Helping the Way We Are Needed: Ethnography of an Appalachian Work College

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Abstract

This doctoral research is an ethnographic study that describes the lived culture of Alice Lloyd College, a work college located in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky, and its efficacy in engaging Appalachian students in sustainability education in a college setting. Campus culture was found to be consistent with that of the broader Appalachian region, with three blue collar values emerging as core cultural indicators within the campus community. The three core values are work ethic, service, and self-reliance. Student participants reported low levels of cultural dissonance in transitioning from their family lives to life in college, with most claiming that their immediate families were supportive of their decision to attend college. This is uncommon in the higher education landscape as many Appalachian students on more traditional campuses are first-generation, struggle to persist to graduation, and experience clashing between their home culture and that which they experience at school. The institution was found to be a model of sustainability education in the areas of social and economic justice. Social justice is promoted through the enactment of the institution's mission of cultivating leaders to serve and improve the Appalachian region. Economic justice is fostered through the College's work program which makes higher education possible without debt for low-income Appalachian students by providing tuition waivers to those who work a minimum of 10 hours per week carrying out critical campus operations. While environmental justice was not found to be a current outcome, the institution's practices have valuable implications for re-envisioning higher education as a tool for promoting—rather than impeding— holistic sustainability efforts by reinforcing and promulgating sustainable blue collar values through teaching subsistence skills and systems thinking in a work college setting. Data collection for this study was conducted via responsive qualitative interviews with multiple campus constituent groups, including students, faculty, and

staff. Data analysis consisted of attributes coding, magnitude coding, and values coding, followed by code landscaping to identify patterns across each coding phase.

Keywords: Alice Lloyd College, Appalachia, ethnography, blue collar values, interviews, character, self-reliance, service, work, fair trade learning, subsistence, sustainability, sustainability education

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My fortitude in seeing this project through to completion was fueled in large part by awe for the people and place of Alice Lloyd College. Theirs is a story that deserves to be told and re-told, never taken for granted, and I am humbled by the trust they placed in me to tell this iteration. I am very thankful for the warmth and authenticity with which I was welcomed, and I will carry forward many lessons they taught me.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my mom, who enthusiastically accompanied me on my site visits to Eastern Kentucky and loved Alice Lloyd College as much as I did. Her stories of living in Flat Lick as a child enabled me to see past stereotypes, to embrace regional culture, and provided me with the cultural credibility to successfully navigate my first interactions with Alice Lloyd College community members. Her knack for story-telling was also a likely contributor to my own desire to tell this one. Mom, I haven't given up on our quest to find you a bottle of Rebel Yell. This dissertation is also dedicated to my dad whose work ethic I inherited. The overt study of Appalachian culture has solidified my respect for hard work and for the blue collar upbringing he provided. I am so profoundly grateful for both. (I could not have completed this dissertation without the work ethic!) Lastly, this study is dedicated to the Alice Lloyd College community that has fostered in me a renewed appreciation for simple living and a hope that education can be a positive force for sustainability.

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Purpose and Background

The purpose of this research is to explore and critically examine the ways in which Alice Lloyd College's character-development mission and practices align with blue collar values and Fair Trade Learning principles, and how these practices do or do not promote social, economic, and/or environmental justice in the Appalachian region. Fair Trade Learning principles, which until recently have only been overtly applied in international experiential education settings, serve as best practices for developing educational programs that foster civic responsibility through means that are culturally appropriate for the given host community. The focusing questions below guided my inquiry into this larger question. The arguments developed to address these questions were informed by qualitative ethnographic inquiry complemented by textual research.

1. How is ALC's approach to education culturally appropriate to the region?
2. What elements of character are intentionally cultivated at ALC and how might the cultivation of these elements contribute to social, economic, and/or environmental justice, i.e., to sustainability?
3. What are the cultural or socio-political barriers to institutional and/or regional sustainability?
4. In what ways can Fair Trade Learning principles be seen in application at ALC, and what implications does this have for cultivating sustainable attitudes and behaviors?

Alice Lloyd College (ALC) is a fitting location for this research for several reasons. ALC is a federal work college located in Pippa Passes, Kentucky in the Appalachian Mountains. It is one of seven work colleges that comprise the Work Colleges Consortium, with the member

institutions spread over six states (Work Colleges Consortium, 2014). My interest in ALC in particular stems from my own identity as an Appalachian and my appreciation for the College's strong interest in serving this region, the residents of which have been, in my experience, undervalued. Given that their mission statement includes educating "mountain people for positions of leadership" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a, par. 1), ALC's location in the Appalachian Mountains is clearly important to the institution's identity. According to its website (2012b), the College offers tuition waivers to students from 108 Appalachian counties in exchange for 10 or more hours of work per week and a promise that students will seek employment regionally, putting their education to work for the betterment of Appalachia. The institution's address is 100 Purpose Road, a reference to founder Alice Lloyd's belief that all should walk the 'purpose road,' motivated by a specific goal and a spirit of service to society (Davis, 1982). Today, all students study these principles as the underpinning to a "character-based education" (ALC, 2012b, par 1) which is viewed as necessary for preparing students for leadership within the region.

Researcher Positionality and Motivation

Bentz and Shapiro (1998) enabled me to begin the process of understanding the type of research most suitable to my personal competencies and values, i.e. my ontology. My motivation for pursuing this particular research question was to better understand those factors that limit the sustainability, economic stability, and educational attainment of Appalachia, the region in which I have always lived and worked. Therefore, this research endeavor is highly personal to me. My interest in undertaking this study arose in part from my own experience as a first-generation Appalachian student at a traditional four-year, private, liberal arts institution. As one of few students from an Appalachian county amongst a majority of socioeconomically privileged

students from suburban areas, I felt a strong disconnect between my family culture and my academic life. The decision to attend such an institution was in opposition to many of my family members' expressed opinions on the value of higher education. While I strongly wished for those family members to be wrong about the elitist exclusivity I would encounter at college, throughout my four years I never felt a connection to my campus. As a commuter and a working student, my lived college experience was quite different from that of most of my peers, and the values that were instilled in me throughout childhood and adolescence – strong work ethic, a service orientation, integrity, empathy – appeared to be less important than resume-building and self-promotion to my fellow students and some faculty who gave life-after-graduation advice. Two years into my program, my mother decided to go back to school to finish the degree she started before having kids. She joined me at my campus and enjoyed good relationships with faculty members whose lives were more similar to hers, but was frustrated when the administration elected to discontinue the adult education program. This decision made it quite difficult to complete her degree in a timely fashion and communicated that the institution did not value students like my mom. Four years after graduating, I returned to my alma mater as an employee. My brother and sister enrolled at this institution, motivated in part by familiarity with the campus and the idea that I could help them navigate administrative hurdles. They both graduated this year, but neither has achieved the connection that I also failed to make both as a student and a professional. In short, we have experienced cultural dissonance, and our decision to push on despite it puts us at odds with the family members who now feel unconnected to us. Their sentiments are not unique to my family, but have in fact been echoed to me by several families in my home community where I briefly taught high school Spanish. Parents of struggling students felt it was ludicrous for the district to require a year of a foreign language

when most of the students did not want to attend college (or "talk to Mexicans"), but rather intended to do "honest work." Today, as a student affairs professional, I see many students engage in service learning for the sake of 'looking good on a resume'; I hear faculty tell students to practice selling themselves; I read syllabi of seasoned Leadership professors and see *How to Win Friends and Influence People* on the assigned reading list (which may contain valuable advice but does not suggest authenticity through its title and has arguably been surpassed by more holistic character-based leadership development texts since its publication in 1936). While I want my naysaying family and community to be wrong about college, from my perspective it does not seem that students are being prepared for *honest* work, something I have come to learn that I value due to my blue collar upbringing. Indeed, one of my greatest pet peeves has become action, particularly service-based action, driven by self-interest and with complete disregard for its impact on others. This frustration has led me to create the following motto, one that most on my campus who know me can recite: Help the way you're needed, not the way you want to. This life trajectory as a whole has also led me to believe that higher education is in need of reform, that the values of my upbringing need to be cultivated and partnered with critical, systems thinking rather than subjugated. Such a vision for higher education is precisely what led me to pursue doctoral work, in search of an existing example of an institution that achieves this vision and the personal ability to better articulate its value. I believe I have found this institution in Alice Lloyd College.

Definition of Terms

For the sake of clarity and shared understanding, I offer definitions to six key terms in relation to their import to this study. Other definitions may exist, but below are the operational definitions used for the purpose of this research. The key terms and definitions that are most

necessary for clearly understanding the content of this dissertation are included here. The reader may refer to the Glossary (see Appendix A) for deeper explanation of other terms that are introduced and more shallowly defined within the dissertation.

1. *ALC* is an acronym that stands for Alice Lloyd College. Participants did not use this acronym, instead calling the institution "Alice Lloyd" when they wished to shorten its name. However, to eliminate confusion and ambiguity in this manuscript, the acronym is used to describe the institution and the term Alice Lloyd is used only to refer to Alice Lloyd the person, the founder of the College. The exception to this rule is in direct quotes.
2. *Appalachian* is used in two primary ways throughout this dissertation. It refers to people who are from the Appalachian region, the mountain range that stretches from Georgia to New York and touches 11 total states. The term Appalachian is also used as a general adjective to describe regional cultural indicators. For example, the dulcimer is an Appalachian instrument in that it was developed within the region and has become iconic in representing the bluegrass and folk music for which the region is known. The culture of the Appalachian region will be more fully described in Chapter 2 and the role it plays in informing institutional practice at ALC will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.
3. *Blue collar* is an adjective referring to working class people, their values, and their common experiences. In the context of this dissertation, the term is used to describe rural rather than urban working class conditions, although Lubrano (2004) asserted that the values in both settings can be collectively called blue collar. The terms blue collar and working class are used synonymously here.

4. A *work college* is one that requires students to work a certain number of hours per week, entrusting them with key functions of the college. In the United States, there are seven institutions that have been federally recognized as work colleges (Work Colleges Consortium, 2014). The goals and benefits of the work program differ across each institution. For example, the work is in exchange for tuition at some work colleges, while it is in exchange for room and board or straight wages at others.
5. *Subsistence* in the context of this research refers to one's ability to emotionally and physically thrive by caring for their own needs without impeding others' ability to care for themselves. While often viewed as a purely economic model (i.e., earning enough money to survive without the support of external agencies such as state or federal programs), Mies and Bennholdt-Thompsen (1999) expanded this definition to one's ability to be self-reliant in areas such as food and energy production, combined with an attitude of gratitude that allows one to be satisfied with having enough rather than endlessly seeking increased wealth and possessions. Within this dissertation, self-reliance and subsistence are used as closely related terms.
6. *Systems thinking* is understanding various parts of a whole (a system) as interconnected and seeing how the parts effect one another. The ability to think in this way is important to sustainability in that it allows people to see the rippling effect and unintended consequences of decisions both large and small and may therefore lead to better decision-making. For example, someone practicing systems thinking can understand the interplay between the demand for oil, international politics and policy, and climate change, and may therefore choose to explore or support renewable energy sources. Education, according to Sterling (2001), can promote sustainability by developing students' systems

thinking skills in scenarios that elucidate the interplay between social, economic, and environmental systems.

Audience for This Research

The intended audience for this research includes both scholars and practitioners. It has relevance to the academic community within the fields of education, anthropology, sociology, environmental studies, ecology, working class studies (pioneered at Youngstown State University in Ohio), and Appalachian studies. It may be of interest to organizations and activists working on behalf of the Appalachian region. I would like for it to be encouraging to first-generation blue collar students who struggle to fit into traditional colleges and universities, and it may inform practice for guidance counselors of rural, economically challenged school districts who help students in choosing a college. My strongest hope for this research is that practitioners in the field of higher education can find within it some actionable steps toward reforming the system to be more inclusive and more effective in cultivating the responsible citizens that institutional mission statements proclaim as a desired outcome.

Chapter Summary

This research was prompted by my experience as a first-generation student from a blue collar background at a traditional private liberal arts institution with a majority suburban student demographic. It sought to explore one institution's efficacy in engaging rural blue collar students in sustainability education in a higher education environment. Chapter 2, the review of the literature, will situate this study within the context of the education sector broadly and within the current conversation around the need for sustainable social, economic, and environmental action. Chapter 3, which describes the research design, will situate this

study within a critical ethnographic framework and explain the feminist methodologies that arose from that framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Organization

The impetus for this research comes from critically reading the existing literature on education, broadly speaking, and higher education, more narrowly, with a focus on its potential as an agent for social change to promote sustainability. This literature review has therefore been informed by various fields of research within and related to higher education and sustainability. On a macro level, these include higher education's purpose, access and inclusivity, and experiential education pedagogy. Subcategories to be explored within these three fields include university-community relationships, service learning, and fair trade learning. This chapter is organized from the macro to the micro level, starting first with discussion of sustainability in general (i.e. the statement of the problem), then moving to consideration of education as both a contributor and a solution to the problem. These larger issues will then be situated in Appalachia, with discussion targeted toward the state of both sustainability and education within this region. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the examination of Fair Trade Learning as a tool for reforming education to better cultivate sustainability within the Appalachian region.

Sustainability: What It Is and Why It Matters

Given that understanding education's role in promoting sustainability (or not) is a primary goal of this review, it is important to first establish what is meant by sustainability and why it is a desirable outcome of education. For the purposes of this dissertation, sustainability is defined as a society's ability to meet its own needs without compromising future generations' ability to do the same (Brown, 1981). Action toward sustainability is that which promotes social, economic, and environmental justice, as sustainability relies on balance in these three areas. The term sustainable can also be used more generically, to describe anything's ability to be

maintained. For example, one could say that reliance on credit cards is not a sustainable method of funding purchases. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, the definition related to ecological balance is most applicable.

Current global state. The evidence is mounting and many experts agree: continuing along our current path of consumerism, overpopulation, and reliance on fossil fuels will render the planet incapable of sustaining human life (Edwards, 2010; Orr, 2004; Rockstrom et al, 2009; Shiva, 2008, Sterling, 2001). Stated more simply, our current path is unsustainable. During the Holocene era, the most recent 10,000 years of Earth's history, planetary conditions have been such that human life has been able to thrive (Rockstrom et al., 2009). Rockstrom and his co-researchers believe that these favorable conditions could persist for several more millennia provided that human activity does not drive the planet fully into the Anthropocene era. The Anthropocene era, which began with the Industrial Revolution, is the first epoch in Earth's history characterized by significant human impact on Earth's systems (Rockstrom et al., 2009). This new era lacks the stability of the Holocene era and it is thus questionable whether or not Anthropocene conditions can sustain human life in the long term (Crutzen, 2009). In light of this, researchers sought to determine precisely which elements of Earth's systems must be sustained and at what levels in order to continue in the desirable Holocene state. The result of their research was the establishment of a set of nine planetary boundaries, three of which are believed to have already been surpassed, that establish safe parameters in which humans should operate (Rockstrom et al., 2009). Remaining within these boundaries, which in essence describe the behaviors necessary for continued sustainability, will require a paradigm that differs from the consumptive paradigm that is currently popular in the United States (Edwards, 2010; Friedman, 2009). As will be further discussed in a later section, education is often looked to as a tool to

foster paradigm shifts. Before fully turning the focus to education, however, I first offer a deeper look at the need for a global shift toward sustainability.

Three-fold crisis. "My fellow Americans: We are not who we think we are." Thomas Friedman's statement in his 2009 rewrite of *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* (p. 47) was motivated by an understanding that, whether or not it is widely acknowledged, the prowess of the United States on the global stage has ended. Friedman asserted that the United States now trails other nations in terms of economic viability, environmental responsibility, educational attainment and efficacy, innovation, and political leadership. Yet developing nations continue their attempts to emulate the U.S. way of life, to achieve the seeming prosperity enjoyed here, and thus these harmful habits are reinforced and entrenched domestically, and promulgated around the globe. Specifically, of grave concern, is the United States' reliance on fossil fuels for energy needs. Shiva (2008) describes developed nations' energy practices as the root of three global crises: climate change, peak oil, and food security.

Climate change. Since the 1950s, industrialization has largely been powered by two commodities, coal and oil, which are relatively cheap, quickly produced energy sources (Shiva, 2008). As society begins to fully comprehend the far-reaching impact of carbon emissions, coal and oil combustion are now understood to be the two greatest threats to sustaining the anthropocene era (Crutzen, 2009). Fossil-fuel combustion is the number one cause of carbon dioxide emission. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, meaning one that traps heat in the atmosphere, thus slowly warming the entire planet. Carbon dioxide, measured in parts per million (ppm), remains in the atmosphere longer than most air pollutants, abetting climate change for 100 years before dissipating (Lockwood et al., 2009). For the 10,000 year period prior to the 1900s, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere measured at 280 ppm with relatively

little fluctuation. However, 50 short years after the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, that measurement had increased to 360 ppm by 1998 (Heinberg, 2005). In an effort to reverse this increase and the resulting warming trend, author and activist Bill McKibben has started a movement and website called 350.org, named for 350 ppm, the upper threshold for a safe atmospheric level of CO_2. However, on May 9, 2013 a worrisome milestone was reached when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported daily average ppm readings above 400 for the first time in human history (Gerken, 2013). The resultant expected temperature increase is three to seven degrees Fahrenheit (Heinberg, 2005).

Many are asking, so what? If the planet is indeed warming, which has been a difficult admission for many and as of yet impossible for others, why does this matter? The answer is simple but has complex implications. As the atmosphere warms, more water is able to evaporate which leads to more notable precipitation events. This process and the many consequences it has for weather patterns is called climate change. As Heinberg states,

> we have, unintentionally, begun to disturb massive planetary systems that have kept much of the world's climate hospitable to civilization…We are heating the deep oceans, which leads to more frequent and intense El Niño weather patterns. The timing of the seasons is noticeably altered and most of Earth's glaciers are retreating at accelerating rates. The potential effects are catastrophic (2005, p. 32-33).

Some of these potential effects include rising sea levels that may eventually drown coastal cities and whole islands (Heinberg, 2005) and loss of glacial runoff that creates major rivers such as the Ganges which feeds massive watersheds in Asia, (S. Kumar, personal communication, November 25, 2012). Thus, human civilization globally has a serious stake in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and slowing or reversing climate change.

Peak oil. In the 1950s, Dr. M. King Hubbert was the first to articulate the existence of a peak level for extracting a finite natural resource. According to Heinberg (2005), *ultimate* refers to the total quantity of a finite resource available on the planet, and is estimated using a formula that considers cumulative production, reserves, and undiscovered stores. Determining the ultimate is useful because it helps determine the midpoint, or the point at which the resource is halfway depleted. "Peak" time is considered to coincide with reaching the midpoint. Hence, peak oil will have been reached when half of the total global ultimate has been used (Heinberg, 2005).

Peak oil is an imminent crisis for two reasons. First, industrialized societies are significantly dependent on oil. It enables our transportation, it fuels our manufacturing and is a common ingredient in much of what is manufactured (such as plastic), it fuels the machinery for mining other power generation resources such as coal, it enables industrial agriculture, and the list goes on (Friedman, 2009; Paarlberg, 2010; Shiva, 2008). The high and rapid levels of consumption made possible by industrialization have allowed for the global population to explode, the planet now tenuously supporting three to five billion more people than an oil-independent society would be able to support (Shiva, 2008). This artificial carrying capacity creates a feedback loop by which more people are able to live longer, consume more, and lead humanity ever closer to peak oil which will mark the point at which the unsustainability of this lifestyle cannot be ignored (Shiva, 2008).

Aside from the environmental and social implications of peak oil, Shiva (2008) predicted that reaching this midpoint will also be marked by grave economic upheaval on a global scale as the market responds to scarcity. In 2008 the world glimpsed what this may look like when oil prices spiked dramatically (Shiva, 2008). Economic crisis in the United States creates economic

crisis around the world due to our enmeshment in global development (Friedman, 2009; Shiva, 2008). In developing nations, particularly in the global south, country leaders have made the decision to pursue the American dream, or what Tina Evans calls the 'development dream' (n.d.). Through the intervention of the World Bank and other development organizations, development is often pursued through the export-oriented development model. Evans (n.d.) explained that the way this model works is this: The U.S. dollar is a world reserve currency. World Bank debts are dollar-denominated so countries taking loans through this entity must trade with the United States to obtain the dollars they need to repay their dollar-denominated debt. Similarly, the OPEC[1] petrodollar system, which requires that all oil from OPEC members be purchased in U.S. dollars, creates pressure to export to the U.S. to make oil purchases possible. This means that foreign nations sell a product to the United States (cotton monocultures, for example), the federal government pays in dollars, and these nations then have dollars to purchase oil to fuel an industrialized society- a perceived sign of a developed nation. All of this exacerbates the first crisis discussed above, that of climate change (Evans, n.d.).

Food security. According to Shiva (2008), industrial agriculture with its enormous yield is made possible by a fossil-fuel based energy portfolio. Producing the food output that industrial agriculture achieves is a resource-intensive process, requiring immense amounts of land, water, and oil (Andrews, 2008; Paarlberg, 2010; Shiva, 2008). As Shiva (2008) explained, oil drives this system in a variety of ways. First, it fuels the farm machinery that tills the soil, plants seeds, spreads fertilizer and pesticide, and harvests crops. Oil is used to produce the plastic packaging in which so many food products are distributed. In addition, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, like those developed and distributed by agribusiness-giant Monsanto,

[1] OPEC stands for Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

are petroleum-based. It is difficult to imagine the reasoning process that would have led one to promote spraying our food with oil, an input most would never consider consuming on its own. Not surprisingly, consumption of residual fertilizers and pesticides on produce has proven to be dangerous, with many of these products linked to various types of cancer (Shiva, 2008).

Oil is also essential to the globalized food industry for the sake of distribution (Shiva, 2008). Each of the various inputs discussed here must be transported to the far-reaching corners of the world where production happens and the outputs are then put back on the trucks, boats, planes, and trains, usually fossil fuel-powered, to deliver them to supermarket distribution centers, to the supermarkets, and eventually to restaurants and homes. To reiterate an oft-cited statistic, the average meal in the United States travels 1,500 miles to our plates (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2013). The last phase of that journey, from supermarket to residence, is often facilitated by a plastic shopping bag. Approximately 380 billion plastic bags are produced annually, most for one-time use, through a process that requires 12 million barrels of oil (Envirosax, 2012).

Despite being capable of producing tremendous outputs, industrial agriculture leaves many in the world food insecure (Shiva, 2008; Vidal, 2010). Land grabs occurring in third-world countries are leaving many people without land on which to cultivate their own food while their former lands are used to provide food to foreign wealthier nations (Vidal, 2010). An emerging issue that is intensifying this type of land use is that of biofuel production. In an effort to mitigate fossil fuel consumption and subsequent greenhouse gas emissions, developing nations are working to diversify their energy portfolios and many are turning to biofuels such as corn and sugarcane ethanol and soy diesel (Scharlemann & Laurance, 2008). The European Union has set a goal of 10 percent of transportation being fueled by biofuels by 2015 (Vidal, 2010). Considering its current fuel consumption levels for transportation, the EU will need to acquire 43

million acres of foreign land to meet this goal. Further problematic and sadly ironic is that, when examined through a wider lens, the most prevalent biofuels "have greater aggregate environmental costs than do fossil fuels" (Scharlemann & Laurance, 2008, p. 44). This conclusion was reached through consideration of factors including loss of carbon-neutralizing native ecosystems, reduction of biodiversity, and emission of ozone-depleting trace gases. Additionally, biofuels are grown in the same oil-driven industrial manner described above. Thus, biofuel production aggravates climate change both by being produced and by being used. It entrenches hunger in food insecure nations where citizens are displaced from their lands and is generally an unsustainable, environmentally unjustified alternative to fossil fuels (Scharlemann & Laurance, 2008; Shiva, 2008; Vidal, 2010).

To summarize, industrial agriculture is an intensely fossil fuel-driven process, is one of the greatest contributors to climate change, and leads the world closer to peak oil. Climate change and peak oil have the potential to cause social and economic upheaval on a global scale. This discussion has sought to demonstrate the need for a more sustainable paradigm, one that considers the interplay of environmental, social, and economic systems, a paradigm which understands that the health of each is dependent on the health of the others. Understanding the world in this way, as interconnected, is known as systems thinking and requires critical thinking skills, a topic that will be elaborated upon below in the discussion of education.

Education for Sustainability

Upon close study of the literature, a pattern emerges of cultural hegemony perpetrated by popular Western education, whether this educational model is applied domestically or internationally. This dominant educational system has yielded significant social change, but not in the positive direction which education is generally expected to move societies (Prakash &

Esteva, 2008; Scott, 2012; Sterling, 2001). Rather, according to David Orr, "education can merely equip people to be more effective vandals of the Earth" (Orr, 1994, p. 5). However, many alternative models of education exist within the United States and abroad that provide diverse approaches to educating the citizenry in ways that promote sustainability. For example, and of highest relevance to this research, Fair Trade Learning is an approach to cross-cultural program design that promotes social and economic justice. The need for such alternatives will be further developed below, followed by an introduction to Fair Trade Learning. See Table 1 for more examples of alternative educational models that foster sustainable paradigms.

Table 1. Alternative Education Models that Foster Sustainable Paradigms

Educational Model/Institution/Partnership	Description	Location
Amizade Global Service Learning	A third-party provider of study abroad opportunities for college students. This non-profit differentiates itself by offering credit-bearing service learning programs that operate under fair trade learning principles. They strive to provide meaningful service to a community and ensure that student purchasing power is used in local economies. Fair trade learning principles are very applicable to the subsistent campus concept, as they promote a mantra of helping the way we are needed (Amizade Global Service Learning, 2012).	Pennsylvania, USA
Bija Vidyapeeth Earth University	Founded on Gandhian principles, this campus is home to an organic farm and a soil laboratory where a vast variety of heritage and heirloom seeds are cultivated and stored in the on-site seed bank. All three of these areas are maintained by full- and part-time local staff whose efforts are supplemented by rotating volunteers and interns. These employees, volunteers, and interns, in addition to students who come for periodic classes, are fed three meals daily. The food is prepared by additional permanent staff and made purely from ingredients grown and made at the conservation center or obtained from local producers. The goals of the campus are to teach skills to survive independently from corporatism and protect biodiversity from the same (Navdanya Trust, 2009).	Dehra Dun, India
Foxfire	Began as a high school student project in which students interviewed community members to capture Southern Appalachian knowledge, resulting in a how-to guide for simple, subsistent living. This project led to the creation of The Foxfire Fund, a non-profit that publishes various texts on subsistence. Foxfire has also articulated a pedagogy entitled The Foxfire Approach	Georgia, USA

	which advocates for student-directed experiential learning that directly engages a group or community external to the school or student body (Foxfire Fund, 2015).	
Gujarat Vidyapith	Founded by Mahatma Gandhi, teachings here seek to cultivate commitment to non-violence, service, self-reliance (particularly from imperialist government), religious freedom, and work ethic. This is achieved through a residential experience that requires daily work assignments, regular participation in service projects (selected based on highest needs of rural communities), field study, and engagement with a religious community (Gujarat Vidyapith, 2010).	Ahmedabad, India
Hershey Montessori School, Huntsburg Campus	The mission of the Montessori school system on the whole is to "foster personal and academic growth, independence, confidence, responsibility and joyful, lifelong learning" (Hershey Montessori School, 2015, para. 1). This particular site carries out this mission through experiential learning in a farm setting where students live, work, and take classes.	Ohio, USA

Table 1. This chart describes existing models of formal education that are capable of cultivating sustainable paradigms, through teaching critical/systems thinking, providing experiential learning opportunities, and/or direct instruction on social/economic/environmental justice. These education systems are noteworthy in that they differ from the transmissive pedagogical style that has come to characterize popular Western education (Sterling, 2001). This list is not exhaustive and includes those examples that the researcher found to be most pertinent to the goals of this study.

Current state of education. Before determining how a better educational system may function, one must first understand the flaws in the existing popular system. Sterling (2001) posited that on a most basic level there are four functions of education. The socialization function serves to promulgate societal norms from group to group. The vocational function is to create an employment-ready citizenry. The liberal function seeks to develop the learner's potential. Lastly, the transformative function serves to foster perceptual change that will promote a better world. Arguably, the current educational system primarily incorporates

learning goals that target only the socialization and vocational functions, for example, the enhancement of public speaking or interviewing skills. Thus, according to Sterling (2001) this system advances extrinsic values and diminishes intrinsic value. By emphasizing capacities for interacting with society, it cultivates the human elements that overtly and immediately impact society, and may not balance that action orientation with the development of reflective capacities. The current popular paradigm ignores the functions of education that develop the whole person, and thus fails to recognize that a whole person can serve society more positively than one who is only socialized and trained for employment (Sterling, 2001). Cain (2013) further legitimized the argument for incorporating both extrinsic and intrinsic functions in education. She argued that introverts are more likely to reflect deeply, to make careful decisions, and consider unintended consequences prior to taking action.

According to Sterling (2001), in ignoring two of the primary educational functions, the current public model in the United States contributes to, rather than relieves, the problems of large-scale social, economic, and environmental crisis. Sterling posited that many characteristics of this educational system are exacerbating factors. For one, education has become transmissive, meaning mechanistic and instructive. In this model, learning is imposed on students through lecture rather than being a participatory process. Students are taught to think linearly, and their ability to foresee the unintended consequences of decisions and actions is diminished (Sterling, 2001; Prakash & Esteva, 2008). This is perhaps because content matter is taught in fragmentation, separated into subjects or disciplines so that the interplay between economics and environmental science, for example, are not clear. Sterling (2001) argued, and Prakash and Esteva (2008) concurred, that fragmented knowledge and curricula create learners who are less able to think critically, to draw connections between fields and ideas. Secondly, in this

educational environment, learning outcomes are federally mandated and must be met within set time frames to avoid financial sanctioning. Sterling (2001) contended that this emphasis on outcomes fosters apathy for the educational process and diminishes curiosity as students are conditioned to figure out 'what the teacher wants' and work toward that as quickly as possible. Learners are expected to unquestioningly accept teachings from a limited number of experts who labor to become deeply knowledgeable about a very narrow subject and often fail to see how their subject matter relates to others. Sterling (2001) argued that critical questioning skills are squelched as failure is inherent in nonconforming behavior or ideas. Further, standards-based evaluations that are tied to funding cause grade inflation so that one has no true measure that the standards are met (Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004). Students who would be considered successful products of such a learning environment may lack the reflection skills to determine whether or not their new knowledge can be utilized in a positive way. Such learners are limited to what Sterling termed "first order change" (2001, p. 15), meaning they learn facts and information without learning to reflect on, synthesize, and act on their new knowledge. Sterling's assertion is supported by an understanding of a foundational educational theory, that of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956). Bloom articulated an ordered set of six cognitive objectives for education that increase in complexity from first through sixth. In order, they are (1) knowledge, (2) comprehension, (3) application, (4) analysis, (5) synthesis, and (6) evaluation. The first two objectives are comparable to what Sterling (2001) called first order change, and the later objectives require the critical reflection/questioning skills that he believed necessary for making decisions based on a holistic view that understands interconnectedness of systems.

While the picture painted here may be bleak, there are many strong alternative educational models in practice (see Table 1). Before more deeply exploring these, however, it is

first necessary to further contextualize the problems of popular education, narrowing the focus to higher education in particular.

Higher education and sustainability. As described, education is often looked to as the tool for solving social problems (Sterling, 2001). As an entity that supports extensive research across a vast array of disciplines and actively disseminates findings, higher education in particular is a seemingly suitable tool for discovering and sharing solutions to social problems. Indeed, the higher education community has engaged the problem of sustainability, recently via increasingly formalized mechanisms. In 2005, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) was founded as the first U.S. professional organization that sought to coordinate sustainability efforts nationally and globally on college and university campuses (AASHE, 2015). The organization makes an extensive array of resources available to members and hosts an annual conference that has grown significantly in recent years. AASHE is also the organization behind the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) which an increasing number of colleges and universities use to assess their sustainability efforts, identify areas of opportunity for growth, and set goals. In 2006, 12 university presidents created the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) which is a pledge that presidents sign to commit their institution to creating an action plan for eliminating net greenhouse gas emissions and beginning implementation within two years of signing. By the end of 2007 there were 400 signatories (Presidents' Climate Commitment, 2015).

With guidance from organizations such as AASHE and ACUPCC, many institutions are making strides toward operationally improving their footprints as well as enhancing the sustainability education they provide. Some institutions are more committed than others, of

course, and an illustration of this is the EcoLeague, founded in 2003. The EcoLeague is a consortium of six colleges that are "dedicated to ecologically focused education, and to modeling sustainability through their operations and facilities" (EcoLeague, 2015, para. 1). While these institutions are exemplary in their sustainability efforts, many other institutions are as well despite non-membership, and I posit that still more are without overtly making sustainability a part of the institutional profile. As will be asserted and explained in Chapter 5, Alice Lloyd College fits the latter description, that of an institution that lives and promotes sustainability without explicitly talking about it. An issue to be concerned with, then, is how to ensure that students have access to such an education.

College-going in Appalachian Ohio. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (2011), the Ohio Board of Regents took action in 1992 to improve college attendance rates within Ohio Appalachia (which comprises 10 of the 108 counties in ALC's service area). This initiative began after a survey conducted in the region revealed that 80 percent of participants reported wanting to go to college, yet only 33 percent subsequently enrolled (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). The resulting state-funded program, the Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE), seemed to be successful in improving this conversion rate. Newcomerstown High School, the pilot location for the OACHE program, saw an increase in college-going from 28 percent to 72 percent in only three years (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). OACHE administrators credit the following measures for the success of the program:

- long-term support in the form of mentors or involved guidance counselors rather than short-term or single-instance interactions,
- sensitivity to and inclusivity of students' cultural backgrounds,

- creation of peer groups with academic aspirations, and
- financial support and incentives for college visits and standardized test preparation.

While the program met its objectives, one might argue that success was declared too soon.

Shawnee State University is a school located in southern Ohio, one of only two public higher education institutions within Ohio Appalachia. According to Bradbury (2008), at any given time, half or more of the student body is comprised of first-generation college students, the precise number fluctuating between 50 and 60 percent annually. Unfortunately, only slightly more than half of the university's entering class each year persists through the first year. At the time of graduation, only a quarter of the original class usually remains (Bradbury, 2008).

