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CONTENTS

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In Support of Others:
An Examination of Psychological Capital and Job Satisfaction in Academic Staff

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction among academic support staff. An online questionnaire served as the primary data source with follow-up personal interviews used to provide descriptive information that complemented the quantitative data. This study explores the relationship between the personal asset of psychological capital brought to the job and the work characteristics of the job itself.

This study applies the emerging concept of psychological capital to the previously understudied population of academic support staff in higher education. This study is also the first to examine psychological capital and job satisfaction within the context of higher education. This expansion of research into academic support staff offers additional insights for institutional leaders and highlights opportunities for leadership and performance enhancement. It suggests a relationship between reports of psychological capital by academic support staff and their reports of job satisfaction. It shows that institutions of higher education may wish to consider the inclusion of a psychological capital assessment in their hiring process for new academic support staff. Additionally, academic support staff may wish to consider including a self-assessment of psychological capital as part of their annual performance review and professional development planning.

This paper presents the findings from an exploratory investigation into the relationship between reports of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007) and reports of job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) among academic support staff at a private institution of higher education in the northeastern United States. *Academic support staff*, the unit of analysis in this investigation, are defined as full-time, non-teaching, non-supervisory staff members. The administrative tasks performed by academic support staff include, but are not limited to, student advising, budget and operational management, data analysis, and student recruitment. Published academic research literature has generally ignored the role of academic support staff (Pitman, 2000). A number of international researchers (Gornitza & Larsen, 2004; Kusku, 2003; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Strajeri, 2009; Szekeres, 2006) have examined academic support staff within an organizational structure unreflective of the contemporary American model. Noticeably absent from the knowledge base are investigations of the work performed by academic support staff within the American model of higher education and the personal assets they bring to the work. This exploratory case study was designed to address this void by investigating the relationship between academic support staff's reports of psychological capital and their reports of job satisfaction.

Psychological capital was defined in this study as a positive psychological state of development comprised of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, job satisfaction was defined as the perceived presence of the core job dimensions of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. As defined by Hackman and Oldham (1980), the presence of these job dimensions corresponds to the three psychological states of experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. Individuals who display self-efficacy (confidence), optimism (positive expectation of future success), hope (perseverance to goals), and resiliency (ability to sustain through adversity) may display high levels of job satisfaction and, by extension, enhanced levels of job performance.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF

Germane to this investigation was the addition of specialized non-supervisory academic support staff functions to assist in operating the organization (Rudolph, 1962). Postsecondary institutions have responded to the growth

and expansion that took place in the second half of the 20th century by increasing their size and restructuring the work of the organization (Gornitza & Larsen, 2004; Leslie & Rhoades, 1995). Faculty members, for the most part, have continued to focus their efforts on teaching and research, while maintaining their involvement in shared governance and leadership in areas such as developing curricula and managing departments and programs (Henkin & Persson, 1992). While academic support staff can fill such supervisory roles as director or manager, a growing segment of academic support staff perform in non-supervisory work roles focused on student advising, budget and operational management, data analysis, and student recruitment. These staff members fill many diverse roles and now manage many different operational and clerical processes of the institution (Freeland, 1997). While these academic support staff are hired to do work other than academic instruction to students, the performance of their work duties is important to the delivery of an effective academic program. Their work requires substantial interactions with other members of the administration and may demonstrate the increasing leadership role for non-faculty administrators in higher education.

Despite the noticeable growth in and important organizational functions carried out by academic support staff, this population has neither been extensively written about nor examined. The two-volume work of Bess and Dee (2008) detailing the organization of college and university work does not make a single reference to academic support staff, focusing instead on the role of the officer-level positions of vice presidents and deans. Szekeres (2006) further noted that academic support staff have been marginalized in academic research, while studies that have included a consideration of academic support staff have tended to focus solely on the differences between faculty and academic support staff (Kusku, 2003; McInnis, 1998; Szekeres, 2004). In most cases, the research, contended Szekeres (2004), has defined non-academic academic support staff not by what they do, but by what they do not do. Given that academic support staff serve critical support functions within postsecondary institutions, it would seem important to begin to gain a basic understanding of their reports of the motivating potential of their work and the personal assets they bring to that work environment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Two complementary conceptual models were used to guide this study. The first model was the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), which focuses on the motivating potential of a job and, by extension, employee job satisfaction. The second conceptual model that guided this study was the Psychological Capital Model

(Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007), which encompasses an individual's psychological development. The Job Characteristics Model focuses on the aspects of the work as structured, while the Psychological Capital Model examines the individual assets that are brought to the work. Together, these two models provided an enhanced understanding of the work and the worker within the environment of higher education. The combination of these models allowed for an examination of the relationship between the two: what the work is and how the worker perceives that work.

