker students tend to benefit the most from student engagement tactics (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Student engagement methodology used effectively on campuses can help universities to improve their graduation rates (Carey, 2004). Student engagement at some universities includes integrating collaborative teaching techniques to improve student learning, including team teaching, interdisciplinary teaching, service learning, and team-based advising (Kezar & Lester, 2009). The key to student success is when what students experience on campus has a greater impact on student learning than the characteristics of the institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Collaboration techniques

Research from high-performing institutions indicates that when administrators, staff, and faculty work together on the mutually shared goal of student success, students succeed at higher levels than students at institutions without shared purpose (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004). The goal is to use programs and human resources in a collaborative manner to better serve students by helping them learn. There is also an intentional move toward more collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs on campuses to enhance student learning (Kezar & Lester, 2009).

Collaboration study

Partnerships engage students in activities and experiences to increase student success (Kezar & Lester, 2009). For example, a study was funded and conducted by the Ernest Boyer Center to understand the relationships between academic and student affairs. The study produced five principles of good practice in forming academic and student affairs partnerships and they are:

1. Create seamless learning environments, taking into account institutional mission and culture;

2. Develop understanding of one's own and of others' vision;

3. Use ongoing partnerships when beginning new partnerships – a history of collaboration is valued;

4. Assessment is essential to all partnerships to prove effectiveness and respond to accountability demands;

5. Create a strong student experience using and aligning resources from both units to benefit students.

Studies of High Achieving Institutions

In addition to the DEEP study described earlier, other research studies were conducted of high-achieving institutions to determine what about their conditions, policies, programs, and practices was conducive to achieving high retention levels and graduation rates. Many national organizations examined what high-achieving institutions do that makes them successful. The organizations are: The Education Trust and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the Pew Foundation. Their findings provide similar insight to the DEEP study to determine what campus conditions enhance student success. The most common theme discovered is that each campus has an institutional commitment to student learning and the leadership of the institution promotes that environment. Campus leadership related to successful student learning is crucial and drives successful institutions.

Campus Roles and Responsibilities in Achieving Student Success

Lee Bollinger (2001), former President of the University of Michigan, contended that the health of a university depends on how it cares for its students, especially its undergraduates, because of their vulnerability of being neglected. George Mehaffy (2010), Vice President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) believes it is time for institutions to create a new model of undergraduate education. Specifically, he focuses on creating new models for institutional organization and a design that includes rethinking effective student success with outcomes focused on skills students need in the 21st. century (Mehaffy, 2010). A college degree has become a symbol of economic self-sufficiency and responsible citizenship. There are many links with a bachelor's degree to long-term cognitive, social, and economic benefits to individuals, enhancing the quality of life of persons who are college educated (Kuh & Hue, 2001). For institutions to achieve higher rates of student success, everyone involved on campus must understand and effectively carry out their role. Those with the most influence on student success include faculty, staff, students, and the university.

Faculty

Any reform in undergraduate education must begin with faculty discussions on how, what, and why undergraduates learn (Bok, 2006; Zemsky, 2010). The focus of universities must shift from teaching to student learning. The connection between the level of student learning and the level of student engagement in achieving success is overwhelming (Kuh, 2003). The more engagement a student experiences, the more learning occurs, and more learning generally leads to higher levels of persistence and graduation (Light, 2001). Just because there is teaching, does not mean there is student learning. The focus on student learning is to include student engagement tactics that use active and collaborative pedagogies (Kuh et al., 2005a). These

activities include classroom-based problem solving, peer tutoring, service learning, and assisting students in finding appropriate internships. Faculty must continuously focus on student learning. It takes much time because it is labor intensive, but the faculty must realize there is no substitute for spending time with students (Kuh et al., 2005a). In addition, feedback from faculty to students must be timely and frequent to greatly influence student learning. It is the responsibility of the faculty to set the academic standards and the means to assess those standards.

Staff

Student success must be an important aspect of campus life and the staff must work collaboratively with faculty to design programs and practices that best serve their students (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004). Shared leadership for student success is vital as many staff members manage student activities outside the classroom (Kuh et al., 2005a). Staff members must understand and demonstrate daily the campus values related to student success. Co-curricular programs must be designed to assist with student achievement (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004).

Students

Students bear the responsibility for their learning and must be empowered to take responsibility for their learning and social life along with that of their peers (Kuh et al., 2005a). Students must use campus services and programs designed to assist their learning after the university clearly establishes the pathways for student success for their students.

University

The University must communicate to students what is expected of them and what the pathways to success look like, and those pathways must be transparent (Carey, 2006). To achieve

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high levels of student success, universities must align their services and programs to meet the needs of the students enrolled. Decisions around what programs and services to offer students must be data driven and assessed frequently for their effectiveness (Kuh et al., 2005a). Universities must instill an attitude of quality improvement throughout its faculty and staff and provide a system to maintain and enhance its quality (Massy, 2003). Universities must allocate resources to promote campus values that drive student success and promote high levels of student achievement and complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom (Kuh et al., 2005a). Similarly, related to student success, institutions must never lower their standards and never allow some student groups to fail because they are not expected to succeed (Carey, 2005). Universities must strive to educate all enrolled students.

Fiscal Realities

Universities must rise to the challenge of improving student success through structural transformations. George Mehaffy (2010), Vice President of American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), has challenged state university and college presidents to examine, and possibly restructure, the entire academic enterprise. Restructuring includes developing a new funding model, redesigning classes, and developing long-term strategies to create scalable high-quality educational experiences relevant in the 21st. century.

One institutional challenge for public universities lies in resource management. Public universities must know what actual instructional expenses are and what resources are available to fund them. For most public institutions, their state revenues have been cut dramatically, with each state experiencing a different level of cuts. In 1970, approximately 50 percent of a state institution's budget was supported by state tax dollars; today it is below 30 percent, and some

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state institutions receive less than 15 percent of their total revenue from state subsidies (Lyall & Sell, 2006).

As public institutions wage the resources war, the Delta Cost Project (2010) presented a clear finding about higher education financing in 2010. The Delta Cost Survey analyzed higher education finances from 1998-2008 and made assumptions about institutional revenues and expenses. Its findings suggests that a total restructuring of the financial model of public higher education is needed, including changes in staffing, a full study of using tenured faculty for teaching, limiting unsustainable employee benefits, and examining instructional costs to determine the best way to allocate resources and accomplish public goals of higher education (2010).

Tuition at public institutions across the country has risen 27 percent, while the Delta Cost Project (2010) showed spending on individual students during the same time frame rose 1 percent or about 149 dollars per student. Thus, the cost of instruction is not the cause of increased costs to attend a university. Higher education costs are rising because of increased costs for employee health care benefits and institutional operations such as utilities (Delta Cost Project, 2010). Less revenue is the new common denominator resulting in tuition increases, layoffs, program closures, and fewer classes offered per semester, collectively leading to the bold statement that the "cost model" in higher education is "broke" (Delta Cost Project, 2010). Universities must understand their expenses and revenues and appropriately align their resources with their institutional goals.

At the same time that state revenues are being cut, the general public is losing its confidence in higher education. In 2009, the Public Agenda for the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education conducted a national survey on public attitudes on higher

education, *Squeeze Play 2010.* This survey found that the public views higher education as necessary for success but believes college could be more cost-effective without affecting quality (Immerwahr, Johnson, & Gasbara, 2008). Simultaneously, there is growing public skepticism that higher education is not doing all it can to control its costs. The public expects universities to keep tuition costs down, ensuring that higher education is affordable (Callan, 1998).

As state revenues are cut to campuses, tuition increases for students are common as loss of state revenues are replaced by increases in student tuition and fees (Ewell & Wellman, 2007). Students are bearing the burden of increased costs of attendance. Increasing tuition and fees either discourages students from enrolling or causes them to assume debt to attend (Rothman et al., 2011).

The cornerstone of American public higher education is access i.e., its ability to educate all Americans, and its increased costs to attend are negatively impacting this cornerstone. Historically, the barriers of religion, race, gender, and finances have been removed so everyone could attend higher education and move to the middle class (Zemsky, 2010). Accordingly, for many years America focused on assisting students to afford higher education, but now the focus is to make *quality* higher education affordable (Christensen, Horn, Caldera, & Soares, 2011). The public perception is that high quality education is high-priced; that is, the more you pay, the better the educational experience. Public pressure is now asking for higher education to provide quality public higher education at a lower cost (Zemsky, 2010).

Institutions are also employing cost cutting measures. If the current financial model continues where budgets are cut along with reduction of labor costs by hiring part-time faculty, the results of these actions are higher costs to students and slower erosion of the academic core (Jones & Wellman, 2010). To further off-set the loss of state funds, public universities have

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employed various tactics to grow revenue, including increasing private fund-raising, differentiating tuition costs in high-cost programs, enrolling out-of-state students, and obtaining more federal research dollars (Jones & Wellman, 2010).

As public institutions struggle with the new normal in funding, they must make sure their programs and policies are aligned with their institutional mission and that resources are allocated appropriately to achieve the mission.

Comparing institutions

What universities do does make a difference in graduation rates (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Students are responsible for their success in college, but there are many things the institution can do to assist students' academic success. Bok (2003) discusses the public perception that the higher the cost of enrollment the better the college education. This may be true with private universities where their admissions criteria are more selective. However, when comparing public universities we find different results. Using College Results website, designed by Education Trust, we find that institutions with similar characteristics have different levels of student success, as listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Graduation rates and College costs

School	2010 Six-Year Graduation Rate	Cost to Attend	ACT/SAT Median	Size
University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse	70.4%	$7509	1145	8508
University of Northern Iowa	67%	$6636	1085	10,612
Eastern Illinois	61.5%	$9429	1010	9545

University				
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater	55.7%	$6495	1030	9321
University of Wisconsin-Stout	53.2%	$7821	990	7192
Ferris State University	47.8%	$9480	990	10,334
Eastern Michigan University	37.7%	$8374	970	14,517
Morehead State University	34.2%	$6036	1010	6166
Northern Kentucky University	34.1%	$6792	1010	11,039
University of Southern Indiana	32.2%	$5474	960	8571
Indiana University-Purdue University	25%	$6233	965	9885

The data included above is from CollegeResults.org. (2013) and the universities listed are public universities. All are designated Carnegie Master's level large, with enrollment of 5,000 to 15,000, and the samples represent the states of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, a sample of public Midwestern universities.

Based on data collected and shown in Table 1, looking at graduation rates, we find universities with the highest six-year graduation rates are not necessarily the most expensive. The school with the highest graduation rate is the fifth most expensive school shown (UW-Lacrosse). Similarly, the school with the second highest graduation rate is the seventh in cost of attendance (Northern Iowa).

Examining cost of attendance to predict graduation success, we find the most expensive school has a graduation rate that is sixth best in this list of eleven public universities (Ferris State) and the second most expensive school has the third best graduation rate (Eastern Illinois).

There are numerous variables to consider when assessing institutional graduation rates and the most expensive schools do not necessarily provide the highest success rates, contrary to the opinion of the general public. The College Results website is used by the general public and has become an assessment tool the public uses to measure university success.

Institutional Mission and Public Universities

Definitions

The mission is the core purpose of an organization and establishes the priorities of the institution (Kezar & Lester, 2009). The articulated mission of higher education consists of three components: teaching, research, and service (Birnbaum, 1988). Keeling & Hersh (2011) are quite clear on this matter stating that higher education must make student learning its first priority and lamenting that there should be more pressure on institutions to make changes. Over time, the intended mission of public education has developed two aspects; 1) educate American citizens to understand and carry out their role in the Democracy, and 2) teach skills to assist students in entering the workforce and earning a good living.

Institutional missions in higher education, as in other sectors of the economy, provide institutional purpose and identify organizational priorities. Mission statements provide direction for the university, allowing for institutional stability and identifying concrete goals to be accomplished (Kuh et al., 2005b). This statement includes values and core beliefs of the institution serving as an operational map for employees and as a framework for campus decision-making (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Kuh and his associates, interpret campus mission statements as operational maps including policies and practices, which over time become institutional philosophy leading to deep values and beliefs of the institution.

Institutional goals

Institutional goals are statements created and set to be achieved by the institution, and when accomplished, lead to mission achievement (Hatch, 1997). Mission statements describe what the organization does, how it is done, and for whom (Goodsell, 2011). In fact, the research of Davis, Ruhe, Lee, and Radjadhysksha (2007) concluded that mission statements steer organizational behavior. Mission statements, stated clearly and concisely, should unify decisions and behaviors within the organization toward achievement of the stated mission (Davis et al., 2007).

In organizations without a mission or strategic direction, decision-making becomes reactive and often unproductive (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Institutional missions must be meaningful and communicated clearly for employees to understand. Absent a true mission or institutional values, the reward system and institutional structures are used by employees to determine organizational core values and can result in conflicts and misunderstandings within the organization, which leads to reduced productivity (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Conversely, institutions with shared values and beliefs produce bonds and coalitions by understanding organizational processes on how to get things done daily (Fugazzotto, 2009).

Aligning campus goals and resources

Organizational alignment is an important outcome of a mission-driven organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008). For example, consider a selective public institution with a goal to graduate students in six years. New leadership on campus enacts a decision to grow enrollment and increase revenue. In order to increase enrollment, the university lowers admission standards, allowing more students to enroll and grow minority enrollments. Admitting students with less

academic potential does grow the enrollment and increase revenue, but the likelihood of the

university graduating these students within six years is greatly diminished. In this situation, the

decision to grow enrollment caused the institution to drift from its mission and thereby suffer

mission fracture. The decision to increase revenue through lowering admission standards is out

of alignment with the stated institutional mission. Corrective action can be taken; the institution

can invest resources assisting academically challenged students to graduate. Using resources to

align a decision with the mission may lower or neutralize any additional resources received.

Regardless, reducing admission standards is a decision made lacking a mission alignment.

Birnbaum (1988) explains that institutions that align their mission and programs and policies are

more effective and efficient. Mission alignment provides opportunities for organizational

efficiency and effectiveness. (Kuh et al., 2005a; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Relationships between a university's structures and processes can result in clashes among

institutional functions. For example, the apparent conflict between teaching, research, and

service in public institutions has become counterproductive as the three functions can and should

be co-dependent (Boyer, 1990). This conflict results when differing and often competing units

with different governance and reward structures interact (Birnbaum, 1988). Faculty with tenure

using shared governance conduct the academic core of the institution, teaching and learning,

while faculty with reduced teaching loads or separate contracts conduct research (Bok, 2003).

The service mission is frequently carried out by university employees who are not faculty and

ineligible for tenure (Birnbaum, 1988). Although there may be overlap among these functions,

the differences in constituents and their interests can lead to conflicting positions regarding

institutional mission. For example, to conduct research faculty members often need released time

from teaching obligations. The faculty member hired to teach receives a reduced teaching load in

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order to conduct research, causing the hiring of an adjunct to perform teaching duties and placing the basic university functions in contrast with each other. If the core mission of the institution is student learning and teaching, it must be stated clearly and concisely to avoid unnecessary conflicts in operations and decision-making.

Institutional conflicts

As universities became bigger and more complex and diverse, evolving into a multiversity, institutional missions have become a source of conflict often related to the competing values of the institution (Birnbaum, 1988). Currently, as the cost to attend the university increases, less minorities and underprivileged students can afford to attend (Jones & Wellman, 2010). This current situation is diminishing the access mission of public higher education. The longstanding expectation of public higher education is to allow access of the underprivileged so they can better themselves and move into the middle class economy of America.

Another example of conflicting values is in constructing new facilities. If a new facility is to be built on campus, faculty conducting research want a facility with a large research footprint while faculty engaged in teaching want a new facility with large teaching spaces including appropriate technology to assist teaching. In this example, the campus conflict arises when teaching faculty feel resources assigned to teaching are becoming re-allocated for research. The conflict leads to one university core function losing while another benefits, which results in competing core functions.

The Challenge

Institutional missions provide strategic direction for the university. What is most important for a higher education mission is agreement. In other words, if institution has as a mission educating students then all institutional programs, policies, and practices must be aligned to accomplish those goals (Kuh et al., 2005a).

Institutional mission has changed over time. Higher education in the colonial age was created for educating wealthy and elite young men (Boyer, 1990), whereas a college degree today is thought of as a vehicle for improving one's economic status.

The challenge related to an institutional mission arises from various expectations of different stakeholders. Bok (2006) argues for a universal mission for higher education to avoid the current conflict between the general public and the students who expect higher education to provide employment opportunities and faculty and administrators who encourage the discovery of new ideas. Students attend the university, in general, to learn skills to enter the workforce. At the same time many faculty members want students to discover learning and create new ideas.

Conclusion

Student success is a product of numerous variables. The most powerful of those variables is the effort the student puts into their studies, but the university has responsibilities in assisting their students as well. Universities must establish their goals and expectations and make sure those are communicated to students and the campus in general. This research project will use one specific university to discover what conditions are present on campus that fosters student success.

The next section, Chapter Three, *Research Methodology*, will discuss the tactics and methodologies used to discover the conditions present on campus that support student success. This includes full expectations of how data will be collected, analyzed, and reported.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

This research project is a qualitative case study conducted with the purpose of creating grounded theory. A case study by definition is an intense, holistic, description and analysis of a singular bounded unit (Merriam, 2009). The research design and specific methodology used are discussed in detail in this chapter.

This study collected data from three sources document analysis, interviews, and observation. Using triangulation of the collected data enhances the internal validity and trustworthiness of this qualitative research study (Merriam, 2009). The details of how the research is conducted are found in this research methodology section.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the University characteristics that influence students' learning. This research study examines one Midwestern public university and the conditions present on that campus that promote student success. This case study is designed to provide greater understanding of what that one university says it is doing, how well it is doing what it says it is doing, and what conditions are present on the campus that support student learning (Kuh et al., 2005b). This case study methodology allows the researcher to discover what programs, policies, and practices support and foster student success and to understand the conditions present on the campus that support student success.

This research is important because of the need for more American college degree earners to compete in the worldwide economy (Zemsky, 2010). Higher education graduates less than half of the entering freshmen each year and the United States needs more college degree workers

to compete in the new knowledge economy (Carey, 2005). While some universities do a better job at graduating their students than other universities, most universities must do a better job of gradating their students (Kuh et al., 2005a). To accomplish this, the university must understand the conditions present on their campus that support student learning.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) report that the most important thing for universities to accomplish is to use their resources in programs and services that are aligned and support their student needs. Every institution is defined by its students and programs and services, and policies must align with student needs to be effective (Bok, 2006). Kuh (2005a) refers to institutional operating philosophy as the tacit understandings of what is important at the university, including values and understandings of its students and their education. Institutions must learn and understand their culture and build programs and projects based on those assessments. These institutional philosophies become the reasons for decisions in curriculum, educational opportunities, and allocation of resources (Kuh et al., 2005a). The data collected is to help determine what is important on this campus and what campus personnel know or understand about student learning.

Research Design

This study is qualitative research presented in a case study. Merriam (2009) defines qualitative research as, "understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of the world and the experiences they have in the world" (p.13). Use of case study research provides the framework for data collection to understand what one campus does to support student learning.