In looking beyond the transition period between high school graduation and college orientation on which OACHE focused, one can see that improving initial enrollment rates is not the only obstacle faced; retention is also a concern for Appalachian students (Bradbury, 2008). Beth Macy (2000) asserted that one important way for educators to help low-socioeconomic-status and first-generation college students persist through a program is to help them 'overcome' their family culture. She proposed six 'keys for success' as the factors that are predictive of first-generation students' likelihood to persist through a higher education program. These keys include early awareness of admission and financial aid processes, strong relationships with peers and role models who value higher education, intrinsic motivation for personal growth, and success early in one's college career. Importantly, and as mentioned above, the final key is the student's ability to overcome their family culture. This assertion carries many troubling implications: first, that a culture is something to overcome; secondly, that first-generation students share a universal culture that is best subjugated; and third, that higher education is

suitable only to a particular monoculture. The latter seems inherently flawed given that higher education institutions themselves are home to very diverse student and employee populations.

In need of further examination is the idea that the family culture of first-generation college students is something to overcome. Franz Boas, an early ethnographer, argued that differing cultures have equal value, that a belief in the superiority of one's own culture is simple ethnocentrism rather than an objective reality (Boas, 1940/1995). Appiah offered a less absolutist perspective, questioning UNESCO's assertion that all cultures deserve equal respect: "all cultures—including those of the K.K.K. and the Taliban?" (2006, 5, para. 12). In looking at these examples, it is clear that not everyone would agree that all cultures are equal. Indeed, some may agree that particular cultures ought to be 'overcome'. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, desirability has been associated with those cultures that promote sustainability (as defined at the beginning of this chapter) because it is a quality necessary for *any* culture to persist on Earth (Crutzen, 2009; Rockstrom et al, 2009). Macy (2000) appears to have attached superiority to the culture of higher education over that of families who have not attended college. Seemingly, she valued higher education so highly that she believed success in college warranted placing one's self at odds with one's family. Currently, family culture of first-generation Appalachian students may not enhance the likelihood that students will attend or succeed in college (Macy, 2000; Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). However, as I will demonstrate, elements of this culture do promote sustainability and as such, it is not desirable for this culture to be sacrificed for the sake of a college education. Perhaps a better solution, both for student retention and sustainability, would be to encourage students to enroll in an educational setting that is most congruent with their own culture, one that actively supports rather than denigrates their background. This solution is consistent with the findings of the

OACHE study which demonstrated students were more likely to succeed when administrators were inclusive of their cultural backgrounds (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011).

Alice Lloyd College is of particular interest because I hypothesize that it is just such a setting, one that effectively supports first-generation students, particularly those from the Appalachian region. Further, it seemingly has not fallen prey to the shortcomings described by Sterling (2001) and Prakash and Esteva (2008). ALC is culturally distinct within the higher education landscape, and it follows that the student population it serves will be dissimilar from students at more traditional campuses. A relevant illustration of how ALC differs from many others is its emphasis on the value of work, as communicated through one of the College's formal student outcomes: "Upon completion of a degree from Alice Lloyd College, a student will have a strong sense of work ethic, including an appreciation for the dignity of work and its importance in society" (2012a, par. 2). This appreciation extends to all types of work; students are required to work at least 10 hours per week and they do so in a variety of positions along the blue collar-white collar spectrum, from janitorial work to assisting administratively. The students' work experience is intentionally designed to facilitate movement along this spectrum, as first-year students are primarily assigned to housekeeping and grounds positions while office positions and leadership roles are reserved for upperclassmen (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a). In addition, the institution's website articulates a mission of preparing Appalachians for lives of purpose in service to the Appalachian region through a character-based education. They actively seek to promote "a love of learning" and "an inner sense of mission to serve others", as well as developing several other reflective capacities (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a, par. 2). If it can be demonstrated that the institution has effectively instilled these values in students, ALC's model

is seemingly a promising alternative to the educational paradigm that Sterling (2001) described. This will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

Need for a Culturally Appropriate Alternative

Prior to speculating at length on how to enhance Appalachian engagement in higher education, it is useful to first fully understand the attitudes and other barriers that exist which make college-going unappealing and/or improbable for many students from the region. The aforementioned study conducted by the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) in 1992 yielded findings that shed light on factors that deter college-going in the Appalachian counties of the state. In the researchers' concluding report, the following were cited as barriers to higher education:

- Lack of information and prevalence of misinformation
- Lack of informed guidance and assistance
- Lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem
- Lack of encouragement
- Lack of academic preparation (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011)

One may notice the congruency between these factors and Macy's six keys for success (2000). For example, Macy's suggestion to promote early awareness of higher education and its constructs could be one method of removing the first barrier listed above, that accurate information is little known and misinformation is common. The second barrier listed above could be addressed by Macy's advice to foster relationships with peers and role models who value higher education. Unfortunately, such relationships may be difficult to develop within Ohio Appalachia due to low levels of educational attainment in students' family members. "At the time of the report, most of the high school seniors from Appalachian Ohio would have been the first in their families to go to college and many would have been among the first in their

communities. The students did not have anybody to tell them stories about campus life, to demonstrate the benefits of continuing their education or to show them that they too could handle it" (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011, par. 6). Seemingly, this serves, at least in part, as the basis for Macy's position that family culture must be overcome in order for college attainment to become more likely. Moving on, the final two barriers listed above, lack of encouragement and academic preparation, correlate to the third listed barrier, lack of self-confidence. As the ARC notes,

> When surveyed, only a very small portion of Appalachian Ohio high school seniors felt themselves to be of above average intelligence. One-quarter of the seniors rated themselves as not intelligent enough to be successful in college and another quarter thought that their poor school grades would be a barrier to attending college... Finally, many students in the survey reported not having taken a college-preparatory curriculum. Whether this was due to a lack of encouragement—or pushing—from teachers to take higher level courses, a lack of resources in the mostly rural, low-income schools to offer more academically challenging curricula, or a combination of both is not known. (2011, par. 5, 7)

None of Macy's six keys for success seem adequate for addressing these issues. In fact, one could argue that working in purposeful opposition to family culture has the potential to be damaging to self-confidence and limits students' sources of potential encouragement. While on the topic of encouragement, it is noteworthy that the OBR researchers found that most parent participants expressed a desire for their students to attend college. Given my interaction with parents in this region as a tutor in many school districts, a high school teacher in one, and through various community involvement activities, I am surprised at this finding to the point that

I doubt its validity. I wonder if this is a case of participants telling the researcher what they believe s/he wants to hear. This hypothesized lack of authenticity might stem from an idea that the researcher (a representative of the arm of the state government responsible for higher education) would believe them to be poor parents if they were to say they feel college would not be valuable for their students. Lubrano's (2004) research with what he calls Straddlers supported this hypothesis. Straddlers are adults with a blue collar upbringing who have transitioned to white-collar work through pursuing higher education, and several interviewed by Lubrano indicated family opposition as a primary barrier to attending college. These differing perspectives presented by the OBR study and Lubrano were influential to my research design, both in determining questions to ask as well as how to frame them to encourage authenticity. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Accurately conceptualizing 'Appalachian.' Given the above analysis of the barriers to higher education and the correlating solutions, it appears that the un-reconciled issues pertain to students' support network and preparation. Therefore, a new approach to eliminating these barriers seems warranted. In 2011, prior to becoming acquainted with Alice Lloyd College, I wrote the following in an initial attempt at articulating my vision for such a 'new' approach. I envisioned a higher education environment where:

- Appalachian family culture is respected
- the community is involved in its development from brainstorming through physical completion
- parents and families have a symbiotic relationship with the school, all thriving as a result of the partnership
- merit-based and need-based financial aid are not the only options for lowering cost, and
- the Appalachian work ethic, which values self-reliance, is honored, understanding that working harder is working smarter because shortcuts often have unintended consequences.

This vision was informed by my understanding of the regional culture and the success of programs currently in place to spur progress, such as the aforementioned OACHE program sponsored by the Ohio Board of Regents. Interestingly, each of these five points appear to be characteristics of Alice Lloyd College. This was a key reason for selecting ALC as the site for my research despite its location in Kentucky rather than Ohio. Next, a closer look at Appalachian culture, both its diversity and its unifying qualities, will be provided.

Regional differences. Appalachia, a region consisting of 420 counties across 13 states, is divided geographically and culturally into three sub-regions: Northern, Central, and Southern Appalachia (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). The Southern Appalachian experience differs from my own lived experience further north, in a county that borders the north and central regions. For example, Southern Appalachia remains linguistically differentiated from other Appalachian regions, both in pronunciation and lexicon. The dialect used there, known by linguists as southern mountain dialect, is stereotypically viewed as bastardized English uttered by economically and cognitively impoverished mountain people (Dial, 1969; Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). However, many expressions and pronunciation patterns can be traced back to Scotland, the mother land of many Southern Appalachian families, making this dialect closer to 'real' English than is today's Standard English (Dial, 1969).

Moving north to Central and Northern Appalachia, a stronger Irish influence is discernable (Freese, 2003). Irish immigrants had an impact not only on the language of the region, but also on the food culture of Northern Appalachia and socio-historical trajectory of the entire country. In Ohio, for example, local wisdom dictates that peas are planted on St. Patrick's Day. In Pennsylvania, the infamous and perhaps fictitious Molly Maguires changed the course of history as a dissenting group of anthracite coal miners (Freese, 2003). According to Freese's

description, their clandestine violence against the coal barons in the 1870s led to the eventual creation of the first labor union in the nation. The Molly Maguires were a feared Irish group known for violence in their home country, and thus, valid or not, the coal barons had no difficulty convincing the community that the loathed Irish immigrants were responsible for the violence surrounding the coal industry. These events also led to the eventual collapse of the anthracite coal industry, thus increasing the demand for the less-pure but more plentiful bituminous coal found throughout the Appalachian Mountains. Bituminous coal mining continues to shape the economic and social life of Northern and Central Appalachians, as many forgo higher education and risk the known health problems associated with mining work, choosing more immediate financial security (Freese, 2003). Coal culture has arisen as an important feature of this doctoral research and will be further discussed in Chapters Four and Five. A similar pattern is emerging currently as hydro-fracking to capture natural gas gains momentum (Morrone, 2013).

The landscape itself also creates diversity within Appalachia. Stereotypical descriptions of the region paint a picture of "isolationism, homogeneity, familism, and fundamentalism" (Lewis & Billings, n.d., p. 1). The idea of Appalachia as isolated was at one point limitedly well-founded. Freese (2003) explained that the Appalachian Mountains created a physical barrier, for many years impenetrable by mass transit, thus separating much of the region from external progress. However, this was not the case in Northern Appalachia where the prevalence of major rivers allowed for human and cargo transport. Pittsburgh, for example, was the first major industrial metropolis in the country, a feat made possible by the city's location at the confluence of three rivers and the meeting point of two massive coal beds (Freese, 2003). This feature of Northern Appalachia differentiates it from Central and Southern Appalachia.

According to Lewis and Billings (n.d.), the prevalence of waterways and consequent urban areas results in a people accustomed to different industry and employment opportunities, different flora and fauna, and therefore different cultural norms and leisure activities than those which characterize the more mountainous areas of Appalachia.

Regional similarities. Despite Northern Appalachia's permeability to external influences, the sub-region shares some key similarities with Central and Southern Appalachia, qualities that are associated with Appalachia as a whole. The region is plagued by poverty, low rates of educational attainment, and a phenomenon known as rural brain drain. While poverty rates have decreased considerably from the 1960s, the current rate is still nearly 17 percent and more than a quarter of Appalachia's counties remain classified as high-poverty, meaning more than 1.5 times the national average (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2012). As the ARC notes, "despite progress, Appalachia still does not enjoy the same economic vitality as the rest of the nation…and recent economic data show that the region has fared far worse in the current recession than the rest of the nation" (2012a, par. 2). Educational attainment rates track similarly behind national averages, with 76.8% of Appalachian adults having graduated from high school in 2000 compared to 80.4% nationally. The national college-going rate in 2000 was 24.4%, but the Appalachian rate in the same year was 17.6% (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2012c).

According to Nadel and Sagawa, writing on behalf of *Save the Children* (2002), rural brain drain occurs when those who pursue a college education ultimately move out of the region in pursuit of better-paying positions, perhaps in locations where higher education is more the norm. This "perpetuates the cycle of poverty by depriving poor rural areas of the skills and creativity of those most likely to effect change" (p. 76). Further exacerbating the problem, "Government funding has been directed more toward helping poor rural families survive day-to-day, than

toward creating strong community institutions that provide good physical and mental health care, education, and positive growth and development" (p. 1). Nadel and Sagawa offer the following as steps toward slowing rural brain drain:

- Develop programs that encourage higher education beginning in early youth
- Strengthen youth connections to their communities by encouraging civic and political engagement
- Provide training for skilled professionals and provide incentives for local people to attend
- Provide incentives for non-local professions to bring their skill sets into the region (Save the Children, 2002)

These recommendations point to a community-driven educational model as a solution for rural brain drain. This finding supports the idea that Alice Lloyd College may embody an educational system well-equipped to effectively serve the region. From its inception in 1915, Alice Lloyd College, then called Caney Creek Community Center, has been sustained as the result of local grassroots action. According to co-founder June Buchanan in an interview with Davis (1982), community members contributed to construction, maintenance, teaching, and various other critical functions. Children tended the gardens and families provided food to both students and staff. Students were required to work part-time to earn their tuition-free education, and an elite few were selected to travel the country on fundraising campaigns. This work-tuition exchange program still exists as a primary feature of the ALC experience, one offered only to local and regional people as an intentional effort to build local/regional capacity (Alice Lloyd College, 2012b).

Blue collar values. With the Appalachian economy being driven primarily by mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2012b),

the regional culture is reflective of its blue collar majority. Lubrano (2004) articulated a concise description of blue collar values based on his personal experience as a Straddler and on interviews with 100 others. He posits the following as defining values of blue collar culture:

- A strong work ethic, "the kind that gets you up early and keeps you locked in until the job is done, regardless of how odious or personally distasteful the task" (p. 17)
- High involvement with extended family and deep respect for parents and hierarchies
- Honest and direct communication, a disdain for pretense and 'playing politics'
- Collectivism, "a sense of solidarity with the people you live and work with" (p. 17)
- Expectation of and appreciation for self-sufficiency
- An ability to view life as plentiful despite financial or family hardships

According to Lubrano's interviewees, these values are at times in direct conflict with those espoused in higher education as colleges and universities often house middle to upper class students seeking white-collar opportunities. This is to say, the dominant ways of thinking and behaving are different on campus, making it difficult to fit in. Those who persist despite the culture clash begin to acclimate and then feel less congruence with their home life which leads in some cases to strained family relationships (Lubrano, 2004). "For some families, college is seen as a waste of time and money, a hideout where lazy—or at least misguided—progeny burrow to retreat from the real work of life…going to college is criminally self-indulgent" (p. 32). Other families push their children to go to college but not necessarily with less angst or pain over it: "By telling their kids to go to college and rise above them, working-class fathers offer their lives not as role models to emulate—as middle-class parents can—but as mistakes to avoid" (p. 27). This is the conflict at the heart of being a blue collar person in college, and this conflict provides

a strong rationale for developing culturally appropriate higher education opportunities that embrace and involve full families.

Subsistence as pedagogy. With an understanding of Appalachian culture now in place, I will focus for a moment on the concept of subsistence and its utility in an educational setting. While the term itself may carry a negative connotation and may not be a welcome description of Appalachian living, it is in many ways accurate. Activities such as home food production and preservation, hunting, textile production, home medicine, and wood heating are still common practices (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). However, subsistence as the basis for a higher education environment in Northern/Central Appalachia is more than a simple economic model. The operational definition used for this research is that of Dr. Maria Mies. Mies is a German professor and sociologist who has co-authored several books and articles which describe subsistence as a perspective for all life activities rather than a purely economic model. She and her fellow authors, including Vandana Shiva, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, and Claudia Von Werlhof, argue that subsistence production is the opposite of commodity production because things are produced to meet basic human needs rather than to accumulate wealth. Mies and her co-authors describe their personal experiences and research that led them to believe that those who live subsistence lives are happier and mentally healthier than those who embrace capitalism (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). Subsistence makes sense both economically and socially as an overriding philosophy for a higher education environment because it is financially easier to sustain, can promote a happier, healthier campus climate by valuing cooperation over competition, and can foster respect for the value of work. Within the Appalachian region specifically, a subsistence-based educational setting may be culturally appropriate because subsistence activities correlate to working hard. As Lubrano stated, “struggle, the working class

will tell you, is central to blue collar life and the chief architect of character" (2004, p.18). Alice Lloyd College's work requirement is subsistence in action, as the College relies on student labor to meet basic institutional needs. In Chapters 4 and 5, the work program's educational outcomes and role in creating a culturally appropriate education experience will be explored.

Privilege in Town-Gown Relationships

Higher education institutions have long enjoyed a privileged status in their relationships with the communities in which they are located, a contributing factor to tensions between the two particularly where socioeconomic divides are wide (Bortolin, 2011). 'College towns' are not often the thriving communities one might expect given that they are home to such large revenue generators and learned people. While many institutions promote responsible citizenship as a desired outcome of college, this perception of deserving privilege is, perhaps inadvertently, communicated to and fostered in students who in turn promulgate this in their interactions with and about the community. For example, at most colleges and universities that offer Greek Life opportunities, each national fraternity and sorority serves as a philanthropic entity for a community organization, raising money for the organization's cause (University of Nebraska, n.d.). While this is important work, these systems have been criticized for not providing meaningful measures through which students can engage in this philanthropic work, thereby limiting students' understanding of civic engagement (University of Nebraska, n.d.). For example, the University of Evansville (2014) hosts an annual Hot-Tub-a-Thon, in which fraternity men sit in a hot tub for three days to benefit a disability services organization. This event has been ridiculed through a political cartoon by Megan Cody which was clipped from an unknown newspaper and mailed to me by Diane Podolske, the author of the above-cited University of Nebraska resource. The cartoon likens the event to a "sit-and-drink-beer-a-thon"

and shows a group of men sitting under a banner that reads ‘we do it for the kids’ while they drink beer and discuss buying a hot tub. This illustrates that within the constructs of the system students are able to ‘make a difference’ without necessarily having a meaningful learning experience or investing much of themselves in the projects. This criticism is not solely reserved for Greek Life experiential learning opportunities, but rather it has been generalized to many elements of collegiate experience (Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014; Scott, 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that similar relationships are perpetuated when sending students abroad, the dilemma that led to the creation of Fair Trade Learning principles, a set of guidelines for service-based international education programs articulated by Amizade Global Service Learning (2012). Yet one could argue that educators ought to teach students to positively engage with communities prior to sending them abroad by applying these principles to traditional town-gown relationships.

While a discussion of the above-mentioned Fair Trade Learning and its implications for domestic higher education is needed, it is first necessary to solidify the existence of an imbalance in university-community relationships. Home to Harvard, the wealthiest higher education institution in the United States (Emerson, 2012), Cambridge, Massachusetts is a city of contradictions. According to Emerson (2012), it is known as a place of great economic diversity. Emerson stated that despite having a population with an educational attainment level 30 percent higher than the national average, the city’s unemployment rate outpaces the Massachusetts and national averages. Nearly 14 percent of the populace lives at or below the poverty line compared to 10.5 percent state-wide and 12 percent nation-wide. Yet housing prices below $100,000 are nowhere to be found in Cambridge (Emerson, 2012). Flynn (2012) sought to shed light on what Harvard is doing to address these disparities in its community. She stated that seemingly, much

of the institution's resources that are not allocated on campus are funneled into private enterprises and organizations. A salient example is Harvard's relationship with three local charter schools. These three schools admit students from the entire state of Massachusetts and give admission preference to non-Cambridge residents over those from the city unless the student has a sibling who has already been admitted (Flynn, 2012). Harvard provides support to these schools in a variety of ways including placing undergraduate and graduate students here for needed contact hours. Further, these three schools are known as pipelines into the university (Flynn, 2012). One may question what outcomes for community improvement could be observed if students in the Cambridge City Public School system had equal access to Harvard students and resources. In addition, I posit that Harvard students' philosophy of education could be transformed if they were exposed to a more representative segment of the K-12 school population rather than an elite few. Harvard's relationship with these charter schools seems to be characterized by privilege begetting more privilege.

Certainly Harvard is not the only university guilty of perpetuating privilege and undervaluing its home community. According to Helena Brady, a graduate student in Higher Education Administration at Youngstown State University located in crime-ridden Youngstown, Ohio, students are fond of creating tongue-in-cheek advertising campaigns for the school, such as "YSU: The Bullets Stop Here," implying that the university exists in a safe bubble in an otherwise undesirable location. Students seek out internships and jobs in neighboring cities and towns rather than staying near campus (personal communication, March 27, 2013). It is my experience at my own alma mater and current place of employment that students disparagingly call locals "townies" and are quick to blame them when a theft, assault, or drug offense happens on campus. Arguably, the result of all of this may be a two-way street of disdain. Sandy and

Holland (2006) posited that locals often view the campus community as one filled with entitled, privileged elitists. Meanwhile, increasing numbers of students plan to leave the community quickly after graduating in search of 'better' opportunities, contributing to the aforementioned phenomenon known as brain drain (Ionescu & Polgreen, 2009).

In contrast to these attitudes, Alice Lloyd College has a long tradition of educating regional students to be future leaders within Appalachia (Davis, 1982). Students within a territory that encompasses 108 Appalachian counties are offered free tuition with the implicit understanding that they will reciprocate this generosity by staying and putting their education to use for the betterment of the local or regional community (Alice Lloyd College, 2012b). It is worth noting that there is no formal construct to hold students accountable to this arrangement: no form to sign, no threat of being charged tuition after graduation if students move out of the area. Yet the majority of graduates stay (S. Ulbright, personal communication, January 14, 2014). This is perhaps in part because the College reportedly has a very positive, engaged relationship with the community (K. Kuhn, personal communication, March 6, 2014). The research that will be described in subsequent chapters sought, in part, to explore whether or not students feel cohesion between their home culture and what they experience on campus (meaning to what degree the campus has created a culture that is appropriate to that of the region). It also sought to explore the role the university-community relationship plays in that cultural cohesion. Findings related to these themes are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Building positive partnerships: Fair trade learning. Recognizing that service learning opportunities have high potential to be transformative for both students and service recipients yet sometimes fall short of this (Crabtree, 2008; Hartman, 2014; Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014), Amizade Global Service Learning (2012) developed a set of best practice guidelines for

developing and implementing service-based education programs internationally. These guidelines, called Fair Trade Learning (FTL) principles, arose from this organization's two decades of experience cultivating partnerships with and between U.S. universities and various developing international communities (Amizade, 2012). Bortolin (2011) noted that as international travel for the purpose of service-learning increases, there is a growing concern over the true value added by students in distant host communities. She also observed that participants in a cross-cultural service-learning experience are often privileged over the host community both during and after the experience (Bortolin, 2011). In contrast, Fair Trade Learning (FTL) is an effort to equalize the value of what is exchanged when student groups interact with communities, ensuring that value is added not only for students but also for host communities. FTL "foregrounds the goals of economic equity, equal partnership, mutual learning, cooperative and positive social change, transparency, and sustainability" (Hartman, 2014, par. 1). To understand how Fair Trade Learning relates to and is distinct from global service-learning, it is useful to consider the metaphor of LEED certification within the fields of architecture and construction. Prior to the development of LEED certification, the construction industry existed but without an articulated set of standards to highlight environmental best practices. Similarly, the global service-learning industry has existed for several decades. Applying Fair Trade Learning principles to the design process enables educators to evaluate a program's social, economic, and ecological impact. In response to Crabtree's (2008) assertion that the industry needed concrete strategies for developing reciprocal relationships, Hartman, Paris, and Blache-Cohen (2014) engaged in a collaborative process to more fully articulate Fair Trade Learning as an actionable set of standards for international service learning, whether undertaken for education's or tourism's sake. The following is a summary of these standards, which were the

result of contribution and critique from Amizade stakeholders, conference attendees, practitioners, and online communities. See Appendix B for the complete list and description of Fair Trade Learning Standards.

Core principles. The overriding philosophy of Fair Trade Learning, that of reciprocity in partnerships, has been further explained through the articulation of eight core principles. Each provides a closer look at *how* to enact FTL. The eight principles, simplified and paraphrased, are:

1. Actively work toward *dual purposes*, meaning both the students and the host community should have goals for the experience that are given equal attention.
2. Actively seek to mitigate university privilege in the relationship by seeking *community voice* in decision-making around resource allocation, learning outcomes, and service outcomes.
3. Actively work to develop students' *commitment* to the community and to relevant social issues through direct instruction/reflection prior to, during, and after immersion. Similarly, seek to cultivate *sustainability* in the community partnership by communicating prior to, during, and after immersion, and by actively setting long-term goals for the relationship.
4. Strive for *transparency* as it relates to budgeting. Both university and host community stakeholders should be aware of how and why resources are allocated, and representatives from both parties should be involved in making these decisions.
5. Actively seek to promote *environmental sustainability* and reduce the group's footprint on the host community. Weigh learning/service outcomes against environmental impact

and communicate with the host community regarding how to mitigate the latter while not sacrificing the former.

6. Actively develop *economic sustainability* within the program as well as the community by (a) engaging in projects for which there is adequate funding to be able to compensate service/goods providers fairly, (b) ensuring that projects do not create an unwanted financial burden after the group leaves [for example, by increasing the electricity bill], and (c) building community capacity for management of funds.
7. Intentionally develop students' and community members' intercultural competence through *intercultural contact and reflection*. Partnership leaders should work to develop skills for facilitating reflection so as to enhance participants' comfort with and curiosity for intercultural learning and acceptance.
8. Actively help participants draw connections between on-site activities and larger global issues in order to foster *global community building*. Through reflection, encourage students to view themselves as capable agents for positive social change (Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014).

The authors expand on these eight core principles by offering two sets of standards, those that are community-centered and those that are student-centered (see Appendix B). Each set provides more specific detail about how to enact the core principles for its respective stakeholder group. These standards will be further discussed in Chapter 5 as they relate to analysis of findings.

Figure 1. Fair Trade Learning Overview

Figure 1. The arrow was chosen instead of an equal sign to denote that student learning in a cross-cultural context may exemplify Fair Trade Learning but does not always. The core principles of Fair Trade Learning shown here provide best-practice guidance for educators planning community-engaged learning experiences, but this is unfortunately not standard practice in all such settings.

Applicability to this research. Those who employ the FTL approach aim to ensure that service projects are designed to meet real needs as identified by the host community, and to guarantee programmatic spending provides a direct financial benefit to the community (Amizade, 2012). While Amizade and subsequent authors developed these principles for use in the global service learning sector, they promote values—fairness and equity—that are applicable to any service learning setting whether the host is in a developing country, a distant domestic location, or the educational institution's own home community. In part, this doctoral research explores the degree to which the relationship between Alice Lloyd College and the Appalachian

region is characterized by Fair Trade Learning standards. FTL provides a framework for analyzing this relationship and a way to articulate various nuances of the affiliation.

To return to the topic of privilege in service learning, students traveling abroad through traditional service learning experiences are often privileged over the community in which they serve (Bortolin, 2011). A worthwhile question to ask is what preparation— whether it be through their upbringing, past experiences, or direct training— have these students had prior to engaging in service? According to research conducted by Sandy and Holland, service learning appears "to be particularly important for students of color and first generation college students" (2006, p. 35). Their research illustrated that, within their own communities, students in these groups had a greater propensity toward voluntary service and were less likely to begrudge required service experiences than those students from more privileged backgrounds. The idea that low-privileged college students tend to be committed to service may have implications for their ability to connect to their institutions which sometimes communicate sentiments that the institution is better than, safer than, smarter than the community. It may be valid to argue that students who value their community and actively work to uplift it will struggle to value an entity that denigrates that community. In light of these arguments and the fact that many ALC students are first-generation, my research explores whether community engagement at ALC is characterized by Fair Trade Learning principles (which encourage equal value on the university and community), and whether this leads students to feel that they and the institution have shared values, or cultural cohesion. Such findings could have significant implications for creating conditions to successfully support low-income, first-generation students through a degree program.

Chapter Summary

This literature review has laid the foundation for understanding the ways in which sustainability, education, and Appalachian culture intersect. (See Figure 2 for a visual depiction of the bodies of knowledge that informed this literature review and how they intersect.) Sustainability, society's ability to meet the needs of the present without jeopardizing the future, is of concern on a global level due to human activity that has created climate instability and food insecurity, the rippling effects of which cannot yet be fully understood. Education is often viewed as the catalyst for paradigm shifting, for changing views to address social problems, yet characteristics of the current dominant educational system do not necessarily foster the attitudes and critical thinking skills needed to understand and address the problems of sustainability. Despite the widespread problems of unsustainability and ineffective education, a multitude of alternative educational models exist, as do cultures that promote sustainability. Alice Lloyd College is both: the work-centered, character-based format creates a unique educational model that differs dramatically from mainstream higher education, and the campus culture is a reflection of the Appalachian region in which the College is located. Appalachian culture is characterized by subsistent practices and by values that underpin sustainability: collectivism, work ethic, self-reliance, simplicity. However, academia has not always valued this culture and similarly, most within this culture have not historically valued, or at least have not pursued, higher education. Fair Trade Learning principles provide guidance for enhancing partnerships between universities and communities for the sake of promoting social, economic, and environmental justice. Alice Lloyd College seemingly embodies many of these principles and provides the higher education community with an example of how to positively engage Appalachian students whose culture is worth supporting rather than subjugating. Chapter 3 will

describe the study that arose from this analysis of the literature to explore ALC's efficacy as a culturally appropriate institution of sustainability education.

Figure 2. Intersecting Bodies of Knowledge Informing Literature Review

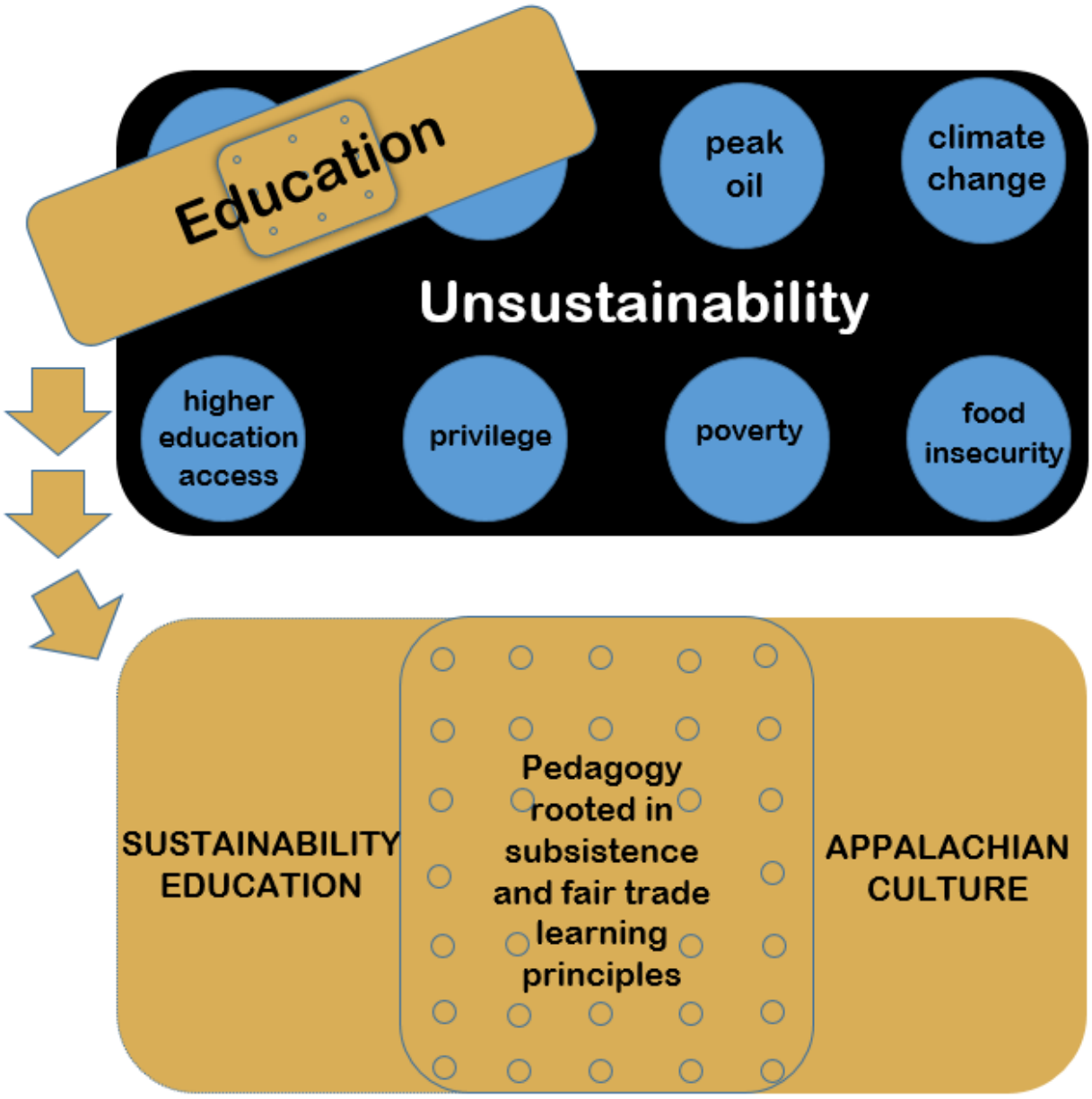

Figure 2. The top rectangle illustrates issues contributing to a global unsustainable situation. The titled circles represent issues that are named within this chapter, while the circles underneath the bandaid signify that there are additional barriers to sustainability that are not addressed within this dissertation. The bandaid on the top figure represents the belief that education is a tool for addressing large social/ecological issues. The close-up view of the bandaid is a modified Venn diagram and illustrates that education which intentionally utilizes elements of Appalachian culture can promote sustainability.