Job Characteristics Model

The size and cost of administrative operations at institutions of higher education has increased dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s (Gornitza & Larsen, 2004; Leslie & Rhoades, 1995). While institutions of higher education have been slow to respond to environmental changes with organizational and structural enhancements (Diamond, 2002; Teichler, 2006; Tierney, 2008), the complex and competitive environment of higher education in the United States challenges institutions to maximize performance and manage complexity (Balderston, 1995; Clark, 1983; Rudolph, 1962). In order to enhance the quality of operations, institutions that place an increasing reliance on academic support staff for delivery of programs and services will need to pay greater attention to the job performance and, by extension, the job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001) of this population. While a strong relationship exists between job satisfaction and job performance (Judge et al., 2001), there seems to be scant published research (Brown & Sargeant, 2007; Clayton et al. 2008) that has focused on the job satisfaction of academic support staff at contemporary institutions of higher education.

Hackman and Oldham (1980) proposed a model for examining the conditions under which employees will be intrinsically motivated to perform their work well. Job satisfaction occurs when an individual, "experiences positive affect to the extent that he learns that he personally has performed well on a task that he cares about" (p. 256). This positive affect serves as an incentive for continued performance in future work activities. The rewards of performance are self-generated to the extent that the individual values the internal rewards derived from good performance. The design of the work is an important influence in the potential of the job to contribute to employee satisfaction. The theory proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) focused on the actual work performed by individuals, specifically on the perceptions of job characteristics that lead to the critical psychological states. While each job characteristic (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) can affect the responses

of a person to a job, Hackman and Oldham (1980) proposed that the effect of the characteristics became more significant when they occurred in combination. According to Hackman and Oldham (1980), the presence of these characteristics prompts the psychological states of experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. A minimum presence of all three psychological states is needed for a strong internal work motivation to exist. As proposed by Hackman and Oldham, the Motivation Potential Score (MPS) is a measure of the overall motivating potential of a job. MPS is a measure of job satisfaction, which is broken into three job characteristics: (a) the job ranks highly on at least one of the three dimensions that lead to experienced meaningfulness, (b) the job ranks highly on autonomy, and (c) the job ranks highly on feedback.

Psychological Capital Model

Job satisfaction has also been found to relate positively to the constructs of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), optimism (Seligman, 1998), hope (Snyder, 2000), and resiliency (Masten & Reed, 2002). These positive psychological constructs have also been synthesized by Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman (2007) to form the Psychological Capital Model. Psychological capital is defined as an "individual's positive psychological state of development" (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007, p. 542). In accordance with the findings of Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007), this individual asset, functioning similarly to financial, emotional, or political capital, may be used by academic support staff to influence their perceptions of their satisfaction with the characteristics of their job.

The results of several studies have indicated a positive relationship between individual reports of psychological capital and employee well-being (Avey et al., 2010), job satisfaction and performance (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007), trust (Walumbwa et al., 2009), commitment to organizational mission (Luthans & Jensen, 2005), and positive work attitudes (Larson & Luthans, 2006). Preliminary research (Luthans et al., 2006) indicated a summary affect regarding psychological capital; levels of psychological capital might have a stronger relationship to job satisfaction than any one of the four constructs that comprise psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resiliency) do alone. To date, no published research has used the Psychological Capital Model to examine the psychological capital of individuals serving as academic support staff at institutions of higher education. The recognition of psychological capital as a personal asset brought by an individual to their work could highlight an important, yet undeveloped, component of professional development. This development may assist an institution achieve its goals in the complex and competitive environment of higher education.