Data was collected by document analysis, interviews of faculty, staff, and students, and

observation of meetings and including shadowing personnel communicating directly with

students. Figure 1. below represents the research design model. The illustrated research model

was adapted from Everson, T.S., 2000, pg. 83. "A Case Study on the Influence of Organizational

Context on School Change." Ann Arbor: UMI.
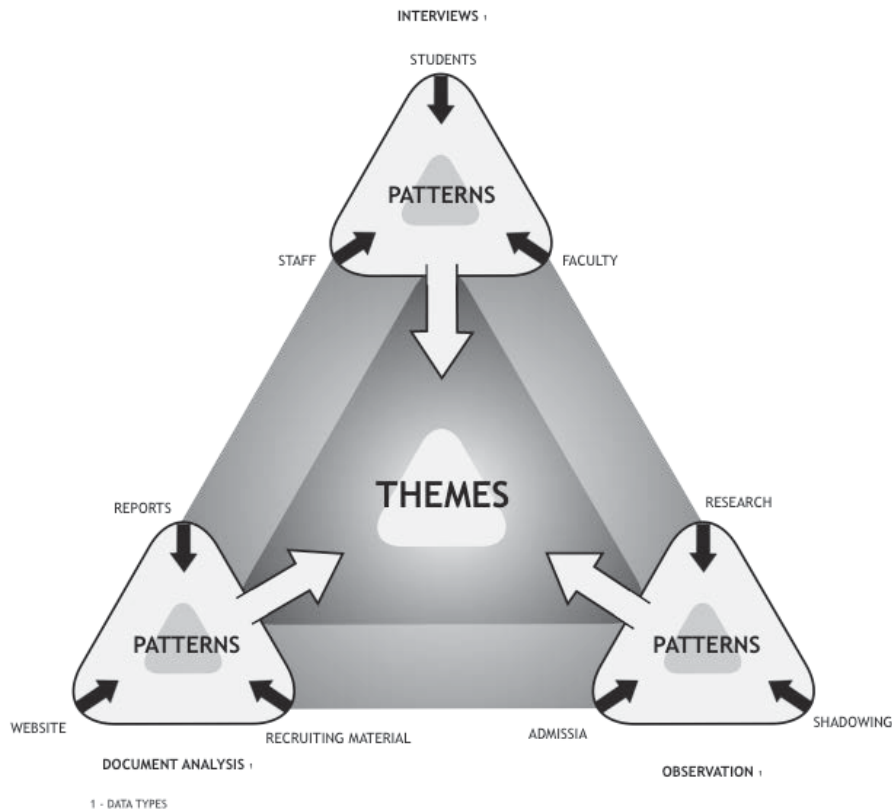
Figure 1 : Research Design

The document analysis included institutional documents on the World Wide Web,

published recruiting material, the strategic plan, and the accreditation report. Data collected from

document analysis examined what the campus says about itself and student learning and

examined for quality and frequency of messages relating to student learning.

Conducting interviews with faculty, staff, and students using the Merriam protocol for conducting interviews (2009). The interviews were a type of semi-structured interviews asking students, faculty, and staff specific questions and probing follow-up questions as appropriate.

Observation was the third data source. This included shadowing personnel communicating with students, attending campus-wide meetings, and participating in two admission events for prospects. An advisor and a center director were shadowed while working with students. Three campus-wide meetings and Chancellor's cabinet meetings for one academic year were attended.

The data collected from sources were combined and analyzed and placed in patterns. As patterns emerged they reflected themes that led to grounded theory (Merriam, 2009). Examining institutional messages and conditions on campus that support student learning creatds grounded theory that allows the researcher the warrant to make assertions in Chapter Five.

Research Questions

In order to investigate the conditions present on campus that support student learning the following research questions were used:

1) What services and programs offered on campus promote student learning?

2) What do students expect from the University regarding support for their learning?

3) What preconceived notions and perceptions do faculty and staff have about their students?

4) What do University publications and reports explain about student learning?

Data Collection

Data collected were analyzed on the messages delivered about student learning and services. The findings are reported in Chapter Four.

Where possible the researcher kept field notes. Field notes are logs of the events examined filled with personal notes, pictures and diagrams, postulations, and conversations happening in the area. In the field notes the researcher noted ideas that came to mind during the research and as patterns were emerging. These notes became personal conversations and were used in overall analysis and helped drive the researcher to delve deeper into issues as they arose.

Institutional document analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1995) explain the greatest value gained when assessing institutional documents is that the process is unobtrusive and nonreactive, meaning that document analysis will not intrude in or bother the setting. Specific institutional documents included the accreditation report and the campus strategic plan, and published recruiting material. According to Merriam (2009), campus documents often describe structures, policies, and practices written with the intent of communicating what the institutional purpose and function is, including educational philosophy and leadership styles.

 Also examined was the frequency and value of the messages related to conditions that support student success. The definitions or frequency and value are clearly defined in Chapter Four prior to the charts that report the findings. The researcher notes were sorted and colored to determine emerging patterns from documents reviewed.

Interviews

According to Merriam (2009), the richest and most lively data source for case studies is the researcher's direct contact with participants. The interview questions used are found in Appendix.

Each interview required minimal to no demographic information, making this study low-risk. Faculty information included, academic department, years of service, and reasons they remained employed. Staff members were asked where they work on campus, how long they have been employed, and why they remained. These questions were used to set the interview stage and establish an interview rapport. Students were asked their hometown, why they enrolled, their major, and their year in school, and career goals. Faculty and staff interviews occurred in their offices. Students were interviewed at their immediate location, e.g., in student centers, student lounges, and in campus offices.

All interviewees were allowed to withdraw from participation at any time. The interviews begin with a review of the study, the researchers' vision of the study, and what might be accomplished though data collection. The interview data was recorded where possible and transcribed. Each transcription was compared and contrasted to determine any emerging patterns.

The framework for the interviews is based on the findings of the DEEP study, which determined the conditions that promote student success at highly effective educational institutions.

Observation

Observation allowed the researcher to become immersed in the ongoing event and view the happenings from the participant perspective. This study used three observation opportunities shadowing, observing campus meetings, and attending admission events, each conducted in

different campus settings. Shadowing entailed spending time with a professional advisor and the director of the Campus Welcome Center when they worked with students. The shadowing incorporated three or four hours per day with an advisor and center director. Both positions convey information to students about what is expected of them and how to be successful at the University.

Campus-wide meetings, such as town halls and Chancellors Cabinet, served as additional sources of data collection. Meetings attended were recorded where possible and detailed field notes were kept. The notes and transcript recordings were analyzed for messages around student learning and placed into patterns.

The campus conducts orientation sessions for new and transfer students and one admission event each semester for prospects. The researcher participated in and observed these events. A qualitative researcher can obtain valuable data by using participant observation (Merriam, 2009). This means the researcher conducts an observation in a loose unstructured manner, generally focused on one central question (Merriam, 2009). Of course, permission was sought prior to business being conducted.

Data Analysis

Document analysis, observation, and interviews used the "constantly compare" method of analysis. As one area or incident was discovered in a document, it was compared to another incident in another (Merriam, 2009). The comparisons became patterns and were compared against each other and informed by the research purpose. These ongoing comparisons of data lead to grounded theory that emerged from the document analysis, observation, and interviews. The findings from the research conducted and analyzed are reported in Chapter 4.

Grounded theory evolves from the data collected. Merriam (2009) states that in grounded theory the researcher is the primary research instrument and analysis. The researcher collects the data, compares and contrasts the data, and constructs theory based on the analysis. Grounded theory develops from an inductive perspective. Inductive theory means the researcher builds theory from small pieces of data collected, combining and contrasting the data to form larger theory. This theory is grounded, staring from the ground and building up.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) define data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to collected data. The first step in data analysis was identifying patterns and categories in each source, such as examining documents and websites for recurring messages, their frequencies, and how they are linked to student success. Coding the information in the documents focused on identifying institutional patterns in messages around student learning, programs, educational mission, and services, and used constant comparison to determine patterns. During the analysis phase notes of impressions and questions were placed in the margins. These notes became the general assessment of the data leading to the emergence of early themes.

Assessing the interviews required a coding scheme. Each interview was recorded, where possible, and the recordings were transcribed into a document the researcher used to determine patterns around student learning. If the interviewee agreed, the researcher also kept field notes. These field notes provided more information to the context in which the interview occurred. While there are software programs designed to work with qualitative research, this researcher refrained from them in favor of manual analysis.

Glesne (1999) explains that the most important aspect of observation includes taking field notes. The researcher kept notes, drew pictures where valuable, and wrote impressions and

questions that occurred outside the margins. This allowed the researcher to recall items not overtly noted in observation.

The final step in data collection and analysis was placing all the patterns that emerged into sentences and charts for reporting and determining themes that emerged. This writing and constant sorting caused the researcher to examine the bigger picture, which provided additional understanding of the researcher's work (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

Site Description and Population

Research conducted through document analysis was conducted away from the campus while the interviews and observation occurred on campus. Interviews were conducted when students, faculty, and staff were available. For faculty and staff, the interviews occurred in their office with a prior appointment. Proceedings were recorded and transcribed, when possible, daily for researcher analysis.

Observation allowed the researcher to become immersed in the University culture by being where students were and participating in the event. The data collected during observation included details of the events, overall perceptions of the event, notes of conversations, notes of side conversations, the environment in which the meetings occurred, and any noticeable behavior of members.

The University selected is a Midwestern metropolitan research university. The population studied includes University students, faculty, and staff. The university employees learn the meaning and purpose of their role in student success from their daily work and what the university expects of them (Bok, 2006). Students attend the university with expectations of the University and what the University expects from them. These expectations are often derived

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from what they read, experience, or hear from others. The interviews and observations assist the researcher in understanding programs, practices, and policies that support and foster student success, and what conditions are present on campus that support student success.

Internal Review Board: Ethics

The researcher obtained approval from two Institutional Review Boards (IRB) prior to conducting the research. The degree granting institution, Saint Louis University IRB, granted permission to conduct research as long as the University where the research was conducted also agreed. The University where the research was conducted granted permission for the research through its IRB process.

Triangulation of data was used to establish trust in the research design. Analyzing university documents and web sites first provided the framework for the research direction. Once the interviews and observation phase began, the research design was altered based on findings in these stages. As patterns emerged from interviews, they were discussed with university personnel to minimize conflicts or misunderstandings and assure that what the interviewee said was what the researcher heard.

This research deals with human subjects, making it possible for unforeseen issues to arise during interviews and observation. Merriam (2009) explains that the most important ethical issue is the researcher and his or her ethics; the researcher must be trustworthy. Also, she explains there may be times the researcher experiences a sensitive or ethical issue and must act as an ethical filter making the researcher's judgment crucial. Furthermore, knowing when the ethical line has been breached is one thing, but having the ability to make decisions on what and how to act on this breach of ethics is more important.

When conducting this research, the researcher was mindful of participants and was aware of researcher bias (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, Merriam says that, when researchers are conducting interviews and observations they must be aware of participant responses as they may under-act or over-act for the researcher. For recorded sessions, pre-approval from participants was sought and the purpose and explained the use of the research.

To inspire trust from the subjects being researched, the researcher strove to be part of their environment rather than an intrusion. To build trust, trust was elicited by the researcher to the persons being studied for the researcher to honestly represent their intentions.

Conclusion

This research used a qualitative research design presented as a case study. Three data sources were engaged and analyzed to determine emerging patterns. The patterns were then assessed to determine emerging themes that when placed together led to grounded theory. The researcher was the prime instrument for collecting data from three data points that heightened the validity and trustworthiness of the study. The richest source of data came from the interview phase. Interviews allowed the researcher to obtain information on programs, practices, and policies that support student success. This study also included observation and shadowing of campus personnel working with students and attended campus meetings. Information gathered allowed the researcher to experience how employees go about their work each day.

Chapter Four outlines the research findings. In Chapter Five, Results, the answers to the research questions, what the researcher learned, and implications for additional research can be found.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the university, presenting a context for the reader. The context provides University information helping the reader to understand the university, how it emerged, and the challenges it faces operating in today's world. After the brief explanation of the University the research findings are presented.

University Context

Kuh, states that institutional mission, culture, and student characteristics drive decisions of educational conditions on campus (2005) and that context is everything (2005b). Context drives policies, practices, and both psychological and physical environments i.e., how space is used, how students feel they are treated, institutional history, geography, and community. Context is the background in which the campus operates (Kuh, 2005).

The university is a public metropolitan university, a member of a four-campus University System, and is fifty years old. Of the four-campus system, this is the only campus that began as an entirely new campus (Accreditation self-study, 2008). The other three institutions in the System were public land-grant or private universities when they were invited to join the University System. The accreditation self-study reports the University shares the land-grant mission of service and research with the system, focusing primarily on metropolitan issues rather than the traditional land-grant agricultural mission.

Annually between 75 to 80 percent of the incoming class are transfer students with 20 to 25 percent new first-time freshmen. The university offers 46 undergraduate, 30 masters and 14 doctoral degrees with over 190 emphasis areas. It consists of nine colleges and schools each

managed by a Dean or Director. Each college and school provides advising services for its students, though a central advising services council exists. The council does not have decision-making authority, making only recommendations to the Provost. During the time of this research project a central office of student success was dissolved and a new center (Student Retention Services or SRS) was created to focus on student retention.

Due to its nature as a public research university, the university is a model for Birnbaum's university political structure with diverse subgroups and diffused decision-making (1998). The chancellor reports to a system president who reports to a board of curators appointed by the Governor. State aid is allocated to the system and then appropriated to campuses. Allocations are historical in nature. According to the Institutional Research website (2013), during the past five years the university provided 22 to-24 percent of the system student headcount and received 12 to 13 percent of state appropriations.

State appropriations to UM System were reduced from 55.8 percent of total budget in 2000 to the current level of 35.8 percent in 2009. At the same time state allocations reduced the System experienced growth in enrollment. Loss of state aid forced the System to rely more on tuition income. In 2008 the state legislature passed a bill, SB389 that forbids state institutions from increasing tuition beyond the Consumer Price Index each year. These conditions have caused financial strain on the University, as the costs continually exceed estimated revenue. These conditions have resulted in financial cuts the past four years (Krueger, personal communication for UMSL Budget & Planning meetings, 2014). The University is becoming more dependent on tuition income, a similar financial model to private universities.

Personal relationships and power by position are valued in political universities (Birnbaum, 1988). Campus administration includes a Chancellor, Provost, and two Vice

Chancellors. The Provost has three Vice Provosts of whom two were Vice Chancellors prior to the arrival of the Chancellor. The Provost oversees academic affairs, while two Vice Chancellors oversee Advancement and Managerial and Technological Services.

Student Affairs leadership was led by a Vice Chancellor as was the Office of Research Administration. When the current Chancellor arrived he reduced his number of direct reports and moved student affairs and research to Academic Affairs, reporting to the Provost. Leadership titles changed with no responsibility changes.

Campus communication is generally informal with coalitions formed around issues. Outside the administrative structure is shared governance. The University Assembly connects elected members from staff and faculty. The Faculty Senate, in addition to the assembly, is exclusively for the faculty. In addition there are assembly and senate committees that advise the Chancellor and Provost on focused matters. Campus budget matters flow through a series of hearings by a budget and planning (B & P) committee. Curricular matters flow through a curriculum and instruction (C & I) committee. Both B& P and C & I have subcommittees that examine issues and report to the Senate or Assembly as a whole. Committee members are elected annually by college or unit and participants may serve multiple terms. B& P and C & I hold open hearings to conduct their work but participation is restricted to committee members. The faculty, staff, and students are represented at the System level with three intercampus committees.

Decision-making processes about personnel matters vary by group. Tenure track (TT) and non-tenure track (NTT) faculty decisions engage faculty governance. Staff personnel decisions are made by supervisors guided by human resource guidelines.TT and NTT decisions begin with faculty recommendations from the academic department, moving to a college-wide decision, and eventually to central tenure and promotion committee. All three levels of decisions

are reported to the Chancellor who makes the ultimate decision for tenure track and non-tenure track faculty.

Demographics

Faculty

A former chancellor and campus historian writes, "When the campus started in 1963 faculty was hired from prestigious universities with a vision of creating a university where graduates would confront urban issues through research, critical thinking, and creativity (Touhill, 1985)." Many of that faculty remains on campus; human resources reports that approximately 61percent of the current faculty are eligible to retire (UMSL Human Resources, 2014). The campus web site documents faculty policies, salaries, tenure rates, and fellowships received by highest degree earned. There is no faculty information synthesized into a university faculty narrative.

Staff

The campus employs over 700 staff. Staff information and demographics are not found on the Institutional Research web site. The Human Resources web site (2013) states that staff employment averages 9.4 years, meaning there is low turn-over. Information on staff demographics is minimal. There is a dedicated web page to the staff association, which is the official governance body and acts as the staff voice. The association includes bylaws, meeting notes, and available services. Like faculty, there is no synthesized information explaining who the staff is, what they do, or how they do it.

Students

According to the Institutional Research web site (2012), in fall 2012 there were 11,981 students enrolled, of whom 76 percent were undergraduates and 24 percent were graduate or

professional students. Over 96 percent of students enrolled are seeking a degree. The percentages of female and male students are 59.6 percent and 40.4 percent, respectively. Caucasian students make up 75.3 percent of the population and 23.7 percent are minorities. Seventy-seven percent of students receive financial assistance. The average age of undergraduate students is 25.9 years and 85 percent of undergraduate students are from the St. Louis metropolitan area. Almost two-thirds of undergraduate classes have less than 29 students enrolled. The student-faculty ratio is 18:1.

The University identifies itself as a metropolitan research university, Carnegie Research Intensive with a Community Engagement endorsement.

Document Analysis

Merriam (2009) states that analyzing documents is similar to interviews and observations for obtaining research data. Three types of documents were examined, including campus documents, recruiting material, and the World Wide Web. Campus documents were subdivided into the strategic plan and the accreditation report. On the World Wide Web, data indicated the three websites receiving the most monthly traffic were pages for degrees & majors (3,000 per month), future students (1,800 per month), and advising (1,500 per month) (UMSL Web Office, 2013). The reviews were conducted, January to April 2013

Marshall and Rossman (1995) explain that document analysis can include content analysis. Content analysis is conducting a standardized approach to understand the nature of the communication within the document. It allows the researcher to reflect on the meaning of the communication keeping an open mind understanding the purpose of the communication (Merriam, 2009). As an employee of the University the researcher knew the prescribed audience

and the intention of messages delivered. This knowledge provided the opportunity to assess content beyond counting the number of messages delivered.

World Wide Web

In order to assess messages delivered on the campus website a basic understanding of web design was needed. Current thinking in web-design is that content is most important alongside ease of navigation (Siegel, 2010). The general public visits a web site to learn, meaning the web design must provide appropriate content or visitors go elsewhere (Siegel, 2010). Nielsen adds that good content stops users from scanning and begins focusing them on areas of interest.

The campus web site is an ever-changing product and reflects the academic calendar and its changes. For example, in spring, student recruitment is important, while in late spring, graduation is the focus. Changes on the front web page or landing page occur because of the University focus based on the calendar. Many web sites were outdated and needed changing but were considered in these findings.

The University presents information and documents to the public through the public domain on the World Wide Web. Many additional campus documents are kept on the web using secure sites. This study focused on the documents and messages presented in the public domain. The University webpages studied and reported are shown in three charts, 1-3. The first chart reflects information presented on the webpages on the Majors & Degrees section, the second reflects information presented on the webpages of the future student web site, and the third website examined was information on the college advising web pages. These sites were selected because of the high number of traffic i.e., hits they receive monthly (UMSL Web Office, 2013).

The five variables were used to study the web pages and are reported on the charts:

- name of campus web page,
- student learning messages,
- student services messages,
- frequency, and
- value.

Under frequency and value, the designation of high (H), medium (M), or low (L) were assigned to each entry. Defining frequency a designation of high equals being noted five or more times; medium equals three to four notations, and low equates to zero to two notations. For the value variable, low equals little to no information presented supporting student learning messages, medium indicates minor amount of information supporting student learning, and high equates to numerous explanations supporting student learning and a direct connection to the campus mission. The definitions of the variables used are:

Webpages: This is the title of the page and where on the campus webpage the information is found.

Student learning messages: Messages written that relate to campus mission, student learning, or student experiences or programs.

Student services messages: Messages that explain how student learning occurs within that unit or on campus.

Frequency: Identifies the number of times the student learning messages appear in the website.

Value: How written messages identify or relate to student learning, what specific services help students learn, or which programs are designed to help students learn.

In addition to the web sites studied, there are numerous other web pages that present facts, conditions, and activities that are ongoing on campus. The information is delivered in a non-message format. This includes listings of schedules, calendars, office times, and directories. Because of the delivery mode that information is not studied or reported here.

Management and control of the campus web site is done by University Marketing. There is a content management program (CRM) the University is expected to use. The management of each individual web site is decentralized. Thus colleges and units manage their own site and are responsible for updating their content. If a unit adds a web site they receive an introductory meeting with a web developer and the unit becomes responsible for that site. The University Marketing handbook (UMSL website, 2014) includes web management considerations such as, rules on fonts, colors, and writing on the web. The campus web office explains, "We develop platforms to maximize our community's interactions, aiding in creating a single voice people can trust (UMSL Website, 2014)."