Chapter 3: Blue Collar Ethnography

Chapter Organization

This chapter describes the research framework for this study. Discussion begins with a description and rationale for the selected methodology and the broad research lens that informed this study's development. The research design is then described, including how participants were selected and how they were protected as human subjects. The third major discussion point of the chapter focuses on data collection procedures, followed by exposition on how data analysis was carried out. The chapter ends with an application of Fair Trade Learning principles to the research design and implementation.

Ethnography Explained

This doctoral research is an emic ethnographic study (Creswell, 2007; Wolcott, 2008) in that it seeks to understand the culture of a particular entity, Alice Lloyd College, as experienced and articulated by members and partners of the campus community. Wolcott (2008) described ethnography as both a way of looking— meaning a way of gathering data— and a way of seeing, or understanding what cultural meaning the data carries. He posited that the purpose of ethnography is "to describe what the people in some particular place or status ordinarily do and the meanings they ascribe to the doing, under ordinary or particular circumstances" (p. 72). Thus, ethnography is rooted in place and is conducted via fieldwork in which the researcher personally engages with the research setting to articulate participants' perspectives rather than her own.

Ethnographic inquiry is an emergent method that allows researchers to be responsive to participants in the field and adapt questions as called for and as intuition recommends. As such, it allowed for the emergence of several of the themes I sought to explore, rather than attempting

to specifically create conditions to test for each, and it highlighted relatedness of various themes rather than trying to understand them in isolation. Also appealing is that it resulted in the emergence of themes not previously considered but that were useful to exploring the primary research questions. This practice of listening to the data is a defining characteristic of qualitative research generally and of ethnography specifically. Wolcott stated that "ethnographic accounts arise not from the facts accumulated during fieldwork but from ruminating about the meanings to be derived from the experience" (2008, p. 13).

Additional rationale for employing ethnography. As Wolcott (2008) noted, ethnography is an increasingly utilized and appreciated approach to research. He articulated a comprehensive list of characteristics of this methodology that enhance its appeal, and several resonated with my own research sensibilities. These included the autonomy ethnographic researchers typically enjoy, the affordability of research tools, the spirit of adventure innate in doing fieldwork, and the collaborative nature of working among participants to make observations from their perspective. In critically analyzing these factors that draw increasing numbers of researchers toward ethnographic inquiry, one may notice parallels between these and blue collar values (as described in Chapter 2). For example, collaboratively working with participants emphasizes collectivism and relationships which are typically important in blue collar families (Lubrano, 2004). While hierarchy is respected (Lubrano, 2004), it creates walls. Thus, stressing one's role as academic researcher may garner respect but it will also likely limit the degree to which participants interact authentically with the researcher given that loyalty to those with similar status is also highly valued. Additionally, frugality and emphasis on collection of experience rather than material goods are blue collar values (Lubrano, 2004) that are reflected in ethnography by virtue of its affordability and requisite fieldwork (Wolcott,

2008). Lastly, wanting autonomy in the research process demonstrates that one values self-reliance which is also reflective of blue collar culture (Lubrano, 2004). I believe these parallels are what drew me, with my Appalachian blue collar upbringing, to ethnography. For me, it seems a culturally appropriate methodology, one well-suited to my own ontology (Creswell, 2007).

Critical ethnography via feminist methods. Critical social theory is the umbrella term to describe research endeavors that seek to critically examine society or critically question norms (Creswell, 2007). Such research is designed to encourage social transformation and is often politically charged (Creswell, 2007; Madison, 2005; Willis, 1978). Given that this study aims to provide a critique of and alternative for traditional higher education in the United States, it classifies as research that fits into the critical social theory paradigm. This broad research paradigm has been fitted to a variety of methodological frameworks, including ethnography (Creswell, 2007; Willis, 1978). According to Madison, "critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain…The conditions for existence within a particular context are not as they *could* be for specific subjects; as a result, the researcher feels a moral obligation to make a contribution toward changing those conditions toward greater freedom and equity" (2005, p. 5). This study qualifies as critical ethnography in that I am motivated by a sense of responsibility to Appalachian people whose culture is stereotyped and demeaned, to first-generation college students whose culture is subjugated—in some cases actively and purposefully— within the ivory tower of higher education, and to the faculty and staff of Alice Lloyd College who demonstrate remarkable resiliency and commitment in their efforts to educate leaders for

Appalachia despite humble resources and a pervasive negative stereotype surrounding their target population.

While early anthropological and ethnographic research elucidated the Other, meaning cultures markedly different from that of the researcher (Madison, 2005), Hurston (1995) changed this tide by becoming the first anthropologist to formally study and publish research about her own culture (Association for Feminist Anthropology, 2015). This is relevant and foundational to my own research as it provides scholarly support for my decision to engage in research with and on behalf of a cultural group to which I belong: Appalachian, first-generation college students. Hurston (1995) further informed the methodological underpinnings of this research by establishing literary narrative as a valid means for articulating results of ethnographic research (Association for Feminist Anthropology, 2015). Although revolutionary and controversial in the 1930s, this type of writing in academic research has recently become increasingly supported in the qualitative research community. Richardson (1994) asserted that writing is a way to foster deep thinking and as such it is a valid method for both data collection and analysis. In a chapter co-authored with St. Pierre, Richardson wrote,

> The ethnographic life is not separable from the Self. Who we are and what we can be—what we can study, how we can write about that which we study—are tied to how a knowledge system disciplines itself…We have inherited some ethnographic rules that are arbitrary, narrow, exclusionary, distorting, and alienating. Our task is to find concrete practices through which we can construct ourselves as ethical subjects engaged in ethical ethnography—inspiring to read and to write. (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 965)

In so stating, Richardson unapologetically argues for not only the legitimacy of writing as a tool for collecting and analyzing data, but also for the researcher's ethical and valid position as part of, rather than apart from, her research.

Both Hurston (1995) and Richardson (1994) have been embraced by the critical feminist research community, the former as evidenced by being cited and discussed by the Association

for Feminist Anthropology (2015). Feminist methodologists continue to build upon their works. Behar (1996), like Hurston, is both a researcher and a literary author who embraces literary voice as a valid means of exploring and explaining data. Behar argued that personal voice has a place in ethnographic research because it can engender understanding, connection to emotion, and empathy, qualities she deemed worthy of cultivation in society as a whole (1996). Ellis (2004) further solidified the legitimacy of first-person narrative in ethnographic research through her advocacy for and development of autoethnography as a research methodology. Personal narrative has come to be described as a feminist method because it has been developed and supported by feminist researchers who seek to enliven and humanize research through accessing researchers' and participants' emotions and making emotion accessible to readers (Association for Feminist Anthropology, 2015). As a researcher who ascribes to these goals, I chose to utilize personal narrative to deeply explore the motivations of participants and to introduce readers to the impressions and feelings I experienced while interacting with the ALC community at key cultural events. In Chapter 4, these narratives will introduce the discussion of each of three major findings (called Content Categories).

Research Design

The exposition within this section serves to clearly describe the research design process and considerations that were deliberated prior to collecting data. This design was submitted to Prescott College's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was approved in April, 2014.

Research Participants. Participants in this study represent each of the following stakeholder groups of Alice Lloyd College: current students, faculty members, and staff. Some held dual roles of faculty or staff and alumni. Recruitment efforts for in-depth interviews prioritized students, and the remaining constituencies were recruited for focus group research as

resources and serendipity[2] (Wolcott, 2010) allowed. A minimum of 10 student participants was desired, and a total of 12 ultimately completed interviews. The initial intention was to specifically target first-year students and seniors. First-year students are experiencing the most direct comparison between perceived or espoused campus culture and lived culture, and also the most recent entrance into a campus culture that may or may not differ from family culture. Seniors have had the most time to not only experience ALC's culture in all its nuance, but also to reflect on this experience.

Selection. These targets proved difficult to attain because data collection was primarily carried out during the summer months, which meant that the student population on campus during that time was limited to those participating in the summer work program, all of them having completed at least one full semester. Another confounding factor in meeting this target was the non-traditional nature of class status at ALC. Many students do not fit a classic categorization of first-year, sophomore, junior, or senior. Some start mid-year, some transfer in and are between classes in terms of credits, some take semesters off, some are working to graduate early to save money, and others take more than four years to complete their degrees. The 12 students who participated in this study therefore represent a variety of classes or levels of progress to graduation. Some of these factors will be analyzed further in Chapters 4 and 5 as limitations of the study and as cultural indicators.

In regard to faculty and staff participants, a minimum of eight individuals from differing departments and disciplines were needed to make focus groups viable, and a total of 11 ultimately participated, although four of these were through individual interviews due to

[2] Wolcott (2010) encouraged ethnographers to be adaptive and open so as to allow serendipity to contribute to one's pool of interviewees or observable events. He maintained that great prospective participants and illustrative moments are found when the researcher is busily attending to other elements of the research process, but only if the researcher trusts serendipity as a valid path toward recruiting participants and finding observable data.

scheduling difficulties. From the staff body, I sought to specifically include someone who works directly with the student work program, someone within the institutional research office, and someone with enough longevity at ALC as to have worked directly with Alice Lloyd and/or June Buchanan, the institution's founders. Two of these three goals were met, with the institutional research person being the missed target. However, I found institutional research data to be mostly open source and therefore not critical for inclusion in the interview process. Regarding faculty, professors within the leadership program were targeted due to their direct responsibility to teach the Purpose Road philosophy and history of the institution. One such professor was successfully recruited. The faculty and staff members who rounded out the study aside from these specific target areas represented two other academic disciplines and seven other administrative areas. Those disciplinary and office associations will not be named here, however, as they would provide identifying information, thus breaking confidentiality.

Recruitment. Participant recruitment was aided by two current ALC employees recommended to me through the Work Colleges Consortium, both of whom signed confidentiality agreements to serve as formal research assistants. (See Appendix C.) One teaches a leadership course that is required for all first-year students and allowed me to recruit participants within her class during my first visit to campus in April, 2014. Also, she is a live-in staff member who is involved in several campus activities beyond what her title suggests. She was therefore a valuable resource for connecting me to varied departments, and provided me with my first campus tour to meet faculty and staff members who could participate in focus groups. Being introduced by a respected member of the campus community provided me with greater credibility and a warmer welcome than I may have received had I introduced myself. During my campus visit in April, 2014 I also attended two events that are ALC traditions to

begin to understand the campus culture. This allowed me to better discern the groups and individuals who would be best suited to participation, both in terms of the quality of their contributions to my particular research questions as well as their openness to the process. The events I observed, the annual Work Honors Convocation and Work Olympics, are events sponsored by one research assistant's department, and so I volunteered to help with small tasks that needed done throughout the day. In this way I was able to directly interact with participants and explain my purpose for being there (as nearly everyone I encountered recognized me as an outsider and asked why I was on campus). It was through these interactions that I recruited the four staff members and three students who would participate in my pilot study when I returned to campus in June, 2014.

During the June, 2014 trip, as with the trip prior, I was hosted in campus housing which allowed me to directly observe and engage in campus activities in between pilot interviews. I ate meals in the campus dining hall with the first research assistant to get involved in this study and she continued to introduce me to campus community members. One person I met in this way took an in interest in my research and volunteered to assist me in recruiting the remaining participants needed to complete primary interviews in July, 2014. After I returned home, she and I remained in communication via email so that I could clearly explain what I was looking for, who I had met that showed interest in participating, who I had already interviewed, and what my timeline was. She did the work of contacting potential participants, both students and faculty/staff, and building a rigorous interview schedule for my July, 2014 visit. Faculty were most difficult to effectively recruit due to the summer timing. No summer classes are offered at ALC so that professors, most of whom are contractually obligated to live on campus, can have a restorative period. Therefore, many professors were not in town to participate.

Ethical considerations. Given that this research involved human subjects, careful advanced planning was required to ensure participants' safety and fair treatment. To this end, procedures in the areas of consent, confidentiality, and compensation for both participants and researchers were developed and followed as described below.

Informed consent procedures. Potential participants were told of confidentiality constructs during the initial explanation of the research/invitation to participate. I distributed the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D) at the beginning of each interview/focus group, verbally reviewed the form to explain the purpose and procedures of the study, answered any questions the participants had at the time, and invited further questions via email or phone. Prior to signing the form, participants were assured that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Post-interview, I followed up with participants by phone or email to further convey my accessibility for questions. Participants were also periodically updated throughout the data collection and analysis periods so that I could verify the accuracy of my interpretations and so that they could reassess their participation as the study unfolded.

The Informed Consent Form allowed participants to individually select the types of data collection procedures they were willing to engage in by initialing beside each one rather than signing the form as an all-or-nothing document. Participants were also made aware that they had the right to strike any element of their participation from records for the purpose of the study, whether it be written or audio data. They were able to do this at any time throughout the study regardless of when the data was collected. Although an effort was made to avoid risks through the design of data collection instruments, participants may have felt that some questions or activities asked of them were stressful or upsetting. They were informed verbally and in writing that, if this occurred, they could elect to stop participating in the activity or study immediately.

Confidentiality. Participant confidentiality has been protected through a variety of means. First, an alpha-numeric identifier and a pseudonym was assigned to or selected by each participant. One or the other was used on all stored data, both paper and electronic, as well as within this dissertation. Additionally, access to data collected has been limited to only the researcher, formal research assistants who have signed confidentiality agreements, and to participants who request to see their own data. Finally, all physical data documents are stored in locked locations and electronic information is stored on a password-protected machine. This includes informed consent forms which are the only documents that retain overt personal identifying information. Via the Informed Consent Form, participants were made aware that data will be securely maintained indefinitely for the purposes of data analysis and future research, publication, and presentation.

Participant and researcher compensation. Efforts were made to make benefits to participants greater than cost to them. There were no financial costs to participants, but each was asked to invest time resources. Between initial interviews and follow-up interviews, the average participant committed approximately two hours to the study, some more, some less. Participant observation as a data collection method extended beyond this two-hour timeframe, but I observed tasks and events that participants were doing regardless of the study and that were public happenings. Therefore this did not constitute an additional time commitment. To express my gratitude for their participation, I provided each faculty/staff participant with a gift item from my own corner of the Appalachian region, a piece of Fiestaware from the Homer Laughlin China Company on the Ohio/West Virginia border. One exception was that I purchased a piece of art from a participant who earns a supplemental income this way. In addition to expressing my

gratitude, these gestures also allowed me to establish myself as someone who shares, at least to some degree, and appreciates participants' culture.

Benefits to participants included the opportunity to reflect on and share their experience as a member of the Alice Lloyd College community. Time for such reflection is not always taken without external prompting. Also, there is intended benefit to ALC as a whole in that this study is designed to describe a link, to the degree to which it exists both in mission and in practice, between the institution and sustainability education. Alice Lloyd and June Buchanan, the institution's founders, fought consistently to legitimize their alternative approach to education (Davis, 1982), and this study provides a new angle in support of existing arguments for its efficacy.

Regarding researcher compensation, Alice Lloyd College extended an offer of free lodging and meals during three of my four visits to campus. Hospitality is an element of character and professionalism that students are taught, and the campus has on-site guest housing for this express purpose. It is the responsibility of specific student work teams to prepare the housing for guests and to clean it after the guests have left. While I initially stated that I did not want to be a burden and asked for hotel information, it was decided that staying and eating on campus would be beneficial to student work-related learning outcomes, would allow me to better utilize my time on location due to the campus' lack of proximity to alternative lodging, and would allow me to directly observe elements of the student work program. While this could be considered compensation and therefore a conflict of interest, this undertaking was in reality still quite costly due to the necessary travel from my home in Ohio to Kentucky and the unpaid vacation time from work I took to complete it. Further, declining the offer would have created problematic barriers to completing the research in the available time given the travel time that I

would have needed each day to travel to and from off-campus lodging. This is an issue with which the College is familiar, and according to my research assistants, they provide lodging for guests of varying purposes, whether they be guest speakers, auditors, or accreditation agents. Providing lodging is customary for ALC due to simple logistic necessity and due to a culture committed to teaching students how to be professionals and men and women of character.

Procedures for Data Collection

Data collection occurred over the course of four visits to Alice Lloyd College which took place in April, June, July, and October, 2014. The April 2014 visit was made to observe public cultural artifacts and to make initial contact with potential participants. Observation of public events was aided by note taking, and audio and/or visual recording as permission to observe is not required in public settings where privacy is not expected (Galman, 2007).

Following this initial inventory, collection of IRB-protected data was carried out during the three remaining visits through three primary constructivist methods: **participant and site observation,** in-depth **qualitative interviewing,** and **focus groups**. These methods were complemented by **textual analysis** of writings and videos by and about the ALC community, including the institutional website, admission materials, a book written by a former president, TV spots, and various other artifacts. According to Galman (2007), this is a classic ethnographic methods cocktail, and Wolcott (2008) concurred. He directed ethnographers "to experience the customs of a group firsthand, to supplement what one is able to observe with interviewing to learn what those in the group make of their experience, and further to supplement what can be learned first-hand with information gathered or materials prepared by others" (p. 66). Data collection methods requiring direct engagement were undertaken concurrently during each of the latter three visits, though the majority of data collection occurred in July and October, 2014. The

primary purpose of the June, 2014 visit was to conduct a pilot interview to pre-test the interview questions (see Appendix E).

Ethnographic reconnaissance. This term, first credited to an unpublished manuscript by Marchione (1981 as cited in Pelto, 1992) but expanded by Wolcott (2008), describes a very deliberate, active process of observation in the context of ethnographic research. Wolcott encouraged researchers to think of site and participant observation as an activity to be utilized prior to other more intrusive data collection measures, as a method for orienting oneself to the setting. Despite its militaristic connotation which may itself seem intrusive, Wolcott argued that reconnaissance simply implies canvasing, or fact-finding prior to taking action or making direct inquiries. As a research method, ethnographic reconnaissance is appealing in that it "offers an opportunity to draw heavily on what Robert Chambers calls 'organized common sense, freed from the chains of inappropriate professionalism'" (Wolcott, 2008, p. 192). That is, reconnaissance welcomes intuition into the research process, allowing one to avoid becoming overly procedural to the point of being off-putting to participants. Malinowski argued that

> It is good for the Ethnographer sometimes to put aside camera, note book and pencil, and to join in himself in what is going on. He can take part in the natives' games, he can follow them on their visits and walks, sit down and listen and share in their conversations. (1922, p. 21)

Wolcott (2008) agreed with Malinowski that this immersion approach was preferable for the sake of observing authentic cultural behaviors and suggested picking up the note book and pencil—or recording device and computer— only *after* observing, but as soon afterward as possible for the sake of accurately remembering and describing events and impressions. This concept of ethnographic reconnaissance, with its respect for intuition and unhindered immersion

in field interactions, strongly informed my own observation practices during each of my visits to Alice Lloyd College. While I did take some notes and pictures in the midst of fieldwork, I did both on my smartphone as this is a modern, widely accepted technology to use in most casual settings, so it was less obtrusive than I believe a clipboard or notebook would have been.

Qualitative interviewing. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), participant and site observation do not stand alone well. They are useful in that they help the researcher familiarize herself with the landscape prior to engaging in interviewing. They also provide participants the opportunity to interact with and become comfortable with the researcher before being asked to answer questions individually (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Wolcott, 2008). Thus, I paired observation with qualitative interviewing and focus group research. Specifically, interviews were designed according to Rubin and Rubin's (2012) responsive interviewing model. In keeping with this model, the questions asked were flexible per the needs of each participant and flowed more like a conversation rather than a strictly scripted series of questions. In conducting interviews in this way, it was important to conscientiously avoid leading questions to ensure I did not jeopardize the validity or reliability of my research. Interviews took place through one-on-one meetings scheduled at participants' convenience and were held in a central campus building or in participants' work location. Each participant was asked to consent to two audio-recorded interviews, one in person during the summer visits and the second via phone over the winter so that clarifying and probing questions could be asked as themes within the data emerged. Interviews lasted approximately one hour, with the first likely going slightly longer and the second perhaps slightly shorter. Focus groups were structured similarly, with questions being flexible to encourage a conversational tone and a nonthreatening environment. Focus groups were helpful in determining faculty and staff perceptions of both the espoused and lived culture

of the campus and how each group feels they contribute to this culture. Participants were asked to participate in one group interview and then follow-up individual interviews as needed during the data analysis process.

Analysis of artifacts. Textual analysis served as the launch point for my study, as well as a complementary collection/analysis measure. Textual research is a valid method in which the researcher conducts a literature review and subsequently analyzes the emerging themes to "present an original hypothesis and conclusive interpretation, and apply the theory in a practical manner appropriate for her field of scholarship" (Clingan, 2011). On the recommendation of my mentor, I read "Miracle on Caney Creek" (Davis, 1982) prior to visiting campus and developed a strong historical perspective of the institution and its founding ethos. Although written as a memoir/biography, this text was a valid resource for this research because it is accepted by the ALC community as the most accurate and complete written history of the College and an articulation of institutional values and goals. This reading was particularly useful to later exploring how and if the cultural constructs that were important to ALC's founders are still in practice today. I complemented this reading by collecting extensive written and visual artifacts during each visit to campus. For example, the Admission and Development offices provided me with access to their closet of current and past materials for prospective students and donors. The library staff allowed me to spend hours in their Artifacts room sifting through historical documents and photos. I collected programs from major convocations which I attended and took materials from each community artisan that set up on campus for ALC's homecoming celebration, which they title "Appalachian Day". The process of analyzing these various artifacts will be discussed below, and the results of said analysis will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Unmet methodological intentions. Two elements of the original IRB-approved research design became difficult to maintain in implementation. The first was the division of students and faculty/staff between interviews and focus groups. While the initial intention was to conduct individual interviews exclusively with students and focus groups exclusively with faculty/staff, this intention was trumped by the reality of schedules and participant comfort. Some students preferred to be interviewed in pairs, and some faculty/staff members wanted to participate but could not flex their schedules enough to engage at focus group times, which resulted in four individual faculty/staff interviews. Because plans to separate students and faculty/staff in this way were primarily motivated by a desire to maximize time spent with students as well as the number of faculty/staff with whom I could interact, I am not concerned with the way the plan evolved. Conversations with students still comprised the bulk of my interview time and allowing some to participate in pairs was the only logical path to take given that they may have otherwise opted not to participate or may have not been as open in their responses. Engaging in some individual interviews with faculty/staff did not negatively impact the time I had available for student interviews and resulted in quality data. Therefore, the departure from the intended structure for interview and focus groups did not jeopardize the quality of the outcomes and may have in fact enhanced them.

The second element of the original research design that was not successfully implemented was the intention to format both interviews and focus groups as photo elicitation interviews (PEIs). During PEIs, participants are asked to look at photos or take photos and respond to them verbally, answering questions designed to help them articulate what they believe to be critical features or elements of the subject matter or the story behind the subject matter (Clark –Ibánez, 2004; Harper, 2002). While each participant indicated consent to engage in this

particular facet of the research, only one in reality did. Several factors led to this outcome. First, one way I intended to gather photos was to ask participants to give me a tour of campus and point out what they viewed as important cultural artifacts. This would allow me to understand what they felt was important and provide me with a starting point for conversations as to why these things mattered. After three tours, I realized that each person showed me the same things and gave basically the same spiel. It felt as if each had the same script despite the fact that none of them worked for an office that would require that (such as Admission). This was interesting in itself because it could indicate a real cohesiveness and consistency around institutional messaging (this will be further explored in Chapter 4). I did not ask subsequent participants to carry out this part of the research design because it seemed to be a dead end, I was concerned about audio recording quality while walking outdoors, and the weather was not cooperative as each day brought significant rain which seemed to be a deterrent to participants.

After coming up against these obstacles, I intended to mail disposable cameras to participants and ask them to take the photos in their own time and collect them on a later campus visit. However, a second factor led me to abandon the photo elicitation component altogether. During interviews, as I discussed ways in which the photo portion of the study could be carried out, nearly every participant directed me to the "picture queen" in the marketing office, telling me that she takes many pictures and could give me higher quality material than they could. I am not sure if this reticence stemmed from a sense of vulnerability over sharing one's own photos, a respect for roles and boundaries, resistance to adding something to their already full to-do lists, or something else entirely, but only one participant expressed a willingness to share pictures she had taken. Even this participant later directed me to the marketing office.

Pilot study and resulting adaptations. In June, 2014 I piloted this research design with three student participants and four faculty/staff members at Alice Lloyd College. As a result, a few modifications were made to the research plan. First, it was through this pilot that it became apparent that adhering to the intended target population would be difficult given the summer timing. Several of the people who expressed interest in participating two months prior (during my first visit in April, 2014) were not available for summer interviews. Some graduated, some were faculty who were off-contract for the summer, and others were working summer jobs or internships elsewhere. Therefore, insisting on my goal of limiting participation to first-year students and seniors would have resulted in having an inadequate number of participants to carry out the study.

Another complication I experienced during the pilot study was difficulty in communicating with participants to schedule interviews from a distance. Responses via telephone and email were sporadic due to participants' sporadic summer schedules, and I was encouraged by my on-site mentor to simply wait until I was on campus to ask people in person if they would be willing to participate in the pilot. Having observed this unfolding, one staff member volunteered to assist me with recruiting and scheduling participants for the primary study in July, 2014. As previously mentioned, she and I were able to collaborate over the month between my visits to create a robust interview schedule.

The third and final noteworthy insight yielded by the pilot study related to the quality of my interview questions. While I made a few additions and subtractions from my original list of questions as a result of the pilot interviews, I generally found the list to be satisfactory in fostering the dialogue I wished to have with student participants. However, my pilot focus group highlighted the fact that my questions were inadequate for a faculty/staff conversation. I went

into the meeting with the same list of questions I had used with students and quickly realized that only a handful of them were relevant to this different population. I took a moment to revisit my research questions and then was able to proceed with the focus group, asking questions that I felt would help me address the goals of the study. Afterward, based on the audio recording, I compiled the questions I had asked into a new faculty/staff-specific list and I made some additions and subtractions based on how the pilot focus group participants responded.

Conducting the pilot study allowed for these issues to arise and be addressed in a non-critical forum, creating opportunities to improve the overall research design and overcome barriers to carrying it out. The pilot was also useful for enhancing my own dexterity with conducting interviews and improved my overall confidence in the research design.

Data Analysis

My approach to data analysis was informed by Galman (2013) and (Saldaña (2013), and occurred in three primary phases: (1) transcription and transcript verification, (2) first-cycle coding which included Attribute Coding, Structural Coding, and Values Coding, and (3) transitioning out which concurrently involved Code Landscaping, Magnitude Coding, and Pattern Coding. In preparation for and throughout the data analysis process, a research journal was kept as a place to store thoughts related both to the technical process and to meaning construed through that process. See Appendix F for a sampling of this cognitive trajectory.

Transcription and verification. For the sake of developing familiarity with the full research process, I transcribed the first interview from my pilot study. Due to the significant amount of time this single transcription required, I ultimately chose to pay for transcription services for the 13 remaining interviews/focus groups that comprised the complete study. Each of the hired transcriptionists signed a confidentiality agreement. (See Appendix G.) Upon

receiving the completed transcripts, I then verified the accuracy of each by reading the transcripts while listening to the corresponding audio file and making requisite edits. This process was important for ensuring accurate transcription, but it also facilitated three other important steps: organizing the data both physically and in my mind, creating naming conventions[3] for participants and files, and completing the first read-through to develop initial codes and take note of large patterns. At this stage I also began developing my codebook (Galman, 2013; Saldaña, 2013), a Microsoft Excel document in which I listed codes and descriptions for each as I created them.

First-cycle coding. According to Saldaña (2013), the process of coding qualitative data can be done through a multitude of means that he categorized into first-cycle and second-cycle coding procedures which are complemented by a variety of recommended transition processes between and after the two cycles. He stressed that all of these phases are not necessarily useful for every study and encouraged researchers to use their own judgment to discern what is most appropriate for one's own research. Given this guidance, I elected to employ three of the first-cycle coding measures described by Saldaña, followed by a transitional process. I did not undertake a second-cycle coding process, but rather concurrently partnered a second-cycle coding system with other transitional steps. This part of the data analysis process will be further described below.

The first of the first-cycle methods I carried out was Attribute Coding (Gibbs, 2002; Saldaña, 2013). This was to pull out basic demographic information about participants such as

[3] While participants were given the opportunity to select their own pseudonym, only one did. Therefore, the naming convention developed for all participants uses names from classic literary works. This was selected because Alice Lloyd and June Buchanan, the founders of Alice Lloyd College, enjoyed literature and named several campus buildings and landmarks after people and places from classic works. Also, the single participant-selected pseudonym fit this pattern. See Appendix H for a list of participant pseudonyms and the literary origins of each.

home county, class status, major, longevity as an employee, first-generation status, and so on. I began tracking these attributes during the initial transcription verification step, creating and adding to the list of attributes to code as I worked through the full body of transcribed data. I then re-visited each transcript to ensure I had coded each of the attributes on the list for each participant. I recorded this information manually, using poster board that allowed me to quickly and easily see patterns across participants as well as attributes for which there seemed to be an absence of patterns. The demographic information collected and compared through this step was then transferred into an electronic format, a sample of which can be seen in Appendix I.

The second phase of first-cycle coding involved Structural Coding (MacQueen et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2013). This approach to the data involves looking at responses to individual questions across the full participant group to look for noteworthy similarities and differences. Like Attribute Coding, I accomplished this step manually, by cutting apart the transcripts and putting all responses to the same question on poster board, creating a poster for each question. I then compared the responses, adding more detailed codes to the codebook and creating a matrix in Microsoft Excel to track the presence of those codes within the data and ensure I could quickly retrieve the corresponding data points later (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Code Book and First-Cycle Coding Example

Code Description	Participant and Page # Within Transcript											
Description	6S1	6S2	6S3	7S1	7S2	7S3	7S4	7S5	7S6	7S7	7S8	7S9
academic focus		5, 11	1, 2, 3			2	8, 11	10	4	6	9	3
academic quality/rigor		5		6	5							
affinity for nature									4, 7	1, 2, 2, 5, 8		6
ALC profile/Eastern Kentucky profile				6	6	9	9	12				
backward view (value the past)				5, 6	5			5				
blue collar value	9			4		1, 1	3	3, 4, 6, 7, 8	3	4, 8	7, 10	8, 12
character (integrity, honesty, etc)				7		11	11				5	5
coal family/regional legacy			6					11				
community supportive				12	12		3	12		7		
concern for future people			4									
cultural congruence	11		10	12	12	12	12	12	4, 7	1	5, 9	5, 9
cultural dissonance		11										
deep engagement/critical thinking	10, 12	10		3			2, 4, 7				9	
don't mess with religion or politics					6							
empathy			2			9	7, 8, 13	10, 13	10			
family environment (on campus)		5		1				12	6		1, 2	
family not supportive		11										13
family supportive of higher ed	11	11		10, 11	11	2, 12	2, 12	11	7, 11	6, 7	6	6, 13
family valued		12		4	4	1						
fighting stereotypes												
financial motivation	1, 3, 11	1, 5		1	1, 5	9	1, 2	1, 7	5	2		
first generation	11	11	2									5
founding principles maintained		7	6									
gratitude, appreciation	7, 8, 9, 11		8		10			5, 5. 5, 9	10	4		
help the way you're needed	7											
high trust/responsibility from ALC				3	3		7					
honor in all work				3, 10					10			
humility	7, 8	6, 10									3	
institutional values								6		5	4	
not for everyone			3									7
onus on the student/self-authorship			6						6			
reciprocity	5			4, 7				9	14			
regional commitment	12	no	6, 11			4				1	11	7, 11

Figure 3. The phrases in the far left column are codes developed in the initial read-through to check transcripts for accuracy. Codes highlighted in turquoise were added during first-cycle coding. The alpha-numeric codes in the blue row across the top are participant identifiers and correlate to the month, demographic group, and order of the interviewees. For example, 6S1 is June Student 1, or the first student interviewed in June. Numbers under participant identifiers and to the right of codes are page numbers for where the corresponding code can be found within that participant's interview transcript.

The final phase of first-cycle coding that I carried out was Values Coding (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Saldaña, 2013). This type of coding involves combing the data for evidence of participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs as they relate to the research questions (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Saldaña, 2013). Given my intent to look for evidence of blue collar values and to describe those elements of character that participants feel are most important/cultivated by Alice Lloyd College, Values Coding was a logical choice. This phase of data analysis was by far the most rigorous and time-intensive, and it yielded rich results. I added few codes to the codebook

during this phase, as I discovered I had largely pulled out those which were most salient during the first three passes through the data. However, I added significantly to the matrix in which I tracked presence of codes. The first phase of the values coding process was conducted manually by printing each transcript, highlighting value-laden content, and writing codes and notes in the margins. See Appendix J for an excerpt from a values-coded transcript.

Transitioning out. Saldaña (2013) advocated for intentionally marking the end of the data analysis process before embarking on the write-up phase by engaging in one or more transition activities. Code Landscaping was the transition activity recommended for ethnographic studies and was the one I ultimately chose. The purpose of Code Landscaping is to see which words or codes appeared the most often within the full body of data (Saldaña, 2013). Two methods of doing this are (1) creating word clouds using online programs that count word frequency in a given passage and (2) creating an outline of codes and subcodes using variable font sizes that reflect the number of times that each code appeared in the data. The outline is arranged by font size, largest to smallest, to show how frequently each appeared in relation to the others (Saldaña, 2013). I carried out both of these activities as each seemed to achieve the goals of another coding system that I was interested in but determined was not sufficiently valuable to carry out as a stand-alone analysis step. That coding system was Magnitude Coding, which is carried out to see *how* codes appear, for example their frequency, infrequency, intensity, or their expression of directional movement or quality (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). Because I was only interested in frequency, I did not engage in Magnitude Coding as a primary process but Code Landscaping allowed me to gather this information while also facilitating the organization of the codes into major categories and subcodes and the development of a logical, pliable structure. The final step to transitioning out of the data analysis process was to take this

outline and reformat it in a variety of ways to identify patterns and themes across the full body of data. These themes informed the organization of the following two chapters. Chapter 4 describes the raw findings that resulted from this data analysis and Chapter 5 creates meaning out of the raw findings.