METHOD

Two surveys, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) and the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974), were administered as a single questionnaire via an Internet-based survey administration system. The questionnaire contained eight demographic questions and included an opportunity for participants to volunteer for a personal interview by providing their contact information. A personal interview guide was developed by the researcher specifically for use in this study. The guide contained seven major questions, and related prompts, that were aligned with the components of the Psychological Capital Model (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) and the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The purpose of the interview was to provide descriptive information that expanded and complemented the survey data. A semi-structured interview method was used to provide a further description of the phenomena. Based on participants' response, the researcher deployed the techniques of elaboration, clarifying, or continuation probes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Study participants were recruited from Johnson Moore College (pseudonym), a private institution of higher education located in the northeastern United States. Study recruitment and research took place over a period of three months. Thirteen academic support staff completed the online instrument and a subsample of four participated in a personal interview. Survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Quantitatively-based findings were determined by item response rates where 50% or more of the responses clustered around similar anchors. The researcher coded the interview data, which consisted of word-for-word transcripts and field notes, using procedures associated with qualitative research (Creswell, 2009).

Psychological Capital Questionnaire

The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) was used to gather participants' reports of psychological capital. The instrument has 24 items that measure the four components of Luthans, Youssef, et al.'s (2007) psychological capital model—self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency. The items are evenly distributed across the four components (i.e., six items per component). Survey respondents were to select the number on the 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree) that best described how they thought about themselves at that moment. The

Total score was obtained by summing the ratings on the 24 items, yielding a total score range of 24-144.

To better describe the results of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire, the researcher calculated three ranges—low, moderate, and high—for characterizing and reporting the raw Total scores, with the specific scores corresponding to each range calculated as follows. The minimum score for the high range required a response of five or more on all items. The minimum score for the moderate range required a response of three or more on all items. All scores below the minimum score for the moderate range were classified as low.

Job Diagnostics Survey

The short-form of the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974) was used to solicit participants' reports of their job satisfaction. This survey was constructed to measure the five major classes of variables—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback—in Hackman and Oldham's theory of work motivation. There are 15 items (three items per job dimension) with a 7-point Likert scale response format. The first part of the survey contains five items (1-5), one for each job dimension, and each has three item specific anchors. The second part of the survey contains 10 items (6-15), two for each job dimension. For these items, respondents are asked to indicate how accurate vs. inaccurate each statement is in describing their job (1 = very inaccurate, 2 = mostly inaccurate, 3 = slightly inaccurate, 4 = uncertain, 5 = slightly accurate, 6 = mostly accurate, 7 = very accurate). The Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974) yields a Motivation Potential Score. The Motivation Potential Score is a product of the scores for Experienced Meaningfulness, Experienced Responsibility, and Knowledge of Results. The possible range for the Motivating Potential Score is 1-343; higher scores indicate high levels of motivation potential predictive of job satisfaction.

To better describe the results of the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974), survey respondents' Motivation Potential Scores were characterized as low, moderate, and high. The minimum score for the high range on the scale was determined to be 126, indicative of a high range on each of the contributing subscales. A minimum score of nine was established for the moderate range. This minimum score indicates a moderate range on each of the contributing subscales.

Personal Interviews

Similar to the survey results, and to enhance description of the results of the interviews, the researcher characterized an interviewee's responses as expressions of *low, mod-erate, or high* levels of the variables under examination. Interviewees were distinguished as expressing high levels of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) or job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) if they provided examples of all components of a particular model. Interviewees were characterized as expressing moderate levels of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) or job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) if they provided examples of at least three components of a particular model. Interviewees were distinguished as expressing low levels of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) or job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) if they provided examples of two or fewer components of a particular model.