The entire campus website was read twice with comprehensive notes kept. Written notes were color coded by topic, sorted into patterns around student learning and student services and reported in the following tables. There are three tables: Majors & Degrees, Future Students, and Advising. The tables condense and present the information studied on these web sites studied. After each table is presented there is an explanation of the findings and emerging patterns. The patterns were developed using compare and contrast technique.

Table 2: Majors & Degrees, presents each college and school along with additional pages located on the site such as points of pride and the homepage. The colleges and units names are abbreviated on the charts, the full names are:

A & S - Arts and Sciences,

COBA - College of Business Administration,

COE - College of Education,

COFAC - College of Fine Arts and Communication,

CON - College of Nursing,

COO - College of Optometry,

SSW - School of Social Work,

Grad- School- Graduate School,

JEP - Joint Engineering Program, and

Honors - Honors College

Table 2: Student Learning Messages on the Majors and Degrees Webpages

University Messages on Majors and Degrees Site

Web Page	Student Learning Msgs.	Student Service Msgs.	Freq.	Value
Points of Pride page	Community, academics + student success+=Fulbright winners, Student -Athletes, amount of aid awarded, & # of degrees conferred.	Outstanding faculty & nationally ranked programs.	M	M
Homepage for Majors and Degrees	Maps academic majors to careers. "..Faculty engaged in community providing students hands-on experiences in contemporary issues". "..Provide each student w/ excellent learning opps". Connect students to faculty & high quality diverse learning.	All academic programs are listed and connected to careers.	H	H
A & S	"Educates diverse, talented, trad. & non-trad students who supply knowledge skills, intellectual leadership in public & private sector".	Active engagement, imported research in classroom, all using multidisciplinary approach.	H	H
COBA	"..Strive to be top metro public business school & recognized as leading student-centered provider of business education..".	6 of 8 photos are students, focus on helping students.	M	H
COE	Careers & list of academic programs offered.	Showcase faculty work.	L	L
COFAC	12 Strengths of college; 7 related to students. "..Relevant challenging, innovative curriculum", "Transformational learning opportunities w/ service learning & student teaching". "Meaningful, unique, & collaborative contrib. to fine art & communication through excellence, outreach, creative activity, & research".	Scholarship & creative work of faculty. "..Partnerships, engagement in community, world-class performance center, leadership by alums & friends..". Talks of performances, art displays, & partnerships.	H	H
CON	Testimonial: ".. Educators touched my life, realized I'll be nurse I wanted to be..".College vision, mission, & plan. Learning is uplifting & interesting.	Use of student interviews, YouTube of experiences. Use students to sell learning opps.	H	H
COO	YouTube with facts about College.	How to apply, ongoing & planned research projects, facts about students, resource site for prospects.	L	M
Honors College	Explain role of college, "..liberal arts environment", challenging curriculum, writing intensive, independent learning opps., all related to student success.	Alums help, list of instructors with bios.	H	L
SSW	Mission "..educating leaders of social service agencies..", "..providing accessible affordable and high quality degree programs..".."..Committed to conducting research & scholarship to improve social work knowledge to better the well-being of people in region..".	Excellent faculty that study-social & economic recognition, child welfare, & treatment of addictive behaviors. Provide collaborative learning opps, committed to social & economic justice, professional values & ethics.	H	H
Graduate School	Graduate education, "wanting to work alongside high caliber research faculty.." Administrative unit, processes.	Student demographics, list of programs & degrees.	H	H
Engineering	Explain value of engineers, their designs make life better for everyone.	Advising, scholarships, faculty &student resources for success, directions, programs offered.	H	H
Academic Resources				
Academic Resource Home Page	"..Academic prog. emphasize student growth w/ internships, research, and 1X1 attention..".."Award winning faculty drive academic programs..".."..Students gain experience in research with a wealth of knowledge discovered everyday.."	Lists centers on campus, no mention of students, talk about work.	L	L
Libraries	None noted	Campus resource, schedule for services, online communication, opportunities for student use.	O	L
Research	None noted	Focus on faculty & their needs, forms, processes, IRB.	O	O
Admissions	"..Being a student is an opp. To grow, learn,& lead @ a public metro research U consistently recognized for its excellence..". Residential housing encourages student engagement environment, acad. Success, personal growth, & personal responsibility.."	Info how to apply, when, forms, etc. Talks to student audience, new, transfers, returning, non-degree, & early college credit.	H	H
Student Life	"..help students develop as life-long learner & leaders..". "..Greek affiliations reinforce life, academic, leadership, & social skills.." Volunteering is component of successful education.	List student leadership ops, acquire new skills, enhance self-concept, grow a network, meet new people, & experiences.	H	M
Residential Life	"..maintain learning environment that encourages academic success, student engagement, personal growth& responsibility.."	Includes forms, residential plans, rules & regulations.	H	L

The landing page consists of messages about student learning at the University. The most valuable information connects the academic majors to careers for students. The University is organized around academic programs and colleges. Students do not always know academic units or how they help them in college to get a job. Students often know what job they want but do not know which academic major will help them achieve their goal.

A & S, COFAC, and Nursing all have solid messages. (H, H). On the other hand, COE has relatively no messages about student learning (L, L) or what services are used for student learning. Honors has many messages but no explanations about the programs offered that help student learning. COO and COBA offer few messages.

SSW, Grad School, and JEP all have messages about student learning that reflect the mission and talk about the programs they offer that further enhance student learning.

Under academic resources, the admissions web site had the most compelling messages (H, H) about student learning, programs, and services. It identifies student learning with growing, learning, and leading and these activities at this metropolitan research university and also speaks to specific student populations such as new, transfers, returning, and early college credit students.

Student and residential life webpages include generous amounts of information about student learning. Student life says it helps students become life-long learners Student life identifies programs and services they offer to support student learning.

Emerging patterns: The colleges and schools web sites generally identify their services offered to students and what they can expect to learn. There is decentralization and variance of messages around student learning and this supports college autonomy that happens in large research universities. Each college uses its own phraseology and asserts specific points. One

college talks about the variety of students enrolled, another college explains its overall goal to become a premier college, and another has a student explain how working with professors helped her realize her full potential as a professional.

Specific to student services and programs, one college explains their classroom activities such as, active learning, research in the classroom, and multidisciplinary approaches. Another explains that their faculty scholarly work is an element of student learning and another college uses pictures and students to explain to readers what is important to do and know in order to be successful in college.

Table 3: Student learning messages on Future Student Webpages

University Messages on Future Students Landing Web Pages

Web Page	Student Learning Msgs.	Student Service Msgs.	Freq.	Value
Future Students-Home pg.	U makes world better through research prog., community involvement, brilliant profs and students, excellent learning opps.	None Noted	M	O
Arts & Sciences	Student body, learning strategies, and strength of faculty.	None Noted	L	O
COBA	Diverse students, career development.	None Noted	L	O
COE	Career prep., work in community developing networks, Dean's letter includes mission.	Faculty help students succeed, all students are advised	M	M
COFAC	Contribute to fine art & communication in the region.	None Noted	L	O
CON	Prepare nurses for careers in health care.	Pictures and videos of students conducting classwork on specific topics.	L	M
Honors	Mission presented, connects mission to becoming a better citizen.	Small class size, focused curriculum, independent learning opps.	H	H
JEP	Characteristics of engineers & relevance of the faculty who instruct students.	None Noted	H	O
Optometry	Graduates work in community.	None Noted	H	O
SSW	Accessible, affordable, faculty add value to student experience.	None Noted	H	O
Alumni Page	Diversity, success, experience arts & culture, value of degree in region.	Flexible scheduling, making friendships	H	M
Student Service pages	Work w/faculty in community.	None Noted	M	O

Table 3 presents the information on student learning found on the Future Students web page, which is the second highest recipient of web traffic monthly.

A few colleges, Honors, COO, SSW, CON, and JEP specifically identify what student learning is in their college. A & S and COBA offer messages on student learning in their web site and no information on how student learning occurs. A & S states they have a strong student body, many learning strategies, and strong faculty and don't identify any methods for accomplishing these statements. COBA says they focus on diverse students and career development; this presents a student learning focus. There isn't any relevant messages that deliver information on how they do either or what is expected of students to understand diversity or career development.

The two resource pages, alumni and student services, state they help students learn by diversity, success, experiencing culture and arts in the region. The student services page says that students work with faculty when working in the community.

Emerging patterns: The web sites examined, located in the Future Students section, succinctly state their mission. Assuming new students use this site; these messages are attractive recruiting tools. However, without concrete examples of content the site falls short of connecting the college missions to student success.

Table 4: Student learning messages on the College advising webpages

Advising Web Pages by College and Unit

Web Page	Student Learning Msgs.	Student Services Msgs.	Freq.	Value
A & S	Help undeclared students.	Career services, explore internships.	M	M
A & S	Trad. & Untrad students, faculty use research in classroom, multidisciplinary, creative, critical thinking, analyzing, evidence based decisions, reflection, effective communication, writing & oral.	College partners w/ businesses, cultural centers, civic orgs., experience outside of class, excellent profs & services. (resources listed).	H	H
Social Work	Provides instructions for students, explains accreditation process & salary level of SSW worker.	Refers to Bulletin for Information, sequencing of classes, SSW policies.	L	L
COFAC	Make appointment, use the Degree Audit Report.	Lists majors & advisors, student advised in A &S.	L	L
COE	General careers available, benefit of Research U = "innovation & research prep". "..Rigorous, innovative, & significant..". Personal relationships w/ faculty, critical inquiry, reflection, creative endeavors, relevant instruction, & high quality alums.	Partnerships, active engagement in classroom, fac., staff, & students plan educational experiences. Instructors are professionals in field.	H	H
COBA	Goal to become top metro public business school, curriculum responds to economics of region, syllabi are posted, value of degree, faculty write books, known internationally, connected to local business, innovative learning & faculty bridge theory & real world problems.	Mandated internships, lists student responsibilities, hot links for student needs, tips on how to succeed in college, list of student organizations, link to career services. Student FAQ's, tutors, vet services, suggestion to use advising.	H	H
Honors	"Good advice is important contributor to student success..", enriching ed. experiences, students produce their own education.	Connects advising & student success, lists steps for admission, links to documents, forms, curriculum, opportunities.	H	H
CON	T & L are "dynamic & innovative". Curriculum designed for communication & acquisition of knowledge. Faculty conduct research.	Defines student services, role, contact, handbook. Student testimonials on how to succeed, names of advisors.	H	H

Table 4 examines the messages around student learning on the advising office webpages. Advising is decentralized; each college advises their own students.

A & S, COBA, CON, COE, and Honors have clear messages about student learning and the services offered to engage students in learning. A & S explains, "Student learning as critical thinking, evidence based decisions, effective communication, and analyzing." COE explains, "Its curriculum as rigorous, innovative, and significant." COBA says, "the curriculum is based on regional economics, faculty bridge theory and real life problems, and faculty are connected to local businesses." CON writes that, "Its teaching and learning are dynamic and innovative with a curriculum designed for communication and acquisition of knowledge." Honors say, "Their students receive enriching learning experiences and the students produce their own education."

Emerging patterns: The campus advising web pages use messages that represent the student experience within that college. One college uses active learning as students design their academic plans with professors. Other colleges connect student success with their advising processes, opportunities to work with local businesses, and student services to help students succeed. Internships and use of partnerships for student learning and access to career services are noted by six colleges.

Campus documents

Accreditation self-study

The accreditation report or self-study (2008), was written from 2006 to 2008 and responds to specific questions posed by the accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The self-study report documents that the campus meets or exceeds HLC criteria and is eligible for re-accreditation. The document addresses fulfilling the campus mission; preparing for the future; student learning and effective teaching, acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge; and engagement and service. The self-study makes assertions, provides data that demonstrates what is said is accurate and identifies campus shortcomings.

As explained in the self-study, the campus centerpiece, student learning, is explained as "quality learning opportunities for diverse students." Student learning is a large focus concentrating on how programs and the campus assess student outcomes. Learning is explained as a "shared campus value with 100 percent of programs having written learning outcomes." Colleges design their learning objective plan based in their discipline to meet accreditation standards, as reflected in Colleges of Business, Nursing, Engineering, Education, and Optometry. Students have numerous opportunities to experience diversity. The self-study says "Assessment

of student learning is evidenced in all programs and documented using annual reports and five-year reviews." Programs assess their learning objectives with direct and indirect measures. Campus uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to assess student satisfaction.

The self-study (2008) clearly states that the "campus values teaching." Campus teaching and research intersect providing numerous learning opportunities. The campus invested in professional development and technology to support faculty and direct services for students. There are many learning environments including, "library digitization, technology infrastructure and backbone, technology enhanced learning and mobile learning spaces that can be configured daily for specific learning."

"Student affairs share responsibility for student learning." There has been increased collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs. The underlying challenge is to share services and resources to enhance retention. Campus uses a split model for advising and most student support services were decentralized so departments can work directly with their students.

There are challenges on campus. The campus needs to improve retention which is a concern addressed by, "initiating an academic alert system, creating a welcome center, and a center for student success" (CSS, which was closed, spring 2013). Campus has, "little success in connecting expectations and reward system." Tenure policy explicitly requires documentation for effective teaching equal to research in faculty performance reviews. However, in practice, "more faculty fail tenure reviews for lack of research productivity than ineffective teaching."

"Class scheduling changed in 2007, when most Friday classes were eliminated." This change encouraged students to enroll in classes in two days, allowing them to work more to better afford their education.

Emerging patterns: According to the accreditation self-study student learning is a campus focus, assessment of student learning is campus strength, and students are provided diverse learning opportunities. All academic programs assess their learning outcomes. Student affairs supports student learning outside the classroom, while instructors are supported by a large array of campus resources. These campus resources include help with technology, pedagogy and curriculum design.

As the self-study says, "The campus challenges are in advising, class scheduling, and moving students to use campus resources. Also in the tenure process, "teaching success is not as meaningful in achieving tenure as research success." If campus expects faculty to be quality instructors, then teaching assessments must have significant impact in granting of tenure.

Recruiting material

Campus produces brochures for academic units use recruiting new students. These documents contain little narrative and are discipline specific. They do not contain many campus messages. They do include four-year academic plans and other degree requirements, such as, math and English, passing calculus for engineering, admission to nursing and business, and social work after completing general education. These brochures are public relations material and lack details.

The campus view-book presents campus people, programs, and facilities in a quick, colorful, and bold presentation. It is a high quality recruiting publication used extensively by admissions and shared with the public. After viewing this book prospective students continue their investigation of campus and eventually enroll. The book is used for all campus enrollment activities.

There are pictures that represent students walking laughing, studying, eating, listening, playing, succeeding, graduating, helping, and socializing. A few facts identified are

"18:1 student-faculty ratio;
Over 1200 students live on campus;
2000 students transfer each year; and
120 student organizations."   (Campus View-book, 2013)

Emerging patterns: The view-book is a quick overview of campus and identifies campus strengths using short lists of facts. It identifies a quality student population enrolled, and explains how a student can enjoy the collegiate experience.

New student orientation

Students who attend orientation sessions receive written materials. This material is written specifically for prospects with a demonstrated interest in campus but not yet enrolled. There are eleven points of pride included with two relating to student learning. Orientation material explains each college including a picture of the dean with advising and program learning outcomes. Advising is defined as a "collaborative event and not isolated (Orientation material, 2013, p. 8)." Further, advising is described as, "an ongoing communication and relationship between student and advisor with mutual trust and respect."

The booklet ends with twenty-one tips for success; eight are academic and thirteen are personal or self-help items. The eight academic points are:

- Go to class,
- Develop an appreciation for the mastery of the language,
- Become part of university life,
- Get to know your professor before you graduate,
- You are in school for your education, not someone else's,
- Know your academic situation before the withdraw period,
- Learn to communicate in the classroom, and
- Locate and use all university services.

Emerging patterns: The written material presents a campus that helps students succeed and includes lists of services and resources available that help students achieve and identifies personal tactics students can engage to be successful.

Student Life annual report

This annual report is published and distributed across campus. It reports that student life and student affairs are working closer with academic affairs to support students academically. The common goals are:

"Creating and supporting opportunities for student learning, leadership, and engagement outside the classroom. Past success includes leadership opportunities, Greek life, student program board activities, and a review of community service conducted by students" (Annual Report, 2013).

Emerging patterns: Collaboration is used by student life. Student life provides opportunities for students to "experience leadership, learning and engagement outside the classroom (Annual Report, 2013)."

Strategic planning document

There is a written strategic plan that was revised in spring 2013. That revision included a specific campus goal that reads,

"….The campus will confer 20% more degrees by 2018 (five years) (UMSL Strategic Plan, 2012 p. 1.)."

The planning process to develop this outcome took over fifteen months and consisted of three campus-wide town hall meetings, numerous reviews by administrative units, feedback from faculty, staff, and students, discussion at administrative meetings, and as a topic at external

meetings for the chancellor. The outcome of these information sessions was two-fold. One was a written document explaining the campus goal and the plan to achieve it. Second, the information process served as a catalyst for discussion around student success. The strategic plan defines student success as degree completion.

The strategic goal has three themes driven by levers with driving actions. The themes are the UMSL experience, Community Partnerships, and Academic Program Enhancement. Levers drive the themes and are related to student learning and student services. They include developing a more student-centric campus to recruit and retain qualified students, reducing net costs to students, increasing degree completion, and designing and implementing innovative course delivery models.

Emerging patterns: The strategic planning process served as a campus communication tool by driving campus conversations around student success. The measureable outcome to the strategic planning goal will be unknown till 2018. The planning process that was established created campus-wide goals for retention, enrollment, and faculty productivity. This campus-wide approach is different, in that it identified one major goal the entire campus was planning to accomplish, and included names of owners and timelines. Historically, everyone on campus was responsible for initiatives and therefore no one owned them.

Overall patterns

Web themes: Multiple messages related to student learning are delivered on the public domain of the World Wide Web. Messages are communicated to prospects about campus support systems and lists of helpful resources. The general messages delivered about the student experience focus on outcomes. For example, "if you want to learn or grow, enroll here. If you want a career, enroll with us (UMSL Web, 2014)."

The colleges varyingly represent the experience their students have. University alignment exists when the colleges discuss their campus advising units and student internships and partnerships.

Accreditation: Committed to quality student learning opportunities for diverse students. Teaching and assessment of student learning is ongoing and conducted in the colleges. Campus challenges include a missing connection between expectations and rewards, class scheduling, advising, and retention.

Recruiting material: Provides academic requirements for degree completion and some refer to careers. Documents are written assuming the student knows what discipline they will enroll in.

New student orientation material: Explain the opportunities where the University helps students succeed and the tools available. The campus supports a shared responsibility for learning model, where faculty and students take responsibility for learning. There are lists of resources for students and what lists of things students can do to help themselves.

Student Life annual report: Identifies student learning opportunities outside the classroom. Messages include the following, "opportunities abound and students that participate succeed at higher levels (Annual Report, 2013)." No data were presented to support the contention. Also they state student life connects with academic affairs in supporting students.

Strategic planning document/process: Crafted for economic reasons and to fulfil the moral imperative. The goal is to graduate 20 percent more students within five years. Messages delivered include that there is no change or reduction in academic rigor and that the campus will identify innovative educational delivery methods while working on reducing student costs.

Observation

Data were collected from observation included researcher observation, shadowing, and attending admissions events. All public events were recorded (where possible) and converted into transcripts for the researcher. The researcher kept field notes of campus meetings and shadowing sessions.

Two orientation sessions and one open recruiting event allowed for researcher observation. Orientation sessions were held for freshmen and transfers. Shadowing consisted of spending time with the Director of the Welcome Center and an academic advisor as they worked with students. Field notes were kept and used from these observations.

Chancellor's cabinet meetings were attended for one year. The strategic planning process consisted of three campus-wide town hall meetings. Cabinet meetings were held monthly with pre-submitted agendas. The town hall meetings contained two themes to manage conversation and were hosted by the Chancellor.

These observation sessions were a challenge for the researcher to study. As the researcher is employed by the university, attendees wanted to know why the researcher was there. This provided an opportunity to explain the researcher's role and the research purpose. These discussions tended to diminish the sense that the researcher was attending as a campus administrator and spying. In general, campus personnel were receptive and willing to assist the research after discussing it.