Fair Trade Fieldwork

Given that this doctoral research is an academic endeavor that involved a host site, it seemed logical and instructive to approach my fieldwork as an opportunity to practice and demonstrate Fair Trade Learning principles. While it was not possible to deeply pursue each of the core principles, I approached the fieldwork with mindfulness for all eight. I made intentional decisions in relation to each and ultimately determined that I could enact five of them. The following is a description of how this intentionality influenced the research design and fieldwork.

Dual purpose. Fair Trade Learning calls practitioners to simultaneously work toward selected goals of both the academic entity as well as the host community. Because of this, it was important to me that this research effort not be solely self-serving. Prior to conducting the initial site visit, I read *Miracle on Caney Creek*, a biographical book written by an Alice Lloyd College president in the 1980s as a chronicle of the events and people that were instrumental in the founding of the College. This text included a multitude of stories about Alice Lloyd and June Buchanan, the institution's founders. One such story described Alice Lloyd's reticence to market the school on national television due to fear that people outside of the Appalachian region would make fun of their efforts and belittle the people for whom she was working to create opportunity. Alice Lloyd believed with conviction that the mountain people possessed the character necessary to overcome the social and economic barriers they faced and that education was the tool to activate this potential. Providing this education required financial resources,

however, and it was necessary to solicit those resources both within and externally to the Appalachian region (Davis, 1982). That was true in the institution's early years and remains true today as the College still relies largely on donations to operate (K. Kuhn, personal communication, March 6, 2014). In discussing my research plans with my on-site mentor prior to visiting ALC's campus, the need for elevating the profile of the institution to meet financial goals was made clear to me. Site approval for this doctoral study was granted with the understanding that publication about the institution could make inroads toward this goal. Therefore, this doctoral study serves dual purposes of raising Alice Lloyd College's profile (only through sharing truths that emerge from the data) and meeting my academic goals.

Commitment/sustained relationship. This principle relates to cultivating concern for social issues relevant to the host community and a commitment to help address them over an extended period of time. The former, concern for social issues faced by Alice Lloyd College stakeholders, was in place prior to my direct on-site engagement and was the impetus for this research. The latter, the call for commitment over time, was a factor in why I chose to devote significant personal resources to be able to visit campus four times, a six-hour drive each direction. It was important to build and sustain relationships and to demonstrate a genuine commitment to accurately hearing stakeholders' perspectives. This FTL principle also lends support to my instinctive drive to continue this relationship after the publication of this research.

Environmental sustainability. An element of respecting the host community is being conscientious of its natural resources. I enacted this principle by consuming minimal resources while staying in guest lodging, such as water and electricity, by eating as much locally grown produce as I could find, by walking rather than driving around campus, and by taking recyclable waste home to recycle in the absence of on-site recycling receptacles. Each of these efforts was

small and largely unseen by campus community members, yet contributed to my efforts to practice Fair Trade Learning by reducing my negative impact on the host community.

Economic sustainability. One of the aims of this FTL principle is to build the economic capacity of the host community, a goal that is of particular relevance to Alice Lloyd College given its donation-driven financial model and its Appalachian service region. I worked to achieve this by supporting local, alumni-run businesses and restaurants while on site rather than frequenting chain establishments. I purchased art from a local gallery, stayed in a local inn rather than a corporate hotel during Appalachian Days when the on-campus housing was full, and I was an active consumer at the Appalachian Days artisan fair. Again, these efforts were small and likely went unnoticed by most campus constituents but each purchase was a mindful effort to support the local economy.

Intercultural contact. This principle seeks to foster cross-cultural understanding by encouraging participation in authentic cultural experiences in the host community. Toward this goal, I accepted every invitation I received from campus community members and I sought out cultural events in the local community in the evenings. For example, I attended several potlucks with various campus groups and I attended a folk music concert at the local settlement school. This was helpful not only for practicing this FTL principle, but also for developing trust and credibility with participants.

A key lesson that I have pulled from studying FTL principles is that practitioners engaging in host communities for academic purposes should work to help in the ways that are needed, which might be different from the way one wants to help. Helping as needed required me to ask questions to find out what the true needs were, to find out what actions I could take without impeding institutional priorities. I asked when the best time would be for each of my

visits and I respected the answer despite some of them being less than ideal for my own schedule. Each time someone helped me I worked to offer something in return, such as helping setup and cleanup for the Work Olympics convocation. The essence of Fair Trade Learning is reciprocity, and that is what I strived for in each of the above ways.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this doctoral research is an emic ethnographic study (Creswell, 2007; Wolcott, 2008) that seeks to better understand the culture of Alice Lloyd College as experienced and articulated by members and partners of the campus community. This ethnography was carried out over four visits to ALC via three primary qualitative data collection methods: interviews, focus groups, and site observation. The collected data was analyzed primarily through Structural Coding (MacQueen et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2013) and Values Coding (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Saldaña, 2013) with Attribute Coding (Gibbs, 2002; Saldaña, 2013) and Code Landscaping (Saldaña, 2013) used as secondary methods to ensure a detailed, organized analysis process with proper closure.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter Organization

This doctoral study was situated within the field of education broadly and sustainability education more narrowly. Alice Lloyd College was chosen as the site for this study so as to explore its efficacy in encouraging educational attainment and promoting sustainability within Appalachia, a region where both are historically not prioritized. Given that education is a vehicle for driving social change (Sterling, 2001), it follows that it is desirable to make education, particularly that which promotes sustainability, accessible to more people.

This chapter describes the three primary content categories, or themes, that arose as findings from this research as cultural indicators at Alice Lloyd College: (1) blue collar values, (2) family environment and cultural congruence, and (3) regional and institutional challenges. Following an overview of ALC from the perspective of the participants, these content categories will be discussed in this order. Regarding the first, three values in particular arose as key elements of ALC's cultural fabric: work ethic, a spirit of service, and self-reliance. These three qualities are explored in depth and are recurring topics across each of the other two content categories. First-person narratives of singular events observed during site visits are used to introduce each content category, so as to provide a window into the richness of the in-person experience. This is in keeping with feminist ethnographic methodology as described by Behar (1996), Ellis (2004), Hurston (1995), Richardson (1994) and Richardson & St. Pierre (2005).

A Profile of ALC: What Participants Want You to Know

Early in each interview, participants were asked to explain what they would want strangers—readers of this dissertation—to know about Alice Lloyd College, or how they would explain the essence of an ALC education to someone who knew nothing about it. Here is the

compilation of what they said, with evidence to support each of these claims pulled from responses to all questions as well as other data sources such as artifacts and the ALC website.

Exclusive by design. No single phrase was repeated across the body of data more than "It's not for everyone." Students said it, faculty said it, staff said it, and many of them said it more than once. The reasons were many, but the following are the ones that were repeated:

- Located in Pippa Passes in Eastern Kentucky, the College is very isolated. Students noted that one had to drive a minimum of 30 minutes to find a Walmart or a movie theatre (Jay, Matilda, Piper, & Scout, personal communication, July 24, 2014). While the students seemed to wear this inconvenience as a badge of honor, to some it is merely inconvenient.
- ALC is not a party school and those students expecting the Hollywood movie-version of a college experience will be disappointed (Kim, personal communication, June 11, 2014; Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014). As Tom expressed, "I think the ones that are expecting the college like *American Pie*…they're way out of place. This is a different universe because none of that happens" (personal communication, July 24, 2014).
- Behavioral standards are strict. Among other rules, students have a curfew, are forbidden to have guests of the opposite sex in their rooms, and are required to participate in Professional Dress Day every Tuesday. There is also a zero tolerance policy against alcohol consumption on campus regardless of age (Charlie, personal communication, June 10, 2014; Nancy, personal communication, June 11, 2014; Lizzy & Don, personal communication, July 23, 2014). As Pippa pointed out, "this is a no-nonsense education" (personal communication, June 11, 2014).

- Succeeding here is hard work and a lot of it. This relates to both the work program and academics: "If the students don't want to work, if they are not serious about education…then they need to go somewhere else" (Pippa, personal communication, June 11, 2014). Finch, a staff member with a long-standing relationship with the College, concurred: "They have to really work their tail end off to get that degree from Alice Lloyd" (personal communication, June 11, 2014).

With this growing picture of ALC as somewhat exclusive, I began to wonder who participants believed the College *was* for. According to Akela, an administrator, the "right" person for ALC, whether they be a student or a staff member, is "someone with a missionary zeal that wants to serve and wants to make a difference" (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Nancy, an ALC graduate and current employee, described the campus as traditional and best suited for "those that have a strong work ethic, are community-oriented, [and] family-oriented" (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Tom, the one student who volunteered a description of the right student, stated, "Most of the times the ones that are the happiest here are the ones just down home, don't want to go far, just down to earth" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Based on these remarks and many more that will be more thoroughly explained below, ALC appears to be a campus for blue collar students who do not shy away from challenge and are willing to make sacrifices in order to take advantage of this educational opportunity.

Work and academics equally valued. In describing the College and the student experience therein, participants explained an ALC education as one that produces well-rounded students through a curriculum which places equal emphasis on academics and work. This was verbally expressed by several staff members, and students conveyed an understanding and appreciation for the benefits of the College's binary focus. Kim, a long-term staff member,

stated, "We have high standards for our work program. We equate it with their academics" (personal communication, June 11, 2014). Finch expressed indignation at negative regional stereotypes and saw the pairing of work and academics as a way to equip students with the tools to combat them:

> It is hard when you have Diane Sawyer come in and do that piece she did about five or six years ago about the lost children in the mountains…people preying on the stereotypical backwards, barefoot, Mountain Dew-drinking, whatever-else drinking Appalachian…that's one good thing about Alice Lloyd, she always was a part of them [mountain people] but yet she transcended that stereotype and with an education, obviously, it's a lot easier to do that. So an emphasis on education and hard work….I think that helps with that stereotype. (personal communication, June 11, 2014)

While describing the responsibilities she delegates to her student staff, Nancy pointed out another justification for placing so much value in the work program as to make it equal to academics: "…experience can usually teach you more than an education can…Whenever they graduate they are going to have years of experience in something that they can't major in here on campus" (personal communication, July 22, 2014).

Campus constituents do not simply pay lip service to this idea of academics and work being equally valued. One can see this in practice in various ways. First, the College holds an annual Work Honors Convocation and Work Olympics each spring to overtly show gratitude for the work students do and to recognize exceptional contributions. As part of the campus-wide Convocation program which brings monthly cultural and scholarly enrichment assemblies to campus, all students are required to participate in the Work Honors/Olympics day. After the formal Honors Convocation, each work area competes as a team in a series of field day-type activities. Classes are cancelled this day to ensure that everyone is able to fully participate (Madeline, personal communication, July 25, 2014). The fact that no classes are held this day is indicative of the high importance placed on the work program. Another practical way in which

the institution demonstrates equal regard for work and academics is by offering graduates two diplomas. One is the standard Bachelor's diploma and the other is a work diploma, given to those who successfully complete all work hours each semester (Akela, personal communication, July 22, 2014).

A character-based, Christian education. I first heard the ALC curriculum described as character-based when perusing the College's website prior to my first campus visit. A full page of the website is devoted to the articulation of institutional values, the first of which states "Students at ALC obtain a character-based education….which focuses on developing Christian-based morals and ethics" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012b, para. 1). Results of my data analysis reinforced this character-based education as an institutional priority that faculty, staff, and students also support. However, there was some variation in what exactly was meant by a character-based education. In explaining what she would want a stranger to know about ALC, sophomore Matilda stated that students work for their education which in turn builds character (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Pippa, who has worked at ALC for more than 50 years, also drew parallels between work ethic and character, seeing the former as evidence of the latter (personal communication, June 11, 2014).

While some participants viewed character as simply having a work ethic, others focused on the College's broader intention of developing character based on Christian values. Seven of the 12 student participants expressed a belief that the College wanted them to live according to Christian principles. Nancy (personal communication, June 11, 2014) and Akela (personal communication, July 22, 2014) explained that the strict social codes are a means of holding students accountable to moral Christian behavior. When asked to further explain what was meant by Christian values, Akela offered that the college was not interested in evangelizing for

any particular denomination, but rather was simply working to promote a spirit of service: "when you get your diploma, you should be prepared for a lifetime of service. Service to God first and your fellow man second" (personal communication, July 22, 2014). This assertion represented a paradox I observed, that the College intentionally chose to not institutionally affiliate with Christianity but actively espouses Christian mission. This observation was reinforced by other participants. Openness to all denominations was appealing to Anne who cited spiritual growth and movement away from her Pentecostal upbringing as the most significant personal change she had experienced since coming to college (personal communication, June 10, 2014). Anne's understanding of Christianity had broadened and deepened as a result of regular bible study meetings with other students who represented a variety of Christian denominations. Students generally seemed to know that the institution is not affiliated with one particular denomination, but some believed the institution to be formally Christian (Matilda, Scout, & Tom, personal communication, July 24, 2014). Faculty and staff were more careful to point out that no formal affiliation existed while also noting that Alice Lloyd expected moral Christian behavior of students, a practice which the College continues today (Finch & Pippa, personal communication, June 11, 2014; Akela & Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014; Lizzy & Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014).

Indeed, Christianity was immediately apparent as a core construct of ALC's culture, from signs and posters decorating the walls, to the choir's repertoire of hymns, to colloquial idioms and stories that assume a belief in God. (A personal favorite was "In heaven they chain all the hillbillies up because they will all go home on the weekends" [Don, personal communication, July 23, 2014].) A perusal of the College's mission, values, and history on the website reveals multiple mentions of Christian values, morals, and ethics (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a; Alice

Lloyd College, 2012b). In describing the "right" student and employee for ALC, Nancy noted that one who did not believe in God would not fit in well (personal communication, July 22, 2014).

Related to the theme of developing character based on Christian values, some participants referenced the Purpose Road Philosophy as a means of understanding the kind of character the institution wants to develop. The Purpose Road Philosophy was the cornerstone of the curriculum that founders Alice Lloyd and June Buchanan taught, and it remains a curricular focal point today. According to this philosophy, everyone is walking "the purpose road". Along this road are smaller streets, detours of life experience that teach key elements of character that are important for being able to determine and live out one's life's purpose. The purpose of any life, according to this philosophy, is to help ever-growing concentric circles and communities, starting with one's own town, then region, then country, and to ultimately be able to see one's own role in world affairs. The side streets along the way down the Purpose Road are labeled: Conscience, Duty, Action, Interest, Courage, and Consecration (Davis, 1982). Some participants pointed out that the signposts of the Purpose Road Philosophy are akin to Christian values (Akela, personal communication, July 22, 2014; Tom, personal communication, July 24, 2014), and the philosophy overtly articulates God as a source of strength in working to carry out one's purpose (Davis, 1982). As part of a required leadership course that all new students take, students study this Purpose Road Philosophy. Within this context, they are asked to critically self-reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in relation to these elements of character as well as to articulate what they believe their own purpose is, or in other words, what they are walking toward on this road (Madeline, personal communication, April 17, 2014). Figure 4 below visually depicts the Purpose Road Philosophy.

Figure 4. Purpose Road Philosophy

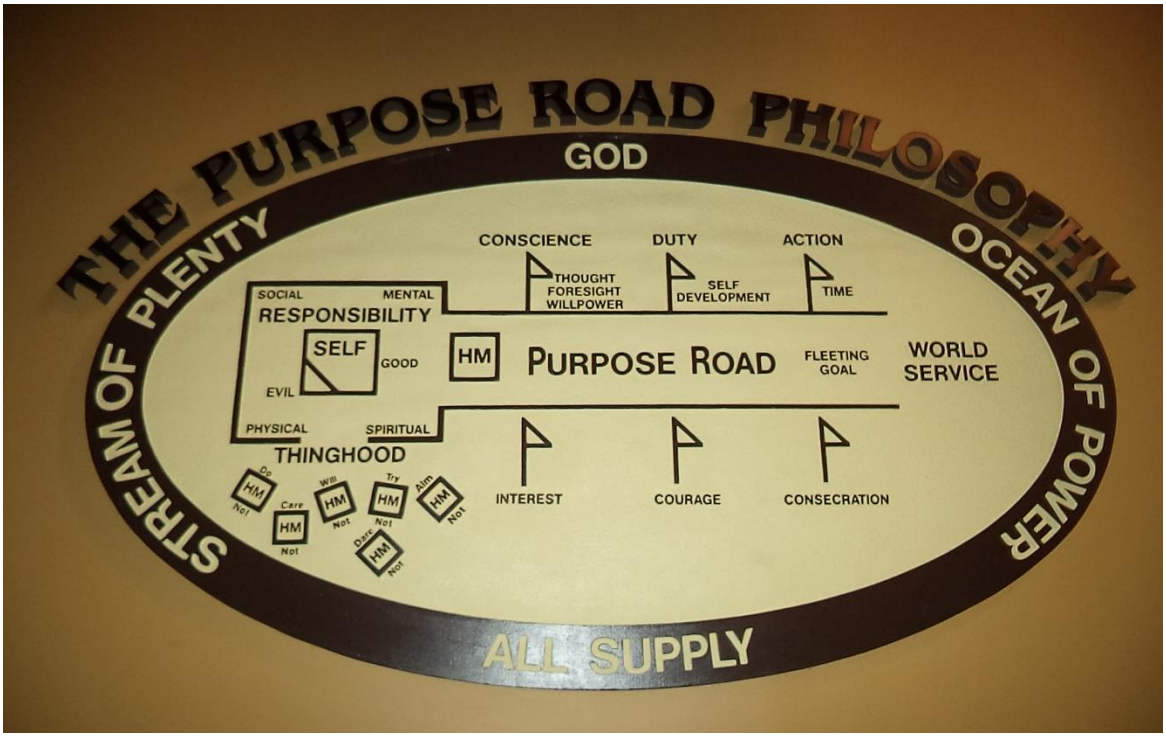

Figure 4. This is a photo inside Cushing Hall, where this undergirding philosophy hangs on the wall to remind all of its importance. June Buchanan, co-founder of ALC, built upon the work of Harvard professor George Herbert Palmer to articulate this philosophy. Key concepts are that (1) All people, or "human machines" are born into Thinghood, which is a purposeless state, (2) One enters the Realm of Responsibility through purposeful self-improvement, working to minimize the evil that is innate in all selves and working to maximize innate good; (3) Maximizing good is achieved through "four-square living," the goal of which is to develop socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually to better be able to serve society; (4) The six signposts along the way represent qualities the human machine develops through life experiences that enable her to better engage in world service; and (5) The phrases along the border are sources of strength and sustenance along the Purpose Road that are most accessible when one approaches life with an attitude of gratitude (Davis, 1982).

A quality, affordable education. While character development was an important theme in participants' descriptions of the College, it was consistently named after affordability as a key characteristic of an ALC education. At an institution where 25 percent of incoming students' families were unemployed for the 2013-14 academic year (Akela, personal communication, July 22, 2014), finances are understandably a dominant concern for campus constituents. In describing ALC, many participants wanted outsiders to know about the tuition guarantee

program. Within this program, any student from a prescribed 108-county region, called the College's service area (see Figure 5), can exchange their work hours for the cost of tuition. This means that, for most ALC students, the cost of attendance is reduced to room, board, and books.

Figure 5. Alice Lloyd College's Service Area

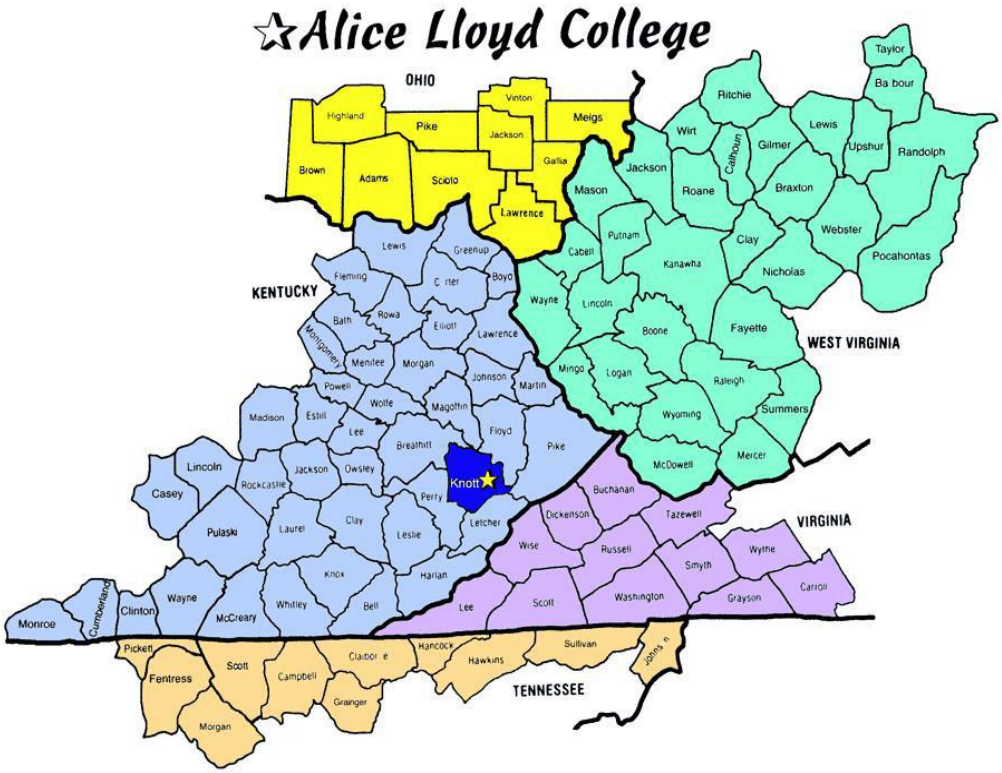

Figure 5. This map, from ALC's website (Alice Lloyd College, 2012c), illustrates the 108 Appalachian counties in five states that comprise the institution's service area, meaning the geographic region whose residents are eligible for the tuition guarantee. The tuition guarantee allows residents of these counties to work 10 hours per week in exchange for a tuition waiver.

Students are cognizant that, despite not being charged tuition, there is still a cost associated with educating them. They understand that, because of their funding model, ALC cannot provide all of the majors, the field experiences, and the laboratory resources that other schools may. Despite this, students and staff agreed that an ALC education is one of high quality and rigor, and they appreciated the College's commitment to helping an already economically-challenged population avoid crippling debt. Jay, a senior, believed that "one of their big goals is

to get students through with little to no debt" (personal communication, July 24, 2014) but many others pointed out that academic rigor is not sacrificed to achieve affordability. Here are a few other student sound bites that communicated these sentiments:

> With Alice Lloyd [College] their biggest thing is trying to get students a quality education on a short budget…a lot of the students who go to Alice Lloyd [College] are from around here and so their biggest thing is offering a convenient source of education for students who may not have enough money to go to bigger universities…we don't have as many opportunities available as other universities do, but it is a quality education, what you're getting [here]. (Blythe, personal communication, June 10, 2014)

Similarly, Matilda asserted that "we have a top notch education here" (personal communication, July 24, 2014), and Clara described ALC as "a great education…for a small price" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Faculty and staff also concurred that the academic culture is rigorous. Miranda (personal communication, July 23, 2014) stated, "It's a challenging curriculum, definitely" and one professor commented, "They will tell you, my class is no cake walk" (Emerson, personal communication, July 23, 2014). Pippa explained, at least in part, why academic rigor can remain high: "We have so many students applying here now, the last count I think it was over 4,000…We can be very selective" (personal communication, June 11, 2014).

To summarize, while there is far more that comprises the essence of Alice Lloyd College, these are the four key descriptors that participants felt it important to share with those unfamiliar with the College: (1) It's not for everyone, but rather for those who are willing to work hard, sacrifice the freedoms often associated with college, and remain academically focused; (2) Work and academics are equally important because important learning takes place in both realms; (3) This is a character-based education which expects students to develop morally as well as intellectually so as to better serve others; and (4) This is a quality, affordable education that is designed to provide an otherwise-unattainable service to Appalachian students. With this overview established, this portrait of Alice Lloyd College will continue to be developed through

exposition on the three major themes that arose from the data. These themes point to campus cultural indicators that are less overt than but no less real than those described in this section.

Content Category 1: Blue Collar Values

In conducting ethnographic research, a primary goal is to better understand the culture of the participating group. A key element of any culture is the set of values that govern members' behaviors and beliefs (DuBrin, 2007). Value coding (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Saldaña, 2013) of the data corpus yielded evidence that the prevailing values at Alice Lloyd College match what Lubrano (2004) enumerated as blue collar values. Three of these values in particular arose as central to ALC's culture. I will henceforth refer to these as ALC's core values. They are work ethic, service, and self-reliance. These core values were expressed in both participant groups and emerged as themes in every data analysis step, including artifact analysis. The core values are instilled in ALC community members via both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. They are instilled from the top down as the institution espouses these values overtly in a formal value statement[4]. They are instilled from the bottom up in that many participants described them as values they carried with them from home to college. Aside from the three core values, several other blue collar values were also evident, such as collectivism, respect for family, respect for hierarchy and authority, and an outlook of abundance. Each of the three core values will be discussed in detail below. The secondary values will be explored as underlying themes within the discussion of each of the core values. First, however, a descriptive narrative of ALC's Homecoming activities will provide a window into an important campus tradition where I witnessed many of these values in action.

[4] Alice Lloyd College's complete values statement asserts that "Students at ALC obtain a character-based education, participate in service-learning, work for their education, don't pay tuition, graduate debt-free, and receive financial assistance for graduate school" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012b).

Narrative: Appalachian Days, October 11, 2014. *The rain was a deterrent for some, perhaps those with children or those who have spent too much time outside the region and have grown soft. But within the Alice Lloyd College family of students, staff, alumni, and friends, the diehards are many. An obstacle such as rain is a welcome challenge, an opportunity to demonstrate one's resilience. If you pay attention, evidence of resiliency—and pride in that resiliency—can be seen in large and small ways: In the structures built with the stone carved out of the mountainside by families willing to work hard to create an educational opportunity for their children in the early 1900's. In a tiny plaque beside a statue of a tiny woman who challenged norms of the early twentieth century by exchanging her New England upbringing for Appalachian hardships as she endeavored to bring "the light of education" to the isolated hollers of Eastern Kentucky. And on this day, Alice Lloyd College's annual Homecoming, resiliency can be seen in the multitude of local artisans who arrived early to unload their pieces in the rain, perhaps motivated by the joy of sharing them with this welcoming community; perhaps motivated by the financial necessity of having a profitable day. Resiliency can be seen in the makeshift tents and tarps that cover the food vendors, and in the brightly colored umbrellas that revelers carry–those that bother with one at all. It is visible in the art itself, creative renewals of household items that some might simply throw in the trash but today are on display with new purpose: pallets turned into rustic shelving, gourds dried and painted to be decorative, metal scraps that became jewelry, ornaments made from an impressive array of once-mundane items, quilts made from old t-shirts and scrap fabric. Other wares are made from raw materials but manage to be both artistic and practical: toilet paper holders, crochet projects, candles, pottery, soap, scarves, and baskets.*

Standing in the auditorium, the rain location for both the artisans and the local musicians, the scene speaks loudly to me. The colors are vibrant, some bright and eye catching, some blending easily with the natural beauty of the surrounding wooded mountains that are aflame this time of year. The variety of colors, materials, and patterns creates a festive air which is fitting for this day of celebrating the people who have come home. Indeed, I feel like I have walked into a family reunion. As someone demonstrating interest in and respect for this place, I have been welcomed warmly.

Homecoming here is unlike any other I have experienced. The local community, regardless of whether or not they are alumni, is invited in and they play a vital role in making the day a success. There seems to be a mutual care from the College for the community and from the community for the College. Also noteworthy is that the day is a celebration of Appalachian culture generally rather than being limited to a College event. This is evident not only by the presence of the artisans, but also the musicians who play a steady stream of folk music featuring banjos and dulcimers, two instruments that the region is credited with creating and popularizing. Many of the dulcimers played here today were crafted 10 minutes down the road, at the Appalachian Artisan Center in Hindman. At the end of the day, the Hunger Din (the campus cafeteria) serves a Soup and Beans Dinner, a traditional meal for mountain people of humble means. Pomp and circumstance have no place here. Rather, the day is characterized by humility and gratitude for the communal efforts that make this unique institution possible.

This glimpse of Homecoming festivities, an event that is a core cultural artifact at Alice Lloyd College, set the stage for discussion of the values that I both witnessed in action and heard described by participants. What follows is a description of both the core and secondary blue collar values that emerged as relevant to life on campus.

Core value: work ethic. No theme was stronger or more prevalent in the findings than that of the value of work. All participants, both within the student and the faculty/staff group, expressed personal commitment to work, or a work ethic, and articulated benefits of the college's work program for personal and regional growth. These benefits will be called work outcomes throughout this dissertation.

According to Lubrano (2004), work ethic is prized among blue collar people, and this is a value that seems to have rooted deeply at Alice Lloyd College. At an institutional level, this is communicated overtly through the mission statement which includes "Promoting the work ethic through a self-help Student Work Program in which all full-time students participate" (ALC, 2012a, par. 1). While it is true that a mission statement does not always translate to action or buy-in from institutional stakeholders, most study participants expressed genuine commitment to work and/or a belief that the College actively worked to promote this value. For example, in describing his work assignment Tom stated that "With working on the grounds program it is instilled in you to just work—to just do it, get it done, and do it the best you can" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Blythe, another student, described the work program in this way:

> I don't think anybody really likes the thought of being a janitor or working outside cutting weeds or behind a grease fryer all day like I was, but…I learned to appreciate that because it taught me a better work ethic…it teaches students to work (personal communication, June 10, 2014).

For many students, the value of work ethic was instilled in them long before they arrived on campus. Piper, and others, spoke of it as a family value:

> My grandfather actually grew strawberries and sold them on the side of the road for his class ring and it was a long time ago, of course, but I've always grown up with the type of people that have worked their fingernails off just to get what they have. So even at 16 I was babysitting…I was a lifeguard for three years…just anything I could do to get me a little extra cash (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Piper's remarks about earning a little extra cash are indicative of two sub-themes that arose from the work ethic topic: survival and self-reliance. Work ethic is respected in itself, but it is fostered because it is believed to be necessary for survival. As Lubrano (2004) noted, blue collar or working-class families do not expect nor respect handouts. Participants echoed this, many stating that you have to work for what you get. Therefore, in order to meet basic needs, one must work. Further evidence of these sub-themes will be described in a later section.

While the above statements were made by students, faculty and staff members interviewed also expressed work ethic as a core value, both personally and institutionally at ALC. For example, Emerson is 65 with no intention of retiring any time soon: "I am too young and having too much fun, and I can't afford it anyways" (personal communication, July 23, 2014). For him, work is not only a survival tool but also a pleasure. Others may not love the work itself but they take pride in the struggle of working hard. This was clearly conveyed through countless descriptions of coal mining jobs. Sawyer, a staff member, described working a 'strip job', a specific method for extracting coal, and the collective mentality of those with whom he worked:

> Most of the coal miners that I worked with wouldn't want to do anything else, even though they would say I'm doing this type of work so my son doesn't have to or my daughter doesn't have to…but had they had it to do all over again, oh yeah, they would. I never had talked to any that wouldn't do it again. I think it was enjoyable for them. I think they took great pride in working underground or being able to run equipment on a strip job to provide for their family (personal communication, July 25, 2014).

Sawyer's recollections suggest respect for blue collar work in particular, and such respect was a common theme throughout the interviews with both students and faculty/staff. This is not to say that disdain for white collar work emerged as a theme; on the contrary, many students described their families' encouragement and their own desires to eventually work in white collar fields

such as law or medicine. Such goals did not diminish their respect for blue collar jobs, however. Matilda, whose work assignment was in Admission, demonstrated a systems understanding of and respect for all types of work:

> I always like to think that the grounds guys are as important as us because if they didn't mow the grass our campus wouldn't be beautiful and then I know personally when I go out and give tours [to prospective students and families] if the grounds aren't nice then my beautiful campus isn't showing, so I think that everybody has equal responsibilities (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

To review, the primary findings related to work ethic are that (1) work ethic is expressed as an institutional core value that both students and employee participants have internalized; (2) in some cases, participants' personal commitment to work was instilled prior to their arrival on campus as a family value and they believe that ALC is effective in further cultivating this value; (3) there is pride in the struggle of hard work and, as such, blue collar work is shown particular deference.

Work outcomes. As established, Alice Lloyd College places equal emphasis on the classroom and work experiences that comprise student life because both have rich educational value. The learning that occurs through the work program was a strong theme throughout each student interview. Several outcomes were overtly noted by students and others emerged through data analysis. Figure 6 illustrates how heavily each of these outcomes weighed in the data.