LIMITATIONS

The researcher identified four potential limitations of the study. First, as a member of the administrative staff at a neighboring institution of higher education, the researcher may be acquainted with some of the participants in the study. Based on the acquaintances' understanding of the researcher's professional work role, these participants may offer responses that reflect a desire for acceptance rather than their actual reports. Second, researcher bias may also be a limitation of this study. The researcher is a supporter of psychological capital as a method to enhance job satisfaction. His belief that academic support staff should develop the personal asset of psychological capital to achieve greater levels of job satisfaction could affect the researcher's interpretation of academic support staff reports. In addition, the professional career of the researcher has taken place exclusively within private institutions of higher education. The researcher holds a favorable view of private institutions. This belief could influence his interpretation of participant responses. Third, this study is limited by the lack of complexity of the sample. Respondents for this study were selected solely based on the common characteristic that they work as academic support staff at a private institution of higher education. In addition, participants in the personal interviews were a self-selected sample. The personal interview sample may not be representative of the participants that completed the quantitative surveys. Fourth, the results of this case study cannot be generalized to a larger population. It is not possible to extend the findings of this study to past or future situations.

RESULTS

Results from the survey and the personal interviews revealed that participating academic support staff presented moderate to high levels of psychological capital, as characterized by the researcher for this investigation. On the

survey, 53.8% (n = 7) of academic support staff (N = 13) reported a moderate level of psychological capital while 46.2% (n = 6) of academic support staff (N = 13) reported a high level of psychological capital. In the personal interviews, two of the participating academic support staff (n = 4) could be characterized as having moderate levels of psychological capital and two of the participating academic support staff (n = 4) could be characterized with high levels of psychological capital.

A comparison of the current results with those from other similar samples cannot be made at this time because no published studies of the psychological capital of academic support staff seem to have been completed before the current study. Previous research (Avey, et al., 2009; Avey, et al., 2010; Avey, et al., 2006) has examined the relationship between psychological capital and various work activities. No benchmarking of psychological capital by work type has been completed, however. In addition, longitudinal data on the development of psychological capital within a population does not seem to have been published.

In the present study, the mean Motivating Potential Score was 180.04 (SD = 74.1, range 78-343). Eleven of the survey respondents (N = 13) reported what could be characterized as a high level of job satisfaction, as measured by the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974). Two interviewees provided examples of three of the components of the Job Diagnostics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), suggesting a moderate level of job satisfaction. Two interviewees provided examples of only two of the components, suggesting a low level of job satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest moderate to high levels of psychological capital in the participating academic support staff at Johnson Moore College. At the levels reported in this study, psychological capital in academic support staff may represent an unrealized asset to the institution. Leveraging this asset in pursuit of institutional goals and individual performance may be a potential source of enhanced learning and job satisfaction. While it may be encouraging to observe these levels of psychological capital in the participating academic support staff, additional exploration is required in order to draw further conclusions.

When taken together, findings from the survey and the personal interviews revealed that participating academic support staff were satisfied with their jobs. On the survey, the motivation potential scores for 84.6% (n = 11) of the respondents (N = 13) were at high levels, indicative of job satisfaction. In the Job Diagnostics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), job satisfaction results from the three psychological states of experienced meaningfulness,

experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. On the survey, 92.3% (n = 12) of respondents (N = 13) reported high levels of experienced meaningfulness. Additionally, 76.9% (n = 10) of survey respondents (N = 13) reported high levels of experienced responsibility while only 53.8% (n = 7) reported moderate levels of knowledge of results. While all of the interviewees (n = 4) provided examples of at least one of the three psychological states contributing to experienced meaningfulness, none of the interviewees provided a single example of their job requiring the completion of an entire and identifiable piece of work. The absence of interviewees reporting skill variety is notable, given the survey data indicating that 76.9% (n = 10) of survey respondents (N = 13) reported a high level of skill variety. More specifically, the four interviewees each reported moderate to high levels of task identity on the survey. A possible reason for the discrepancy between survey and interview results relative to skill variety may be in the perception of the worker. In the survey, respondents are asked to describe *their perceptions* of the work they perform. During the interviews, the interviewees were asked to describe *their work* or provide examples. It is possible that the participating academic support staff perceive their work as having a level of skill variety that is only evident in the examples provided. This interplay between perception and reality strikes at the very core of the research questions posed for this study.