The new student orientation supervisors welcomed the researcher's observation and asked for feedback to improve their processes. For observation in the Welcome Center and advising, supervisory approval was sought and received. Students in the advising session were

verbally asked for permission for the researcher to be present and agreed. Often, during shadowing, the conversation continued and the researcher's presence was forgotten.

For data collection, in town halls and Chancellor's Cabinet, sessions were recorded and transcribed. The admission and orientation sessions were recorded using field notes. For shadowing, the researcher kept field notes and documented conversations. Transcripts were created after shadowing to keep information flowing.

Two challenges emerged while observing. One is the role of the researcher as an administrator, the second being an inability to manage conversations. Both challenges had positive outcomes. To explain the researcher role as a campus administrator, a concise and accurate clarifying explanation was crafted. Initially, the researcher sensed concern from participants about a hidden agenda. This caused a need for an explanation of the research, which then allowed people to forget their fears and become immersed in sharing information. It was stated clearly that there would be no loss of privacy in this research. In order to develop an environment of trust and avoid appearing intrusive or making people uncomfortable, probing questions were minimal.

Observing people in conversation was challenging. Probing questions could have delved deeper into issues as they arose but this was judged as intrusive and not the role of the researcher. After the student or parent left, questions were asked and no confidential information was transmitted, only impressions discussed among the professionals.

Timelines

Orientation and admissions sessions were attended in Spring and Summer, 2013. Chancellor Cabinet meetings were attended from September 2012 to May 2013. The strategic

planning town hall meetings were held January and February, 2013. The advisor and Welcome Center shadowing occurred February 2013.

Student orientation

The campus offers two orientation sessions, for new students and transfer students. Each was offered numerous times with similar content. The purpose of orientation is to enroll students who had demonstrated interest in campus but not enrolled. Both sessions contained similar frameworks, beginning at 8 a.m. and ending at 4 p.m. Some transfer students attended the freshmen session, though the reverse is not true. Freshmen sessions focused primarily on social aspects of campus and building successful relationships to help students earn a degree. Transfer sessions focused on academic issues and provided more direct communication to advisors and faculty. The underlying principle is that transfer students know what they want academically and freshmen need time to adjust to college life.

There is a registration process and students are provided written material to supplement the sessions. Once registered, students are ushered into a large room where seating is random. Each session has four presentations in the morning, lunch with an advisor, and the afternoon session is three hours spent with the academic unit. There is a session for undecided students in the afternoon. Transfer orientation morning sessions includes five breakouts, of which students choose three. Both freshmen and transfer sessions include activities for family or loved ones.

The new student orientation begins with an introduction to academic life. This included explanations of campus resources, transition to the University, and course load. The second session was entitled, "Why I came to UMSL." Reasons shared for attending were:

- "Wanting to commute to school and save money living at home"

- "To attend a metropolitan research University"

- "Earn a quality education at affordable prices."

A faculty member who earned their undergraduate and master's degree at UMSL led this discussion. It was an opportunity to discuss campus history and mission and the benefits of attending an accredited research university.

The next session was presented by new student orientation (NSO) leaders and included a student produced video. In it the orientation leaders told personal stories to convey that campus relationships are important. The video presented campus options along with rules and regulations, explaining food service options, extra-curricular choices, and leadership opportunities. The message was: "Get involved, get out, and make friends." The NSO leaders ended with an exercise called "Get Involved." They reshuffled the tables and conducted an exercise to "friend- build."

While the attendees were with NSO leaders a session was conducted for family members, the majority of which were parents. Here students told their real stories about student life activities, athletics, and campus housing. All stories were positive and personal. One student explained that, "he was not passing his classes and reached out to a residential hall leader who found tutors in time to reverse his grade."

The audience received information on what to expect from their freshmen the first year. There will be, "sadness being away from home, they may experience failure in a class, they experience more freedom, learn new values, learn to make their own decisions, and may change their major." Parents and friends were reminded to support the student during frustrating times and "refer them to use campus resources, as needed." The message was, "We'll help your student succeed but need you to help them.

New students need to know expectations of their loved ones. A discussion included roles of people involved and parents and loved-ones were encouraged to remain in communication with the new student. NSO leaders agreed that encouragement is huge and parents received a parent-family handbook.

A discussion ensued about how it was in the past and what it's like now. Differences now are, "age of students, more commuting students, less academic preparation, more undecided students, and graduation average of four to five years" (Orientation, 2013). Many parents were shocked. "Most students today face the prospect of going to college, getting a degree, and not finding a job." The session was blunt and accurate.

Attendees returned from their "friend-finding" session for a safety session. Campus Police Services were identified including, escort-service, emergency vehicle service, and engagement with students by attending events.

At lunch students sat with their academic unit. Sitting at a table, listening to discussions, questions ranged from how to select classes, to finding classes and buildings, to taking class notes, and preparing for exams. Tables had faculty or advisors, and answers to questions were clear and succinct.

After lunch there were break-out sessions for family and loved ones while students were transported to meet their major faculty. The break-out sessions offered were "money matters." "Support your student," "living on campus," "beyond the classroom," and "first in the family."

"Money matters" addressed financial aid issues and the options to pay for college. At the "Living on Campus" breakout, the presenter was inexperienced and read the Power-Point presentation. The next session was "Supporting Your Student" and included, "balance, fulfilling

new expectations, taking on new responsibilities, making new friends, and dealing with homesickness, and performing academically."

After the breakout sessions, students returned from visiting academic homes and attended the final session, Essentials. The academic calendar was shared along with information on how to use campus technology. A discussion of who does what on campus took place along with disability services, the student conduct code, and campus policies such as grade changes and appeals and the sexual harassment policy.

Transfer orientation

On five Tuesdays during the summer orientations are sponsored specifically for transfer students. Seventy percent of incoming students are transfers and have different needs than freshmen (Kuh, 2005). The staff registered students and provided directional advice and general assistance. Everyone was smiling and intrusive. That is, if you wandered or looked perplexed, they immediately asked to help. All registered participants received a one-page schedule for the day and a ring-binder of information. The meeting area included circular tables with ten to twelve seats at each table; seating was random.

The event began with a welcome from the orientation director followed by a video of a professor who earned two degrees from the university explaining why he chose this institution. The video focused on University accreditation, the great faculty and value of research in class, great students, and ended with a snapshot of the University celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The overall focus was academic with not as much emphasis on social attachments and adjustments as in NSO. Compared to NSO there were not many parents and friends at the transfer orientation. The table where I was had three students; two males and one female. The female had a daughter and asked about, child care, financial aid and how to create a class

schedule to fit her life. One male transferred from a four-year school and asked for specific information on, which of his classes transferred and what classes he needs to graduate. The third student started his college at another four-year school, performed poorly, transferred to a community college disliked it, and quit to start working. Now eight years after initially enrolling in college he decided to return and earn a degree to become a chemist. These prospects shared their questions openly having a strong academic focus and wanting to earn their degree.

Students in the next session were assigned by major. A transfer coordinator met with each table to discuss transfer credits and how to organize their degree by major, minor, and electives. Advisors stopped at tables to provide additional direction and assistance. This covered policies such as, pre-requisites, course load; add/drop regulations, and graduation. Additional discussed items were, using e-mail and syllabi, advisors, student life and academic integrity.

There were five break-out sessions of forty minutes each, attendees selected three. I attended "Money Matters" and "Introduction to Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS)." "Money Matters" was presented collaboratively by cashiers and financial aid officers. Both followed a template of what students needed to know. Items discussed were student payment options, how to read the billing statement, and cost of parking. Financial aid discussed constructing a budget and reading and accepting a financial aid letter.

The DARS session was a challenge. The presenter was knowledgeable but talked to himself making understanding the material challenging.

After lunch, students attended specific college sessions. I attended the College of Education session. The advisor announced the College has under gone massive changes. The biggest occurred in, "student teaching, new programs, and degree requirements." The presenter was not overly familiar with the material compromising the presentation's flow.

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The last session of Transfer Tuesday consisted of bringing participants back into the large room and highlighting the discussed material. There was a review of the class registration process, the need to visit your advisor, and campus resources available. No overriding theme emerged, merely a random list of "things."

Emerging patterns: NSO focused on student development, making friends, adapting to college, finding their way, and resources available to help. The messages delivered were to, "get involved, make friends, and use the campus resources to be successful." Using students' stories of adaptation and change created a sense of realism in the information delivered. NSO highlighted the value of personal relationships. Personal stories resonated positively with prospects and hopefully relieved their anxieties. NSO managed content delivery in a non-threatening fun way.

With the Transfer Tuesday orientation, there was reliance on the talent of the presenters. Consistency was missing as some performance was poor while others were effective. Presenters' styles varied with some being energetic and others drab. There was variance on material presented; some were delivered in great detail while others were skimmed.

One challenge that emerged was around how to deliver on-time information. Is it a good use of time to spend, five to eight minutes discussing the cost of dropping a class when the students have not enrolled? What transfer students want to know and need to know is a challenge to decide, as there are many variables. The use of students to deliver messages is an asset; both students and family appeared to listen.

Shadowing

Shadowing a campus advisor and the director of the Welcome Center is an aspect of observation triangulation. Due to the nature of advising offices which are busy all semester, shadowing was designed to occur away from extremely busy time of the semester. Shadowing an advisor was for three-and-half hours.

Shadowing also took place in the campus Welcome Center, introduced in 2005 and located in the Student Center. It was originally created to reduce student run-around and focus on customer service. Over time the center fulfilled that mission and morphed into a student traffic hub. There is one director, an administrative assistant shared with admissions on busy days, and a student assistant assigned to the Welcome Center.

The advisor shadowed is employed in the College of Arts & Sciences (A & S). In the college the ratio of students to advisor is above national average at 500:1, down from 800:1 three years ago (Eckelkamp, personal communication, April, 2013). The day began promptly at 8 a.m. with the advisor reviewing their daily schedule. Using new technology, daily schedules are delivered to the advisor. The day ends with the last hour unscheduled, which allows the advisor time to document notes and attend to unfinished matters. Each advising session (4) began with introduction of the researcher and explanation of the research, followed by asking students for approval to remain; all agreed. Advising is a campus function with workflow ebbs and tides around the class schedule.

The advisor's schedule is full. Preparation includes reviewing student files. Within the last year technology has provided advisors with digital student files. This allows advisors to view all student communication trails and a holistic perspective of the student.

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Two scheduled students arrived asking to change their class schedule from four days to two days a week to work more hours, earn more money, and pay their educational bills. The advisor attempted to move a 12-credit schedule to two days and it was impossible. There were not enough class sections offered to enroll in 12 credits on two days. The classes the students needed conflicted with each other and few sections were offered after 2 p. m. The student's choice was to remain enrolled in current classes and work less hours or reduce credits enrolled to under 12 credits. Both students "chose to reduce their credits." Advisor checked their financial aid status; neither received aid. The situation was clearly explained to the students, that dropping classes will mean delayed graduation unless they attend summer school. Both students said, "There was no choice." Advisor discussed this after the students departed. Many students work to support their educational efforts and a lifestyle that includes cell phones, cars, and an apartment.

A third student wanted to change majors but really did not know what she wanted. This student was referred to career services and a follow-up appointment with the advisor. The student explained that her mother wanted her to major in English, which she enrolled in, however she said, "I don't like English, I like music." According to the advisor this confusion is somewhat regular. Many students are enrolled in majors because some loved one or friend told them it is a "cool major" or "you get a good job." These suggestions are generally true but don't take the interest of the student into account.

Two additional appointments consisted of minor issues, including clarification of graduation requirements, how to obtain a tutor, and what happens in a class where the instructor is difficult to understand. The first student was confused clear about pre-requisites for graduation and her boyfriend had given her conflicting information. This same student had difficulty in

advanced chemistry and knew she could not drop it as the 3000 level course was required for next course. This student knew she needed a tutor. The advisor suggested she talk with her instructor but she declined to do that for fear the professor would, "think less of her." The advisor made a few calls and obtained names of tutors for that class. Campus lacks centralized tutoring program. Tutoring is conducted in the academic departments. Another student was bothered by an instructor with broken English that was hard to understand. The advisor discussed options such as, "sit in front of class, create a study group with classmates, and visit the instructor in her office." The student seemed pleased with the options. After the student left, the advisor said she would report this to her supervisor. The class was a required math class and the System has a rule about instructors with broken English. This issue is for a supervisor to address not an advisor. Students seemed pleased with the advisors' advice and conversation.

These two sessions took less than time than assigned, allowing the advisor to accept two walk-in appointments. The walk-in students were pleased and both needed signatures to drop and add classes. Each easily made changes in class times to suit their schedule.

Emerging patterns: Students rely on advisors for information and serve as point of contact for students to manage campus processes. Students are concerned with paying for college and are questioning its value.

Institutional challenges include lack of variability in the class schedule, the cost of education, adhering to pre-requisites, and the hiring of adjuncts with poor command of English. Many general education courses are scheduled at conflicting times and not many classes are scheduled later in the day. One-on-one relationships are important to students for information.

Welcome Center

The Welcome Center is a public site where at any time students, parents, and visitors drop in. It serves as a campus information center and recently was assigned the "information" calls from the phone system. In general, conversation is casual and open, different from advising which is structured by appointments and held in offices. The Welcome Center is an open space.

The Welcome Center manages campus tours, including individuals or groups. The center hires and trains students to conduct tours. It is a source of information, and questions range from parking to how to complete paperwork for admissions or financial aid. For current students the center serves as a social gathering area to connect with friends and obtain a cup of hot chocolate or a piece of candy. All students talks about this "place" as their "new home." For new students is serves as an information center. The center is physically large enough for wheelchairs and has become a nest for disabled students, as these students do not have many places large enough to socialize on campus.

This center is busy. The Welcome Center manages the campus internship program, which funds forty interns. Many campus personnel drop by to chat including police, mail services, staff members, faculty, and students. It is a hub of activity and communication. The Center's director knows everyone's name and students feel special there and talk openly about that warmth. Seniors said they came as freshmen and continue to visit weekly or when nearby. Students explain the Center as, "the place on campus where people talk straight." For example, one student said the director explained to her, "how to dress when on campus, explaining what dressing professionally meant." Another student explained his experiences talking with professors and his tactics for talking to professors he feared.

Students serve as campus tour guides that begin and end here. Students and prospects hang out waiting for next tour or before their next class. Beyond its stated function and purpose, the Welcome Center is a haven for students, an oasis. It is social, relaxed, and positive. The success of students working in the Welcome Center is 92% retained and 87% graduation rate of students employed by the center. Students working in the center explain their attachment as knowing where someone will help you. This is what is taught from one generation of students to another. Students refer to their friend or loved one who showed them the center.

Students in the Center talk about having a voice in campus matters, though not necessarily throughout campus. The Center is located in the student facility close to the bookstore and food service. The Center needs additional campus shuttle service to serve the need for additional campus tours. The Center also manages a recruitment day where more than 800 prospective students visit campus in one day to learn the ins and outs of campus.

In the Center there is a never-ending bowl of candy available as students interact with each other. Students conduct tours that include a twenty to twenty-five minute presentation from admissions. The student tour guides have campus handbooks providing needed information to most questions. Their training consists of mock tours and working with each other to perfect their delivery. These students love talking and sharing their successes; it is contagious.

*Emerging patterns***:** One campus urban myth that the faculty often refer to conversations is that students are commuters and do not spend time on campus. The Welcome Center disproves that myth; this Center entertains and supports students each hour of each day and in return students share their energy. Many students are commuters, some live on campus, but all come and go. At the Center students are working, some are crashing; all are interacting, talking about classes, professors, and upcoming week-end activities. In general they are helping each other

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casually but in a professional manner. Beyond helping students, the Center functions by assisting with admissions, serving as the campus operator, and training staff on customer service principles and tactics. This is a campus space where students are comfortable and enjoy being.

Campus meetings

According to Merriam (2009), researcher observation allows an opportunity to record behavior in real time as it happens. These observations occurred in two separate and distinct settings. Chancellor's Cabinet meetings were observed for one-year and included ten monthly meetings. Each cabinet meeting had an agenda. There were three observed town halls meetings. These were special campus-wide events hosted by the Chancellor with two themes each. The town hall meetings' goal was to discuss the campus strategic plan and obtain input. Each town hall meeting was recorded and analyzed for themes and ideas for incorporation into the strategic plan.

Cabinet meetings

The Board of Curators, Collected Rules 300.040.8, identify faculty governance as the faculty senate and university assembly to participate in campus governance. The 2008 accreditation report states that the Chancellors Cabinet is a model of shared governance where policy issues are discussed in a transparent environment. The Cabinet members consist of faculty, staff, and students. They are asked to share their views on the issues brought forward.

The Chancellor's Cabinet meetings were attended Spring and Fall semester 2013. The administration is represented by three Vice Chancellors, three Vice Provosts and one Associate Vice Chancellor. Also attending are directors of human resources, the national public radio station, and a Dean's council representative. Each meeting agenda is sent in advance. No minutes are kept because this body is not decision-making.

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Cabinet meetings provide the Chancellor and staff feedback on campus policies. At the ten cabinet meetings attended, over fifty percent of the time was spent reviewing or updating campus policies. These updates included changes in human resources procedures, scheduling events for yearlong campus anniversary celebration, campus safety, web marketing plan, and plans for making campus tobacco-free. Of these issues the majority were spent on campus safety issues and facilities.

During the time attended the campus experienced four closings. There were two closings due to loss of power and two due to loss of water. None of the closings was related to bad weather, meaning the campus felt the closings should have been prevented. Faculty and staff vocalized concerns over closings and their frequencies explaining the possibility of damaging research and safety issues from losing power in facilities and elevators. The reasons for the closings were results of an aging infrastructure and yearly practice of deferring maintenance to reallocate resources elsewhere. For example, the redundant power system did not work when needed because the parallel system was not aligned due to the loss of workforce. The water main broke because it was old and minor repairs conducted sixteen months prior missed a weakened valve seal which eroded and broke. In recent years necessary maintenance was deferred due to diminishing state revenue minimizing the ability to keep up with failing infrastructure.

As a metropolitan research university located close to an urban area, safety is a concern. Safety issues, their perception, and types of prevention were frequently listed on the agenda. Most issues related to how the campus was preventing the negative effects of safety. For example, outside lights on south campus burned out causing concern because there are many night classes there. To avoid panic, while the lights were being repaired the police increased their presence in the area. The added police presence caused students to worry that something bad had

happened. Early the next day a campus communication was issued explaining the increased police presence as a positive step.

As a state institution, should there ever be a major regional crisis the campus would be ready to assist as needed. A campus crisis handbook was presented that identified procedures and practices in the event of a campus crisis, for example, if a live shooter was on campus or if a horrible storm hit the area and all local bridges were destroyed. Preparation was the theme, and having the campus community read and comment on the handbook created an image and culture of readiness.

Other issues beyond facilities and safety were discussed at cabinet meetings. Introduced was a new tuition model. The suggested plan rolled all student fees into tuition to avoid student fee hearings each year and allowed revenue to be comingled at collection. As a student issue, the student response was soft and weak and offered no objection. Weeks later, students documented their objection in the student newspaper.

At two other cabinet meetings, the strategic plan was discussed. The strategic goal was explained to "to confer 20% more degrees by 2018." This spurred conversation by students, staff, and faculty. Students discussed the need for timely faculty feedback on their classwork to make informed decisions about their classes. Timely feedback helps students assess themselves in classes with time for corrective action. The faculty discussed the need to hire additional faculty to teach class sections that students need to graduate. Faculty perspective was clear; ongoing cuts to the faculty and lack of refilling vacant positions has hurt the ability to offer timely and sequential classes and now the faculty is asked to do more. The Chancellor was told this is the tipping point. Staff appeared supportive of the strategic goal and offered no objection.

Emerging patterns: Student voice appeared weak in the Cabinet meeting environment. Faculty said they are becoming fatigued. Others said of the faculty, "There is clear lack of energy or desire for involvement around projects." The cuts that campus must undergo are hurting the, "faculty and the core mission." The loss of state revenue, additional mandated regulations, a state statute minimizing tuition increases, and loss of faculty positions are hurting campus.