Figure 6. Outcomes of the Work Program Coded by Magnitude

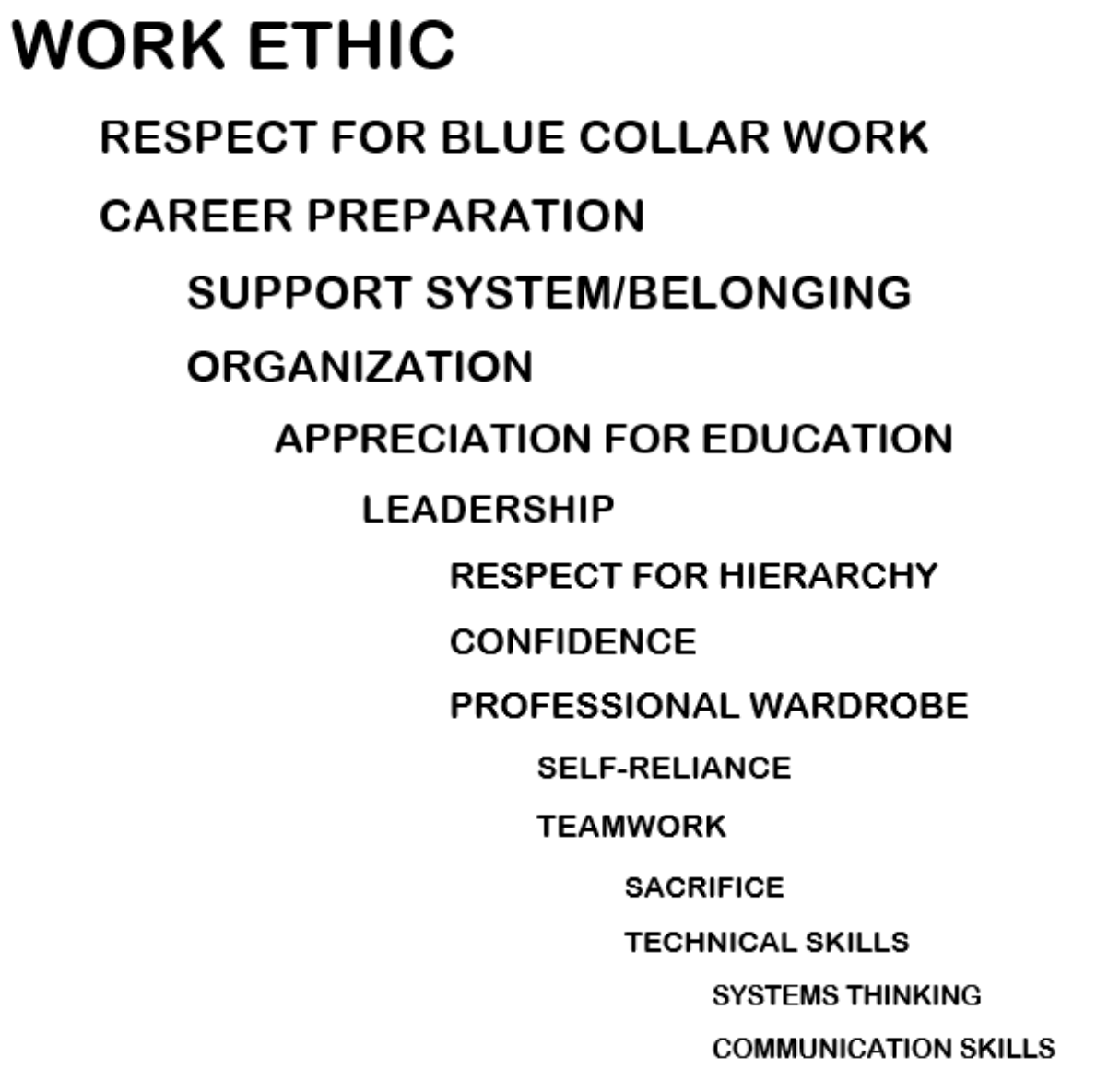

Figure 6. The font size and indentation level correspond with the number of times each work outcome was mentioned across all interview transcripts. For example, work ethic was noted as an outcome 18 times, so using a base font of 10 for all outcomes, work ethic is listed in size 28 font. Those outcomes that are listed at the same indentation level and in the same font size were mentioned the same number of times, so they are listed here in order of which were discussed more frequently by students. For example, systems thinking and communication skills were each mentioned by only one participant. Systems thinking was discussed by a student, whereas communication skills were discussed by a staff member, and so preference was given to the student response.

Sense of belonging. When asked what they believed students gained from the work program, faculty and staff commonly responded that it created an additional support system for students beyond what their professors and residential staff could provide. Indeed, most student participants spoke of their work assignment as a mechanism that helped them foster a sense of belonging. Overwhelmingly, students felt a connection to their coworkers and/or supervisors that enhanced their general sense of well-being on campus. Some described their work environments as home, some called their coworkers their families, and others said their best friends are those with whom they work. When asked about their favorite place on campus, half of the respondents replied that they most liked the building or area in which they worked. The same theme arose when students were asked about a favorite memory; they told stories of office pranks or jobs successfully completed with their work friends. Blythe, for example, said this about his job with the music office: "I love the atmosphere of the auditorium. I love the people I've got to know through it, and I don't know, I'm here *all* the time. I'm probably here more than I should be" (personal communication, June 10, 2014). Tom echoed these sentiments, saying "It can be hectic sometimes [on grounds crew] but the guys that you work with quickly turn into some of the best friends you will have" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Scout, an adventurous out-of-state student who did not grow up within the service area, also saw value in her work relationships: "When I first came here I felt like I was really shy, I didn't know anyone. I think my friends at work helped me get out of my shell a little bit. I learned to be outgoing" (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Of note is that all but three of the students' favorite places related either to their work environments or academics, with the split being approximately half and half. (Also noteworthy is that all three whose answer strayed from this pattern indicated that an outdoor location was

their favorite place on campus.) This finding supports the faculty and staff members' assertion that the College places equal emphasis on academics and the work program. Perhaps due in part to the sense of belonging their work allows them to develop, students appear to be as invested in their jobs as they are in their classes.

Faculty and staff participants were also asked to describe a favorite memory and responses overwhelmingly related to coworkers or students. In other words, favorite memories were about relationships. The fact that this was true across both participant groups is illustrative of a secondary blue collar value, that of loyalty or what Lubrano (2004) calls a 'we're-in-this-together' mentality. Broadly speaking, collectivism is a hallmark of blue collar cultures as people who work together develop close relationships, particularly with those at the same rank within a hierarchy. This dynamic is clearly at play within the ALC work program.

High level of responsibility. As a work college, ALC relies heavily on student labor to perform vital functions and to keep the institution operating on a day to day basis. This was expressed by many faculty/staff participants, all of whom directly supervise student employees. Miranda, a staff member with 37 years of service to the College, explained the genesis of this system.

> Mrs. Lloyd couldn't have done it if students hadn't worked. The students had to carry coal and water and wood and help with the cooking. It was all necessary at that time and it became obvious through the years that it was a good thing, that work ethic was a good part of education. It continued because of that, because it is an integral part of the education we provide here (personal communication, July 23, 2014).

Miranda highlighted the reciprocal nature of the work program, pointing out that it is mutually beneficial for student learning and for the institution's ability to function effectively. This was even more directly articulated by Don, a staff member who has worked at more than one work college:

> For us as an institution to survive and be able to provide the things that we provide, we talk a lot about the student labor program. If we had to hire all these different people to do these different jobs that are vital to the operation, their tuition would be like it would be at Centre [College] or all these other private colleges throughout the country. It would be upwards of $28 to $30,000. Because they do the labor, help us with that, we provide them that tuition. So they are working for their education (personal communication, July 23, 2014).

Nancy, an alumna of ALC and current staff member, noted that entrusting students with high levels of responsibility is educationally more powerful than traditional work study that may be commonplace at non-work colleges, settings where students commit limited hours doing homework in between odd jobs (personal communication, July 22, 2014). The students are well aware that their responsibility levels are high and most seem keen to rise to the occasion. Different students expressed this differently, but the theme was prevalent. Clara and Matilda (personal communication, July 24, 2014) spoke directly about being given more responsibility than expected and Clara was excited to be developing such a strong resume. Others expressed pleasure at the feeling of being needed (Piper & Scout, personal communication, July 24, 2014), and those who had risen to work head positions took pride in having earned more responsibility than their peers (Charlie, personal communication, June 10, 2014; Tom & Clara, personal communication, July 24, 2014).

While multiple student participants articulated pleasure at the high level of responsibility, one student described another benefit of this responsibility. Matilda (personal communication, July 24, 2014) demonstrated heightened awareness of general operations of the College. She understood how her role impacted and was impacted by others'. In other words, her work assignment allowed her to practice systems thinking. Because this was articulated by only student, this is not supportable as a true finding of the study. However, given that systems

thinking is a key sustainability skill that can be cultivated through education (Sterling, 2001), Matilda's experience warrants mention and will be discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

Confidence. As an outcome of the work program, it may already be apparent that enhanced confidence emerged as a theme. The two outcomes thus far discussed, sense of belonging and being trusted with high responsibility, in themselves improve confidence. However, given that this was a specifically named outcome of the work program by several participants, it warrants individual attention here. Two such participants, Matilda and Clara, arrived at ALC with no prior work experience and talked about feeling initially intimidated by the work requirement (personal communication, July 24, 2014). However, the process of developing relationships and competency in their jobs elevated their general confidence. Bess (personal communication, July 24, 2014) said this about her work experience:

> With my job, personally, I have learned confidence. Before I got here I couldn't talk to anybody, I was so shy. I was the person who just didn't look happy…I have definitely come out of my shell with this job. With giving tours and having families come in, you definitely have to come out of your shell and make them feel as welcomed as you did when you came in. That has definitely affected my confidence level.

Bess' sentiments were echoed by many of her peers, both explicitly and implicitly.

Appreciation for education. While many participants expressed respect for all types of work, whether that respect was instilled through familial upbringing or through their campus experience, they appreciated education for the opportunities it created to rise above janitorial, service industry, or other blue collar work (Finch & Nancy, personal communication, June 11, 2014; Matilda, personal communication, July 24, 2014). This was true within both the student and employee participant groups. As Tom stated, "education means a lot nowadays. If you don't have it, then in a rapidly expanding universe of technology and stuff…you are not going to go anywhere" (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

As illustrated, education was appreciated for its utility in career advancement. However, faculty and staff also valued education for its potential to cultivate leaders capable of improving the Appalachian region. At an institutional level, ALC asks that students pay forward their education within Appalachia after graduation. The degree to which students internalize this will be discussed in a later section, but of note here is that faculty and staff appear to strongly value education for this reason in particular. In itself, the decision to work at a college suggests that one values education, but many participants spoke of their jobs using language to suggest they view their work as philanthropic, as an act of service to the Appalachian region. They feel good about their positions because of the opportunities they help to create for students to better themselves *and* Appalachia (Kim & Finch, personal communication, June 11, 2014; Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014; Don, personal communication, July 23, 2014). Furthermore, they view ALC as an anomaly within the higher education sector, one of few institutions that explicitly and appropriately serves the Appalachian region (Akela & Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014; Kim & Finch, personal communication, June 11, 2014; Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014). All of this is to say that while the campus community appears to value education generally, particular appreciation was expressed for ALC's specific model.

Humility. I considered titling this section *Un-titlement* because of a particular story a student shared. Before describing that story, I will first explain the section title I ultimately chose. As described in Chapter 1, through my work with college students I have developed a mantra which I recite often: "Help the way you are needed, not the way you want to help." I usually follow this up with "because the two might not be the same and you could unintentionally do more harm than good". Doing this requires one to subjugate his/her own

wants and needs for the greater good. In other words, it requires humility. Without having this particular language to describe it, ALC students appear to be developing this ability through their work experiences. This is in part due to the structure of the work program itself in which all first-year students enter with the expectation that they will be assigned to a custodial, grounds, or food service position (Madeline, personal communication, April 17, 2014; Sawyer, personal communication, July 25, 2014). This is to say, they are held to the expectation that they will serve wherever they are most needed rather than where they most want to work. While student participants did not relish these types of positions, nor did they rail against this system. Anne, a student, said this about why she appreciates this element of the work program:

> Some people come here used to having everything handed to them their whole lives, and you know, getting a job is a real eye opener, having to clean bathrooms and stuff when they didn't have to clean them at their own house. I think that's good. Because in a way it's humbling, because you're not any better than anybody else here. Everybody has to do something (personal communication, June 10, 2014).

Another blue collar value, respect for hierarchy and authority, could also be an explanation for why students do not rail against the work program. Students and faculty/staff alike talked about putting in time in lower-level positions in order to earn the opportunity to move up and take on more responsibility. While entitlement is a buzzword when describing the millennial generation (Wright, 2013), this does not appear to be a problem within the ALC student body. Rather than feeling entitled to their preferred jobs, they accept that they may have to work for a while in less desirable positions. Charlie, who has earned a student supervisor role, expressed respect for work hierarchy and a lack of entitlement in this way:

> At max you're going to hold that mop for four years. Work really hard at what you do then move up to supervisor status, because we have supervisors for the janitorial crew, for each building. Work with the group, supervise them….and that's going to help you in the long run, too. The thing is I really don't think people understand how much those skills are going to come in handy, even the little things (personal communication, June 10, 2014).

Charlie saw value in all work for the lessons it could provide for future employment and life in general. He chose humility over pride or a sense of entitlement, perhaps due to an underlying value of respecting hierarchy. Sentiments such as these were common within the data.

To further illustrate the way in which the work program cultivates humility and discourages a sense of entitlement, think again of the story mentioned at the beginning of this section, that of un-titlement. Charlie shared that the office in which he works had recently implemented a rule that students must work there for one full year in order to earn a formal title. This reinforces hierarchy and provides students with something to work toward. Charlie was not upset by this change; rather, he seemed pleased with this new rule. This suggests that at both an institutional and personal level, there is a shared appreciation for hierarchy which cultivates humility.

Practical skills and competencies. In addition to the above-mentioned higher-order change, students and staff attributed several more basic, concrete outcomes to the work program. Time management was mentioned by several participants, with organization being mentioned nearly as often. Both students and faculty/staff viewed these as important outcomes for their utility in future careers. One student, Clara, extended that rationale to balancing work pressures with family responsibilities (personal communication, July 24, 2014). A third competency that came up frequently was the ability to be a self-starter. Madeline, a staff member and a supervisor of a team of 12 students, described this ability as critically important. Clara, the aforementioned student, viewed it as an expectation from her supervisor and doubted students' ability to be successful at ALC if they were not self-starters.

Before moving into exposition of the second core value, a review of what was discovered thus far is useful. Work ethic emerged as a primary value at the institutional level and this value

is reflected within the student and faculty/staff body. Participants were able to describe, both overtly and indirectly, several positive outcomes of the work program, and these descriptions revealed a few additional blue collar values that appear to be commonly held: loyalty and respect for hierarchy. Next, the core value of service will be explored.

Core value: service. While Lubrano (2004) does not cite a spirit of service as a hallmark value of blue collar cultures, researchers have found a correlation between socioeconomic status and proclivity to engage in service work (McGehee, 2012; Morton, 1995; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Low income individuals and marginalized groups in general have displayed a greater likelihood to engage in service in their own communities than those from economically or otherwise privileged groups (Sandy & Holland, 2006). I will not deeply explore the values and factors that may contribute to this broad reality (although I hypothesize that the collective nature of blue collar cultures could begin to provide some explanation); however, these dynamics are clearly at play at Alice Lloyd College. In addition to work ethic, service emerged as a strong theme of something that students and faculty/staff highly value. This discussion will start at a micro level, focusing on individual participants' personal motivations and aspirations, and move to the macro level, focusing on how this value is institutionalized and impacts the Appalachian region broadly.

Pursuit of helping professions. Alice Lloyd College offers 17 majors (Alice Lloyd College, 2012d). Of these programs, seven are in the field of education. The College also offers eight pre-professional programs, most of which are health-related, and 10 minors. Most of these minors are also available as majors, although three are not: chemistry, entrepreneurship, and leadership studies. Table 2 illustrates all of the majors that are available to ALC students and how the 12 student participants were distributed across these programs in terms of chosen major.

Table 2. Student Participants' Academic Majors

Degree Programs in which Participants are Majoring	Number of Participants Majoring in the Degree Program	Other Degree Programs Offered at ALC
Accounting & Business Management	1	Biology Business Administration English English Education Liberal Arts Middle School Education Nursing Physical Education Pre-Engineering Pre-Dentistry Pre-Medicine Pre-Optometry Pre-Physical therapy Pre-Veterinary medicine Social Studies Education Sports & Fitness Programs Management
Biological Science Education	1	
Elementary Education	2	
History	2	
Kinesiology	1	
Math Education	2	
Pre-Law	1	
Pre-Pharmacy	1	
Sociology	2	

Table 2. The far left column displays the degree programs that participants are pursuing. The middle column displays the number of participants pursuing each program listed on the left. The far right column displays all of the other programs that are available to ALC students. Although there were 12 student participants in this study, the middle column totals 13 because one student who was an elementary education at the time of her interview was considering either changing her major to sociology or committing to a fifth year to be able to do both.

In studying this list, one finds that most of these programs prepare students to enter helping professions upon graduation. Students interviewed appear to be cognizant of this and describe their rationale for choosing their own majors as coming from a place of wanting to help, make a difference, or give back. Demonstrating this point, many of the student participants entered college with pre-medicine or another health field as their intended program. Charlie (personal communication, June 10, 2014) described this as "a parents' push" driven by concern for financial security, and this was echoed by each of the other participants who started in one of these programs. However, as the table above shows, only one of these students has remained on

this track. The others changed their major despite the resultant loss in potential income, choosing instead a path that maximized their helping potential. Daisy, a math education major, explained:

> I've always loved helping kids. I love helping them learn because when you're teaching them something and you see that they get it, their face just lights up and that warms me. I don't care how much I get paid, I love seeing that and I just want to help them (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Similarly, after getting past worry over disappointing his parents, Charlie changed his major from pre-pharmacy to history with the intention of pursuing an eventual law degree. Unlike those who switch from health fields to education, his earning potential may not substantially decrease as the result of this change, but he believes his job satisfaction will increase (personal communication, June 10, 2014).

Piper, another student, was in the process of changing her major to sociology at the time of our conversation, with the hope to eventually become a guidance counselor. Speaking in reaction to Jay, a student who described his personal mission statement as wanting to impact as many people as possible through teaching (personal communication, July 24, 2014), Piper said this about her own mission statement:

> That's mine, too. That is the main reason I'm switching my major, because…in high school we had two counselors. One was awesome….and the other one really struggled and acted like she didn't care. I guess my mission statement as a high school counselor would be to let these kids know we do care and we want you to succeed…I want to be that rock that kids reflect back on (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Piper's remarks reflect a desire to have a job in which she can provide a needed service and feel like her efforts have a positive impact.

Further evidence of spirit of service. Of course, it cannot be said that every major available at ALC is related to a helping profession. History, for example, is not an overtly service-oriented field. However, the student participant who was majoring in history replied

very simply and succinctly when asked what he intends to do after graduation: "Help Fish and Wildlife [Service]" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Tom could have said he planned to work for or get a job with the Fish and Wildlife Service, but his choice of language—*help*— is indicative of a service orientation. This may seem minor, and in isolation it would be insignificant. However, this was one of many such examples across the data corpus. Matilda, for example, expressed her own orientation toward service more directly, stating "I was raised that giving back to your community is the best way to show that you care" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). For her, service was a family value that would be further reinforced at ALC. Ned, another student, did not credit his upbringing for his desire to serve, but he nonetheless felt strongly about it: "Whenever I came [to college], no matter what my major, I wanted to help people. I've always liked helping people, even in just little ways" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). He went on to explain a youth sporting clinic at which he had recently volunteered. The experience was not a requirement for any class nor an expectation his role as a collegiate athlete. Rather, his rationale for doing it was two-fold: the satisfaction of helping kids learn something new as well as the opportunity to represent ALC in a positive way, thus helping the school.

Serving as an employee. Multiple faculty/staff participants noted that they do not work at ALC for the money, that their salaries are quite low compared to their peer institutions. Care for students and for the role those students could play in uplifting the region were consistently cited as rationale for seeking employment at ALC and for being retained in those positions. As Nancy explained,

> More than money, it's the enjoyment of what you are doing. I feel like I get paid a lot more than I would if I became a pharmacist. It's not in my bank account but it's in seeing students achieve goals…I feel like I am reaping a lot more rewards than if I had

> decided to just go for more money. It really taught me a lot here. (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

Kim, a 40-year staff member, concurred:

> There are not a lot of possibilities for career advancement here but if you love the students and what the College's mission is, I think it's important that you want to stay if you really buy into that. And I do. (personal communication, June 11, 2014)

A fact that lends credence to these claims of unselfish motivation is that many faculty and staff members have considerable longevity in their positions despite knowing they could earn more money in similar positions or with less responsibility elsewhere. The collective average number of participants' years of service was 22. Four participants had worked at the College for 30 or more years, with the longest tenure being 51 years. (This individual has clear memories of working with both Alice Lloyd and June Buchanan and in a focus group, her peers joked that she had earned the right to be "buried on the hill" along with Alice and June.)

Regional commitment. Commitment to serving the Appalachian region, or the 108-county service area more specifically, is one that is lived at an institutional level. This commitment trickles down to be embraced by the campus community. Institutionally, this commitment can be seen rooted in language as well as in general campus practices. For example, the simple fact that ALC refers to its primary recruitment region as their "service area" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012c) is indicative of an attitude of service. Other institutions may refer to this same geographic unit as a market or a high-yield region, language that focuses on what that region can do for the school. ALC's use of the term "service area" instead emphasizes what the school can do for that area. While on the topic of institutional language, the College's mission statement also clearly communicates that service to the region is a value. The following is an excerpt from the mission statement that includes those points that directly discuss service to the region:

> The mission of Alice Lloyd College is to prepare mountain people for positions of leadership by
>
> - Making an Alice Lloyd College education available to qualified mountain students regardless of their ability to pay…
> - Serving the community and region through appropriate outreach programs which utilize mountain people helping mountain people…
> - Producing leaders for Appalachia who possess…a spirit of service to others (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a).

The mission statement's introductory phrase immediately communicates that the College's purpose is to serve a specific group of people, and the subsequent bullet points (which are three of seven total bullet points that comprise the full mission statement) further demonstrate this purpose. Their approach to serving the region is two-fold as they seek to directly serve the community and region through outreach but also through instilling a spirit of service in students who will then carry that forward to the benefit of the region. Multiple faculty and staff participants directly expressed this:

> [We are] helping these students to set goals for their lives and to work toward service to their fellow man. That is one of the things we encourage, is not just to go out there and make the big bucks…but we want to improve Appalachia so our encouragement is to keep them here…They may have to sacrifice some of that income that they could get if they left the region, but if you instill that goal to serve your fellow man and give back to your community then that helps you on that road. (Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014)

In response to a question regarding what the College means when it claims to offer a "character-based education", one staff member asserted,

> I think servitude is probably number one that's drilled into the minds of our students. We definitely want people to…think of more than just yourself, think for the greater good. We want them to go out into the region and make a change. If they're thinking of nobody but themselves, then you can't do that. So servitude is probably the biggest. (Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014)

In response to the same question, a student produced a similar response:

> Coming with a willingness to serve. Alice Lloyd came here to serve the people of Appalachia and I think once we graduate she would want us to go out and serve our communities or serve wherever we can…not only in the classroom but in the community

> as well. She would want me to be a part of that. (Daisy, personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Daisy's words were particularly interesting because she spoke in a way that illustrates respect for, or at least knowledge of, the College's founder and founding principles. I was repeatedly surprised by how much the students, faculty, and staff knew about Alice Lloyd and the degree to which she remains a living presence on campus despite having passed away more than 50 years ago. Charlie provided further evidence of this:

> Alice had that kind of mindset, too. She wanted to build Appalachia, she wanted you to stay and work and help it be something and not just leave it. I feel that I can connect with that because that's my goal. I want to somehow contribute to this place. (personal communication, June 10, 2014)

Each of these participants believe that regional service is a key institutional value—and always has been, as the students pointed out— and they seem to have embraced this as a personal value as well.

In addition to language, the College displays its commitment to the region through some general campus practices and academic constructs. Since its founding, service to the Appalachian region has been a key component of the College's mission and this was lived out through a program called Christmas Pretties (Davis, 1982). Each year, students would work to craft a Christmas-themed item to deliver to area families as a simple gift from the College, often an ornament or something else decorative. This program is still in practice today and has grown considerably. For the 12 or more students assigned there, working in the "craft shop" equates to spending 10 hours per week creating the Christmas Pretties for which ALC has become regionally famous. Donors receive one every year, as do alumni, and then they are also distributed to every student in area elementary schools. The program has also grown to include collection and distribution of household goods for anyone who may need them. These items are

available at any time of year, not specifically at Christmas (Sawyer, personal communication, July 25, 2014).

In regard to regional commitment reflected in academics, ALC compliments its array of service-oriented majors with two minors in particular that are geared toward cultivating skills to improve Appalachia. First, Leadership Studies builds on the required leadership courses that are part of the general education curriculum. According to the program's online description, "Academics, Student Services, and the Student Work Program have combined resources to create a formal leadership development program with the specific mission of preparing leaders to serve Appalachia" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012e, para. 2). This offering was deemed important because "Historically, Alice Lloyd College has been committed to not only meeting the educational needs of those living in our region, but also in helping to meet social needs through various community outreach programs" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012e, para. 3). In other words, the College acts from the idea that the education it offers should provide a benefit to individual students, but should also equip them with skills and experiences to pay those benefits forward within the region.

The other minor that is indicative of a commitment to regional service is Entrepreneurship. While the formal catalogue description of the program does not indicate a rationale based in regional service, faculty and staff participants explained that such motivation did indeed lead to the development of this new offering. With the decay of the coal industry, Appalachians are in need of an alternative flagship industry or a diversified portfolio of ventures to build the economy. As Miranda explained,

> That's why we are focusing on entrepreneurship, too. I mean, there is a hope for tourism in Eastern Kentucky…We still have nature here, we still have a lot to offer if we can draw people in. I think that's one of the goals we need to work on and we *are* working on [it] but it's a slow process. If you can train people to be entrepreneurs…to at least

> step out there and try things…if we could ever develop a community based on tourism that might help our situation if the coal mining doesn't come back. (personal communication, July 23, 2014).

Kim expressed similar hopes for the entrepreneurship program, that it would not only contribute to economic recovery within the region but that it would also allow graduates to create ways of putting their skills to use in the region rather than moving away in search of opportunity (personal communication, June 11, 2014).

To review the findings that have been described in this section, service was revealed as a second core value within the culture of Alice Lloyd College. This value is apparent in the College's curriculum which emphasizes helping professions, and in both institutional language and action through constructs such as the mission statement and the Christmas Pretties program. Students and staff alike have internalized this spirit of service, placing higher value on helping others than on personal wealth. The third and final core value to be discussed is self-reliance.

Core value: self-reliance. Lubrano (2004) included self-reliance in his description of the key qualities of blue collar culture. He described this as something both appreciated by and expected in members of the culture. This description accurately captures the ethos that is lived on campus at Alice Lloyd College.

Self-reliance for survival. As one of the most economically depressed populations in the United States (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2012a), Appalachians are understandably preoccupied with survival. Having limited financial resources requires one to develop subsistence skills to take care of things for which others may be able to pay, such as food production or car care. Student participants were surprisingly cognizant of this reality, feeling a strong sense of responsibility for their own survival. Many have no safety nets, perceived or real, but no one spoke of this from a victim lens. Rather, in keeping with blue collar culture,

participants demonstrated great capacity for gratitude and for viewing life as plentiful despite having scarce resources. Developing self-reliance was the response for facing hardships, and this was done with pride rather than any complaint regarding being dealt a bad hand in life. In fact, Tom had little patience for the idea that someone might complain about life at ALC, suggesting a few ways to pass the time that in themselves are subsistence activities: "Just go to class, get your job done….go hunt up some berries or something, go fishing, stuff like that" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Tom was also the only student to put a name to this necessity of being able to care for one's self: "If you can't change your own oil… [shakes his head]…Stuff that would require self-reliance is a big thing. You have to have self-reliance" (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Self-reliance through independent living/working/studying. As an institution, ALC agrees with Tom that self-reliance is important. It is expressly named in the College's mission statement: "The mission of Alice Lloyd College is to educate mountain people for positions of leadership by…promoting the work ethic through a self-help Student Work Program… [and] producing leaders for Appalachia who possess…an attitude of self-reliance" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a, para. 1). Self-reliance is also expressly named in the articulated institutional student outcomes: "Upon completion of a degree from Alice Lloyd College, a student will… Possess the personal attributes of a positive self-concept, adaptability, open mindedness, tolerance for others' ideas, self-reliance, compassion, and a love of learning" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a, para. 2). Many features of an ALC education lead students toward the fulfillment of this mission and this intended outcome of self-reliance. Charlie, for example, views the work program as an exercise in self-reliance, noting that

> I'm working for myself, meaning that we work to offset our cost of our tuition…To me, it's the perfect process because…you're giving yourself an education. You're here,

> you're working to better yourself, so realize that and be appreciative of it. (personal communication, June 10, 2014).

Not only does this convey that he values being able to play a proactive role in securing his education, but one can also hear the sense of gratitude for struggle that is characteristically blue collar.

In reflecting on how his experience at ALC in general has changed him, Blythe had this to say:

> Just being able to think for myself, being more responsible for my own life…that's one of the biggest ways I've changed is learning how to take on responsibility and learning how to make my own choices and not necessarily having to rely on other people, but to get stuff done by myself. (personal communication, June 10, 2014)

That sense of responsibility Blythe mentioned was a theme across many interviews. Students generally took responsibility for their own learning, whether that be through academics or the work program, saying things such as "you get out of your education what you put into it" (Blythe, personal communication, June 10, 2014) and "it depends on the student" (Piper, personal communication, July 24, 2014). For some, being responsible for themselves meant learning better time management skills (Anne, personal communication, June 10, 2014; Jay & Piper, personal communication, July 24, 2014).

High expectations. To return to the idea of how ALC fosters self-reliance in students, in general terms I assert that this is accomplished through communicating and holding students accountable to high expectations. Students who may not have articulated a sense of responsibility (which is not to say they were not responsible) still understood that the College expected it of them. In describing what ALC's primary goal is, Piper stated, "They are all about work ethic and responsibility and being independent, being able to have time to go and do your job and also be able to do your school work and go to class" (personal communication, July 24,

2014). Clara felt that she was expected to be a self-starter in her work assignment, which implies a need for self-reliance or the ability to self-regulate. Here are a few examples of why students were likely to feel pressure to be self-reliant. First, Scout (personal communication, July 24, 2014) explained that it begins as early as the admission process. When prospective students and applicants have questions, the Director of Admission requires those students to talk directly to an Admission employee rather than allowing parents to call in on their behalf. The Director instructs her student employees to talk only to the applicants so as to encourage them to take responsibility for the process because their ability to do so is an early indicator of whether or not they will be a good fit for ALC (Scout, personal communication, July 24, 2014).

According to Bess, ALC again communicates high expectations at the time an offer of admission is made:

> The Director of Admission will sit down and she will explain all of the social codes, what's expected of you, and everything else and then you have to sign a contract. That way if you do break those social codes you can't say 'Well, I didn't know about that'. They can say, 'Yes, you did. You signed a contract.'" (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

In this way, the College communicates high expectations from the outset. The social code itself is also indicative of high expectations and the result of breaking it can be severe. As a senior, Charlie has witnessed more than one student being removed from campus for an alcohol infraction (personal communication, June 10, 2014). ALC has a zero-tolerance policy against alcohol and violating it results in automatic suspension or expulsion (Alice Lloyd College, 2013). One staff member explained that in the event of suspension, students are able to apply for re-admission, but

> We make them go through loopholes, we make them write reflections, we make them show what they have been trying to do. They can't just sit at home. They have to go out and work or try and get additional education somewhere…we make them do steps basically to prove that they want to come back. And they come back with a better

> understanding and a deeper commitment. (Madeline, personal communication, July 25, 2014)

Not only does this process encourage students to take responsibility for themselves, it also reinforces that work ethic is a core value.

In addition to alcohol use, the social code also covers topics ranging from visitation policies, curfew, and room inspection to piercings, hair color, and appropriate dress. When asked how students feel about the social code, Bess replied, "that's what keeps us focused, that's what keeps our grades up, basically our social standards. Everybody knows when you come to campus you are very professional. You act like young ladies and gentlemen" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Ned also had no complaint:

> …if you're out until four in the morning, the chances of you getting up for your eight o'clock class aren't very good. It really helps us, it protects us and yeah, you may have to be forced into maturity because of it but it really benefits you not only while you're in college but after you graduate, too. (personal communication, July 24, 2014)

This acceptance of strict behavior guidelines is further evidence of the blue collar value of respect for rules and hierarchy (Lubrano, 2004). An example of being held to the high professional standard that Bess mentioned is the campus-wide requirement to wear appropriate business clothing every Tuesday (Alice Lloyd College, 2013). As seems to be the case with most other policies, there is an accountability system in place for this. According to one professor, many of his colleagues will not permit a student to enter class on Tuesdays if they are not dressed up (Emerson, personal communication, July 23, 2014). Similarly, a staff member who works with the convocation program noted that students who come inappropriately dressed are turned away which is problematic for them given that the convocation program is credit-bearing (Madeline, personal communication, July 25, 2014).

Accountability mechanisms are also in place for the work program. Student supervisors collect timecards from their teams weekly (another example of how students are trusted with high responsibility) and then count hours to ensure each person has put in the requisite number of hours. Those who have not first receive a written warning. A second offense results in a meeting with the coordinator of the work program, and a third offense results in a meeting with the Academic Dean. In addition, if someone has not caught up on hours by the end of a semester, the College charges them for the number of hours missed (Sawyer, personal communication, July 25 2014).

To revisit an earlier topic, another way the institution sets high expectations for students to become self-reliant is by having honest conversations with them regarding their skill sets. These conversations are difficult to have and therefore are often foregone which may be a factor in the average millennial student's inflated sense of self and resultant entitlement (Wright, 2013). However, at ALC, the staff actively works to combat this: "If they have too many enablers, people at home bailing them out all the time, they don't learn anything…You have to have tough love" (Emerson, personal communication, July 23, 2014). In this spirit, Finch, a professor and work supervisor, does not hesitate to give critical feedback when called for: "Some have grandiose ideas but their skill set is just not there" (personal communication, June 11, 2014). By challenging students to be self-aware, to take stock of their own strengths and weaknesses, and expecting them to actively work on weaknesses, the institution is helping students develop further skills to be self-reliant.

In summary, by setting high expectations, creating accountability mechanisms, and having honest conversations with students when they do not meet expectations, ALC is teaching students to take responsibility for themselves—for their learning, for the development of their

character, and for their work performance. In short, they are teaching students to be capable of self-reliance and to value or take pride in this ability. Because of their understanding of the need for survival, many students seemingly come to ALC with this value already in place and are open to continuing to learn to be self-reliant.

Summary of content category 1: Blue collar values. Both the espoused and lived culture at Alice Lloyd College are reflective of the blue collar culture that characterizes the broader Appalachian region in which the institution is located. The institution communicates three core values, which are work ethic, service, and self-reliance, and campus community members display evidence of having internalized these as personal values. Several other blue collar values were also evident across the body of data (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Core and Secondary Blue Collar Values

Figure 7. This depicts each of the blue collar values that were expressed in the data. The three core values are given the highest weight in the center, and the outer circle illustrates how conversation of the core values allowed for the emergence of secondary values. Notice that some of the secondary values were underpinnings of more than one core value, meaning that the relationship between these values is overlapping and complex rather than linear.