Norms for the Job Diagnostics Survey were established in the late 1970's by Oldham, Hackman, and Stepina (1978). These norms provide a point of comparison to evaluate the results of the current study. The established Motivating Potential Score norms for the Job Diagnostics Survey reveal that men (M = 131.54, SD = 71.50) scored slightly higher than women (M = 112.29, SD = 66.09). Norms for the Job Diagnostics Survey also described individuals in managerial and positions as rating highest while individuals in clerical and processing positions were described as rating lowest. At the time the norms were established, Oldham et al. found that, typically, "high Motivating Potential Score jobs were populated by males over 40 years old" (p. 42). In the current study, a sample comprised primarily of women in clerical or processing positions revealed a mean Motivating Potential Score of 180.74 (SD = 74.1), exceeding Oldham et al.'s previously established benchmarks. There could be several plausible explanations for this phenomenon. The diversification of the workplace, and particularly institutions of higher education, may play an important role in worker roles and the characteristics of their jobs. These notions were not explored in the current study and are a potential area for future research.

Overall, the survey scores of participating academic support staff demonstrated a relationship between reports of psychological capital and reports of job satisfaction, ac-

cording to the measures associated with the Psychological Capital Model (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) and the Job Diagnostics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). On the survey, 15.4% ($n = 2$) of respondents ($N = 13$) reported a moderate level of psychological capital and a moderate level of motivation potential score, indicative of job satisfaction. Additionally, 38.5% ($n = 5$) of respondents ($N = 13$) reported a high level of psychological capital and a high level of motivation potential score, indicative of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, this same relationship was not revealed in the results of the personal interviews. This relationship, evident in the survey finding, affirms the results of the studies conducted by Larson and Luthans (2006) and Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007) linking psychological capital and job satisfaction. Notably, those studies neither examined the population of academic support staff nor did they use personal interviews to expand upon the quantitative survey data. Although 61.5% ($n = 8$) of respondents' ($N = 13$) scores demonstrated a relationship between reports of psychological capital and reports of job satisfaction, the precise nature of this relationship is unknown and worthy of further examination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The increasing complexity of the higher education industry in the United States has presented a challenge to its institutional leaders and those who deliver its programs and services. The enhanced role of academic support staff, working alongside academic teaching faculty, in the delivery of these programs and services will test the adopted structures that form the nature of work in higher education. Institutional leaders have cause to investigate the reports of academic support staff regarding job satisfaction as well as the personal assets those individuals bring to their work. Only with this set of complementary approaches can leaders begin to understand the potential productivity and efficiency that can be provided to the institution by academic support staff. While the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction has been the subject of preliminary research in the service and technology manufacturing environments (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007), similar research has not been focused within the environment of higher education. The possible presence of psychological capital as the yet unidentified moderator in the Job Characteristic Model is an intriguing addition to the current study.

Recommendations for Practice

Institutions of higher education should consider the inclusion of a psychological capital assessment in their selection process for new academic support staff. Similar to education, experience, and political assets, individuals

bring the personal asset of psychological capital to their work (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). Before engaging in an employment relationship, institutions of higher education should assess and consider the psychological capital assets of potential academic support staff. Pre-employment testing of personality, learning styles, and response to conflict are common in many industries (Hendrick & Raspiller, 2011). Others (Rhoades, 1990; Tierney, 1988) have opined that institutions of higher education have a proclivity for resisting change. With this in mind, the administrative needs of the institution may be best served by hiring workers who display high levels of psychological capital because workers with high levels of psychological capital are capable of managing in a stagnant environment by adapting their perceptions (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007).

Academic support staff may wish to consider including the assessment of their psychological capital as part of a reflective process focused on personal and professional growth and development. Academic support staff do not need to wait for institutionalized approaches to the development of psychological capital. They can and should take advantage of narrative or reflection exercises, as endorsed by Snyder (2000), as one path to enhancing their psychological capital. As a personal asset, psychological capital can be enhanced through the process of *personal mastery*. According to Senge (1990), personal mastery is one of the building blocks of a learning organization. Senge identified the two components of personal mastery as the identification of a goal and the measurement of the path to that goal. Once a worker has become familiar with the concept of psychological capital, they can assess their current level of psychological capital and identify a path to further development. Academic support staff have the opportunity to go beyond the job-related assessments of a typical performance review and delve into their developing psychological capital. The individual is also demonstrating the importance of their personal assets in performance of their work duties. This approach reaffirms the personal vision of the worker, synthesizing the personal and the job-related into a holistic review that can serve the needs of the institution and the individual.