Campus town halls

The goal of town hall meetings was to receive feedback on strategic plan themes. A secondary goal was to increase ownership and support of the campus strategic plan by using communication. The town halls were scheduled in the afternoons of varying days of the week, allowing for more constituents to attend.

The town hall sessions were difficult to record due to the vastness of the facilities used making it hard to hear. Detailed field notes were kept to supplement the digital recording. During the week of each town hall, reminders invitations were sent to campus by the Chancellor's office. Each session was held in a different building, for 1.5 hours. Each session was recorded and the audio posted on a website. Attendance average was reported at 84 per session with a high of 112 and low of 76.

Town hall meetings were conducted in January and February 2013. Each session had two themes. The Faculty Senate leadership served as master of ceremonies. The Chancellor made opening comments and encouraged faculty to voice their opinion. The first themes were the academic array and innovative teaching, second were campus growth and community partnerships and third were University Experience and reducing costs to students. All of these themes aligned with the strategic goal.

Each session was collegial though conversation did not render outcomes desired. Themes were introduced to manage conversation and avoid complaining. The Chancellor stated that he felt after the first two sessions, "The audience expected entertainment or information delivered from me and they would respond." The Chancellor asked faculty and staff to respond to specific questions with minimal response. Attendees did share their thoughts, more about issues concerning them then the Chancellor's themes. Some issues required response from the Chancellor, but he insisted he was there as a listener. The stated goal to receive information on the strategic themes was not accomplished, but campus issues were identified.

Session 1 themes were academic array and innovative teaching. The MC explained the need for campus growth. Faculty expressed a need for inter-professional education, seen as a catalyst for campus growth. The model explained incorporated fundamental classes shared by units and colleges derived around learning clusters. Faculty expressed an interest in new academic programs but System makes adding programs complicated and not worth the time. Chancellor responded that, the process is streamlined and to add a program another program must be dropped, that's creating a challenge. Possible new programs were occupational therapy, physical therapy, sports medicine, and sports management.

The next question asked during this session was, what is innovative teaching at the University? Comments made were far ranging. "The campus must understand what it does well and do more of that." Continuing, one person said, "We must focus on teaching student learning objectives." Another respondent said, "As teaching innovations emerge, the campus must communicate those tools to faculty." Specifically, one person referred to the recent addition of eight- week classes that were designed to assist students but it's not happening that way. The

comment was that eight-week classes are added late to the class schedule and students are handicapped trying to take advantage of new and innovative course designs.

Chancellor explained that System wants campus to identify its strengths and invest resources into those. System has made the process clear for going forward, "All new state resources will be allocated strategically." Whatever campus strategies decided, campus must market and promote them, and craft clear messages to explain campus strengths.

Additional possible campus goals introduced were:

- Massive open online classes (MOOCs). One use is identifying student objectives and using the material, lectures, exercises, problems, etc. Redesigning classes is an old exercise; campus should consider using these resources that are student ready.

- Class opportunities in high impact educational experiences (HIEE) should increase. HIEE varies by discipline and instructor workload. Campus goal should be adding additional percentage of HIEE per year. Specifically, HIEE is undergraduate research, service learning, learning communities, and internships.

- PhD students earn their university teaching certificate; many PhD graduates with teaching certificate are earning jobs.

- If we were a student –centered learning campus, what would tenure and promotion look like? There were no responses.

- School of Professional Studies (SPS) allows faculty and staff to try innovation without fear of failure. PCS encourages faculty to pilot programs with no financial loss.

- Add educational exploration centers for students. These are envisioned spaces identified for students to study subjects of interest outside academics, such as hip-hop rock. Spaces are high-level creative centers using high-level technology.

- Students must be integrated with international students and experiences. Local students must understand international issues and challenges; many graduates lack this experience.

- Our students must be engaged in research with high expectations. Faculty said, "Students love doing research and work harder doing so." Students must be digitally literate.

- Our students need programs centered on aging, developing curriculums on creativity, how to work entrepreneurially, and how to work as a change agent.

- The upcoming student population is underprepared and needs faculty feedback to be successful. Faculty spends hours on how and what content to deliver in classes and now are asked, "to spend time delivering feedback to students." Feedback must be delivered timely so students and advisors have time to develop success strategies. This is true in 1000 and 2000 level classes. Without feedback students are doomed to failure. Faculty complained about, "Lack of time to do everything, teach, research, write, and now are asked to provide timely feedback to students."

- How can we assist our transfer students? We do not accept many transfer classes causing students to retake classes and spend needless money. This process needs immediate review. Online classes are great but not all students are successful. Online students need an e-learning center.

- What do students need to be successful? How can we best teach them to learn together? How do we focus on the process of learning? We have a math assessment placement test; do we need one for writing? Students write poorly. Some academic areas do not offer their majors a writing class. Writing across the curriculum is below par for most students. An interdisciplinary writing class is needed.

Session 2 themes were campus growth and community partnerships for retention. Chancellor asked the audience what types of students we want. How many? Where do we put them when we have them, what programs can grow? Should specific academic programs grow and if so which ones? How can we leverage community partnerships to assist with our retention? Where can we grow community partnerships?

Participants made wide ranging comments. There was a question about how student fees are assigned and what campus connections are to municipalities. The most common reason for students leaving campus is finances. Can we recruit the Bosnian population as a new market?

- Campus needs quality control of student population. How do we grow campus? Online education? Can we use online to enter new and different markets? Some faculty supported recruiting and enrolling better students because other good students enroll once good students attend and are successful. Our entrance requirements are steep allowing

our competitors to cut into our markets; we are losing students to them. Can the campus offer three-year degree programs to help students afford a degree? To do so, classes must be sequential to fulfill degree requirements. There is a huge market of international students in the online market. That is a growth area but quality might be reduced.

- If online offerings expand, community engagement opportunities will not be affected. HIEE opportunities can be integrated into online classes, though we need an office to manage the opportunities. Faculty working in the community wants credit for that work; their activities need to be managed and prioritized. In most colleges this work is unrewarded.

- Scheduling issues: summer school is stable, but not growing. To grow as a campus SCH must be increase. How do we do that? Summer school model needs revamping; it is old and does not drive innovation. We need Friday and weekend classes. We have growth capacity though the schedule is not maximized for growing. All our classes are offered at the same time. To retain students they must be educated about personal finances and financial matters. We need to push our students to graduate. Our student debt limit has grown to ten percent the past year.

- Should we have centers of excellence? System history is not successful using these centers. In the past they were mismanaged, resources did not follow success, and people felt they were working harder for no reason.

- As a state university in a metropolitan area how can we leverage resources to enhance student success? We need better use of partnerships and to offer campus space to the community to engage in. What can we do differently? The pipeline for graduates to employment needs to be tightened. Students need faculty assistance to transition to their careers. We need focused career planning that is offered in FYE classes, career fairs, and when businesses visit campus and meet with students.

- How can we better engage our alumni? Where do campus responsibilities stop and the academic unit begin? Alumni relate to campus through their chapters, we need alums to grow internships. Internships are offered on campus but mismanaged. Internships need an office including an assessment plan to measure effectiveness.

- There are degree completion students, 460,000 of them in the region. This is a rich potential market to recruit. These students require a different delivery system and a prior

learning assessment tool. This market wants Friday, week-end, and accelerated classes. There are veterans in this market and we offer an affordable quality degree, but we don't deliver what this market wants or needs.

- Our campus customer service model must be how we do business every day, especially in the graduate school. Our student population generally consists of commuter and high-performing students. We need enhanced communication channels with students especially those looking for jobs. Faculty need to help students connect with possible jobs.

- Are there ways to migrate campus forms to the web? Campus web services and web sites need upgrading. Our campus is strong because of our diversity. We must map our assets and help students realize their assets as well.

- One faculty member explained, "The campus barrier to success lies in the difference between faculty mentality and campus leadership in managing change."

Session three themes were "University experience and reduce costs to students." This session was held in the Millennium Student Center, (MSC). The University experience was explained as time students spend outside the classroom on academic or non-academic issues. The crowd consisted of fewer than 80 and of the 80, one-third was students, half were staff, and a few were faculty.

Students asked for more things to do. At night there's no activity. Many events are offered by student life, but are the same. One student said that, "the events they are interested in are around their major, their real interest in events is related to their academic interest." Athletics is okay but not big time.

Students listed the following as needs:

- Computer labs in all buildings,
- Personal academic advising,
- More students living on campus,
- More accessible parking,
- More social opportunities, and
- More interactions with professors outside classroom.

SGA and residential life association offer events but attendance is low. Weekends are horrible on campus. Stated clearly by one student, "No events, no people, and minimal food service; it's boring." The student pattern is to, "Enroll, make friends, move off campus, and find activities away from campus." There are much more offerings in the city and nearby and housing close to campus is weak and uninteresting. Events sponsored by the Touhill are great, there just is not enough offered and not all sponsored events are student friendly.

Question arose about expanding the class schedule to add Friday classes. Students were opposed to the move, saying, "We wouldn't enroll in Friday classes." Students want Fridays to work, catch up on their work, and relax and chill out. One comment made was that, "This University is like other metropolitan schools where Friday classes are minimal". Students are not just students at metropolitan schools spending 100 percent of their time on school; "these students need to work to pay for school and are often taking care of loved ones; children, parents and so forth." This University has 25 percent student parents while the national average is 13 percent (Institute of Women's Policy Research, 2010).

A question was raised about reducing student costs, which turned the conversation to scholarships. Can advancement raise more money for scholarships? Can campus obtain more resources from the federal government? How are scholarships allocated for merit and how do academic departments issue their scholarships? Time was spent explaining processes involved with scholarships. The processes involved in issuing scholarships were not understood by many. There was not as much conversation in this session as prior ones and it ended early.

Emerging patterns: Faculty are concerned with the how's and why's of growing the student population and at the same time maintain academic standards. Faculty are concerned over losing faculty positions and what is needed to do more work. There is interest in enhancing

academic focuses such as educational centers, additional HIEE opportunities, and greater emphasis on writing skills, helping transfer students, and working with underprepared students. There is uncertainty over how to grow the campus; whether online programs add students, whether increasing academic standards can grow enrollment, whether adding new academic programs will add students. There is no clear solution. Students enjoy no classes on Fridays though admissions claim no classes on Friday hurt campus visits which lead to enrollment. Students look for socializing off campus because there are not enough choices on campus. The cost of attendance is a huge issue among students and the faculty is concerned about this issue as well.

Interviews

Merriam (2009) says the real purpose of an interview is to extract a specific type of information when they cannot be observed. The Merriam interview protocol was used (2009). Interviews were conducted with faculty, staff, and students. Interviews allowed the researcher a personal conversation around a specific issue and the opportunity to ask probing questions. Each interview with faculty or staff had an advanced appointment and carried out in a semi-structured manner. Students were interviewed without appointments. Interviews began with a researcher introduction and explanation of the study. The interviewee was informed they could stop participation at any time if they felt uncomfortable.

The interviewer attempted to remain neutral while receiving responses and offered no body language. The researcher was creating an honest and trusting environment to encourage the interviewee to share their thoughts. Students were asked to participate and the researcher explained the purpose of the research was to develop trust. All groups were assured

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confidentially and informed about how the information collected would be used. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for the researcher to study.

As a University employee serving as a researcher, interviewing faculty and staff was thought to be a concern. For a few faculty and staff, the fact that the researcher worked on campus was a bonus, meaning the trust relationship was established and the interviewee was comfortable talking. Students seemed comfortable when the research purpose was explained and wanted to help.

Student interviews

Twenty-five student interviews were conducted between March and April 2013. Sixteen were female and nine male; five were freshmen, eight sophomores, three juniors, and nine seniors. There was ethnicity balance though not specifically asked but noted visually. Students were successful academically, achieving a 2.0 GPA or higher.

The first question addressed their major and why they stayed at the University. Of the 25 interviewed, eight remained enrolled because of family, friends, or professor's support. Seven remained because of scholarship dollars received. Two were place-bound with UMSL as their only choice. The remaining reasons were random, such as falling in love with a person, the city, or because it was inexpensive.

The second question asked was, what is important and valued on campus? A summary of the responses follow.

The responses were diverse. One general theme identified by the students interviewed was academic success and the importance of doing well. This response was probed. Academic success generally meant successful grades earned, though some students defined it, "as doing well on a presentation or a research project." Eight students felt relationships with other students

were highly valued an others responded that learning and having experiences on campus were important. Three students said being busy and involved was important to achieve success. By saying involved this meant, activities such as learning to network, working hard, and being in the community; on campus and off. Other random responses included finances, intelligence, and finishing research. Numerous students explained that caring instructors were important.

The next question asked was what is expected from the university?

The responses were clear. Students expect an education and some expressed that they wanted the university to provide networking experiences. Other comments about university expectations ranged from learning to be a professional, getting a job, and graduating. Students were very specific saying they expect, "Support and direction." Many students said they expect good solid and caring advising services and others indicated they expected a diversified class schedule to be able to manage their life beyond classes because they commute or work off campus. Quite a few comments indicated that students are pleased saying the University hasn't failed or let them down. A few students responded they were not pleased with the class schedule. One student expressed frustration that other students weren't held to same academic standards. That comment was probed and the student explained the issue and how it related to grade distribution in a class. It was a class where the instructor predetermined how many students would receive A's, B's, D's and F's. The comment about class offerings was probed and the student explained that the schedule offers students little to no choice in scheduling, which they find frustrating. Students explained the thin class schedule was lack of faculty to teach needed classes.

The fourth question asked was what is special about the campus? The responses are included below.

Many students expressed that being within twenty minutes of almost everything in Saint Louis was terrific. One student referred to campus as, "A little town located within a big city." Another student referred to the urban feel of campus over the country because this student enrolled to experience diversity. Another response related to diversity making campus special was having the opportunity to talk with different people about different things. Further, students explained diversity as "Hearing diverse ideas and viewpoints help us understand more about the world." One student referred to the dorms as, "special" and another student identified the performance center on campus, "the Touhill" as special.

By and large the most common responses related to people. The majority of responses identified, "people resources as special." Faculty was identified by students as special. These students explained that faculty take interest in them and care. This response was probed. Students defined caring as, "Taking time, talking kindly and slowly, and listening to students when they ask questions in class. "Other students explained they enjoy faculty interaction because it's special." One student identified the Chancellor, "as caring about students making this campus special."

There were comments relating to students being special. One student identified the Honors College as special because of friendships he made and the faculty interaction that occurs. One student interviewed talked about the alumni and how getting to know them is a special opportunity. This student believes alums help current students obtain a job through networking opportunities created when UMSL alums remain in the region.

The next question was how is success defined on this campus? Have you been successful? These responses were somewhat general around academic issues.

All responses were related to academic achievement. Many students defined success as, "Good grades, achieving graduation, earning a degree, becoming alum, and giving back to campus." A few students measured success as being enrolled in graduate school. Others said success is, "Getting a job." Other students defined success as using campus resources when necessary. This response was probed and was explained that if a student is struggling in English they need to use the writing center. When a student in need seeks the resources needed; this is success. A few responses identified the instructor as key resource for students when they need assistance. The instructor helps students be successful. All respondents believe they accomplished some measure of success by enrolling, attending and achieving decent grades. Few respondents indicate their measure of success is earning the degree.

The next question asked was, when you need assistance with a class, where and to who do you turn for help? The responses were surprising.

The biggest surprise from the responses was the reliance on friends, classmates, or other students for help. A few said they would turn to family or god. Some students said where they turn for help has to do with the issue. If the issue is academic they turn to a professor or their tutor. If it is a personal issue they turn to friends and sometimes family. The surprise was that not one student said they turn to campus documents or policies.

Students were asked in the next questions, if you need personal assistance where do you turn? Responses were somewhat similar.

Majority of responses said they would turn to, "friends" and some said they would ask faculty or instructors. Students also responded that they would reach out to mentors or advisors under some conditions. Two student responses said they would go to the student Health & Wellness Center.

The final question asked was, what are best things about this campus? What should be preserved for the next generation? The question was asked to probe the student to reflect on campus.

Comments fell into three categories; faculty & staff connections, diversity, and sponsored events especially the free ones. By and large most students responding want the "campus environment preserved." When probed the respondents identified the campus environment as, "A place where faculty & staff are available to work with and help students." The students like the attachment to caring people that the campus offers. "Diversity" was expressed as a special aspect of campus. Students said, "They enjoy hearing the thoughts and beliefs of other people and their experiences in life." One student said, "I had a student sitting next to me from Ghana and she saw life much different than I did." Many students are interested in the free student events offered and believe there should be more free events for students. Additional comments about what is best on campus included: events where free t-shirts are provided, events offered in the dorms, the campus having affordable tuition, and specific campus events such as Mirthday and events held in the Touhill.

Emerging patterns: Students indicate a reliance on personal relationships for information and assistance. Plus, strong personal relationships help students enjoy campus and be successful. Key relationships that motivate students are with professors. Students enjoy talking about issues;

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academic and personal with a variety of people. There is not much reliance on campus activities for social activity. Students enjoy the campus activities offered, there are not enough opportunities to make a difference. Students enjoy the activities around their major.

Students want to understand the connection between academic successes and obtaining a job. The students interviewed explained their educational experience as serious education and have an interest in learning. These students enjoy diverse opportunities provided on campus and expect the faculty& staff to help them. Some disconnect with the campus emerged as two students talked about not having a student voice on issues but were unsure where or how to remedy that.

Staff interviews

Twenty-two staff members were interviewed with thirteen females and nine males. Twenty have direct contact with students on a regular basis, while two have rare contact with students because they work in back room operations supporting students with transcript production and admissions. Staff interviews were conducted May through August 2013.

The first question asked was, why did you come to the campus and why have you stayed?

The majority of responses were either personal or professional. A few women responded that they came to St Louis with their husband years ago, needed a job, and were hired. Other responses included moving to accept a new employment. A number of staff interviewed said they were former students who earned their degree, took a job elsewhere, and returned when a job was available. These alums were asked about returning to campus. The alums expressed, "A desire to work at their alma mater and to give back to campus." Other staff interviewed said they moved into their current job because it is similar to what they were doing as an undergraduate.

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The majority of staff interviewed said they enjoy their work, like what they are doing, and enjoy the opportunity to work with students. Many staff indicated they appreciate higher education and like the working conditions and the work they do. Many of the staff said they are "treated well" and "paid well."

The next question asked of staff was, what is the institutional mission and how does that influence your daily work?

Mission does not motivate or drive many of these employees. Half of the interviewees implied they don't have contact with the official institutional mission or know what it is. They expressed an understanding of their purpose and that is based on the work they do, but are unsure of the official campus purpose. Some responses indicated a general understanding of the mission but couldn't express the true purpose. The most common reference to the mission was that students come here to learn and get a job. One respondent said, "Our job is to create a community to help students," and another said, "Students are expected to work in the community and be good citizens." There were comments made indicating that the staff felt the campus mission happens at a higher level of administration. One particular comment said, "I like working with students and do what I can to help them, purposes and stuff like that happen in Woods (Administrative building)."

The third question asked was what is special about this campus?

Most comments were made related on the different students and campus diversity in general. Most responders felt that difference or diversity on campus is a special attribute. A few comments highlighted here are examples of what was said. "All our students have a story; they come from different places and live different lives and I enjoy talking with them." And another

comment, "Our students are determined and many live their lives in turmoil, but persist."

Another comment explained that many students go at home at night and take care of their little

brother or sister. One staff member explained the opportunity campus offers to make a difference

in the lives of people is truly special. One specific comment that reflects that theme was, "I've

seen my student worker grow up before me; he talks now, shares his thoughts, and isn't afraid of

his professors." Another comment, "I've worked with a few students that were headed down the

wrong path, one student found a faculty advisor he respects and they developed a relationship.

This student goes to his classes, works hard, and dreams of getting a job."

A few comments were made about campus in general. It was described as a place where

people can try different things and experiment. Additional comments were about how campus

relationships are special and it is where people take care of people. One staff member said, "It's

not uncommon for a student I'm working with to bring a friend or a loved one to work and

participate in our conversation." A few staff members indicated they talk about work all the time

and try to do what is right for students. Others said what is special is the opportunities on campus

to meet new people. A few comments that support the diversity theme include, "This is not

homogenous student body, it is diverse," and "I work on many issues and they are different every

day." One comment that highlights campus was, "There is a sense of family on our campus."