Content Category 2: Family Environment and Cultural Congruence

The word *family* appeared 86 times within the transcripts of all 14 interviews. The only key term that appeared more often was work, which, quite significantly, was uttered 285 times. Family was widely discussed in three ways. First, participants nearly unanimously agreed that Alice Lloyd College is a family environment. Secondly, both students and faculty/staff believed that families of ALC students are generally supportive of their students' efforts to further their education. Finally, students described the campus community as culturally very similar to their own family. Before providing evidence of each of these three themes, the following narrative sets the scene for better understanding what a 'family gathering' feels like at Alice Lloyd College.

Narrative: Work Honors Convocation and Work Olympics, April 17, 2014. *Because of this day, I would later understand what Piper meant when she said "We make up our own fun" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). I made the six-hour drive through and around the mountains just so I could see today's happenings. Late April is a busy time for all of us who work in higher education, so I knew in advance that there would not be time for interviews. For today, I'm just here to observe.*

I've read that the Work Honors Convocation and Work Olympics are annual events when everyone gets the day off to celebrate the hard work they do every other day. But as I help my host prepare in the morning—which mostly just feels like staying out of the way— it hardly looks like a day off. The office is packed with students asking about the day's dress code, other students checking the convocation program, more students preparing team information for those who will soon compete in the Work Olympics. This year a new policy allowed teams to choose a song to represent them which would be played as their team was introduced. The students in the

office this morning are taking great glee in choosing songs for those who did not submit one. Grounds crew? Someone suggests "Redneck" by Blake Shelton. The room dissolves with laughter…and it's added to the playlist. There's no malice in this, they assure me. The "grounds boys" will love it, I'm told, and besides, small jokes like this are how you know people care about you.

Before that song selection can be revealed, however, first comes the Work Honors Convocation. Unlike the usual convocation program, people are dressed down in jeans and shorts and t-shirts in anticipation of the Olympics. There's a general festive atmosphere that might have something to do with having no classes, or might have something to do with Easter break which is just around the corner. It might have something to do with the great weather that "makes it feel like God himself has stamped his approval on taking a day off" as the opening speaker jokes. While people are taking their seats, I'm introduced to a slew of staff members who "might be around" this summer for interviews if I do make it back. Everyone is friendly, but I can sense their doubt that I'll be committed enough to make a second trip this deep into the mountains. It's apparently a common occurrence—someone visits, scratches the surface, and then no one sees or hears from them again. They shrug this off, though, as they tell me, "This place isn't for everyone."

The Convocation lasts about an hour, with each department presenting a standout student employee with an award. Stories heralding their work ethic and problem solving skills are shared, and many tears are shed. Tears of pride from the supervisors, tears of gratitude and surprise from students. Then everyone is dismissed to the meadow where a picnic lunch will be served, followed by the Olympic face-off. Some teams have made special shirts for the occasion. While many people jump in line for food, I join the many others who are working on this day off.

Not wanting to be a complete burden, I offered to help with whatever task was needed, no matter how mundane. My idle hands are put to work, so I am writing up team names on a portable white board to keep track of points while my host makes further introductions: her husband, her grandkids, the President's dog that has joined in the fun and is unlikely to leave hungry. Soon I'm ushered into the food line where I meet a staff member who is related to someone I met earlier. He entertains me with stories of who won which Olympic events last year and through what nefarious means, pointing across the meadow at key characters while he talks.

Soon I'm tallying points while eggs are tossed, teeth are lost in a 3-legged race, and the grounds crew successfully defends their long-standing title of tug-of-war champions. As the events come to a close, someone hollers that it's clean-up time. And something magical happens. Within five minutes you can't tell that nearly 600 people spent the afternoon eating and playing here. Tables are folded, food put away, trash carried to the dumpsters, all personal belongings claimed. I scurry to be helpful, but this is an efficient group of people who seemingly don't mind a little work on their day off. Or perhaps, as one student implies, they're not willing to leave a mess for their friends in grounds or in food service or on the convocation planning team. Whatever the case, while the names and faces of those I met today start to blur together, I see one thing clearly: this is a close-knit community that both works and plays hard together.

This first-person account of the Work Honors Convocation and Work Olympics served to illustrate the close-knit, welcoming atmosphere that one experiences on campus, whether a member of this community or a stranger. This warmth is indicative of what participants described as the College's family atmosphere. Next, a closer look will be taken at what exactly such an atmosphere means to participants.

The ALC family. Both directly and indirectly, participants repeatedly described ALC as a family environment, the connotation behind this description always being positive. The list of examples to demonstrate this environment is long. To begin with the most obvious, full families live on campus. Faculty and staff have a live-in option, and those who take advantage of it have meal plans. Therefore, families live in campus housing in facilities next door to or just down the street from student housing and can be seen daily in the dining hall (Madeline, personal communication, April 17, 2014). In addition, ALC's campus is home to a daycare and a K-12 private school, June Buchanan School (JBS). Therefore, children of all ages are regularly on campus, and the college students interact with them in a variety of ways: as staff at the daycare, as janitors at JBS, and, for education majors, as observers of classroom management or lesson planning (Madeline, personal communication, April 17, 2014). Charlie described the heightened sense of responsibility that ALC students feel to behave properly given that someone younger may always be watching (personal communication, June 10, 2014). Nancy suggested that the strict social codes are in place not only to ensure proper moral development for the students but also to ensure that a family-friendly environment is maintained on campus (personal communication, June 11, 2014).

While the presence of families obviously contributes to the family atmosphere on campus, many students and staff members described it as such in different ways or for different reasons. For example, Anne viewed ALC as family-like because of its small size: "Because it's smaller you have to put more into it because the teachers know you better so they know if you're not doing your work. They know if you're not…in class or not paying attention" (personal communication, June 10, 2014). In other words, professors watch you and hold you accountable as parents might. Jay expressed something similar, noting the access he has to top administrators

that would be unheard of at many institutions. He went on to say, "The professors are also at lunch and dinner and sometimes they sit with you and you can talk to them. It's just very friendly here and that really helps in the classroom" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Speaking to the small size of the Student Life staff, Nancy points out that this family role is one that many staff members voluntarily and intentionally take on:

> …since we don't have people that are delegated for those types of roles, we take it upon ourselves…if there is a staff member that says they want to remain professional and not have that relationship…then students really lose in that situation…I kind of feel like all of my students—I don't want to call them my children because I'm not that old so maybe younger brothers and sisters—I just want to guide them. (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

Miranda also expressed a strong sense of responsibility to take care of her students beyond what basic professionalism would ask of her (personal communication, July 23, 2014), as did Emerson:

> Many times if I know the students are struggling…and they sometimes feel uncomfortable…but I will take my plate and go over and sit with them [in the dining hall]. I will ask, 'Why did you do so poorly on that exam?' and…'What can I do to help you with your study skills?' And they look at me like [makes a shocked face]. I do it in an uplifting manner, not to be derogatory. That way they do know that I care about them…And I make myself available a lot. I am here for all the meals in the evenings." (personal communication, July 23, 2014)

Despite the high accountability it creates, the family environment is something students appreciate. When describing her campus visit and subsequent enrollment at ALC, Matilda said, "I came down, I fell in love because everyone is like a family. Everybody knows everybody, there are families on campus. I just loved it and from that moment on I've been hooked" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Piper also described it as beneficial, stating "Everybody is willing to help and get you a job because you just know everybody. It's a family-like place" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Bess described the campus' "homey feel" as the reason she chose to matriculate at ALC, and she has not regretted her decision:

> It exceeded my expectations. Everybody is just so friendly and it's still small enough where you get your one-on-one attention with professors, and you really feel like you are part of a family…we are a whole, big family here because the professors live here with us, too, and that makes a huge difference. I love where I go to school." (personal communication, July 24, 2014)

One possible explanation for why students have strong positive feelings about this family atmosphere will be explored shortly, but first attention will be given to the nature of students' relationships with their own families, particularly in light of their decisions to attend college.

Family support for higher education. As Lubrano (2004) discovered and as was discussed in Chapter 2, blue collar families are not always widely supportive of the pursuit of higher education. Arguments against the institution range from the assertion that the jobs it leads to are not real, honorable work to the opinion that attending college instead of immediately joining the workforce is "criminally self-indulgent" (Lubrano, 2004, p. 32) when families are struggling to bring in enough money to survive. These negative perceptions are exacerbated when family educational attainment stops at high school, meaning when no one in the family has previously attended college. At ALC however, while 65 to 75 percent of each incoming class are first-generation college students, family attitudes such as these are not challenges that most ALC students seem to face.

Faculty/staff perspective. Faculty and staff consistently described their students' families as supportive of their academic pursuits. Nancy called students' parents "their biggest fans" and attributed this positive attitude to a selfless desire for students to not face the same survival struggles that their families did (personal communication, June 11, 2014). She went on to explain,

> Those [students] that actually do work and don't receive a degree, the majority go into the coal mines, or I would assume so. Seeing the hard work and just how it is on your body, I know my father-in-law pushed my husband into college and helped him pay for it any way that he could so that he wouldn't have to [become a coal miner]. He said there

> was no way he was going into that. A lot of families are similar because they just want a better way of life for their children. (personal communication, June 11, 2014)

Despite knowing some students whose families were disinterested or overtly created obstacles, Finch also believed that the average ALC family is supportive: "Every now and then you get stories like that, but for the vast majority of them the parents support them. Even if they can't support them financially, they really do encourage them" (personal communication, June 11, 2014). Don had counseled a few students whose extended families accused them of thinking they were better than their families now that they were in college. Don believed that this negativity was occasional within extended family relationships but rare from core family members (personal communication, July 23, 2014).

Pippa, who works with donors and ensures that students write personalized thank you letters for each donation, saw evidence of family support while proofreading: "…we seek first-generation students, and what I've seen in a lot of these letters, these parents are behind them. They are real excited that their child's going to be the first in the family to get an education" (personal communication, June 11, 2014). Miranda, a staff member who has also spent time reading students' thank you letters, found them to be similarly illuminating:

> …we ask them to write these thank you letters to the donors…and what I see is that if you can get that one student, if you can reach one person in that family, then you have brought education, the light of education, into that whole community. Because when that person comes, their brothers and sisters then want to come. I really think, I can't possibly speak for every case, but I have never really heard a student say that someone gave them a hard time for coming…For the most part I'm seeing, 'I am setting the example for the rest of my family'" (personal communication, June 11, 2014)

While Miranda is appropriately careful to note that her experience with students is not necessarily representative of every student's family situation, it does match what the student participants had to say on the topic.

Student perspective. Twelve of 12 student participants in this study described their immediate family members as supportive of their decision to attend college. To reiterate this, 100 percent of the students in this study felt that the family members with whom they were raised supported their pursuit of a degree. Given that it is in direct opposition to many observed national trends, this finding is significant. The gravity of this finding will be more deeply analyzed in Chapter 5, but here I will share this phenomenon in the students' words.

Similar to what some faculty and staff members described, many of the student participants explained that their families actively pushed them to attend college to have a better life than they did. For some parents this translated to economic prosperity (Jay & Piper, personal communication, July 24, 2014), to encouraging their students to pursue fields that would be financially lucrative, such as pre-medicine or pre-law (Charlie, personal communication, June 10, 2014). For others, a better life meant avoiding back-breaking labor (Blythe, personal communication, June 10, 2014; Ned, personal communication, July 24, 2014). For still others, a better life meant getting through college traditionally, rather than attempting it in the midst of work and family pressures (Daisy, personal communication, July 24, 2014). Clara described growing up watching her mom go to school and how it pushed her to want to be a good student and get into college:

> My going to college was really emotional for me…When I was little it was just me and my mom and she would take me to night classes with her. Her doing that and trying so hard to make our lives better, she is the best mom in the world. I didn't want to disappoint her or make her hard work not worth it, I guess…Then she got her Associate's degree and she started teaching so she was a big inspiration for me to go to college" (personal communication, July 24, 2014)

A few students described their families as not merely supportive, but actually "excited" that they were in college (Bess & Jay, personal communication, July 24, 2014). For Jay, this was because he chose to attend ALC in particular, which is where his grandparents met. This is further

evidence of an earlier point, that ALC is a family environment. Jay was one of many legacies I encountered, meaning students or staff with an earlier family connection to the College, whether that connection be that someone attended ALC or worked there.

As a final illustration of the fact that ALC students feel supported by their families, Tom replied in the following way when asked if his family was behind his decision or had mixed feelings about it:

> I honestly don't know why anyone would try and hinder somebody from getting a college education. That surprises me that that happens. It honestly shocks me that it would, that someone's parent could tell them no, don't expand your education, don't grow mentally and physically. (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Tom was shocked to learn that some parents discourage college and I was shocked that such a concept would be so foreign to someone who grew up in Appalachia. I initially attributed his bewilderment to the fact that his mother works on campus and so he has always had a parent who understood and valued higher education. However, I was surprised that a lack of family support was not something he had encountered in fellow students, particularly given his role as the student supervisor for the grounds crew, seemingly the most culturally blue collar of all work teams at ALC.

It has been established that students experience a family environment on campus and that this is a characteristic of their college life that they appreciate. It has also been established that most students are supported by their families in their decisions to attend college. What will be explored next is the interplay between these two environments, home and school.

Cultural cohesion at home and school. In order to succeed in college, Macy (2000) suggested that low-income students should actively work to overcome their family culture. This advice was counter to another suggestion she offered, which was to create support networks of people who would encourage persistence. The former suggestion was based on Macy's beliefs

that low-income families would be unsupportive of their students' efforts to get an education, and that these students' family culture would clash with on-campus culture. As Lubrano (2004) illustrated, these beliefs are not unfounded. However, as demonstrated above, most ALC students can count their families as members of their collegiate support network. Another noteworthy finding is that they also report feeling strong congruence between their home and family cultures.

Two student participants, Jay and Tom, graduated from the on-site high school, JBS. As such, both have spent a considerable number of years on ALC's campus. It therefore came as no surprise that both described the transition to college as seamless. Tom, for example, explained that he had been hanging out with and helping the grounds crew since elementary school, so when he became a formal working college student "there was no difference" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). In essence, these two young men grew up on campus and so this was a culture to which they were accustomed.

Cultural dissonance might be more expected from Scout, the only student participant who was not from the 108-county service area. Scout grew up in urban Illinois and did describe some examples of feeling a little out of place in her first semester at ALC. Her examples were surface-level, however, including things such as her "Yankee" accent, which induced no real dissonance stress. Despite not being Appalachian, Scout felt a strong connection to the region after a short time and remarked that she felt very at home on campus. One possible explanation for this is that the value system the College upholds seems to match the values with which she was raised. When asked if the character expected of ALC students was similar to what was expected at home, both Scout and Bess said yes. Scout went on to assert that families *"should"* teach the same things ALC teaches, and mentioned that her own family would like to move to the area.

Most of the remaining students interviewed, all but one in fact, said essentially the same thing about their experience with bridging life at home and school: the two worlds were not all that different. In fact, the question seemed unremarkable to most of them, as if it had never occurred to them that cultural dissonance at school could be a challenge. Most were fairly dismissive of the idea, having little to say on the subject. For example, Blythe responded with,

> I kind of bring college home with me sometimes. You know, we talk about what's been going on during the week whenever I'm home, and I just like to keep my family updated with what's going on here. But as far as different lives, nah. I just kind of bring it with me. (personal communication, June 10, 2014)

Matilda's response also indicated no cultural dissonance: "I feel like I can go back and forth. Though I've changed a little bit being down here…I am still me when I am here and I am still me when I am home. I can do the back and forth" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Clara echoed these sentiments: "I don't think there is too much of a difference for me. This is sort of…it feels like home and going home feels like home so I think it is all just the same to me" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Piper also shared this perspective: "Pretty much everything is the same for me, just switching back and forth. It really doesn't change" (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Daisy and Anne were the only two students to describe having noted a difference between life at home and life at school. For Daisy, it was the expectation to be independent at school but dependent at home. She explained,

> I don't act any different [at home and school] but I feel different. Alice Lloyd [College] has become my home and I feel like…I'm becoming more independent. I feel like when I go home I'm put back into a place where I should be dependent on my family…That's really the only difference for me." (personal communication, July 24, 2014)

Like Scout's, Daisy's comments did not appear to display any strong cultural dissonance. A true clash of cultures was not responsible for her growing sense of independence. Again, the

difference between home and school was surface-level, not rooted in values or beliefs or customs.

Conversely, Anne was the one student to overtly express dissonance, although she did not elaborate on how home and school differed:

> I feel like I have two completely different lives. Nobody from my family or from my home has ever been here. I've been on my own for a long time…when I go home nobody knows one person here. And then whenever I come here nobody here knows one person from my home. So I can't talk about the same things because they don't know what I'm talking about…It's very different. (personal communication, June 10, 2014)

Without more information regarding how the two are different, it is hard to know the degree to which this presents her with a challenge to persisting at ALC. It may or may not be the case that values and attitudes differ from setting to setting.

Lastly, Charlie agreed with the majority that life between home and school were not markedly different, and was defensive of Appalachian culture generally. Unwittingly, he gave the perfect retort to Macy's (2000) suggestion to overcome low-income family culture: "Culture is a beautiful thing. Embrace it, don't kill it" (personal communication, June 10, 2014). Alice Lloyd College appears to be doing exactly that for Appalachian culture.

Summary of content category 2: Family environment and cultural congruence: To summarize the key findings within this second major content category, family was a strong theme across all interview in three important ways. First, participants believe that Alice Lloyd College is a family environment, a term that was used only positively. Secondly, ALC students' immediate family members support their students in the pursuit of higher education, which is noteworthy because this is not common experience for low-income, first-generation students. Lastly, ALC students feel strong congruence between the culture of their families and that which

they experience at college. This is perhaps the most significant finding of this study, and the reasons for that will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Content Category 3: Regional and Institutional Challenges

Narrative: Public concert at the Hindman Settlement School, June 10, 2014. *I didn't know it at the time, but I was entering the world of a group of people who live on the fringe here in Knott County. The day before I had visited the Appalachian Artisan Center in Hindman, the town closest to the College, in an effort to soak up everything I could that would provide cultural insight. The man there, bearded and bespectacled (perhaps a result of years of detail work while hand crafting the beautiful dulcimers and banjos on display), rewarded my interest in regional musical culture with an insider tip about a concert that was happening the next night at the Hindman Settlement School. The school had opened its doors to people from all over the country for the week to offer a bluegrass music workshop, taught by regional folk music heroes.*

So tonight I arrive a few minutes early, dodging the first few raindrops of what is to become a torrential, building-rattling, tree-falling, power outage-causing thunderstorm. As the wind picks up outside, so does the energy inside. Some of it is nervous energy from young kids and pre-teens who are about to perform what they've learned at the workshop all week. Some more nervous energy can be felt from the older teenagers who are worried about finding a partner for the square dance that I'm just learning is happening after the concert. More of the energy in the room (a simple, long, white-walled space with stackable chairs that continue to be pulled out as the room fills) comes from the middle-aged and older adults who are here to see the teachers, the well-known names that are mostly responsible for drawing anyone in this crowd who isn't family to the kids performing.

As the show begins, a few things become apparent. First, this is a community of people who know each other well. Whether they're local and raising kids together or they're from far corners and look forward to this annual chance to reconnect, the general atmosphere is one of warm familiarity and informality. Second, this music is part of their cultural fabric. People of all ages—and the range is dramatic—can sing along to each and every song. One song in particular strikes a chord, though, and this is when I make a third, and most important, observation. There is a sentiment within this group that I have not felt elsewhere in my visits to this corner of Kentucky. While "Friends of Coal" decals live in nearly every business window and on most license plates I've seen, tonight many in the audience are brought to tears as they sing along to "And the Rivers Ran Black." The song describes the environmental degradation caused by mountain-top removal, a coal mining method. They clap enthusiastically and nod in agreement to another song that describes the toll mining jobs have on men's bodies and the challenges of the women who care for them. I take a closer look at those in the room and begin to see other differences: long hair, bare feet, a few dread locks here and there, flowing skirts. While there are plenty of buttoned-up crew cuts present, the general look is a bit more…relaxed, a bit less conservative than I've observed on campus and in local restaurants and shops.

The concert ends and everyone pitches in to clear the room to make way for the square dance. In short order, kids are partnering with gray-haired friends to follow the instructions of the caller. I'm struck again by the camaraderie that crosses generational lines and I'm impressed by the enthusiasm with which the teenagers participate. No one here is too cool for this scene. I later come to find out, though, that many would not be interested in showing up to this scene at all. I've spent my evening with "the artisans" and I'd be wise to be careful who I tell about it…or to admit that I cried along with them.

Prior to this experience with local artisans, I had tip-toed around the controversial issue of coal mining in interviews and focus groups. With the idea that talking about such a politically charged issue would alienate my participants, I preferred to avoid the subject. However, this experience provided a stark contrast to the norms I had observed elsewhere, showing me that I was only seeing part of the story and that the full story was likely far more complex than I originally assumed. Thus, I decided I had no choice but to dig deeper. The following are the results of this line of inquiry, including an explanation of why coal is a controversial topic in this region and a description of the nuanced role it plays in shaping norms and policies at ALC.

Coal's legacy. Both faculty/staff and students displayed an awareness of the coal industry's impact on the Appalachian region—Eastern Kentucky in particular, on the College, and for several, on their own life's trajectory. As explained, some students spoke of it as a motivator to attend college, having been pushed by parents to strive for a different lifestyle than that of a miner. But, given the picture painted by the collective participant group, a different lifestyle is seemingly necessary, not merely desirable.

To state it plainly, "we're suffering a depression in this region" (Akela, personal communication, July 22, 2014). The coal industry has been the savior and the demise of Appalachia. In its peak, the coal industry employed nearly 785,000 people and provided generous salaries (Center for Media and Democracy, 2014). Nancy explained that, prior to retiring from coal mining, her father-in-law earned more than she and her husband combined (personal communication, July 22, 2014). The industry as a whole has declined, however, and Miranda noted that "it used to be better than it is now, as far as the pay" (personal communication, July 23, 2014). It also used to be better in terms of the number of people it employed. Twenty-five percent of ALC students' families were unemployed in the 2013-2014

incoming class (Akela, personal communication, July 22, 2014). Akela asserted that the coal industry regionally only employs 28,000 people today. He cited a statistic of 7,000 coal jobs eliminated in the past year, and further explained that

> with each coal mining job lost, there are another three jobs lost, and it can be in banking, it can be in a convenient mart. You can drive through any of these small towns—Hindman, go to Whitesburg—and they are almost like ghost towns. (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

Other participants also spoke of this trickle-down effect, wherein the loss of industrial jobs leads to families not having money to spend in retail or service industries, which leads to lay-offs in those sectors (Don & Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014). Don further elaborated on how this pattern affects individual families and graduates' ability to stay in the region as the College asks of them:

> …now we are not only trying to educate people to be here but now we have to talk about, 'you may have to go here'…our nursing industry is the same way. They have to go into different regions to get work because hospitals are closing down…now your families with children, they can't stay in that house that they can no longer pay for. Their place will go back to the bank, more than likely, because who is going to buy it? Nobody has money to buy it…So basically, if you take so many young families out with children, what's that going to impact? School systems. So then all these teachers we are preparing, they can't find jobs, so what do they have to do? They have to go. (personal communication, July 23, 2014)

When compared nationally, Kentucky does indeed seem to be experiencing harder times than most other states. Nancy supported this claim by referencing a New York Times article that ranked the worst places to live in the United States, using metrics such as unemployment, obesity rates, educational attainment, and income. Six of the top 10 were in Eastern Kentucky (personal communication, July 22, 2014).

Akela (personal communication, July 22, 2014) and Don (personal communication, July 23, 2014) blamed the current federal administration for the minimization of the coal industry and the resultant economic crisis within Appalachia, citing environmental regulation as the primary

cause. A few were less interested in assigning responsibility, neither for the loss of a once-great industry nor for the environmental destruction, and instead focused on how to move forward. Madeline, for example, was supportive of the coal industry but also cognizant of the need for an alternative:

> I was raised by coal. It was my life. As a matter of fact…the one time I got whipped bad was putting down a coal truck driver. [My father]…just let me know very quickly that person is what keeps me in school and I better shut my mouth and be respectful of them. That's what I tell [students]. We need to be respectful, we need to understand, and instead of blaming we need to think about what we are going to do to help, to pull things together. You can either choose to play the blame game or you can choose to be proactive…I am reluctant, but I do try to bring in speakers that talk about…why did you all concentrate all your efforts into this one industry? (personal communication, July 25, 2014)

However, several participants seemed to experience paralysis rather than proactivity in the face of the question of what to do in coal's aftermath, which is reflective of the institutional stance on the issue.

College policy: Don't mess with people's religion or politics. According to stories passed down over the years, Alice Lloyd had a policy for how to engage in diplomatic relations with the community in order for the school to gain local support: Don't mess with people's religion, politics, or moonshine (Akela & Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014; Clara, personal communication, July 24, 2014). Participants believe that this philosophy is what has kept ALC both financially solvent and uninvolved in the effort to find an alternative economic driver to replace coal. Nancy explained,

> I am of course pro-coal but I see both sides of the equation. But for our economy, right now there is no alternative…If we had a different alternative, that would be awesome…here on campus we don't necessarily take a stance on it, and we do that on purpose…We get a ton of money from coal supporters but if we decided to put a label on us as pro-coal or anti-coal then that would knock off a bunch of donors. So whenever Mrs. Lloyd came here she was told not to and it has just kind of been ingrained in us since then not to mess with the local religion, politics, or moonshine. (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

Madeline also talked about remaining neutral on the issue:

> Politically, we don't direct anything any way…None of our classes, nothing that we have ever done has been centered around coal. Even our engineering, we've tried to get people to think about things other than just mining and things like that. Or if they did do that, try to get additional certifications so that they can think outside the box. (personal communication, July 25, 2014)

Individually, many participants acknowledged a need for an alternative industry (Charlie, personal communication, June 10, 2014; Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014; Sawyer, personal communication, July 25, 2014). Nancy remarked, "the coal industry has hit us hard and we are not proactive, we are reactive, so now that it's going away we are trying to find stuff when years ago we should have been coming up with a plan…But we definitely need something. Coal isn't going to be around forever" (personal communication, July 22, 2014).

Despite this call for innovation, for its own political safety, Alice Lloyd College remains politically neutral on the coal issue and actively avoids contributing to an alternative for fear it would be viewed as an anti-coal endeavor (Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014). This creates an interesting dilemma. ALC's core mission is to cultivate leaders for the betterment of the Appalachian region, yet the institution's hands are tied in taking on the single biggest regional concern. The current dominant coping mechanism is to support students in moving away to find jobs so that they will have funnel financial resources back into the region (Don & Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014; Madeline, personal communication, July 25, 2014; Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014).

Survival is the trump card. Appalachia's reliance on and loyalty to coal is not a problem that stems from ignorance, as stereotypes might suggest. The ALC community is not a group that uncritically supports the coal industry. Relative to this, Madeline described an interaction with a speaker who was visiting campus to deliver a convocation:

> Some of them came in with pre-notions that we were all uneducated and that we were destroying this earth with our mining efforts. One of the ladies a few years ago, I was kind of really reluctant [to bring her in]…She started meeting our students and talking to them and on the drive up she didn't see all this devastation and destruction…then [students] took her out and showed her some of the things, some of the reclamation process of trying to bring in businesses and she came out educated…she thanked our students. She said… 'It was one thing for me to sit in Louisville and have this idea and read…all this data and research and then to come here and physically experience it. I have a new perspective.' (personal communication, July 25, 2014)

Similar to the way the work program fosters systems thinking in students as they see how their jobs relate to the full campus' operations, the coal dilemma seemingly cultivates the same ability for the ALC community in general. Indeed, participants' understanding of the coal industry went beyond surface-level. Some were able to describe pros of the industry that might not be apparent to outsiders. Aside from the obvious income benefits, strip mining and mountain top removal cleared space for hospitals, housing, and commercial development (Don, personal communication, July 23, 2014; Sawyer, personal communication, July 25, 2014). Participants also recognized the serious problems associated with mining and burning coal. Aside from the aforementioned economic challenges, these problems range from black lung disease to emphysema to air pollution to decreased protection from strong weather patterns to water pollution, and the list goes on (Charlie, personal communication, June 10, 2014; Don & Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014; Madeline & Sawyer, personal communication, July 25, 2014; Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014). Some spoke with reverence for the beauty of the mountain landscape (Don & Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014; Jay, Scout, & Tom, personal communication, July 24, 2014). Don (personal communication, July 23, 2014) and Madeline (personal communication, July 25, 2014) demonstrated a keen understanding of how coal power works and why it is superior in manufacturing to gas-firing. All of this is to say that those I spoke with did not blindly support coal simply because it was at

one point a financial boon to the region. Rather, most had a far more nuanced understanding of what they were supporting.

Because, despite understanding the darker side of the coal story, most *did* support coal. As Bill McKibben discovered through his research and outreach on climate change, knowledge does not necessarily lead to change in attitudes or behaviors (2011). The explanation as to why both of these things are true is simple: Survival is the trump card. Providing for one's family, paying for food and shelter—these things are more immediate needs than worrying about one's health at retirement age or protecting the water supply when water treatment facilities exist. As Nancy stated, "the majority of people around here care more about the person than the picture as a whole, about our whole community, about 'how does it impact *us*?'. Not 'how are we going to live 50 years down the road?'" (personal communication, July 22, 2014). With scarce financial resources, there is a sense of urgency to everyday life which makes future planning less important. Another key takeaway from Nancy's statement is that, congruent with blue collar culture and values, the primary focus is on people and relationships, on community. This orientation combined with long-term economic distress have seemingly led to disinterest in politics and the big picture, narrowing the community's focus to immediate survival. Sawyer noted that loyalty to the coal industry did not stem from love for coal itself, but rather from its potential for providing a living: "I don't think there would be as many complaints about the coal industry [dying] if there was something else for the people to make a decent living" (personal communication, July 25, 2014). While Alice Lloyd College is not engaging in the search for that alternative, most faculty/staff participants were well aware of other groups' efforts and progress toward that end. Don and Finch were aware of a feasibility study that had been conducted to bring in manufacturing. The study found that there was insufficient water to adequately support

such a facility: "we have had a couple different great opportunities to get industries to come here and we have even got property. But we don't have the water. We are the only county in Kentucky that doesn't have a river running through it" (Don, personal communication, July 23, 2014). Nancy was aware of the formation of a county-wide task force that had hired a consulting firm to help identify other potential economic opportunities, and Miranda knew of an idea to mimic the tourism industry that had boomed in the Smokey Mountains (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Because of their potential to make survival easier, any and all of these efforts and ideas were embraced.

Although the argument can be made that higher education institutions are places of privilege, at ALC survival is no less exigent than it broadly is within the region. One young man believed that the primary thing he was supposed to learn in college was "how to survive" and he defined this as being able to take care of himself, both through practical life skills and the ability to make a living (Tom, personal communication, July 24, 2014). Students overwhelmingly discussed affordability and the opportunity to avoid crushing student debt as a primary reason for selecting ALC. For example, Matilda explained how financial pressures played a role in her decision:

> My dad has actually had 9 strokes and so…on pen and paper it seems like my family, my mom makes good money, but when you take out medical expenses and things like that we didn't have much money, so the tuition guarantee was a really big deal to me. (personal communication, July 24, 2014)

Clara also cited finances as a prime factor in her college decision: "In all honesty I am just really poor. I was looking for a cheap school" (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Institutionally, survival is the trump card in that being financially viable must take precedence over the mission of solving regional problems. If this viability was not prioritized over all other

goals, then the institution would risk not being able to function at all in pursuit of their mission (Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014).

Chapter Summary

To review, three overarching themes emerged from the body of data: (1) blue collar values were affirmed within the campus population, (2) the campus was described as a family environment that is culturally congruent with students' home cultures, and (3) regional challenges influence the institution's ability to carry out its mission. Three core blue collar values were discovered: work ethic, service, and self-reliance. Several other blue collar values were also apparent, though to lesser degrees: respect for hierarchy, loyalty to those at the same level within a hierarchy, and collectivism.

The second key finding revealed that campus constituents feel that the ALC campus is a family environment, one where students are treated by faculty and staff with the care and high expectations that one expects from parents or close relatives. Further, faculty/staff and student participants concur that students' families are supportive of their decision to attend college, and students feel that their home and school lives are culturally similar.

The third key finding illustrated that regional social and economic challenges directly influence ALC's ability to carry out its mission. The decline of the coal industry has had a strong negative impact on the Appalachia's economy. As such, it has become a hot political issue and attention is increasingly being given to finding an alternative. However, for the sake of avoiding a politically charged move so as to retain donor support, Alice Lloyd College has not become involved in this search for an alternative. Survival was found to be the trump card, meaning the goal to which all others are subjugated.

Chapter 5 will situate these findings in a broader context, relating them to the Appalachian region and higher education generally. The ways in which these findings interconnect will be explored, and their implications for promoting sustainability through the work college model will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter Organization

In this chapter, the following conclusions derived from the findings presented in Chapter 4 are asserted and explained:

- The core values promoted and lived at ALC are reflective of the broader blue collar regional culture which contributes to why students feel strong cultural congruence between their home and school lives. This suggests that the ALC model has utility in effectively engaging blue collar families in higher education.
- The core values promoted and lived at ALC are underpinnings of sustainable living.
- Alice Lloyd College is an exemplary model of sustainability education in that it promotes social and economic justice and develops the skills necessary to have concern for environmental justice.

Engaging Blue Collar Students in Higher Education through Cultural Congruence

As established in Chapter 4, the core and secondary values that are espoused and lived at Alice Lloyd College are congruent with blue collar culture as described by Lubrano (2004). Eleven of 12 student participants were from the College's service area, meaning they were raised in blue collar Appalachia. Therefore, the culture they experienced at home was likely to be similar to what they experienced at school. This indeed proved to be the case, as student participants overwhelmingly reported feeling strong congruence between their family and academic lives. When partnered, these two findings, that (1) ALC cultures reflects the broader regional culture, and that (2) students do not feel cultural dissonance on campus, have significant implications for how to engage blue collar students in higher education.