The next two questions are what are valued by the staff? How do you spend your time
daily?

The strongest pattern that emerged among the respondents was opportunity to provide

input into decision making process and to feel appreciated. One staff member commented, "I'd

love to be asked about the processes I am working with and what is needed to make them better."

The theme of being appreciated was said as, "I want to be valued and be a part of campus

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projects." Even clearer comment made was, "I like to be recognized, appreciated, and valued." Others said they want to feel worthy and contribute to making campus better.

The next question asked was, are students successful at this University? How do you know?

Based on comments received the staff appreciates the students and views them as successful, though the reason for that determination varies by respondent. Many felt students are successful because they graduate. Other comments made indicated that the staff sees students as assertive, prepared academically, and taking advantage of services to help them. One specific comment about students and their success was, "Many students work hard but their backgrounds make a huge difference in the possibility of achieving success." Many staff said that they felt their jobs were to support students, help them graduate, and to help campus with student retention. One staff member felt that students are successful and that success is represented by the new buildings being constructed on campus, this comment was probed. The explanation was that the new buildings are under construction because students supported funding them with student fees. This reference means that students supported new facilities' and that support is viewed as student satisfaction and becomes a measure of student success. Specifically what was said, "Students wouldn't support these new projects without feeling positive about the campus." Many respondents knew data on student success was used but had no idea where to find the data.

Another pattern around student success relates to student resources and not many interviewees were sure of the resources available for students. Staff indicated that they don't know where tutors or study halls are for students that want them. One staff person said, "I tell students to talk with their advisor and some say they don't have one." Other staff members

believe that campus student leaders are successful and all students should have leadership opportunities to develop skills. Student leaders are viewed as special and busy.

Another question asked about students was, what do you know about students at this campus? What about student learning?

In the responses to this question the pattern of diversity emerged. Diversity was explained as being more than ethnicity. Diversity on campus was explained as age, socioeconomic status, world-life experiences, family backgrounds, and philosophies. Campus diversity was defined as, "What the old non-traditional population was." One respondent explained that out students come from many other schools and all have many experiences. UMSL students trend to be first generation and lower-income and seek practical knowledge and skills in their education. A staff member said, "I worked with a student who came from inner city school and at first was lost but persevered and just earned all B's in his third year, he is happy now." Another response was, "Every student has their own story. UMSL students are versatile and determined even with challenging life situations around them."

A few staff members noted that students are interested in conducting research and learning opportunities where they learn hands on, however campus doesn't offer enough of these opportunities. A staff commented, "Many students want to work closer with faculty and have an internship." Another comment made said, "Students want skills to get a job and make a good life for themselves and their family." In general the staff believes the students aspire to earn a college degree and enroll with limited experiences. Staff indicated their understanding of many students with awful backgrounds. A few respondents did not know much about student strengths or weaknesses.

The next to the last question asked was, do you play a part in student learning? An additional question is, if you take part in student learning, how do you do that?

The most compelling responses about student learning came from a staff who works as advisors and admission counselors. They understand their role as key relationships by providing guidance, direction, and oversight to help students make decisions. The admission counselors help students begin their academic careers, they are transition experts. As one counselor said, "Students use their admissions counselor for help when needed, that relationship is special." Advisors serve as advocates for students by helping learn the university processes. One advisor responded, "Our relationship with students is critical to helping them stay enrolled and on target for graduation. I wish more students would see advisors."

Respondents working in student life explained that the programs they offer foster relationships that help students make decisions. One comment said, "We work closely with students away from the classroom and in that environment students talk about their academic issues and we all talk them through helping where possible." The most common response heard, was related to tutors. The point was made that tutors play a big role assisting students to learn but that the campus doesn't have enough tutors to make a significant difference. Another comment was, "The campus must understand what industry wants from its employees and campus must then focus on building those skills in our students." When probed the respondent added, "Once campus understands the skills our graduates need in the workforce campus must focus resources on teaching those skills." Some respondents indicated they believe all campus personnel contribute to student learning in some way.

The final question asked was, how has the campus changed the past five years? Where does the campus spend their resources?

A comment made by a few staff was that the recent strategic hires have made campus more visible, these are the people hired in the last five to seven years. Further, these people work well together, support each other, and work for students. One comment explains this further, "The campus is real different now, we have people talking about students and it wasn't like this four years ago. The new hires are great." Comments about resources say resources are spent on scholarships and facilities. Another respondent said, "The campus makes fewer apologies than a few years ago." Whenever resources are discussed there are often comments made about cutting and reallocations. One comment about resources was, "We keep cutting services we provide to students; soon we won't offer anything for them." Another respondent said, "There are big changes to the campus physical plant and there is much more student life, this is a big change, and a good one." Another respondent said, "The students changed; they are more engaged and there is more of them around." Another staff said, "We have less employees, more online opportunities for students and greater use of technology at work."

Emerging patterns: Staff wants to contribute to the mission and provide input to campus decisions. They rely on campus personnel to complete their work and spend a good part of each day talking and working with others. Staff reported they do not complete many reports and that most work is carried out informally with phone calls and e-mails messages. Respondents said at the University people and relationships are most important. Staff felt there was a great deal of focus on student success, especially on student support. This includes advisors, admissions counselors, tutors, and student affairs professionals. A few respondents did not know what resources were available to help students but knew who to call for information. The student body

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is viewed as diverse in age, background, personal history, ethnicity, lifestyles; everyone embraces that diversity and views it as meaningful. Campus is changing and moving toward a more student centered environment, helping to create a cohesive campus.

Faculty

Faculty interviews were conducted between August and October 2013.Twelve individual appointments were made and were interviewed. Each faculty member had a previous relationship with the researcher. The interview began with the research explained along with how the data might be used. A few faculty asked to be kept in the loop as conclusions are made. All faculty interviewed were supportive of the research and offered to help where possible.

When were you hired and why have you stayed?

Most responses were personal and included, "I believe in the University" and "I wanted a job in the city where it is great to raise kids," and "It was a perfect opportunity for me and my family." A few faculty attended school here and wanted to return saying, "I loved St. Louis when I was here studying and followed my heart to continue my teaching here." Another faculty member said, "My wife was born and raised here, made sense when job was offered to accept it and allow her to be closer to her family."

There were also responses that reflected professional reasons for working at the University. One comment was, "It was an opportunity to advance my academic career." Another faculty member said, "This job was a practical opportunity to do more of what I want to do, research and teaching. I was working locally doing part time teaching at few colleges and universities, when the opportunity to work full-time at one university presented itself, I applied." A few faculty raved about campus and one said, "I love this University and I'm committed to it."

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A few comments were that they thought the University had huge potential and have stayed. A few faculty members commented on the size and one said "Campus is big enough and small enough to make a difference in life of a student and that is my pleasure from teaching at the university."

The next question asked was, what is it like to work here?

A few responses had a negative overtone; over half said working on campus is frustrating and disappointing. One comment explains it further, "Facilities are minimal and many students aren't committed to achieving academically." Another faculty member explained, "Each student that works reduces their possibility for academic success, working hurts the students." Comments around resources included such things as, campus doesn't have enough resources to serve students, and faculty is underpaid and is asked to do too many things; service, extra teaching, and work with students. The workload reflects in comments about professional life saying, "These tasks don't allow much time for conducting research, and that's disappointing. As a faculty member, I'm frustrated by what the University doesn't have or can't accomplish." Another comment on campus resources includes, "There is a shadow over the U regarding resources. Every year we reallocate and cut resources, and these exercises in cutting must end; there is no more fat to cut, we're cutting people and the core mission. It is scary." There were comments about other things besides resources and one was, "Our campus processes frustrate me. I don't understand the issue with prerequisites, the campus doesn't mange them well."

Many respondents are happy working on campus. These respondents said, "They enjoy working with University students but working with them takes away time from doing their research." Another faculty member said, "My colleagues are solid, I like my department." There was a response saying, "There are department chairs that make the work environment

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unpleasant, some chairs are ineffective, and some make life miserable for others." One faculty member who enjoys students said, "If I focus on my work with students, it is great here; I like to watch students succeed." Another faculty members stated, "The politics in my department is awful, no place for politics but I like my work and what I do, teach and scholarship" and another said, "I love it here, I have opportunity to teach, advise, and recruit." There are frequent comments about administration, "People make this campus happen and I like my chair but our Dean is not always understandable." One faculty member explained the position she found herself in by saying, "Last summer I planned to conduct my research and my chair pleaded with me to teach a required class so students could graduate. Under those circumstances I couldn't say no, but my research was put off another year." One faculty was direct in her response, "I like the campus and working here, it's relaxed."

How do you spend your time?

General response from the faculty is that they are busy people. One said, "Most of my time is spent preparing, for classes, semester, meetings, and so forth. I have a large general education class and spend a great deal of time directly helping students, talking about their academics, possible careers, and their dreams." Another expressed their response as "We spend lots of time in meetings, they all take my time." Some comments made indicated a frustration with time such as, "Due to recent cuts and no approval to fill vacated positions, there aren't enough colleagues to do all the committee work that needs to be done. There are committees for curriculum, tenure and promotion, student success, diversity and college-wide committees; the committee work never ends." And another said, "The challenge is figuring out what to do next, there is so much to do and I love working with college students."

How time is spent differs by person and often means learning how to balance priorities and challenges. One faculty member asked, "Who sets campus priorities? I'm busy and go from

class to meetings to class to office hours to advising. I have no time to reflect." Another comment about time was, "Forget time for research. I have 3 classes per semester, and I'm trying to learn to teach online, it's hard." and another faculty member stated, "Campus priorities bounce around and that wears me out, I have project fatigue." The faculty them continues with, "Do research to get tenure, at the same time teach classes, and complete service. Then there's a request to design online classes, help students, serve your department and college, the work never ends around here."

Lack of resources is a serious theme among the faculty. One faculty said, "Our never ending worry about lack of resources is serious; at some time soon the campus must decide what to stop doing (close departments). Huge decision but we need relief." Another comment was more succinct, "Perhaps it's the time to right size the University and quit trying to grow and we need to fit to the resources we have."

What does the University do best and what is it known for?

Most respondents agree on campus strengths. One comment explained, "This campus is known for diversity, UMSL is diversity in action." And another faculty member said, "Students are all ages, experiences, backgrounds, ethnicities; allowing for enriching conversations in classes." Faculty strengths include helping students. A few comments explain, "What the campus does best is its work with first generation and Pell grant recipients." Other comments include, "We work best with first generation students and help them succeed." and "We take care of these students and they appreciate it." A great strength of the University is educating the Saint Louis workforce and is proud of doing that, many faculty referenced this strength. Specific comments included, "Our community partnerships are best in the region" and "University students are sought out in the regional job market."

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What are the students like and describe the student culture?

Students at metropolitan universities are different. One faculty member said, "The socioeconomic level of many students is low and they pay their own education costs meaning many must work." And another faculty member said, "Most parents don't provide resources to help their child pay for their education; this is a non-traditional student campus." The downside to students working is stated by one faculty member who says, "Students that work too many hours suffer educationally and often have to drop their classes or flunkout" and "Many students attend part-time due to their economics or life story, including providing care for a loved one." The pattern about students working emerges, "Each student has a story." One faculty member views students working as a negative saying, "Our students aren't interested in education, they don't study enough and they don't try."

Other comments indicate that faculty sees the University students as determined and wanting to earn their degree. One faculty member said, "Being a student is hard for our students because of other responsibilities." A faculty member who was amazed at what our students experience shared the following story, "One student in my class was at home with her baby when she was robbed. I expected her to quit but she persevered and finished the class. I was impressed and wanted to help her as much as I could." Another story that was shared said, "It's pretty common for a student or two each semester to occasionally bring their child to class when baby sitters are sick." One Dean said, "Our students don't know what the University can do for them or what it should do for them." The faculty reflected a similar comment saying, "Many students are intimidated by the University and fear it. They don't know how to get through roadblocks."

Teaching classes to students with diverse skills is challenging. One faculty said, "In some classes, students know and understand content and some don't. It is hard to teach content

and conduct research in the same class." A similar theme can be seen in another comment that says, "Students are at different levels of knowledge, this is the biggest challenge." Additionally a faculty member says, "School is a challenge for students when the rigor level is beyond their capabilities."

Comments were made about solving some of these challenges. One said, "Campus needs holistic attitude working with students; they are not just in my class, these students have other classes and responsibilities." One faculty member says, "Many students have hard life and face major life issues, their burdens hurt them academically, meaning we must teach and expect different things from them." Some faculty are specific about student weaknesses saying, "Too many students are underprepared for academic life," or "Our students have challenges with finances," and "Many students attend part-time to afford a degree and remain enrolled." Another faculty comment was, "Students struggle with life, academic content, money, and balancing issues; it's hard." One faculty member that works closely with students explained that, "The campus has too many cultural information gaps for students they don't understand the hows and whys of the University. Concepts like suspension and intervention are viewed as negative, when they are looking for help." A similar comment explained, "Students do not understand prerequisites and their purpose." One faculty member saw a difference in students based on where they resided, "Students living on campus know more and work harder at academics. However, there is not a large enough critical mass to make a difference on campus."

The next question is, does the institution support and encourage student learning?

UMSL does things differently. One faculty member said, "Information on student graduation and retention is available if we want it." Another said, "Student learning is not

discussed frequently in meetings or are the faculty asked for solutions." Where campus conversations on student success originate is unknown as two faculty members say, "Adjuncts talk about graduation rates but it's not a strong campus agenda item," and "Our Dean is vanilla on subject publically, other things bother him more."

Who focuses and discussed student learning differs. One faculty member said, "Student services are focused on student success and recently more resources are available to help students." One faculty member shared her concern saying, "Faculty needs to be more involved in the process of retention and student success, to achieve success faculty need to be more involved. My worry is that many faculty teach as they did 20 years ago and our campus needs different faculty involvement."

Academic departments focus on student outcomes by classes but not for programs. As one faculty member said, "We are always working on student outcomes; then they are not used to assess the entire program. The coordination between class objectives and program gets lost, there is no focus." Another faculty said, "Our students need to talk, many advisors help but there aren't enough professionals to make a difference, and we get by though." There was agreement that students need help by academic discipline. Almost all faculty agreed that they can't afford the tutors that the students need.

In many interviews the conversation drifted to campus resources. Campus must cut wasted spending. One faculty member sated clearly his views as, "We have funded places on campus not producing SCH and they remain funded regardless of cuts." Another faculty member explained that, "Many students in my classes say they never use campus resources." To improve campus one faculty member said, "We need a more focused commitment to our resources, many

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students are on their own trying to survive and aren't informed which campus resources they can and should use."

Campus confusion remains about its focus. As one faculty member said, "We are expected to teach and retain students but tenure is based on research that is published and cited, it's hard to do both, they are full time jobs." Another faculty member said, "Research is underfunded with very little infrastructure."

Emerging patterns: Faculty is concerned about students, especially the students who work so much. These working students have challenges and struggles but are determined to graduate. The students' academic profiles have improved, but more students need to be more engaged in their academics. Faculty needs time to perform the tasks asked; lack of time is a serious issue with the faculty. Another faculty concern is continual loss of positions and use of adjuncts and NTT positions. Faculty is concerned about ongoing and increasing costs of education to students and loss of resources in the academic core while units not producing SCH continue.

Conclusion

True measures of student success at a complex public metropolitan research university are hard to report. There is no one measure that explains how a complex university functions and performs especially related to student learning. After examining numerous campus communications and participating in many dialogues it was found that student success is measured and reported in many ways. Some institutional success is measured by reported rankings. These measures can enhance the campus reputation and are related to levels of faculty scholarship and students performances on national tests. Additional measures of student success

lie in the number of students who graduate and find employment. Still others believe the true test of the university is how students overcome their personal issues and persevere to graduation. Legislators and taxpayers expect public universities to be efficient, affordable, effective, and not overspend their budget. Campus researchers measure success by number of grants, state and federal, that receive funding. The campus explains its success when students use their many services and resources.

Chapter Five discusses the emerging patterns from the findings merged into themes. It discusses the alignment and communication of institutional messages in a decentralized organization. Academic units are highly specialized, relating to the discipline making the organizational structure decentralized. Student success as a university focus needs alignment to effectively use diminishing resources and to assure services and programs offered assist students. Employee satisfaction is dependent on knowledge. Organizational communication is a key to success. Complex organization culture is the fabric that makes the organization work.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

Introduction

Themes emerged from this research that originated from the patterns derived from data collection while studying programs and practices that support student learning at one Midwestern public university. The unit of analysis was the university. There was an examination of campus-wide written material and the messages delivered, observation of administration and campus professionals conducting their work, and interviews with students, staff, and faculty discussing campus programs and practices related to student learning. Three themes emerged from the research: alignment of programs, practices, and policies; administrative centralization of campus policies, programs, and practices related to student learning; and communication of practices, programs, and policies related to student learning. Each of the themes will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. This chapter summarizes the study, provides responses to the research questions and the limitations of the research model, and makes suggestions for future research.

The University used for this study is a complex public organization that grew rapidly, being only fifty years old. State support has declined each year for the past eight years, causing the campus to depend more on tuition revenue. To further complicate matters, state statutes forbid public universities from increasing tuition beyond the consumer price index (CPI). Students must be retained to graduation to avoid losing tuition revenue. Thus, student learning, satisfaction, and retention are critical components to the economic well-being of the campus.

While these economic issues drive decisions at the University, it has also grown and become more specialized around academic disciplines and added more graduate degrees at both the masters and doctorate levels. This growth by discipline has allowed certain areas the opportunity to earn external funding. When departments secure external funding, they also earn

power and autonomy (Bok, 2006). The growth of these specialized academic areas led to a decentralized administrative structure which encourages autonomy (Birnbaum, 1998). These specialized academic units tend to rely on themselves and are what many refer to as loosely coupled units. The administrative structure that serves loosely coupled units best is decentralization (Kezar, 2009). Further, Kezar explains that in a loosely coupled structure there is little opportunity to work with others outside the unit, as the unit provides tight organization within the specialization.

Summary of the Study

The research study examined what one university says about student learning, how its employees carry out their work, and what faculty, staff, and students understand about student learning. Keeling and Hersh (2011) state the most important outcome in higher education is student learning, and changing the current paradigm from teaching to learning is a radical concept. George Mehaffy (2010) explains that higher education must focus on student learning, or it will go away like the newspaper. American higher education is known for its diversity, which can be seen in the variety of campus, sizes, locations, and overall operations. Yet with all this diversity the core mission remains student learning. Due to the complexity of higher education, their varying interests, and economic needs, campuses often move away from their core mission to pursue other opportunities. Using case study methodology examining one institution provided the opportunity to gather data on how that campus focuses on student learning.

Study conclusions

In Chapter One, four research questions were asked to drive the study. The information collected for each research question is summarized below.

Research Question One: What services and programs offered on campus promote student learning? Newly admitted students are introduced to campus when they attend a required orientation session for freshmen. These are acculturation sessions where the students learn about the campus. They receive overview of campus history, its programs, and overall operations. There is an additional focus on relationships and making friends.

The campus studied is research intensive where growth occurred by academic discipline. Budgets in academic units were recently reduced, resulting in cuts to services and programs. The academic units with resources remaining provide students with faculty advisors, tutors, and learning communities to support their learning. Budget cuts also affected workloads in many departments, as many professors are now teaching an additional class or larger classes.

Students in departments or colleges without these additional resources rely on campus resources for these services. Unfortunately, the campus at large lacks extensive tutoring options or supplemental instruction. These are generally offered at the academic unit level. Campus supports math and writing centers but offers no formal learning communities. At-risk students are supported by services and processes that engage them intrusively. This includes the offices of Multicultural Relations and Student Retention Services. The Honors College provides a learning intensive environment that is writing intensive across the curriculum. These students are selected for admission and provided additional scholarship dollars when enrolled. Honors acts and behaves like a learning community by providing a small liberal arts experience within a research university.

Research Question Two: What do students expect from the University regarding support for their learning? During interactions with students during this study, each student defined what education means to them. Many outcomes were identified.