Retention. As an outgrowth of serving a working class region, Alice Lloyd College serves a high number of first-generation students, with approximately 65 to 75 percent of each incoming class having no family experience to draw on to know what to expect in college (Akela, personal communication, July 22, 2014). As Macy (2000) pointed out, support networks are important indicators for persistence through college. This is a contributing factor as to why national retention rates are notably low for first-generation students, with their risk of attrition being 71 percent higher than students who are not the first in their families to pursue a degree (Bradbury, 2008). While ALC's overall retention rate is well below national averages at 50 percent (Akela, personal communication, July 22, 2014), this is in reality quite high given the number of first-generation students enrolled here. Shawnee State University, located in Appalachian southern Ohio, enrolls fewer first-generation students by percentage but their overall graduation rate is only 25 percent, far below ALC's. I posit that the cultural congruence students experience at ALC is a primary factor in the institution's success in retaining its at-risk population. While Macy (2000) asserted that institutions ought to help such students overcome their family culture, Alice Lloyd College is demonstrating that it is more effective to support that culture rather than subjugate it. This supports my own reaction to initially reading Macy's article, which was to argue that these students can be better engaged by changing higher education institutions to be a cultural fit rather than expecting students to change, to renounce their home culture to fit into the academic culture. The latter denies them access to a key support network, something that Macy (2000) accurately noted was important for first-generation student success.

Deep learning and transformation. To anticipate one possible rebuttal to this argument, I am not asserting that students should not change or experience transformation as a

result of attending college. Rather, I encourage creating cultural cohesion so that students are more likely to stay in higher education so as to be able to have the transformative experiences that campuses can provide. When institutions carry the burden of creating a culture that welcomes blue collar students, those students are freer from angst over whether or not the institution—the College specifically or college in general—is right for them and can devote their mental energies to deeply engaging in their college experience. I saw this type of engagement and resultant transformation at Alice Lloyd College. For example, after only one year at ALC Anne articulated remarkable transformation in an area that has deep roots in her family culture. Despite having been raised "really hard core Pentecostal", she came to question a lot of the teachings of her upbringing and broadened her view of religion through an on-campus bible study group: "I've gotten a lot of different people's points of view and my ideas have changed, of Christianity" (personal communication, June 10, 2014). This is one small illustration of how ALC's model is fully capable of fostering transformative learning. Embracing blue collar values and allowing students to feel as if home life and school life are "the same" (Clara, personal communication, July 24, 2014) has not stunted nor created a deficiency in students' learning experience.

Cultivating family support. Another counter argument I predict to my recommendation for cultivating family/college cultural congruence for blue collar students is rooted in Lubrano's (2004) research. If, as Lubrano demonstrated, blue collar families are often not supportive of higher education, then one could make the argument that it is logical to encourage students to operate at odds with their families. However, Alice Lloyd College presents an alternative to this way of thinking because here, as described in Chapter 4, families *are* largely supportive of their students. I have noted three possible reasons for this trend.

Fair Trade Learning in action. An application of Fair Trade Learning (FTL) principles can help explain why families are supportive of their students' educational aspirations. To reiterate the description offered in Chapter 2, FTL is an effort to equalize the value of what is exchanged when student groups interact with communities, ensuring that value is added not only for students but also for host communities. To distill it to one word, reciprocity is the focal point of relationships that effectively employ FTL principles. I posit that careful attention to reciprocity over time is a foundational reason for the positive sentiments that ALC students' families have toward the pursuit of higher education. The institution was founded due to a reciprocal agreement reached between Alice Lloyd and Abisha Johnson, who offered Mrs. Lloyd land and a house if she would use them to create and run a school (Davis, 1982). The entire campus, and more recently the curriculum, has been built this way, with community voice driving decisions of what is needed and what is possible. Reciprocity emerged from the data as something that today continues to be important to campus stakeholders, and the College's adherence to its overall mission of serving the Appalachian region is evidence of that. Further evidence of this was presented in large and small ways. For example, participants used idioms that represented a belief in reciprocity, such as "you're only getting what you put into it" (Blythe, personal communication, June 10, 2014) and "if you work hard for something, something great will come out of it" (Charlie, personal communication, June 10, 2014). Piper displayed appreciation for the work program because of its reciprocal nature, stating that she would approach any job she was assigned with gratitude because it made a college education affordable (personal communication, July 24, 2014). Other examples were more palpable. One interviewee arrived late to our meeting and explained that he had been stuck in traffic because the shoulder of a mountain road had collapsed. He was planning to return to the site after our interview,

bringing along a few other ALC men, to help the group who had already assembled to start fixing it. The rationale given for getting involved was simply that the community does a lot for the school so they try to help out however they can (Jay, personal communication, July 25, 2014). Table 3 more fully depicts how ALC's relationship with its service area is Fair Trade Learning in action.

Table 3. Fair Trade Learning Principles in Action at ALC

Core Principle	Evidence of Principle in Action at ALC in Relationship with Service Area	Parallel Goal(s) Achieved
Dual purpose	• Formal mission of uplifting the Appalachian region socially and economically • Efforts to create jobs and retain graduates within the region to prevent brain drain	Economic equity, equal partnership, mutual learning, cooperative/positive social change
Community voice	• Community input sought in decision to add entrepreneurship minor • Community perspective and norms considered in behavioral standards	Economic equity, equal partnership, cooperative/positive social change
Commitment to community	• Service a core value; expected of all students • Community an integral part of annual homecoming events • Graduates expected to remain in the region to pay forward the benefits of their education	Economic equity, equal partnership, cooperative/positive social change
Transparency	Not observed	Transparency
Environmental sustainability	Not observed	Sustainability
Economic sustainability	• Tuition guarantee to provide opportunity to service area residents • Operations funded primarily through donations rather than reliance on governmental support • Work program to reduce staffing costs and create invaluable learning opportunity for service area residents	Economic equity, cooperative/positive social change, sustainability
Intercultural contact	• Recruitment of diverse faculty to expose students to cultures that differ from dominant Appalachian culture	Mutual learning, cooperative/positive social change (through students' worldview)

	• Admission of international students and domestic students outside the service area to foster appreciation for diversity through peer relationships • Internship opportunities in urban settings • Intercollegiate athletic competition outside the service area • Convocation speakers that represent diverse cultural backgrounds, careers, and political viewpoints	
Global community building	• Ultimate goal of Purpose Road philosophy is world service achieved through service to ever-growing concentric circles until one sees his/her own influence on world affairs and can purposefully make decisions to ensure that influence is positive	Economic equity, mutual learning, cooperative/positive social change, sustainability

Table 3. This chart provides examples of the presence of six of the eight core FTL principles that were discussed in Chapter 2; two were not observed in a context that can be supported by hard data. The right column utilizes Hartman's articulation of the goals of Fair Trade Learning to illustrate that these are indeed being met at ALC. Hartman stated that FTL "foregrounds the goals of economic equity, equal partnership, mutual learning, cooperative and positive social change, transparency, and sustainability" (2014, par. 1).

Defining the right student. Another possible explanation for why family buy-in is high is that the campus community has so clearly and narrowly defined the "right" student. Students with a spirit of service are sought. As established in Chapter 4, such a commitment requires humility, the ability to put others first. For students who have this orientation, chances are high that it was modeled for them by their immediate family. Thus, it follows that these would be the parents and family members capable of being supportive and unselfish, who would want their students to rise above them. Charlie shared that "My mom actually told me the other day, 'I am so proud of you, you are doing what I didn't do'" (personal communication, June 10, 2014). This is in stark contrast to the words of some of Lubrano's (2004) interviewees whose family

members accused them of thinking they were better than their family because they chose to attend college.

Work ethic is also desired in students, and again, this is likely modeled at home for the successful ALC applicant given the implicit cultural value that is placed on work ethic within the campus' majority demographic. The work program is particularly useful for fostering cultural congruence as well as for gaining family support because it demonstrates a shared value: honest work. The work requirement is an excellent retort to the families of Lubrano's participants who viewed college "as a waste of time and money, a hideout where lazy—or at least misguided—progeny burrow to retreat from the real work of life" (2004, p. X). This captures the essence of why some working class families are unsupportive of higher education but also why ALC's model is effective in attracting and retaining an often un-reached demographic. This indicates that a work college may be uniquely positioned to engage blue collar students and families.

Honoring legacies. In the world of college and university admissions, legacy students are those who have had a parent, grandparent, or other previous generation of family member attend the institution to which the student is applying. At Alice Lloyd College, legacies are plentiful but not always in the traditional sense. One participant, Tom, was a true legacy student in that his grandparents met as students at ALC (personal communication, July 25, 2014). Other participants, however, described becoming interested in ALC, either for employment or enrollment, as a result of a family member having worked at the College or for a company that provided services to the College. Finch, for example, became acquainted with ALC because his mother was a guest performer at seasonal campus celebrations (personal communication, June 11, 2014). Despite these connections not adhering to the traditional definition of a college legacy, these relationships play a large role in the campus culture and contribute considerably to

populating the campus, both faculty/staff and students. As explained in Chapter 4, participants described ALC's campus as a family environment, and this can partly be attributed to the fact that several generations are all on campus simultaneously, as some participants explained, but also because several generations of single families are on campus over time. This is why everyone seems to know everyone. They knew your grandparents and your parents and your cousins and your high school basketball coach, and take pride in there being few degrees of separation between campus community members. This appreciation for networks and relationships is a hallmark of blue collar culture, and another reason that families within the service area may feel supportive of ALC. The network of people connected to the institution has been growing since 1917, but within a relatively small geographic area, and chances are high that a given family in the service area can find a connection to the College in their family history. In blue collar culture, such connections are honored, no matter how obscure (Lubrano, 2004).

In stepping back from this picture, one can see the interplay of the blue collar value system, Fair Trade Learning principles, and the manifestation of both at Alice Lloyd College. Each of these factors contribute to Alice Lloyd College's capacity for adequately supporting blue collar students and creating an on-campus experience that is congruent with the values and culture in which students were raised. Discussion of the findings will now turn to how and why they are relevant to doctoral study in the field of sustainability education.

Blue Collar Values are Sustainable Values

In addition to its implications for student retention, this study yielded further argument for supporting rather than subjugating blue collar culture within higher education. I contend that the values and attitudes discovered at Alice Lloyd College are the underpinnings of sustainable thought, meaning they can foster a sustainable paradigm from which action for sustainability is

motivated. I arrived at this conclusion as the result of applying three concepts to the findings: subsistence, the principles of the Slow Food Movement, and systems thinking.

Subsistence. In subsistent cultures, members seek to have *enough* rather than having as much as they possibly can. The goal of a subsistent lifestyle is to meet basic needs, not to accumulate wealth, and it therefore is innately more sustainable than a capitalist, consumerist lifestyle in that it requires far fewer resources. These cultures are typically characterized by gratitude, by the ability to see what they have as plentiful, and hence many within these cultures do not feel that they are impoverished (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999; Lubrano, 2004). Martinez (2010) called this survival-based practice and accompanying gracious attitude *affluent subsistence*. As explained in Chapter 2, Appalachia can be described as a subsistent culture (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011), and while I cannot speak for the region as a whole, on ALC's campus, they are practicing affluent subsistence. In the United States where commodification and commerce drive the American Dream, subsistence is seen as lesser, as a life marked by less than all to which one is entitled: less stuff (as Annie Leonard [2007] called it) as well as less help to acquire and care for one's stuff. Subsistence may also have a negative connotation because being responsible for one's own needs requires a lot of hard work. However, these criticisms are precisely why blue collar people are well-suited to a subsistent lifestyle. According to Lubrano (2004) and my own findings, this is a group that values work ethic and self-reliance. As Sawyer told me, doing hard work and providing for one's family are points of pride, not reasons to complain (personal communication, July 25, 2014).

Slow Food Movement principles. The relationship between subsistence and sustainability may still be unclear, so the following is an effort to make this connection more overt. The simple motto of the Slow Food Movement is that food should be good, clean, and fair

(Petrini, 2007). According to Gottlieb and Joshi's (2013) interpretation, good food refers to that which is enjoyed in community as an expression of culture. Good food is prepared and consumed according to family or local traditions and is an outcropping of traditional knowledge and relationship with nature. Food that is clean is grown with concern for the environment and for public health, without chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Fair food is that which is produced by farmers and laborers working in safe, equitable conditions and which does not violate land rights in developing nations (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2013). Fundamentally, slow food is the opposite of fast food, or rather, of the industrial agriculture system that has made fast food possible around the world. One should also note that the three elements of the Slow Food slogan promote the three areas of sustainability: concern for social, economic, and environmental systems. The Slow Food ethos encourages self-reliance through assuming control over one's own food, by learning to garden, learning to cook, by asking critical questions of the production process to make informed buying decisions (Petrini, 2007). This is an active orientation toward food rather than the passive participation that the fast food industry and industrial agriculture have fostered, and as such, it requires a considerable time investment. This is why it is called *slow* food. In essence, the Slow Food Movement promotes sustainability through promoting subsistence practices. By slowing down and attending to the processes underwriting the global food system, one makes visible the feedback loops that indicate whether or not the system is healthy, not only for direct consumers but also the societies and environments that support it.

Systems thinking. The ability to view the world as interconnected, to understand for example the effect that industrial agriculture has on climate change, can be fostered through slower experiential education, settings in which students are challenged to deeply engage rather than encouraged to shallowly accomplish several items on an educational checklist. This is what

I see happening at Alice Lloyd College. Students are expected to engage deeply in their academic and work assignments, and to build connections between the two. Toward this goal, the campus supports far fewer of the multitude of extra- and co-curricular options that pervade many college campuses and splinter students' focus, and those that are offered directly relate to an academic area. Because of this, life on ALC's campus is slower. All offices and the dining hall are closed by 5:00pm, and students are afforded time in the evenings to reflect on their days, to prepare for the next. Piper and Tom talked about using free time to go hiking and fishing, and Clara recounted a favorite memory as the time she and her friends repurposed old chairs into sleds (personal communication, July 25, 2014). Entertainment and hobbies such as these are sustainable in that they do not require high levels of resource consumption. They also offer the benefit of creating positive memories in the outdoors, which is a predictor of biophilia, or love of nature (Louv, 2008; Wilson, 1986). Biophilia has been linked to an increased likelihood of engaging in environmental activism (Wilson & Kellert, 1993).

A noteworthy example of deep engagement, of a student who made tangible connections between his academic, work, and personal lives, is Ned. Ned was an Accounting and Business major and a varsity athlete whose work assignment was in the training center for his sport. He also served as captain of his team. In answering interview questions, Ned consistently referenced his job and captainship, noting life lessons he has learned from them, noting skills they have allowed him to develop, and noting the ways in which these experiences are preparing him for his intended career. In these roles he has learned to make his own sporting equipment, how to use GPS coordinates to create maps, how to motivate a team, how to help as needed as he assists his coach/boss, how to plan youth sporting camps, how to teach his sport, and the list goes on. Because of the slower lifestyle at ALC and the experiential nature of its curriculum, Ned has

been afforded the time and opportunity to layer his involvement deeply rather than across the surface of many activities and the resultant learning has been transformational. He has confidence in his ability to learn to do things on his own, to be self-reliant, and he wants to use that ability to help others be similarly empowered (personal communication, July 25, 2014).

Systems thinking, when combined with an orientation toward service, is a potentially powerful tool to promote sustainability. I think again of Matilda who was conscientious about littering because she knew it would negatively impact two circles of which she was a part. First, it would show disrespect toward and create work for her fellow students and friends whose work assignments were grounds crew. Secondly, her job in Admissions would be negatively affected if the campus was strewn with trash as she gave tours to prospective students and families. If Matilda were further challenged to consider other systems to which littering could be harmful, to actively practice deeper thinking about its rippling effect, she would learn a way of thinking that allows one to predict unintended consequences and act in a way so as to mitigate them. The orientation toward service is an important component to this because in order to be motivated to change behavior, one must have the capacity to care for the well-being of others and to prioritize that over satisfying personal desires. To approach the same point differently, for those who take pleasure in helping others, developing systems thinking skills can enable them to actively consider how to maximize their positive impact on others through intentional, informed decision-making to mutual positive ends: a satisfying life lived for the betterment of as many as possible. I believe this is what Alice Lloyd would have called walking the Purpose Road.

The core and secondary values discovered at Alice Lloyd College have the potential to yield sustainable thinking and behaviors. Their active cultivation in a higher education setting that prompts systems thinking can therefore lead to the paradigm shift toward education for

sustainability for which Sterling (2001) called in his critique of the current popular education model.

ALC as a Model for Sustainability Education

More than once during the data analysis process, I asked myself "Is it necessary for decision-making to consciously be rooted in awareness of and commitment to sustainability if one's culture is such that he or she behaves in a sustainable way without conscious thought?" After much debate, I have come to the following responses to my own question; none of them are a clear yes or no. If one accepts that blue collar values can themselves foster sustainable thought and action, this creates further justification for supporting this culture rather than subjugating it in our higher education institutions. Not only does this allow these students to make healthy connections to their campuses that increase their likelihood of persisting to graduation, but it also then allows this culture to continue to thrive in these students as opposed to being overwritten by middle or upper class values that currently dominate most colleges and universities. Furthermore, if these students are not asked to subjugate their own culture, their unsuppressed presence on campuses may positively shift the institutional culture toward a more sustainable paradigm, even if only in ways that are not consciously chosen. Lastly, while sustainable thought and behavior that is not critically considered is preferable to unsustainable thought and behavior, the ability to apply critical thinking to decision-making has greater potential to create a rippling positive effect. As an example, consider Returning to my question, it is therefore not necessary but preferable for decision-making to be consciously motivated by awareness of and commitment to sustainability. This can, and I assert *should*, be the role of higher education: to equip students with the skills to critically analyze their decisions to maximize their positive influence on social, economic, and environmental systems. I call this,

quite simply, helping the way we are needed. We can maximize our ability to help, to have our footprint be primarily positive, by using systems thinking to predict and mitigate unintended consequences that result from our decisions. It is therefore wise to support and develop those cultures that, to a degree, do this naturally.

Next I will overtly delineate the ways in which Alice Lloyd College is succeeding in cultivating sustainability, regardless of whether or not it is understood in these terms on campus, as well as the opportunities for further growth. This discussion will be framed around the three traditional arms of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental justice. One blue collar value, respect for authority, is presented as a caveat to ALC's efficacy in fully promoting sustainability.

Strengths: Social and economic justice. Within the first two major content categories of findings are indicators that ALC is succeeding in cultivating social and economic justice. To start from a wide-scope lens, the institution's mission (which, as established in Chapter 4, participants believe is actively lived, not merely given lip service) is rooted in social justice. ALC's primary goal is to provide advocacy for and enrichment of the marginalized, economically challenged population of Appalachia. This goal is also innately connected to economic justice, particularly given the means by which the College pursues it. The obvious factor is the tuition guarantee program which makes higher education affordable for the College's target population, low-income Appalachians who would otherwise not be able to afford it. The College seeks to minimize the need for student loans because the hope is that graduates will seek employment in the region, but faculty and staff are cognizant that earning potential is low for those who stay and therefore student loan debt would be crippling (Don &

Miranda, personal communication, July 23, 2014; Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014).

The mission statement and the tuition guarantee are two large institutional constructs that promote social and economic justice. In more nuanced ways, a third construct that achieves these ends is the character-based education. Through months of data collection and analysis, I have come to think of ALC's character-based education as synonymous with the active teaching of blue collar values. Through the intentional development of work ethic, a spirit of service, and self-reliance, ALC is cultivating citizens who are motivated to help others, have the skills to take care of themselves, and have the work ethic to put forth the effort that both require. Taken individually, these values may have no implications for sustainability. However, in combination they have strong potential for promoting social and economic justice. Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) argued that subsistence is a more socially, economically, and environmentally just economic model than capitalism because it empowers individuals to care for themselves rather than fostering dependence on unsustainable and corrupt systems such as industrial agriculture and the aforementioned OPEC petrodollar. Individuals working in smaller, localized systems are more likely to notice and address negative feedback loops sooner, and their rippling impact is slower and smaller than that of industrial, globalized systems. (See Figure 8 for an illustration of this comparison using food systems as an example.) In more localized systems, unintended consequences play out closer in time and proximity to the root cause, and therefore those who created them are more likely to be impacted by them which increases motivation to mitigate them. In the spirit of self-reliance, ALC declines direct federal funding for which it is eligible, choosing instead to be financially self-sufficient with the majority of operations funded

through donations. This is yet another means by which the institution models subsistence, thereby teaching and promoting social and economic justice.

Figure 8. Comparison of Localized v. Globalized Food System

Figure 8. This infographic, from Mother Nature Network, demonstrates both the negative and positive effect of consumers' food decisions along a continuum of local to global sourcing. Consideration is given to impact on the environment in terms of energy use and resulting carbon emissions, impact on growers, and impact on consumers in terms of health, convenience, and affordability. In critically analyzing this content, one can see that the effects of the locavore diets are more centralized which mitigates negative environmental impact.

Reciprocity underlies blue collar values. To revisit and expand on an earlier point, Fair Trade Learning is an intentional approach to building fair and balanced educational partnerships through striving for reciprocity in program design and decision-making. FTL's concern for the social, economic, and environmental well-being of communities that host students is a direct parallel to the goals of sustainability, meaning that the enactment of FTL principles yields sustainable outcomes. To reiterate, Alice Lloyd College's educational model is the exemplification of Fair Trade Learning in that reciprocity characterizes their interactions with students and families (through the tuition guarantee), with the local community (through its involvement in major campus events such as Appalachian Days), and with the broader Appalachian region (through the commitment to keep graduates in the region). As may seem obvious, ALC constituents have been applying FTL principles to their decision-making since long before these principles were formally articulated. I posit that this is because reciprocity, which is the primary vehicle for carrying out FTL principles, is the underpinning of several blue collar values. For example, the blue collar emphasis on relationships, on loyalty to peers, on collectivism: each of these is grounded in an ideology of giving to receive, in the belief that people should take care of one another. Another blue collar value that is rooted in reciprocity is work ethic. Several participants talked about not wanting or expecting handouts, believing that one should work for and earn things (Charlie, personal communication, June 10, 2014; Emerson, personal communication, July 23, 2014; Nancy, personal communication, July 22, 2014; Sawyer, personal communication, July 25, 2014). This belief extended beyond earning money; one should also work to earn seniority, to earn respect, to earn a place in heaven. None of these should be simply expected or given. Again, this points to reciprocity as an underlying value. The conclusion I have therefore reached is that, in the same way that Fair Trade Learning

principles promote sustainability through reciprocity, blue collar culture fosters more sustainable attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the active cultivation of blue collar values at Alice Lloyd College is sustainability education in practice.

Area for growth: Environmental justice. The caveat to the above conclusion, the elephant in the room so to speak, is that blue collar values have not protected the Appalachian region from the significant environmental degradation that has resulted from coal mining. While perhaps effective in the areas of social and economic justice, blue collar values have not yielded sustainable outcomes in the area of environmental justice, at least not within Appalachia. This is not to say that they cannot. On the contrary, I assert that the same values that drive Appalachians to prioritize the good of their human community over personal wants are transferable to their natural community if those within the culture are challenged to overtly think in this way. However, for the sake of survival, the region's view of and relationship with nature remains anthropocentric, meaning human-centered, with primary concern given to how nature can help humans meet immediate needs. This blinds the longer-term view which would reveal that future ability to meet basic needs is being compromised by current behavior.

The final finding discussed in Chapter 4, that of regional challenges' impact on ALC, alluded to this issue, that survival trumps environmental concern. The College's policy of staying out of religion and politics, which stems from concern for institutional survival, ties their hands in any effort to find an alternative to coal. However, I do not believe that this anthropocentric view is the go-to mode for many Appalachians, and I sensed that a shift toward eco- or bio-centric thinking would not be unwelcome. An appreciation for nature was the backline to many conversations I had with participants. Jay, for example, was happier at ALC than he believed he would be at a more urban college because of its wilderness-like setting. Both

he and Tom described the campus as "peaceful" and appreciated the outdoor activities to which they had easy access (personal communication, July 25, 2014). Tom's affinity for nature was more developed and well-articulated than most participants, and he hoped to one day work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In describing what he feels his purpose is, Tom stated,

> I actually have a bible study group…and it's something that I feel very strongly about and I think that I am being called to that and to help out with my fish and wildlife...Those are my two loves right there, God and the outdoors. I mean, what more could I need? (personal communication, July 25, 2014)

He went on to describe the mountains as "breathtaking. Your own revelation" (personal communication, July 25, 2014).

Some participants expressed sadness, frustration even, that nature could not be more highly prioritized. Charlie spent a summer interning with the state government and was annoyed by what he perceived to be the governor's priorities: widening roads and expanding broadband internet connectivity for the state. Neither addressed what he saw as more pressing, finding an alternative to coal to begin to repair the health of the region (personal communication, June 10, 2014). Because of the surrounding natural beauty, Miranda was cautiously optimistic about tourism becoming the replacement industry. Her caution stemmed from watching the Smokey Mountains become overdeveloped to the point that visiting there is no longer the nature retreat that it was in her youth (personal communication, July 23, 2014). These examples serve to support the assertion that, given relief from the struggle for survival, more ALC constituents would take greater interest in environmental justice.

Respect for authority as a caveat. Within blue collar cultures, it is disrespectful to pose questions to authority figures (Lubrano, 2004). One student participant stated "I'm not the curious type" when asked if he had questions at the conclusion of our interview. What this revealed to me was that he had adopted the blue collar value of respect for authority, of not

asking questions or challenging what is presented by someone higher in a given hierarchy. Another term for this is obedience. While I maintain that blue collar values contribute actively to sustainability, respect for authority is one that may hold ALC back from being the complete picture of sustainability education. I observed obedience to two authorities in particular: Alice Lloyd and God. Religion itself is a type of authority. It provides rules and people/deities to follow. Obedience is expected of followers, and Lubrano (2004) noted that devoutness is common among blue collar people who culturally value respect for authority. Alice Lloyd, the highest authority of ALC, first commanded that the College not get involved in religion or politics. Contradictorily, she was also the one to establish the expectation that students would maintain Christian values. This contradiction persists today, as ALC's formal mission statement includes "providing an atmosphere in which Christian values are maintained, encouraging high personal standards, and the development of character" (Alice Lloyd College, 2012a).

If Alice Lloyd's policy was not obeyed and religious and/or political issues could be openly discussed, the College could more directly engage in finding a solution for Appalachia's economic hardships, i.e., finding an alternative to the coal industry. Concern for offending donors and the regional community, which strongly values both religious practice and the coal industry, reinforces respect for Alice Lloyd's early directive to stay out of religious and politically-charged matters. In this way, the need for survival combines with the value of respecting authority to create conditions for engraining rather than overcoming unsustainable patterns, policies, and practices. Hence, unlike many others that have been discussed, respect for authority is a blue collar value that may impede sustainability.

Chapter Summary

In summary, three primary conclusions were derived from this research (see Figure 9). First, because the culture of Alice Lloyd College mirrors that of its Appalachian service area, the College is uniquely positioned to attract and retain students from this region, most of whom are low-income and the first in their families to attend college. Students here feel little cultural dissonance in transitioning between home and school life, and their families are part of their support network rather than a source of dissonance stress as is the case for many first-generation students on more traditional campuses. The work program is a large factor in creating a culturally congruent experience for students and one that maintains value in the face of blue collar criticisms that higher education is pursued by those seeking to avoid honest work.

The second conclusion is that blue collar values, particularly those that are core to ALC's culture, are rooted in sustainable thought and their active cultivation can lead to more sustainable behavior. This was illustrated through applying the concepts of subsistence, the Slow Food Movement, and systems thinking. Subsistence as a way of life minimizes resource consumption and maximizes self-reliance. It requires a strong work ethic and a spirit of service, a willingness to help support fellow community members. It also requires a slower lifestyle, which Slow Food principles assert is environmentally cleaner and socially fairer than lifestyles that mirror the fast food industry. Systems thinking is the tool that moves blue collar behavior from being uncritical to being a conscious choice, and it is the means by which one can measure decisions to predict the most positive course of action for the greatest number of people.

The third conclusion, which connects and extends the first two, is that Alice Lloyd College is sustainability education in practice. The institution promotes social and economic justice by virtue of engaging a marginalized population in higher education and by actively

supporting and fostering blue collar values. It enacts Fair Trade Learning principles, which actively promote sustainability, by virtue of its commitment to reciprocity in relationships with students, the local community, and the Appalachian region broadly. And while the institution prioritizes survival over environmental justice, there is a biophilic ethos within the campus community which suggests that a more environmentally-friendly survival mechanism than coal would be welcome.

The following chapter will review the content of each previous chapter of the dissertation and further articulate the import of the findings and conclusions in the field of sustainability education.

Figure 9. Research Conclusions: ALC as Sustainability Education for Appalachia

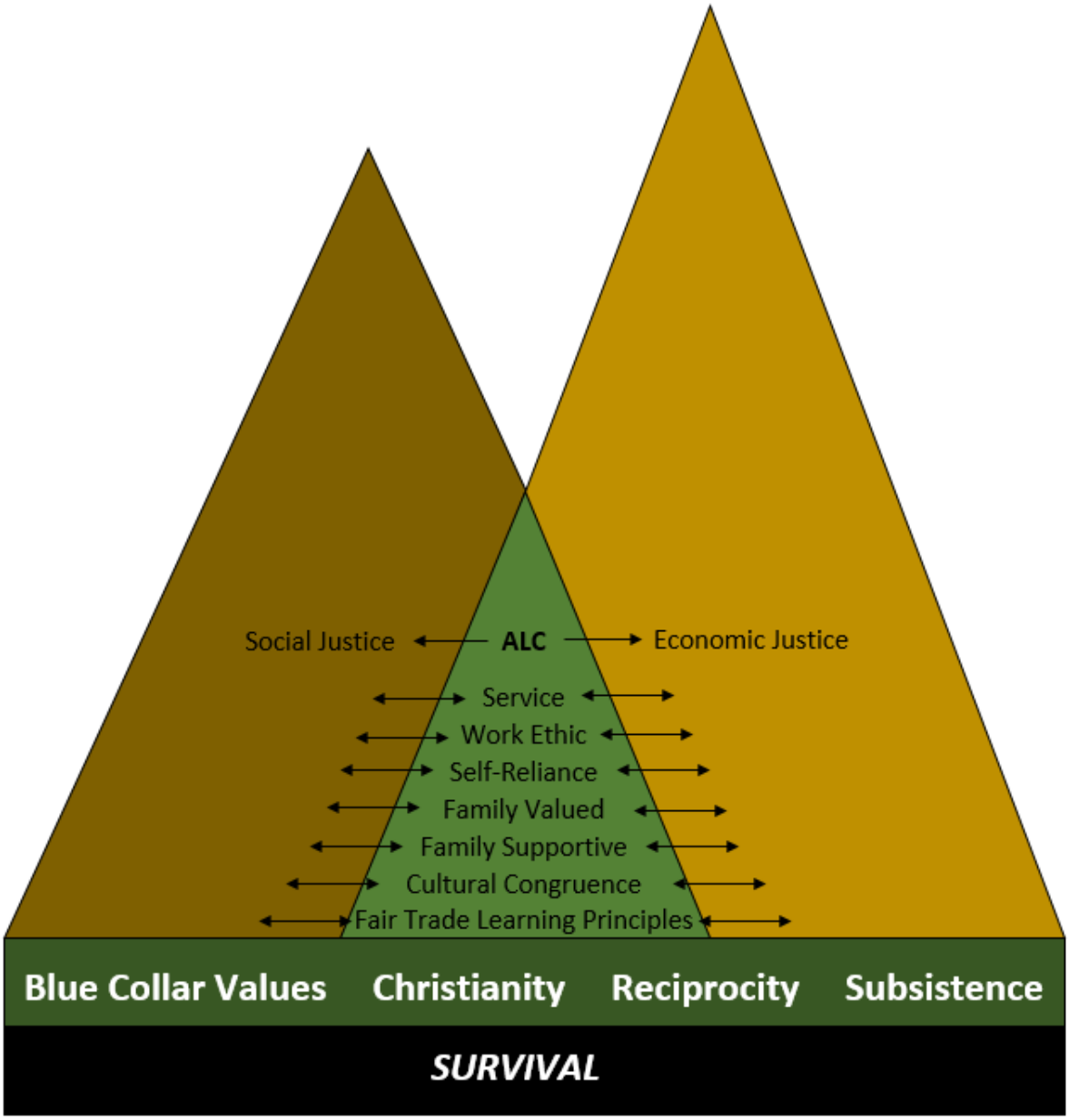

Figure 9. Words within the central triangle represent the findings of this study. The two-directional arrows signify characteristics found in Alice Lloyd College that are reflected both within campus culture and Appalachian regional culture. The presence of these characteristics enable the College to promote two areas of sustainability, social and economic justice, within Appalachia. The first bar beneath the mountains represents those elements of campus and regional culture that informed discussion of the findings but were not, in themselves, stand-alone findings of the research. The bottom bar represents the coal industry, which is viewed by many Appalachians as the best option for ensuring survival. As its position in the graphic denotes, this is the issue that underlies and trumps all other activities.

Chapter 6: Utility of the Research, Limitations, & Recommendations for Future Research

Utility of the Research

The findings and resultant conclusions of this study inspire in me a strong hope as they prescribe a clear path forward toward education for sustainability. Similar to some of my participants, I advocate for the broader adoption of work programs like ALC's across the higher education sector. The outcomes of a work program are invaluable for student learning, for students' financial health, and for institutional financial viability. Further, a work program has the potential to instill, to some degree, the blue collar values that were discovered to be a trifecta for sustainable thinking: work ethic, spirit of service, and self-reliance.

As a caveat, I am not suggesting that all campuses across the United States should adapt to be more congruent with blue collar culture. This would create dissonance for other students whose upbringings are not blue collar. Implementation would necessarily look different in different places depending on what is culturally appropriate, but I would guess that any group could embrace or benefit from enhanced work ethic, service orientation, and self-reliance in its members. In terms of retention implications, the conclusion reached here is that creating cultural congruence is a more sound approach to retaining students of any culture rather than expecting students to weather dissonance and distance themselves from a potential support network. Perhaps it is better for institutions to acknowledge and act upon the knowledge that they are "not for everyone".