Many students expect campus to provide them social outlets. They want activities, which can be either aligned with their academic interest or purely social. Students want to be treated equitably and to learn. Many students seek professional relationships to help them manage the large campus and its complicated processes as they navigate their career path. Students want an advocate to help direct and guide them in good and tough times. There are offices for advising and career services to help students. Students rely heavily on personal relationships to provide information and guidance.

Older and transfer students expect their needs to be supported by the university while enrolled. These students want adequate parking, child care, complete understanding of the financial aid process, affordable education, all-day access to computers and technology, and networking that leads to a job or career.

Two student themes that frequently emerged were the expectations that their former educational experiences will receive credit and that they will encounter opportunities for social relationships. With close to an eighty percent transfer population, these students want to avoid repeating classes and adding costs. Students also expressed a need for casual and social relationships. They place high reliability and value on information received from friends and acquaintances. When students were asked where they sought information when needed, no one said the campus bulletin or a formal university document; they frequently referred to friends. This was highlighted in the Welcome Center, where students, staff, and faculty meet casually in an open environment to talk and help each other.

Research Question Three: What preconceived notions and perceptions do faculty and staff have about their students? Examination of faculty conversations in the town hall meetings and during interviews provides insight into what faculty knows about their students. Students define the university, and all services and programs must be designed to address student needs. Throughout the research, faculty indicated an appreciation of the students and their stories. However, they appeared to lack a true understanding of their students and what they need to succeed. Not one faculty talked about redesigning a class or restructuring their learning opportunities due to students being underprepared. Faculty made comments about students not trying, working too many hours or not being fully engaged in the academic process.

Faculty understands that many students enrolled are Pell grant eligible, a minority, or first generation. Many students come from working class homes, where higher education may not be as readily available as an opportunity and many enroll despite being academically underprepared. This becomes a classroom challenge for faculty. If the students' academic levels vary, some students need background on content and others are ready to conduct research. Overall, according to faculty, students need to focus more on writing. There are many majors without a writing class in their discipline. Our students need to learn how to learn in teams or with partners. The skills needed in today's workforce are writing and working in teams.

Faculty members understand that many students experience challenging lives. Our students have responsibilities as parents, caregivers, and pay their own education. In addition to those challenges students must learn how to manage the university and its roadblocks. These underprepared or distracted students need feedback on how to succeed. This is hard to address in academic settings where expectations are high. Faculty sees students needing assistance and

wanting professionals to talk with. Campus lacks an adequate number of professionals in those roles to help. Over half of the faculty interviewed, but not all—faculty members understand the responsibilities the students have. While some help them, others hold those challenges against them. Of the faculty interviewed just under half, believe students are not academically engaged enough and cannot succeed in academia. Based on what the faculty said that were interviewed, they indicated students work too many hours and will never get through; they need more effort and focus.

Many of the faculty members interviewed indicated the reason students leave is finances. Further, they say retention would improve if students had financial knowledge and personal strategies for managing financial issues. The campus competitors with less rigid academic entrance requirements are cutting into our student market. The campus is in need of a new student market—but, contrary to how many feel, online education is not the answer. If the campus grows online programs, those students will need services and programs to help them manage the online environment, where students need more additional services to succeed.

Faculty expressed frustration with what students do not have or know. They expect students to understand the value of an education at a research university. Transfer students do not understand the need for prerequisites, and, as their preceding schools prepare them differently, some material is repeated. Students also do not always understand course load, how much study is needed, and how to achieve graduation.

Current students need studies related to community needs such as studies in aging, creativity, entrepreneurial work, and being a change agent when they enter the work force. Students want opportunities and spaces to study non-academic items such as hip-hop rock.

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Students want and need help with career planning; they need direction and help connecting academic studies to jobs.

Research Question Four: What do University publications and reports say about student learning? Many publications were studied with varying purposes. Some are used for recruiting new students, some preparing students to enroll with keys to success. The accreditation self-study documents that the campus meets or exceeds HLC criteria that it is eligible for re-accreditation, and that student learning is its centerpiece.

Multiple messages related to student learning are delivered on the public domain of the World Wide Web. Messages are communicated to prospects about campus support systems and lists of resources to help them. The general messages delivered about the student experience focus on outcomes. For example, one state, "If you want to learn or grow, enroll here." Another reads, "If you want a career, enroll with us."

How student experience is represented varies from college to college. Nevertheless, the colleges' messages indicated agreement on the value of their campus advising units, as well as student internships and partnerships' being student learning opportunities.

The accreditation self-study states that campus is committed to offering quality student learning opportunities for diverse students. Student learning is identified as the centerpiece of campus success. Teaching and assessment of student learning is ongoing and conducted in the colleges.

Recruiting information is presented with pictures and short stated facts; there is little narrative. One document provides academic requirements for degree completion and some

reference to careers. Documents appear to be written assuming the student knows the discipline they will enroll in.

Orientation publications offer a different slant. Messages delivered explain where the University helps students succeed and the tools available for them. The campus supports a shared responsibility for learning model, where both faculty and students take responsibility for learning.

Student Life, that supports student development, identifies in their annual report the student learning opportunities outside the classroom they support. Messages include that "opportunities abound, and students that participate succeed at higher levels." (Student Life Annual Report, 2013) They discuss how student life connects with academic affairs' support of students.

The strategic plan was crafted for economic reasons and to fulfil the moral imperative. The plan identifies campus outcomes to be achieved by 2018. There is little explanation of ways this will occur, except statements clarifying that there will be no change or reduction in academic rigor (quality image) and that campus will identify innovative educational delivery methods and work on reducing student costs. Over time the ways to accomplish the outcomes will be more clearly defined.

Limitations of Study

A case study research project provides rich data on one entity. As a result, conclusions drawn from the research are not necessarily suited for application to all universities. There is no evidence to connect data collected from this university study that can be applied as a standard for other universities.

There are many limitations that could not be controlled. Both benefits and risks arise as a result of being an employee conducting research at the immediate place of employment. The benefits are that relationships were previously established; people interviewed were already acquainted with the researcher. The setting up of the interviews with faculty and staff was easy because of these prior relationships, and the researcher never had trouble navigating the campus. Attending campus events was handled similarly; the people working the event knew the researcher and welcomed the attention. It was easy for the researcher to find appropriate data and information, because the researcher was familiar with the university and its processes.

On the other hand, there were risks in conducting research at the place of employment. A few times during interviews, a comment was made that instinctively needed probing. Because of the prior relationship between the interviewee and the researcher, the probe was avoided. The researcher felt uncomfortable asking for details in certain situations. Generally this hesitancy arose with personnel issues. For example, one faculty member shared comments about the chair of their department. The researcher avoided hearing the conflict or appearing interested, because there was a prior acquaintanceship with the Chair. The comment was personal and inappropriate in this research. If the researcher was employed elsewhere outside the university, it is likely the statement would have been probed.

Collecting data in an open forum is a challenge. The attendees of the town hall could have numerous reasons for saying what they did, and extracting those comments to all the faculty or conditions for all campus is challenging. The speaker's motivation is unknown and cannot be controlled.

Case study research has the researcher as the tool. This entails making a human being the research tool. The human being has biases and blind spots. The researcher must be aware of these and act accordingly.

Recommendations

Academic alignment

Alignment of campus resources is critical to student success. Tinto (2012) explains that effective universities have coherent alignment of actions and resources that support student success. The campus studied is young, and many programs remain in transition and continue to improve. Their true assessment comes over the course of time, as the programs aimed to help students adapt as student needs change over time. There is evidence of academic alignment in many aspects of campus. Kuh and associates (2005a) define university alignment as the coordination of allocated resources with the campus mission, educational function, and the needs of the students. Achieving interconnectedness of campus actions requires units to work together on assessment, sharing information, and coordinating work (Tinto, 2012).

Academic plans and class schedules

Students need to understand what to expect from the university and what student success looks like. Students do not come to the University knowing expectations. The University designed four-year academic plans for degree programs as pathways for students to create plans for graduation. Advisors and faculty in the colleges created these plans, now published and are provided to students. These plans create prescribed pathways to success. They present classes and activities that all students need to be successful in their major. While such a concrete outline of coursework is important, more is needed. The campus has challenges with scheduling classes.

Many required classes are offered at the same time and day, thereby limiting the number of required classes students can enroll in, thus slowing progress to degree. There are little to no classes offered on Fridays and few undergraduate classes after 2 p.m. each day. With required classes offered in conflict and only a few sections of each class offered, students who work and have other responsibilities are at a disadvantage of making academic progress. The alignment between the academic plans and the implementation of those plans is not evident. For greater alignment, the class schedule should provide students with ample opportunities to enroll in required classes in order to make academic progress. Tinto (2012) explains that implementation of quality programs often takes many years to enact. The first year of implementation is learning, followed by a year of fine-tuning and repairing, and in year three new programs tends to flourish.

Early alert system

Student success is enhanced when expectations are high and explained clearly and often (Tinto, 2012). The use of an early alert system is intended to provide timely feedback to students on how they are doing in their classes. The system encourages faculty, especially those in general education classes, to use it. The faculty reports a student whereby an advisor or student affairs professional follows up with the student and provides feedback to the faculty. For students to be successful they need feedback; the student is then responsible for changing their behavior to improve their academic performance. The management of the system provides alignment opportunities between academic affairs and student affairs. The early alert system aligns campus resources with information on student success when the student needs it and has time to improve. According to Kuh and associates (2005b), when campus resources are assigned to support student needs and characteristics, this constitutes alignment.

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Transition programs

Academic alignment is also found in campus transition programs, including collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs. Low-income and first generation students generally lack the social knowledge about the collegiate experience to be successful on their own (Tinto, 2012). Mandatory orientation can help students be successful, especially with a student population that is first generation or Pell eligible. Orientation provides opportunities for students to receive good advice and to understand institutional expectations. Historically, incoming students were not required to attend orientation; orientations were offered but not mandated. During the past two years, freshman orientation became required, though transfer orientation remained encouraged but voluntary. Student affairs have responsibility for planning and staffing orientation. They have masterfully engaged every college and use some faculty members to communicate information. Over half of the material covered in orientation relates to academics and addresses student challenges. Freshman orientation includes information on socializing and making friends. Making new friends is a valuable skill for students to learn.

Teaching students to learn is defined as acculturation and helps establish a pathway to student success (Kuh, 2005a). The orientation sessions focus on student needs. The biggest challenge working with freshmen is adjustment, and freshman orientation focuses on making new relationships and friends. Transfer students are generally enrolled in college to earn their degree and have a stronger academic focus. Transfer orientation was geared to providing students needed academic information. Both orientations talked about the history and background of the campus. A difficult concept to address is about right time delivery of information. Whether it was valuable to spend orientation time discussing the cost of dropping a

class to students that have not enrolled was put into question. In other words, when should students receive information about dropping classes?

As a transition program, freshman orientation is aligned with academics. Orientation discussed the many people who are involved in student learning. This includes the student, their friends, the faculty, the professional staff such as advisors, and parents and loved ones. Parents were reminded to share their expectations of their student with them, so they know what to expect.

Transfer orientation sessions aligned well with academic needs of the transfer students. Each incoming class has between 77 percent and 80 percent transfer students. Offering a separate orientation for transfer students clearly identifies the different needs between freshmen and transfers. Freshmen tend to experience adjustment challenges, while transfers, be it two-year or four-year, have a stronger academic focus and are actively seeking their degree. The transfer orientation helps transfer students manage their way through the university. That this orientation is voluntary is unfortunate. The challenge in mandating transfer orientation is numbers. If all transfers were required to attend, the orientation staff, which is minimal at present, would need to double to serve the population. Transfer orientation session spends close to 80 percent of its time delivering academic information. The session includes information on degree audits, transferring classes, and specific sessions with advisors and faculty in their major college.

Academic affairs and student affairs

Student affairs are structurally aligned with academic affairs. Generally, Student Affairs focus on the social welfare of the student and academic affairs focuses on the development of the student (Kezar & Lester, 2009). The Vice Provost for student affairs reports to the Provost and

represents student affairs on the Provost Council which consists of academic deans. This conversational opportunity and availability of knowledge allows student affairs leadership to participate in decisions and provide input. For example, when this research was being conducted, the Center for Student Success (CSS) was eliminated. It was an older student support model that was passive in nature and had become ineffective. CSS offered student programs and resources. Students were expected to attend, but the center offered no outreach. Student Retention Services (SRS) began as a replacement and focused on a more intrusive model. The Deans frequently talk about student needs and the students' reluctance to seek help when needed. This drove numerous conversations about what students need. Student affairs created a different model of student support based on student needs. SRS calls students directly who are on probation, admitted provisionally, or referred by faculty and staff. SRS enacts academic recovery plans for these students and holds them accountable for achieving their set goals. This was lacking with the previous center. The alignment between academic affairs and student affairs helps create services to better serve student needs and help fulfill the campus mission.

Alignment of messages

World Wide Web: Alignment may also occur in odd relationships. The examination of the campus web sites—particularly the pages of Majors and Degrees, Advising, and Future Students—led to discovery of alignment within inter-colleges. Inter-college is defined as between colleges, while intra-college is defined as within the same college. Alignment was found there as well.

Using the intra-college method and examining the Majors and Degrees page, the written material was extracted and what remained was a story and picture about that college. The story that emerged portrayed alignment and reads:

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We educate a diverse student population and want to provide a student-centered education. The College provides students opportunity for a career and offers a relevant and challenging curriculum with educators that are personal and uplifting. With a challenging curriculum they educate leaders that improve knowledge and make a better life for everyone.

Similarly, using the Future Students webpage, a story was created. This was extracted from the New Students page used to recruit new students. Therefore it is reasonable that the majority of the material would align in that it was written to attract new students. Using the same process used in the Majors and Degrees webpage, the narrative constructed reads:

We support undeclared students. We work to make the world a better place through research. The community is relevant with brilliant professors that provide students with excellent learning opportunities. Our student body experiences excellent learning strategies and their work they engage in makes better citizens. We add to the arts in the region and prepare students for careers in health care and our faculty work in the community.

The advising webpage is a different matter. There is no campus overview or landing page for advising. If a visitor is navigating the University site looking for information on advising, the information will be hard to find and is not located on similar pages by college. Campus advising is conducted and managed within each college without a central operation. The college advising web pages are located in assorted places within each college website. Some advising webpages are located front and center on the college home page and easily found; other pages are buried deep in the college website and navigated with difficulty. Without a unified presence including a voice and face, campus advising lacks a presence.

The advising pages are written in different formats, making it difficult to create a similar narrative. When an assortment of focuses was extracted from advising web pages, it became clear that the story created does not align. The advising pages emphasize themes that the colleges reflect. The themes stressed include the value of finding a suitable career, the value of the faculty directing student learning, and the presence of a dynamic curriculum. These are components of education but not of advising. The websites talk about the value of internships and partnerships in the educational process and what student services help students, but all websites talk about all the components.

The website can also be examined looking at written material on one college through the three different websites for intra-alignment. Intra-alignment was found while examining the three websites of the largest colleges—Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education. Intra-alignment refers to the process of comparing information written about one college using the three different webpages.

Combing messages delivered around the Arts and Sciences website, a narrative was constructed. The narrative reads, "Arts and Sciences educate diverse and bright students who become intellectual leaders. The college engages active learning practices. The college helps undeclared students using a strong faculty who focus on creativity, critical thinking, analyzing data based decisions, and reflection." This narrative portrays the college well and shows alignment to student success and purpose.

Using the same process for the College of Business Administration (COBA), a narrative was also constructed. COBA narrative reads, "The College is becoming a student centered provider of business education that helps diverse students and work with students to find careers and enter the workforce. The COBA curriculum is related to the regional economy. The value of

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the degree earned is high, the faculty writes books and is known internationally, and use innovative learning, and tie theory and life problems." The messages delivered on the COBA website are aligned and explain student learning in that college.

Examination of the College of Education produced similar results. The college narrative begins:

The College prepares students for careers. They have a great faculty that helps students develop their career and networks in the community. Faculty help advise students. The education curriculum is innovative, research based, rigorous, and significant. Further, students form personal relationships with faculty, learn to use critical inquiry, receive relevant instruction, and have great alums. Students are active partners in their learning and faculty is professionals.

Again alignment is found relating this college and its goals to student learning.

Written recruiting material

Another campus area that is unaligned is messaging used in recruiting material. For example, the written material defines advising as an ongoing conversation and personal relationship. This is different from practice. In two colleges, students can only see advisors using walk-in opportunities and can self-advise. For these students there is no relationship with an advisor, for as a walk-in a student might see a different advisor each time. For students who self-advise, they will not even talk with an advisor. The recruiting material does not reflect advising practice on campus and presents misrepresentation of what the advising process is for a number of students.

Strategic plan

The biggest alignment was born as this study was being conducted. The strategic planning process outcome is a goal related to student success and reads, "The campus will graduate 20% more students by 2018." Year One has passed and many campus initiatives began that were plans and practices to achieve the goal and therefore provide an opportunity for the campus to compete for state dollars within the System. There were events such as the town halls which served to unify the campus around the goal and obtain buy-in through explanations about how this goal affects daily routines for faculty, staff, and students. The results of these efforts remain unknown.

Tinto (2012) explains that, in order to achieve alignment, all university action needs to support each other so that work is conducted in a coherent manner. Alignment is needed for carrying out the mission, assuring that all employees know the overall purpose, and effectively using resources. As state aid continues to be reduced and campus must rely on tuition income for revenue, it cannot afford to waste resources on projects or programs that are unaligned to serve the greater good. Alignment alone will not make a university effective; other measures are needed. Specifically, administrative structure must align with campus needs, which requires the campus to have a reliable and effective tool to communicate and train stakeholders about these ongoing programs and projects.

Administrative centralization

In order for a large complex organization like a research university to focus on one campus-wide goal such as student success, some operations need central oversight to ensure equitable delivery of services and effort. All organizations have structure that drives its

operations (Ruben, 2004). For an organization to function effectively, the core purpose must be understood, roles established, and relationships assigned (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Each college responds to its stakeholders, faculty and staff expectations and these vary by discipline.

Institutional mission

Higher education differs from business by not having clarity of mission. In business the bottom line is profit, and all actions and decisions are made to improve the bottom line (Ruben, 2004). In higher education the focus of purpose and effort varies. The University is comprised of nine colleges, each with their own culture formed from decisions made on rules and regulations, job descriptions, tenure and promotion recommendations, and chain of command. There are colleges that focus effort on improving their rankings; others look to grow their enrollment, improve their facilities, develop new revenue streams, or enhance research opportunities. The growth in the colleges when they focus on different goals takes resources and focus away from achieving larger campus goals, such as student success.

Alignment of programs and practices when managed centrally can minimize wasted resources. As public higher education loses resources with state legislators cutting budgets to higher education, it seems reasonable that aligning programs and practices, which makes good use of the diminishing resources, is a wise practice. Central management of processes could assure mission fulfillment.

Student success

The institution studied recognized a need, both economic and moral, to focus on student success and has set a goal of graduating twenty percent more graduates within four years. President Obama and numerous scholars have said that, in order for America to produce enough college graduates to compete in the knowledge economy, higher education must focus its efforts

on student learning. The institution has committed itself to graduating more students. Central governance of this goal could manage the design and implementation of plans that lead to goal achievement. Leaving plans to achieve the goal to each college won't achieve similar outcomes, as each college engages different strategies.

Specifically, this study found a need for the campus to centralize activities around campus advising and transition programs. In order for students to graduate timely they must receive quality advising. Inequitable advising services are not acceptable. Each college should deliver similar messages and information during advising that help students graduate. Transition programs, including orientation and recruiting activities, serve to acculturate students. The messages delivered during transition programs as facts, expectations, and processes need to be similar as well.

Advising

Advising students is a college function, and there is currently no central oversight. Campus advising is a valuable tool for retaining students and graduating students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The university provides no central face or voice for campus advising. There is no central advising philosophy, best practices, or policies established; these are created by each college. Campus does not describe an overview of campus advising, explain the value of the experience, or identify the roles and expectations in the advising experience. This information could be managed and delivered centrally to various college advising units. Throughout campus, students are assigned to advisors differently. A couple colleges assign advisors by alphabetical order or discipline, while another sees advisees by walk-ins only. Additionally, a few disciplines assign students to faculty advisors, while other colleges do not engage faculty advisors at all. There is much variance in advising processes.

The variety of advising experiences is evident by lack of similar representation on the World Wide Web. Each college identifies their advising services in different places with varying consistency. A few colleges present access to their advising services on their front page; others bury their advising information three to four clicks from the homepage. However, to provide central oversight to advising offices, each advising unit would have to agree on conducting similar advising processes. Giving up those processes is a major challenge. The college's control advising and losing that control to central operations might be disregarded.

Developing a campus-wide advising structure with a clear definition of advising and complementary processes would be a challenge. The challenge comes in standardizing. For example, advisors would need to understand their role as faculty support and the conveyors of information around the curriculum. Campus units would need to agree that they will focus advising relationships on student development and move beyond transactional relationships where signatures are sought and forms are completed. Moving advising to a central model needs a masterful implementation plan. A heavy handed approach demanding units to change their operations would likely cause units to not participate. A central advising philosophy could create an equitable advising experience for students by assigning roles and responsibilities and allocating tasks to advisors. For an effective central advising operation each college would need to agree on the role of advising. Currently, they vary greatly. For example, decisions on role of faculty advisors are needed. Other items needing coordination are the model of an advising curriculum, the process by which students are assigned an advisor, basic responses to student questions, and a clear understanding of advising processes such as follow-up notes and assignment of resources. These items would need central decisions, after which the colleges would implement them. Other issues to be addressed include faculty advisors and their roles with

the professional advisors. As mentioned before, a few academic units require students to see a faculty advisor every semester; others do not. Similarly, only some colleges allow their students to self-advise. Campus needs a consistent policy.

Though a central advising operation might be a challenge to enact, the benefits derived might be worth the risk. Receiving good advice is critical for students to succeed (Tinto, 2012). Advising is critical to student success, and student advising experiences must be similar. The content delivered in advising sessions should vary by college, but there should be similarity with the overall process and expectations. For example, students could be required to meet with an advisor each semester or when dropping a course. Another possibility is to assign students an advisor with whom they remain until graduation, assuming their major remains the same throughout enrollment. A central advising office could communicate campus best advising practices and each unit is expected to assess the effectiveness of their processes and report their results. Unfortunately, advising managed in the colleges has led to a variety of advising processes that evolved over time and reflect the college values and are assigned to its advising services, and some may or may not be effective.

Students reported challenges in understanding the process to drop classes or change schedules, meeting with an advisor, or understanding campus information about changing majors and applying for a scholarship. Stated earlier and supported by research (Kuh, 2005a and Tinto, 2012) students need support to be successful. Advising is a relationship that helps students succeed, and not all students receive the same experience. This adversely affects campus goals of retention and graduation. While observing students interacting in the Welcome Center, it was noted that students talk openly and share general campus information with each other. That information could be delivered more formally with a central advising model.

Retention

Campus retention has been a challenge for years. Keeping students enrolled is the right thing to do and provides economic gains to the University. Now the campus has set a goal of graduating 20 percent more students by 2018, making retention crucial. Additionally, campus is more reliant on tuition dollars for revenue and losing students annually is expensive.

Research indicates that retention does not improve much by taking actions, but the critical factor is how those actions are organized (Carey, 2005, Kuh et.al. 2005a). The administrative structure found at the University studied has decentralized retention efforts. Currently responsibility for retention lies with the Deans. When eight people are responsible for a campus-wide activity, the result is that retention efforts have different meaning and status in each college. One college focuses their retention efforts on aggressively working with students receiving early academic alerts. However, the faculty is not required to submit alerts—and many do not. In another college the retention effort is based on the students who come to the advising center asking for help—and many do not. The point is that, when eight people are in charge, there is no systematic approach or overall assessment to attack the issue. Research identifies three major factors that enhance retention, and campus is not focusing on them: students must be aware of their expectations, receive social and academic support, and receive feedback on their progress (Tinto, 2012).

Retention leadership is important. Effective leadership includes the authority to make and follow-up on decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2008 and Tinto, 2012, and Kuh, 2005a). This suggestion is to develop focused leadership around retention. A central retention office must focus on activities and align resources to improve retention. Regardless, this suggestion is calling for one office charged with retention responsibility and the authority to design and enforce a

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comprehensive retention plan. Most importantly, this central office would develop relationships across campus whose collective efforts would help meet the graduation goal. What campus needs is campus interconnectedness on this issue. This office would study and report on campus data around student retention and needs, and create plans to attack retention. A central retention organization would identify leadership throughout campus, hold them responsible, and foster continued retention and support of student success.

As evidenced in the campus town halls and interviews with faculty, it is unclear what must be accomplished to improve retention and graduate twenty percent more students. The campus knows the strategic goal, but how that goal affects people on campus every day remains unclear. For example, if one college designs a plan to retain more of their students by offering general education classes only at a certain time, the effect of this decision on other colleges is not discussed. These types of issues are currently not discussed between colleges because retention lies within the college. Central oversight could encourage campus-wide discussion and generate more creative solutions to retention. In a decentralized operation, the different colleges naturally think of themselves. In the town hall meetings, faculty talked about adding programs, expressed frustration with circumstances around salary or assignments, and talked about personal wishes. These are valuable topics for discussion but unrelated to retention or meeting the campus strategic goal.

Transition programs

Campus transition programs could benefit from additional centralization to be more effective. To achieve enhanced student learning campus-wide initiatives, such as transition programs designed to acculturate students, they need central administration to achieve goals. Bolman & Deal (2008) explain central organization as a formal structure where work is

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accomplished and can consequently enhance morale. Transition programs include orientation and recruiting sessions. These are critical opportunities to help students learn what they need to be successful. Kuh (2005b) explains that student success occurs when institutions successfully complete two things: teaching institutional values and assuring resources are available and match student needs.

Teaching students what is important occurs in orientation and recruiting events. Messages delivered to students during orientation addressed using campus resources and making new friends to minimize loneliness. Students were frequently assured that they are welcome on campus. However, it is difficult to determine if that same feeling is delivered to each student within academic disciplines. There were a few faculty members present at orientation and recruiting events, but more are needed. There were no messages delivered about the faculty, student performance and outcomes, and how things are accomplished on campus. Incoming students should have this information. As the campus transition programs grow and improve over time, attendance and additional coordination with academic programs would be beneficial. The campus orientation programs are directed and managed by competent student affairs professionals. Additional collaboration with student learning units and units responsible for student development would be a welcome addition to these programs.

Campus messaging

Centralization of messages delivered on the World Wide Web would further enhance the campus mission. Currently the web is managed by University Marketing, the web office, but website implementation is managed by units. There is a content management system with oversight by University Marketing, and each college is required to use it. Those units not participating find their web pages withdrawn from the web. However, at the unit level, web page

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management varies. Some colleges hired professionals to manage their web sites, believing their appearance is important, while other units assigned the task to an administrative assistant with no interest. The outcome is that many college websites are updated daily and include bells and whistles, while other sites are stagnant with outdated information. Again, the overall campus presentation to the public varies, providing a public perspective of disorganization. University Marketing does not want responsibility for content but could provide oversight. The oversight could include hosting meetings once a semester that encourage units to update their websites along with a list of specific dates that content updates are due. Additionally these meetings could create a subculture for those who work on the web where they interact with others who also work on web content. In a large complex organization such as the university, employees need to know they are supported and can interact with colleagues in similar positions. Centrally operating web management could also help create messages that are similar and collectively create a positive story about the campus. As it is, messages are varied. One college explains itself as a provider of enriching learning opportunities, while another says its curriculum is related to regional economics; yet another says its curriculum is rigorous, innovative, and significant. A central oversight office could bring the colleges together to talk about their curriculum, craft a story from those conversations, and post appropriate message on the web related to curriculum. Similar messages and stories could be crafted and interwoven on the web about transition programs, student learning, faculty, staff, university expectations of students, and so forth. The suggestion is related to having one voice write the messages on the web so that visitors read and understand campus strengths.

In a decentralized management structure, managing campus efforts is often diluted because units generally respond to their interests acting in "silos." This is a challenging model to

use in accomplishing the core mission of student success or achieving a campus-wide strategic goal. In a decentralized model the department is connected and responds to its college but rarely to the larger university (Birnbaum, 1988). A measure of central oversight and coordination would help achieve campus goals by holding units accountable and establishing reasonable goals. Decentralization allows for colleges and departments to thrive by responding to stakeholders with similar academic interests and concerns. The actors are in the academic departments where the faculty conduct teaching, perform class scheduling, provide student assistance, and are responsible to their college and its goals; the campus goals are secondary.

Campus communication

A complex organization such as a research university needs constant two-way communication that provides information to stakeholders and receives information from stakeholders (Ruben, 2004). Information shared with the organization keeps employees updated and attached. This can consist of training opportunities where it is important for new employees to learn about the organization, what is important, and how things are done. Also, ongoing employees need occasional training. This is especially true when new or updated processes or tools are introduced. The communication can be designed to create and maintain relationships within the organization (Ruben, 2004). The goal of training sessions is to acculturate employees and minimize their disenchantment and potential withdrawal from the institution. It is a form of engagement (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Training opportunities allow for one campus voice to explain the brand or any pending issues. Leadership must communicate campus values and purposes along with status reports of campus successes and failures (Kezar & Lester, 2009).

Effective leaders articulate the vision, set performance standards, and create focus and direction (Tinto, 2012).

Leadership communication

Bolman & Deal (2008) explain that many leaders fail because they depend on reason too much and not enough on relationships. The DEEP study explains that, at highly productive institutions, public conversations around issues act as a forum for dissenters, who need an outlet (Kuh, et al., 2005a). These forums can minimize the differences that can fester and paralyze an institution.

This research found faculty at the town hall meetings and during interviews displeased with recent university decisions. If the campus used a comprehensive communication plan when the opposing views were expressed, a campus-wide message could be sent clearing the misjudgments and citing the facts. During the town hall the chancellor attempted to point out the need for campus to expand their student markets. Faculty said it was better to admit more high quality students. While that would help, in reality there are not enough high caliber students. If enrollment growth was conducted using that model, enrollment would decrease. Additionally tuition revenue would most likely fall further behind. This enrollment concept could be clarified with a campus communication that explains the campus enrollment management philosophy and repeats the access mission of public higher education. Becoming an exclusive institution might not meet the mission.

Communicating student needs

Also during the town hall meetings the faculty commented on students' poor writing skills and that additional writing was required. Again a communication from administration might

resolve this by explaining that all students are required to successfully complete six credits of English composition—three as a freshman and three as a junior. If the faculty is convinced that students are not capable writers, then a larger communication with the English department might be in order. Another issue discussed was the comment that all students leave for financial reasons. A communication could be sent explaining the research conducted for the past three years on students leaving the university. Students leave for financial reasons, other life responsibilities, poor grades, and disenchantment in pursuing a degree that seems unachievable. It is clear that there is a need to teach the faculty and campus in general about their students and their needs.

Communication with students

Similarly, students were concerned about student fees being rolled into tuition, thereby eliminating student fee hearing. If student fees were increased student hearings were mandated by state statute with student leadership and results reported to the Curators. When the changeover in student fees occurred, there could have been a wider discussion with students and perhaps an open hearing on the matter. A communication might not change people's views, but it gives them an opportunity to express their dissent, which can be viewed as passion for the university.

A common language for student success is needed (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Various colleges and campus units address student learning in different ways. For example, this research discovered that one college within the University explains student learning as active classroom participation, while another college explains it as working with great scholars and admissions explains student learning as growing, learning, and sharing. A comprehensive communication plan could establish institutional definitions around student learning and create a mental model

the entire campus would understand. Once a similar mental model is created around student learning, policies and actions can be designed and carried out that focus on student success. Constant and similar communication could help define these terms and create a mental model of what student learning is and means.

Communication plan

Birnbaum describes universities as complex organizations with various levels and sources of communication and interaction (Birnbaum, 1988). Additionally, he reports that, in political institutions like the University, they have environments that are turbulent and face unexpected challenges. The faculty indicated in interviews and town hall meetings that their world is changing. Faculty members are leaving, and those positions are not being filled, workloads are increasing, and resources are diminishing. Concurrently, students are requiring more attention than in previous years. These frustrations are real for these faculty members, and, though the campus cannot change reality, it could communicate to increase understanding of the issues and changing environments. No amount of communication can alter reality, but it could diminish the anger and frustration and perhaps lead to creative solutions.

During the interviews the staff frequently talked about using colleagues as sources of information. A communication plan directed at staff and students could provide accurate information to ensure that stakeholders possess the correct information that can be shared and used for decision-making. During the town hall meetings and in interviews, there was misunderstanding about scholarship allocation, class scheduling, funding decisions, enrollment goals, and a general sense of direction.

For any initiative to be sustainable it must be supported. In a large organization like a research university, a handful of people working on a project will not make much progress unless

they can get support. The messages communicated about the project help dramatically in how much support is developed for a project. The communication plan must attack on a messages (Barber, 2011). For example, brand can be a consistent message. As the backdrop for all communications on issues changes, the brand remains positive and grows over time.

Types of communication plans

Support of campus initiatives is not automatic. The suggestion is to design and implement a structured communication plan that builds on the campus brand and addresses whatever information needs to be distributed. This vision is a two-way communication plan. The first aspect is providing stakeholders the opportunity to communicate with leadership. What is most important is providing the opportunity. University of Cincinnati offers campus personnel the opportunity to submit comments. These are then forwarded to the appropriate unit leader who determines whether to act, but in any case must respond to the sender. All actions are recorded, and semi-annual reports are made on resulting actions (Ruben, 2004).

The second aspect of communication is for the leadership to send information out to the stakeholders. The delivery method can vary. Some information can be delivered on a website that is updated frequently. Messages can be sent in letters to stakeholders, and general meetings can be held to discuss issues in an open forum. For example, once a month the dean could visit a department and answer questions or discuss a specific issue. Or the Chancellor could be available for discussion every two or three weeks to discuss changes since the last meeting. The goal is to provide constant two-way modes of communication on a frequent timeline.

A good communication plan is designed with a purpose and helps to intellectually and emotionally engage the stakeholders (Barber, 2011). In an effective communication plan, three steps are necessary:

1. Identify and understand the stakeholders,

2. Develop the communication plan, and

3. Monitor the plan   (Barber, 2011).

To identify the stakeholders, one must consider the issue form their viewpoint. Rather than worrying about those who will never be adopters, one should consider those in the middle who can be convinced. The goal is to gather additional support (Barber, 2011). The second step, developing the plan, entails creating a compelling message. Often this means explaining the moral purpose of what is being communicated, in addition to what the issue is (Barber, 2011). Further Barber explains that the best communication plans are simple and clear. What is also important to know is who the message receivers are and when is the best time to deliver messages. In order to make a good decision, the stakeholders must be known.

The third step, as shown above, is to monitor and assess the communication plan. It is hard to determine the effectiveness of a communication plan, but there are signs to look for. One is hearing the stakeholders repeat the message in their own terms or the number of questions around the initiative increase. This is where leaders can use good listening skills to determine if the stakeholders understand. As stakeholders engage and communicate with each other, messages are re-written and adjusted as needed. Communication is about messaging, telling the story, and delivery of those messages to right people at the right time is critical.

Future Research

As taxpayers, legislators, and students demand more and more accountability from higher education, it important that the University knows and understands its successes and gaps regarding student learning and student success. Using case study methodology, the University

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could complete stakeholder assessments bi-annually. Stakeholders are defined as faculty, staff, and students. Using an assessment tool, such as in-depth interviews or focused focus groups, the campus could study how effective faculty and staff are in contributing to student learning and where the successes are and where the gaps are.

At the same time, an assessment of students and recent graduates could be conducted annually focusing on student learning. The campus isn't graduating 100% of the students it enrolls, however generating a model of what successful students look like would be helpful. For example, for those students that graduates in four or six years use their path as a model for success. When they enroll in certain classes, what additional activities are they engaged in, what active learning opportunities they experience, and what resources do they use along the way to success. An in depth study of student success could provide a roadmap for future student success.

As successful students are modeled, it is vital for campus to understand why students leave and aren't retained. The campus could conduct exit interviews with all students that leave before earning their degree. Many students withdraw because of life issues that they have no control over. Campus can't stop those students but can encourage them to return. Students leave campus for many reasons and often the University can adjust or reduce those roadblocks when known. For example, if a student becomes disenchanted with the lack of relevance of a particular academic program or frustrated with poor customer service in financial aid office or with advising, campus can examine the issue and make appropriate adjustments. Perhaps a student leaves because the class schedule isn't workable or there isn't enough student life on campus; these are issues and concerns campus can adjust to if known and leadership has the will to make the changes. This does incorporate an ongoing assessment conducted routinely with the results

and findings used to drive future decisions. The routines are what is crucial to sustaining an effort improve student success on campus.

Conclusion

Although this university is a complex decentralized organization, there is a need for consistency and alignment. The environment where the campus operates has changed. Historically, there were always plenty of students enrolling in public universities, and there were not many competitors for those students. The tax-paying public wants to know how to measure campus success and what the campus does to support students. These are some of the items the present public wants reported. Aligning campus resources with stakeholder needs is an effective use of diminishing resources. Alignment can be enhanced by using central operation for campus-wide projects and initiative such as retention or advising. Whatever the plan to win people over and garner support, it must be communicated. True effective communication must be crafted for the stakeholders and delivered by the right people at the right time. The outcomes of a communication plan are additional support and understanding.

Appendix: Protocol for Conducting Interviews

The Merriam (2009) interview protocol was used. The interview questions contain similar framework to the Inventory for Student Engagement and Success (ISES) but redesigned for this research. The information derived from these interviews and observations was used to determine the factors on campus that influence student learning.

<u>Interview Questions for Students:</u>

What is your major, year? Why did you enroll in this University and why have you stayed?

What is important at this university? What is valued?

What do you expect from the University? Are your expectations met?

What is special about this campus?

How is success defined at this campus?

<u>Interview Questions for Faculty:</u>

When were you hired to the University and why have you stayed?

What is it like to work here?

How do you spend your time?

What does the university do best? What is it known for?

What are the students like and describe the student culture?

Does the institution support and encourage student learning?

<u>Interview Questions for Staff:</u>

Why did you come to this campus and why have you stayed?

What is it like to work here?

What is special on this campus?

What is valued by the staff? How do you spend your time each day?

Are the students successful at this University?

What do you know about students at this campus?

Additional information if needed:

The ISES (2005) suggests that the interviewer keeps in mind follow-up questions to continue

probing as responses happen in real time. Some of the suggested items include asking for

examples, asking if others believe as the interviewee does, asking who has a differing opinion,

and asking what else would they like say that wasn't asked.

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Vita Auctorius

Ms. Patricia Dolan, born in Brooklyn New York, anticipates receiving the Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education in August, 2014 from Saint Louis University. Ms. Dolan began her career as a physical education teacher, grades K-12, in Northern Michigan and ended her career forty-four year's later in Saint Louis, Missouri.

After serving as a physical education teacher for six years, Ms. Dolan envisioned herself as a women's collegiate basketball coach. In order to achieve that goal, Ms. Dolan had to earn a Master's and this was accomplished at Western Michigan University in physical education. Upon earning the degree and experiencing collegiate women's basketball coaching, Ms. Dolan was hired to coach women's basketball at Ferris State University and serve as an assistant professor in physical education. This employment lasted thirteen years and also included four years as the University softball coach.

Her career in higher education administration began as the athletic director at University of Wisconsin-Superior. In Superior Wisconsin Ms. Dolan began her studies to earn a Ph. D. in higher education. Ms. Dolan served as the athletic director for six years and moved from Wisconsin to University of Missouri –St. Louis to also serve as the athletic director. Changing employment and moving to a different state caused Ms. Dolan to transfer her Ph.D. enrollment to Saint Louis University. The athletic director position at UMSL was highly intense and demanding causing Ms. Dolan to slow down her work on her studies in order to focus on her position at the University as the athletic director. After serving for thirteen years as the athletic director, Ms. Dolan became Assistant Provost in academic affairs for six years. While in academic affairs, she was committed to establishing institutional processes that would be

sustained as routines and assist the University in achieving its mission. It is from this position that Ms. Dolan joyfully retired.