Moving forward, my intentions for utilizing this research are specific. Four years ago, unsure of its existence, I envisioned a higher education environment in which my values and upbringing would be honored. In my mind's eye, this was a place characterized by simpler and more self-sufficient living, something that simultaneously resembled the gracious third-world

communities in which I have spent time and the camp experiences of my youth which inspired my personal commitment to sustainability. I pursued doctoral candidacy with the express intention of determining what about those experiences was so impactful, whether or not such transformation and belonging in these settings was a generalized experience or one unique to me, and how to apply those answers toward higher education reform. In essence, I sought to determine whether or not the environment I envisioned could achieve what I hoped it could: to welcome and support blue collar students while fostering sustainable attitudes, patterns of thought, and behaviors. This research has revealed ALC as a model for achieving these goals, and I intend to use this as the rationale for developing a similar, but more overtly environmentally conscientious, campus that students of more traditional institutions can attend for a study-away semester so as to make this transformative experience available to the greatest possible number of students. In this way, blue collar students who are experiencing dissonance at their home institutions may have a semester-long reprieve that affirms their values. Conversely, students whose background is not blue collar may be transformed by a cross-cultural experience while learning skills for sustainable living. This is how I intend to walk the Purpose Road.

Limitations

The scope of this research is limited by its design in two ways that I would be remiss in not mentioning. First, while data was collected across three seasons and in both semesters that hold different milestones in the College's annual cycle, direct interviewing took place only in the summer months. Summer is not an academic term at ALC, but students can choose to stay for the summer months if they sign up for a work team. Given these parameters, the students with whom I spoke may have comprised a group that collectively values work more highly than the

average ALC student. In that they self-selected to spend their summers on campus, they may also have stronger positive connections to the campus than the average student feels. However, financial necessity was a clear reason for many of them choosing to work for the summer. Furthermore, based on site observations made during the spring and fall semesters as well as interviews with faculty and staff who consistently work year-round, the major themes found in the data likely would have been unchanged had I interviewed a broader student sample.

The second important limitation is that this study describes the culture of one particular work college and is not meant to describe that of any of the other six federally-recognized work colleges. (These include Berea College in Kentucky, Blackburn College in Illinois, College of the Ozarks in Missouri, Ecclesia College in Arkansas, Sterling College in Vermont, and Warren Wilson College in North Carolina.) The seven work colleges have organized themselves into a consortium and it was through this entity that I first began investigating the possibility of conducting research at a work college. I initially intended to study all of the work colleges located in Appalachia, but as the then-director of the consortium explained, each of the seven work colleges are culturally unique and serve differing target populations. Even the three within the Appalachian region have very different goals and student demographics. Alice Lloyd College was ultimately chosen as the sole focus of this research because it was the only institution that deliberately addressed Appalachian culture and challenges in its espoused mission. The common thread across the seven colleges is that they have a required work program, but even that is implemented with great variation in each location which could make the student outcomes of each work experience different. Therefore, the findings and conclusions reached here are not generalizable to other work colleges.

Recommendations for Future Research

I would like to suggest areas for future research that I or others may pursue to further build upon the learning derived from this doctoral study. In addition to the propagation of the work college model similar to that of ALC's, I also advocate for the broader adoption of a character-based curriculum. While many institutions espouse a mission of cultivating responsible citizenship or something similar, ALC has something to offer as a model for how to infuse this into the fabric of life on campus. Further research could focus on how exactly this is achieved as well as how it can be achieved elsewhere in an equally culturally appropriate way.

A second area that has rich potential for future research is the point of tension between religion, politics, and environmentalism at Alice Lloyd College. Fascinating paradoxes exist within and across these three issues. All three are topics which are purposefully avoided, yet all three contribute considerably to the culture of the campus and its role in the local and regional community. For example, the campus is non-denominational, but underlying assumptions are that all campus community members are Christian and that the College seeks to promote Christian values. Non-Christians are believed to be ill-suited for attending ALC. The intersection of politics and environmentalism places limits on the ways in which the institution is comfortable working toward carrying out its mission of uplifting the Appalachian region. In examining these issues that are simultaneously ignored yet pivotal, deeper research could unpack the ways in which the College's handling of them makes it more or less culturally congruent for the region. Action research could explore the efficacy of methods for reconciling the need for survival with the seemingly prevalent appreciation for nature, methods such as eco-tourism or the active teaching of affluent subsistence.

Additional areas of research that could extend from this study include drawing connections to sense of place writings and the scholarly dialogue on leadership pedagogy. The body of research on sense of place is rich and seemingly has relevance to Alice Lloyd College's ability to engage people from a particular place, the Appalachian region. In regard to leadership pedagogy, ALC touts itself as a place that is cultivating leaders for Appalachia and to this end all students are required to take a foundational leadership course. Future research could examine the ways in which the institution's focus on character is or is not the application of leadership pedagogy. Researchers may also explore the appropriateness of certain types of leadership for blue collar followers and draw links to how those leadership styles may promote sustainability.

Chapter Conclusion

When asked what he believed Alice Lloyd most wanted students to learn in college, Tom responded without hesitation: "How to survive. How to thrive" (personal communication, July 25, 2014). The tension point between these two goals is the nexus of what makes Alice Lloyd College a dynamic, sometimes paradoxical, study in sustainability education. I posit that the values-driven campus environment cultivated through the academic and work programs is a model for fostering a paradigm rooted in social and economic justice, and one with strong potential for building concern for environmental justice. The values that are implicit to the Appalachian region are grounded in reciprocity which yields sustainable thought and action. As such, these values could and should be actively cultivated more broadly across the higher education sector in such a way that is supported by this and future research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary

Academic rigor— the academic strength and level of difficulty of an institution's curriculum. Participants believed ALC's degree of rigor to be high, equal to or greater than that of other private institutions in Kentucky. This belief seemed to be rooted in the fact that distractions such as extra-curricular involvements and social outlets are purposefully limited to allow for heightened academic focus.

Convocation—an assembly, lecture, or other type of presentation that is part of Alice Lloyd College's mandatory, credit-bearing Convocation program which is designed to provide students with cultural enrichment and a variety of social and political perspectives by welcoming external performers and presenters to campus.

Culture— Tylor (1871) offered the first formal definition, stating "Culture, or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." This individualistic definition was expanded by Franz Boas over the course of his career. Boas asserted that culture is "an integrated system of symbols, ideas and values that should be studied as a working system, an organic whole." The primary difference between these two definitions is that Tylor viewed culture as specific to an individual while Boas believed it was created through the beliefs and actions of a group. It is Boas' definition that underpins modern anthropology.

Dissertation—the final write-up of research conducted to satisfy requirements for a doctoral degree. A doctoral degree, also known as a Doctor of Philosophy degree or a Ph.D., is the highest formal academic credential one can earn in most fields of study. A Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree are typically required prior to enrolling in a doctoral program.

Ethnography— "a qualitative [research] design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group" (Creswell, 2007)

Family environment—refers to the atmosphere of Alice Lloyd College as described by study participants. The phrase meant that they viewed the campus as warm and welcoming to people of all ages, a place where people cared about others and all adults played a parent role in that they would give students advice and/or admonishment as deemed necessary or appropriate. The phrase carried a positive connotation and described a place where participants felt a sense of belonging. It was not indicative of any negative associations despite the fact that not all families are warm, welcoming, or foster a sense of belonging.

Higher education—refers to formal education beyond the high school level. It can include masters and doctoral programs but in this dissertation it primarily refers to undergraduate institutions, meaning colleges and universities that offer Bachelor's degrees.

Service area—refers to the 108-county area in which Alice Lloyd College's recruitment efforts are targeted and where students must be from to be eligible for the tuition guarantee. The service area spans parts of Kentucky, Ohio, and Virginia and covers all of West Virginia. All 108 counties are Appalachian geographically and by federal designation for the purpose of social programs geared toward the region.

Sustainability— a term introduced in 1981 by Lester Brown to describe a society's ability to meet its own needs without compromising future generations' ability to do the same. In the years since, the definition has been expanded to suggest that action toward social, economic, and environmental justice is action toward sustainability.

The region—refers to the Appalachian region, the area of the United States which geographically corresponds to the Appalachian mountain range that touches 11 states from New York to Georgia and is culturally understood to be characterized by economic poverty and working class values.

Tuition guarantee—the ALC policy that allows students from the institution's service area to work 10 hours per week in exchange for free tuition. Students who do not complete 10 hours per week (or 160 hours per semester) are required to reimburse the College for the missed hours and risk being dismissed from the institution.

Values— "refers to the importance a person attaches to something that serves as a guide to action. Values are also tied in with enduring beliefs that one's mode of conduct is better than the opposite mode of conduct" (DuBrin, 2007). Values inform behavior and attitudes, and shared sets of values help to define cultures.

Appendix B: Fair Trade Learning Principles

This list is taken directly from Hartman, Paris, and Blache-Cohen's (2014) articulation of ethical standards for community engagement during international service learning experiences.

Core principles:

1.1. *Dual Purposes.* Programs are organized with community and student outcomes in mind. The ethics of integrating community development with student learning necessitates that as much attention is paid to community outcomes as to student learning. One purpose is therefore never primary. Rather, community-driven outcomes and student learning about ethical global engagement must be held in balance with one another.

1.2. *Community Voice and Direction.* Drawing on best practices in community development, service-learning, and public health, community-based efforts must be community driven. Community engagement, learning, program design, and budgeting should all include significant community direction, feedback, and opportunities for iterative improvements. Attention to the best practices referenced above suggests practitioners should triangulate community voice, actively seek the voices of the marginalized, and otherwise be systematic about inclusion of broad community perspective and multiple stakeholders regarding direction and goals. While student outcomes are certainly important and we point to dual purposes above, the typical bias of universities to serving students and organizations to serving customers requires a special focus on and attention to community voice and direction.

1.3. *Commitment and Sustainability.* International education programming should only be undertaken within a robust understanding of how the programming relates to the continuous learning of the student and community-defined goals of the host community. For students, this translates as a relationship between the program, preparatory courses, and re-entry programming. Such programming should support the development of the individual student and/or continuous connection to the community partnership or ethical question addressed after returning to campus. Ideally, on campus faculty, activities, and programs support students' efforts to engage in ongoing global civic engagement and social change programming related to their immersion experiences. For community partners, this means clarity regarding the nature of the commitment with the university or international education provider, as well as a clear vision of likely developments in the partnership and community-driven goals for the next year, three years forward, and even as many as five years in the future.

1.4. *Transparency.* Students and community partners should be aware of how program funds are spent and why. Decision making regarding program fund expenditures should be transparent. Lines of authority should be clear. Transparency should extend throughout GSL relationships, from the university to and through any providers and to the community.

1.5. *Environmental Sustainability and Footprint Reduction*. Program administrators should dialogue with community partners about environmental impacts of the program and the balance of those impacts with program benefits. Together, partnership leaders must consider strategies for impact mediation, including supporting local environmental initiatives and/or opportunities for participants to travel to and from their program site "carbon neutral" (e.g. by purchasing "passes" or "green tags").

1.6. *Economic Sustainability.* Program costs and contributions should be aligned with local economies or social dynamics within the community. Donations or project support should reflect a sustainability perspective, thereby taking into account and/or developing the capacity of the community partner to manage funding effectively and ethically. University-based practitioners may also need to cooperate with their development and finance offices to create the capacity to responsibly manage funds targeted toward these specific initiatives.

1.7. *Deliberate Diversity, Intercultural Contact, and Reflection.* The processes that enhance intercultural learning and acceptance involve deliberate intercultural contact and structured reflective processes by trusted mentors. This is true whether groups are multi-ethnic and situated domestically, comprised of international participants, only students, or community members and students. Program administrators and community partners should work to enhance diversity of participants at all points of entry, and should nurture structured reflective intercultural learning and acceptance within all programs.

1.8. *Global community building.* The program should point toward better future possibilities for students and community members. With community members, the program should encourage multi-directional exchange to support learning

opportunities for individuals from the receiving communities, as well as continuous contact and commitment regarding local development and/or advocacy goals. With students, the program should facilitate a return process whereby learners have reflective opportunities and resources to explore growth in their understandings of themselves as individuals capable of responsible and ethical behavior in global context.

Community-centered standards

2.1 *Purpose.* Program administrators should engage in continuous dialogue with community partners regarding the partnership's potential to contribute to community-driven efforts that advance human flourishing in the context of environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Continuous dialogue should include minimally annual evaluation and assessment of the partnership and its purposes.

2.2 *Community preparation.* Community organizations and partners should receive clear pre-program clarity regarding expectations, partnership parameters through formal or informal memoranda of understanding, and sensitization that includes visitors' customs and patterns, and fullest possible awareness of possible ramifications (both positive and negative) of hosting.

2.3 *Timing, duration, and repetition.* Program administrators should cooperate with community members to arrive at acceptable program timing, lengths, and repetition of student groups in communities. Different communities have demonstrated varying degrees of interest in timing of programs, their duration, and their regularity of repetition. This, like all such conversations, must be highly contextualized within particular communities and partnerships.

2.4 *Group size.* Program administrators must discuss ideal group size with community members and arrange program accordingly. Large groups of visiting students can have positive and negative effects on local communities, including undermining traditional cultural knowledge and distorting the local economy.

2.5 *Local sourcing.* The program should maximize the economic benefits to local residents by cooperating with community members to ensure program participant needs are addressed through indigenous sources. Community-engaged programs should categorically not parallel the economic structures of enclave tourism. Maximum local ownership and economic benefit is central to the ethos of community partnership. For example:

2.5.1 Transparently reimbursed host families offer stronger local economic development than hotels or hostels that are frequently owned by distant corporate organizations.

2.5.2 Local eateries, host families, and/or local cooks should be contracted to support local economic development and offer opportunities to learn about locally available foods.

2.5.3 Local guides and educators should be contracted to the fullest extent possible, including contracting with professionalized/credentialed as well as non-professionalized and non-credentialed educators who hold and understand local knowledge, history, traditions, and worldview.

2.6 *Direct service, advocacy, education, project management, and organization building*. To the extent desired by the community, the program involves students as service-learners, interns, and researchers in locally accountable organizations. Students learn from, contribute skills or knowledge to, and otherwise support local capacity through community improvement actions over a continuous period of time. Ideally, community members or organizations should have a direct role in preparing or training students to maximize their contributions to community work. Students should be trained in the appropriate role of the outsider in community development programs. They should also be trained on participatory methods, cultural appropriateness, and program design, with a focus on local sustainability and capacity development.

2.7 *Reciprocity*. Consistent with stated best practices in service-learning, public health, and development, efforts are made to move toward reciprocal relationships with community partners. These efforts should include opportunities for locals to participate in accredited courses, chances to engage in multi-directional exchange, and clear leadership positions, authority, and autonomy consistent with the ideals articulated in "Community Voice and Direction" above. Outcomes for communities should be as important as student outcomes; if this balance is not clear, program design adjustments should be made.

Student-centered standards

1.9. Purpose. The program leaders instill an ethical vision of human flourishing by systematically encouraging student reflection and growth regarding responsible and ethical behavior in global context.

1.10. Student preparation. Robust learning in international education is clearly predicated upon careful preparation for participating students. Student preparation

should include pre- or-in-field training that equips learners with the basic conceptual and experiential "tools" to optimize field learning, with greater or less attention given to the concepts mentioned here based on program design, community desires, and student learning goals. Programs may expect students to acquire a working knowledge of the host country's political history and its relationship to global trends and pressures, current events, group customs and household patterns, ethnographic skills, service ethics, and research methods, as well as culturally appropriate project design, participatory methods, and other community-based approaches and tools. This may require transdisciplinary courses and multidisciplinary cooperation among faculty members.

1.11. Connect context to coursework and learning. The program leaders engage documented best practices in international education, service-learning, and experiential education broadly by systematically using reflection to connect experiential program components with course goals, global civic engagement goals, and intercultural learning goals.

1.12. Challenge and support. Program leaders embrace lessons learned regarding reflection in experiential education and intercultural learning by ensuring the living and learning environment is characterized by "challenge and support" for students.

1.12.1. Student housing opportunities encourage sustained intercultural contact, opportunities for reflection, and connection to intercultural learning.

1.12.2. Students are systematically encouraged to engage in contact with the local population that deliberately moves students out of "group cocoons" and into interpersonal relationships with a variety of local individuals.

1.12.3. Service projects or community programs are conducted collaboratively, with students working alongside community members to maximize cultural understanding and local context knowledge.

1.13. *Program length.* Program design decisions recognize the strengths and limitations of different lengths of programming, and learning outcomes and educative processes are specifically calibrated to achieve outcomes consistent with program length.

1.14. *Instruction and mentoring.* The program provides the necessary external facilitation and supervision to keep students focused, active, and reflective in their learning. The field support system includes "mentor-advisors" drawn from the host community (e.g. host family members, service supervisors, language coaches, and research guides).

1.15. *Communicative skills and language learning.* Based on the length of the program and consultation with community partners, the program leaders choose the best possible strategy to improve current language and communication skills *and* spark interest in future language learning. The growth in short-term study abroad should in this light be seen as an opportunity to entice students toward language learning, rather than an excuse to avoid significant language development. More and deeper language learning is always optimal for improved communication and community partnership.

1.16. *Preparation for healthy return to home communities.* Before and after return, program leadership offers guidance, information, reflective opportunities, and exposure to networks intended to support students' growth as globally engaged, interested, and active individuals. This is part of both course planning and institutional support, as it should extend from the course into student programming and organizations as well as career services and academic career opportunities.

Appendix C: Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, agree to assist researcher Lindsey Laret with her study titled *Helping the Way We're Needed: Ethnography of an Appalachian Work College* by recruiting participants and scheduling interviews. I agree to maintain full confidentiality when performing these tasks.
Specifically, I agree to:

- keep all research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any form or format (e.g., email, etc.) with anyone other than the primary researcher;

- hold in strictest confidence the identification of any participant that may be revealed during the course of assisting with the above research tasks;

- not make copies of any identifying information or raw data in any form or format (e.g., interview schedule, audio recordings, etc.) unless specifically requested to do so by the primary researcher;

- keep all identifying information secure while it is in my possession. This includes:
  - keeping all digitized documents in computer password-protected files and other raw data in a locked file;
  - closing any computer programs and documents of the raw data when temporarily away from the computer;
  - permanently deleting any e-mail communication containing the data;

- destroy all research information in any form or format that is not returnable to the primary researcher (e.g., information stored on my computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

Printed name of research assistant: _____

Office phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature of research assistant: _____ Date: _____

Printed name of primary researcher: _____
Signature of primary researcher _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Alice Lloyd College: Ethnography of an Appalachian Work College

Dear _____,

I am writing to ask you to participate in my research project because of your relationship with Alice Lloyd College. You were referred to me by _____. As I mentioned when we initially spoke, the purpose of my research is to understand how Alice Lloyd College prepares students for lives of purpose, how the College has built and maintained relationships with families and community members, and how the College's approach to education may promote social justice. Participation in this study is voluntary. *SENTENCE FOR STUDENTS ONLY:* If you have been recommended by one of your professors, your grade will not be negatively affected if you choose not to participate. *SENTENCE FOR EMPLOYEES ONLY:* Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with Alice Lloyd College. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time.

This research project will have two components:

1. Two in-person interviews, each lasting approximately an hour. The first can take place in the summer, and the second will likely be in late fall or early spring. I will be on campus in June, July, and October, and will work around your schedule to find a time that is convenient for you.
2. When we meet for our interviews, I would also like to collect photos of things that have been important to your experience or that you think really capture the essence of ALC. These can be anything: people, places, events, specific items. You can take these photos and bring them to the interview for us to look at together, or you can show me around campus when we meet and I can take the photos then.
3. When we meet, I would like to record the interviews. I can stop recording during parts of the interview at your request if you feel like you would prefer to speak "off the record."

Your participation in this study means that you and your experiences may be described in one or more research articles. I will share any articles with you so that you can review them before I submit them for publication. You can choose to remove your information if you wish to do so at that time, or at any time before.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Prescott College Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may contact the Prescott College IRB committee through Dr. Noel Cox Caniglia at 928-350-3201 with any questions regarding your rights as a research participant. If any question or problems arise, you may contact me (Lindsey Laret) at 330-831-4170, lindsey.laret@gmail.com, or 1972 Clark Ave, Alliance, OH 44601.

Your signature below confirms that you have decided to participate in this study. Knowing that your participation is voluntary, please initial **only** the statements that name activities you agree to participate in. Thank you very much for your participation. I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

_____ I agree to participate in 2 in-person interviews over the summer and fall of 2014.

_____ I agree to my interviews being audio recorded.
_____ I agree to allow pictures I have taken to be used for purposes of this research. *(You will be credited if I include your photos in a research article or if I include photos that I take based on your prompting.)*

_____ _____
Lindsey Laret Date

_____ _____
Participant Date

Appendix E: Sample Interview Questions

The following questions are arranged in an order that roughly follows the chronology of a student experience, beginning with inquiry into how the student ended up at Alice Lloyd College and ending with questions regarding post-graduation aspirations. This order was tested in a pilot interview in June, 2014 and was revised at that time to include additional narrowing questions. Also of note, these questions are written for a student perspective but the general themes represented here also informed the questions asked of faculty and staff in focus group settings.

Question Category: Demographics and Ice Breakers

- Where are you from? (what county/town)
- Are you from the 108-county service area?
- How many semesters have you been a student here?
- What are you studying here?
- Are you involved in anything in addition to working and studying? Tell me about it.

Question Category: Motivation and Expectations

- What made you decide to come to Alice Lloyd College?
- Did you consider other colleges?
- What made you decide to go to college in general?
- How did you find out about Alice Lloyd?
- Before coming here, what did you know about it? What were your impressions?
- Has your experience here met your expectations? In other words, is it similar or different from what you thought? How?
- Have you had any experiences since you came to college that made it challenging to stay? Can you tell me about them?

Question Category: ALC Lived Experience and Espoused Mission

- If a stranger was passing through town and knew nothing about Alice Lloyd but wanted to see something that would explain what this place is all about, what are some things you would show him/her?
- Do you have a favorite place on campus? What is it and what do you like about it?
- It seems like everyone knows a lot about Alice Lloyd and June Buchanan, the founders. What do you think is the value of learning about them? What do you think about their ideas? Are they similar or different than ideas you grew up learning?
- Do you think Alice Lloyd College still teaches the same things that Mrs. Lloyd and Miss June wanted students to learn? How do you think the College has changed since their time?
- How are your classes here different than classes you took before coming here (if they are)?

Question Category: Elements of Character (Work Ethic, Self-Reliance, Purpose & Service)

- I've read a little about the Purpose Road and I saw the picture on the wall in Cushing Hall. There seems to be a lot to it. Can you tell me about it?

- In Leadership 101 you had to write a personal mission statement. What was yours? What made you choose it? Has it changed? To what degree do you think students try to live these mission statements?
- I read on the website that in your freshman year everyone has to work on janitorial staff or grounds. What was that like? How do you feel about this requirement?
- I was here in April for the work awards convocation and the work Olympics. What work team are you on? Have you had other jobs? What do you think about the work requirement here? What kind of things have you learned through your job(s)?
- I heard President Stepp tell a story at convo about a freshman who hated her job and looked miserable every day until suddenly her attitude changed. He asked her what had changed and she said she had gone home and told her mom she hated her job and wanted to quit school. Her mom's response was if you do, this is the kind of job you'll have every day for the rest of your life. Were you there when he told that story? What do you think about that?
- How have you changed since starting school here?

Question Category: Family and Community Support/Relationships

- When I went to college, no one else in my family had gone to college and while some of them were glad I was going, some of them weren't very comfortable with it. How does your family feel about you being in college? What do they think about Alice Lloyd in particular? Do they come to visit on campus or come to events here?
- Has anyone else in your family gone to college? Did any of them come here?
- How do you change your behavior/attitude/language between when you're at home and when you're at school?
- Do you get off campus very often to do things in the surrounding communities? Like what? Where do you go?
- What types of community service opportunities are available through the College? Do you or any of your classmates participate in them?
- What do you think local people think about Alice Lloyd College?
- Do you feel like Alice Lloyd has been a good choice for you? Why or why not?
- I've heard that a lot of local businesses are run by Alice Lloyd alumni. What do you want to do when you graduate? Do you think you will stay in this area/close to home?

Appendix F: Sample Entries from Research Journal

October 21, 2014: Finished listening to audio/editing transcript/taking notes on 6S3.

- Had idea for a future analysis step: Print out the questions and then print and cut apart the interviews by question to show themes within answers to each individual question.
- Maybe the (a) research question should be how do blue collar values reflect FTL principles and support sustainability? Work ethic, relationships…. I see parallels.
- My assumption that families would be unsupportive has been challenged.

November 16, 2014: I learned a lot about myself through this process. My sense of adventure, while seemingly contrary to the culture of half of my family, may actually be a direct result of other cultural values that are embedded in me: frugality, valuing experience over material things (if only because playing make believe in the woods was attainable while a video gaming system was not).
For the limitations section: Discuss that talking only to summer students may have created a group that more strongly valued work ethic than the average ALC student.

December 21, 2014:

- Family environment that is the campus: consider what implications this has for students' development as responsible citizens. 6S3 mentioned it (page 3) and many others, particularly faculty/staff.
- More musings on family importance. If a majority of participants express this, think about how that further demonstrates the importance of family support.
- Add county to demographic poster board and create a map
- Add major to demographic poster board
- Another thing to track: how many started as pre-med. This is a theme. So many say they started in biology to be doctors because their parents pushed that so they could get well-paying jobs. 6S3 talked about needing to be a teacher or a lawyer to get a job in the region, and 7F1 talked about a running joke with a local lawyer about the law community having no one to sue but each other since people in other professions leave. [Maybe talk about financial stress as a barrier to social/environmental justice.]

January 2, 2015: Working on finishing Chapter 3. I deleted a citation for a phenomenology reference since I'm no longer planning on using bracketing as a data analysis method, so I went back to the reference list in the Chapter 2 doc and crossed out that source and made it red. Try to remember that that's the procedure for tentatively removing sources from here on out. Just to err on the side of caution, don't delete anything yet!

January 29, 2015:

- Question to look at within the data: Do all student participants express love for the college, satisfaction with their decision to come here?
- This is probably mentioned above somewhere, but one way to organize the description of ALC in the paper is to describe it the way participants wanted it described, the way they said they'd explain it to a stranger.
- What role does the college's selectivity play in its elevated retention rate over other schools with lower numbers of first-generation students but higher attrition? ALC only

admits 8 to 10% of applicants (according to 6FG2, page 5) so these would be the elite and still only half of them graduate

February 1, 2015: Isn't it interesting that this place is so rooted/committed to the arts despite how survival-based they are? Maybe arts are an extension of self-reliance and autonomy. Evidence of this artistic commitment include:

- Well-developed music program despite not having a major: Voices of Appalachia and instrumental groups
- Voices of Appalachia is the fund-raising vehicle
- Christmas Pretties craft shop is what puts the college in the hearts and minds of so many in the region
- Appalachian Days is an artisan festival and many of the things sold are representative of blue collar culture—repurposing, not wasting, creativity with a practical edge

Pottery facility on campus and art classes despite no art major (not sure actually if it's a major or not….would that fit Akela's criteria for the "right" majors?)

February 22, 2015: FOR CHAPTER 5: The work program at ALC may be so impactful because of the implicit cultural value that is placed on work ethic. This indicates that a work college may be uniquely positioned to engage blue collar students and families.

February 24, 2015: An idea for a graphic in chapter 4: something to show the blue collar values that emerged and how important they were and how they related. Ex: The 3 core values then the secondary values that emerged within each of those. There could well be overlap or the appearance of the same secondary value under multiple core values.

February 25, 2015: How many institutions actually have a values statement?!

March 12, 2015: Here's a good thought about the art piece! It seems strange that the arts are so important to a culture that is so survivalist, so practical. But that perhaps makes sense after all. Think about *Eat, Pray, Love* and the book she cites that talks about why Italy is home to the mob and centuries of corrupt politics but has produced the best artists, musicians, culinary masterminds, etc. Think about the plantation songs that emerged from slavery. Is there research that demonstrates that music enhances resiliency?

Appendix G: Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audio recordings and documentations received from researcher Lindsey Laret related to her research study titled *Helping the Way We're Needed: Ethnography of an Appalachian Work College*. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-recorded interviews, or in any associated documents.

2. To not make copies of any audio recordings or computerized titles of the transcribed interviews texts, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher, Lindsey Laret.

3. To store all study-related audio recordings and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.

4. To return all audio recordings and study-related materials to Lindsey Laret in a complete and timely manner.

5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive, back-up devices, and personal accounts.

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audio recordings and/or files to which I will have access.

If I have questions about my responsibilities as transcriber, I agree to direct these questions solely to the researcher, Lindsey Laret, via phone (330-831-4170) or email (llaret@prescott.edu).

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

Appendix H: Literary Origins of Participant Pseudonyms

Students	
Blythe	*Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery
Anne	*Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery
Charlie	*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl
Matilda	*Matilda* by Roald Dahl
Clara	*House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende
Daisy	*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
Ned	*Nancy Drew Series* by Carolyn Keene
Piper	*The Pied Piper of Hamlin,* a poem by Robert Browning
Jay	*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
Tom	*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
Bess	*Nancy Drew Series* by Carolyn Keene
Scout	*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
Faculty/Staff	
Kim	*Kim* by Rudyard Kipling
Nancy	*Nancy Drew Series* by Carolyn Keene
Pippa	*Pippa Passes,* a poem by Robert Browning
Finch	*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
Akela	*The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling
Sawyer	*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
Madeline	*Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans
Miranda	*Caliban Upon Setebos,* a poem by Robert Browning
Emerson	as in Ralph Waldo Emerson, poet
Lizzy	*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
Don	*Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes

Appendix I: Attribute Coding Sample

Basic Attributes & Demographic Data for Student Participants

Participant	*Class Status*	*Major*	*First-gen*	*Gender*	*County or State*	*Favorite place*
6S1	junior	Kinesiology	yes	m	Perry, KY	work office
6S2	sophomore	Elementary Education	no	f	Whitley, KY	work office
6S3	senior	History	yes	m	Letcher, KY	*unknown*
7S1	sophomore	Bio Education	no	f	Lawrence, OH	outdoor gaming table
7S2	junior	Pre-law	yes	f	Lawrence, KY	campus overlook
7S3	senior	Math Education	yes	f	Knott, KY	curriculum center
7S4	junior	Accounting & Business	yes	m	Menifee, KY	work office
7S5	junior	Elementary Ed/Soc	no	f	Floyd, KY	work office
7S6	senior	Math Education	yes	m	Knott, KY	curriculum center
7S7	junior	History	no	m	Knott, KY	everywhere outdoors
7S8	sophomore	Pre-pharmacy	no	f	Washington, VA	work office
7S9	freshman	Sociology	yes	f	Illinois	library

*Only participant not from the 108-county service area.

Appendix J: Values Coding Sample

everybody. Some people like the big campuses and like big cities and stuff. Some people don't like that at all, they like quiet country areas. I don't know, I guess it really just depends on how much you're willing to work for your education, how much you really want it.

Lindsey: Yeah. (To Anne) What did you think when you heard that story?

Anne: I worked at McDonald's so I kind of learned a little bit about having a job outside what college can give you. But a lot of people come here not knowing anything about that. And some people come here used to having everything handed to them their whole lives, and you know, getting a job is a real eye-opener, you know, having to clean bathrooms and stuff when they didn't have to clean them at their own house. So, you know, I think that's good. Because in a way it's humbling, because you know, you're not any better than anybody else here. Everybody has to do something. And I like that, 'cause you know, at different colleges you don't have to have work study. Some people, their parents pay for everything, and some people have to work every day after school just to be able to make it every day, and so I think it's good that we all have to work.

Blythe: It gives you...it gets them introduced to what the real world is going to be like when they're out there on their own.

Lindsey: How do you think you have changed as a person since you started here? What things are different? Maybe nothing, and that's okay, too.

Anne: One way that I've changed is, mainly because of the music office, going to have bible studies and stuff. Because I grew up really hard core Pentecostal, and they're not [meaning the music office bible study group], at all. So I'd never really seen any other view besides the Pentecostal view which is, you know, it's not bad but from my own studying the bible and from different people's point of view which I didn't have before, I've realized that a lot of the stuff isn't completely biblical, but you know, a lot of it is, too. And so I've gotten a lot of different people's points of view and my ideas have changed, of Christianity and stuff. That's the main reason, the biggest thing.

Blythe: A lot of the changes [for me] were similar to hers, like more maturity with my own faith as a Christian, but also, you know, just being able to think for myself, being more responsible for my own life, so to speak. You know, without being real cliché, but you know, you're learning how to live on your own. And that's important because after these years you're going to be on your own, so that's one of the biggest ways I've changed is learning how to take on responsibility and learning how to make my own choices and not necessarily having to rely on other people but to get stuff done by myself.

Anne: I was always on my own, so that wasn't really a change. Being here has really made me feel a lot better. It's relieved, like, 89% of my stress so I've actually got to enjoy being young. Not in the ways that most college students do which I like because—people party here but not as much as, you know, there's not big frat parties right in the middle of everything. So I've got to enjoy just doing whatever I want.

Blythe: Yeah, that's cool you know, 'cause college is a place where you're learning to find out who you are so to speak. Sorry if I'm going all cliché again but that's really what it is you know, you're finding out who you are, as far as what you want to do with your life and how to make that possible. You know, you're leaving the nest. You're leaving the nest so to speak, you're trying to make your own way, and so I definitely think that, going back to what I said, that was the biggest change for me, was just learning how to think and live on my own.

[BCV] sense of responsibility
work ethic ... needed for not only work but also school
[BCV] Humility
Work as an equalizer
[work outcome]
critical thinking
self-reliance & responsibility
Seems like home was rough; she's finally enjoying a break. Earlier "busy" comments may not tell real story.
[self-reliance = BCV]
↳ seemingly many view this as a purpose of college.
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