Future Research

The results of this study help identify several recommendations for future research. This investigation was conducted at a single, private institution of higher education in the northeastern United States. Other investigators should repeat this study at other public or private institutions of higher education, either within the same region or across different regions of the country. Further, data could be collected from similar groups of academic support staff

to pursue the investigation of psychological capital as a group-level asset.

The sample for this study consisted of only 13 academic support staff working at a private institution of higher education. Other investigators should conduct survey research with a national sample of academic support staff at public or private institutions of higher education. A larger sample would also help to further explore the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction.

Given that the norms of the Job Diagnostics Survey were established nearly 35 years ago, it would seem appropriate to revisit these norms within contemporary work environments. The introduction of information technology (Black & Lynch, 2001), enhanced ethnic, gender, and racial diversity (Brief, Umphress, Dietz, Burrows, Butz, & Scholten, 2005), and the changing nature of the relationship between employer and employee (Berkley & Watson, 2009) have all shaped the very nature of professional work over the last three decades. A recreation of the comparison norms within a contemporary context would provide further insight into the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and potentially offer enhanced application of the model in the future.

Other investigators should explore the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction among different categories of academic support staff at public or private institutions of higher education. It would seem valuable for those in the field to explore the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction among different categories of academic support staff. This differentiation might be accomplished by sampling a large number of academic support staff and comparing the results of the investigation when grouped according to participant age, experience, gender or other variables. While administration of the established surveys would provide results suited for quantitative analysis, the value of the personal interviews to informing the quantitative results should not go underappreciated. As evidenced by the results of this study, the personal interviews provided some participants the opportunity to discuss aspects of psychological capital and job satisfaction that were not revealed in a purely quantitative method.

CONCLUSION

The increasing complexity of American higher education has required institutional leaders to better understand the motivating potential of academic support staff job characteristics. Complementary to this understanding is the need to understand the psychological capital assets brought to work by academic support staff. This complexity in the environment of higher education demands an understanding of the work (job characteristics) and the assets brought to the work by the worker (psychological capital).

Work redesign in higher education is difficult (Keller, 2008). The job satisfaction and job performance of academic support staff may be improved, not only by changing the characteristics of their jobs, but by also enhancing the personal assets of the individual worker. The development of these assets may allow individual workers to find satisfaction and enhanced performance within the very same jobs. In the environment of higher education, it may be more efficient to develop the personal assets of academic support staff rather than attempting to change the characteristics of the job. This investigation of the relationship between the personal asset of psychological capital and job satisfaction is a starting point for the examination of these possibilities.

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Student Evaluations of Faculty Revisited:
Online Versus Traditional Methods

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ABSTRACT

Past research has focused on many aspects of faculty evaluation from types of question to appropriate application. An increasing number of academic institutions are changing to web-based systems to take advantage of certain efficiencies in the collection process. This research compares results from traditional in-class versus online methods. No significant differences in mean scores were found in the majority of cases. However, when a major paper was required in the course, researchers discovered that student evaluations were significantly more negative. This study proposes a model to show important factors in considering a change from traditional pen and paper evaluations to online evaluations and whether the online process will have a significant effect on means scores and response rates.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions have continuously made efforts to determine methods of effective evaluation of faculty, courses, and degree programs. Although progress has been made, the need for continuous improvement is needed. Past research has focused on many aspects of faculty evaluation, such as examination of the appropriate methods, questions, and sample size. Universities often administer student evaluations of faculty to provide feedback to faculty for improvement of teaching effectiveness. Another stream of research assesses the validity and reliability of the instrument, while others focus on the appropriate application (i.e. professional development vs. evaluation of faculty).

Recently, administrators have considered online student evaluations as opposed to the more traditional in-class, paper and pen type evaluations. An increasing number of academic institutions are considering a change to web-based systems to take advantage of the efficiencies in the collection of end-of-semester course evaluations. In considering such a change, it is important that researchers determine whether the method will affect mean evaluation scores and response rates. Even though the literature has criticized reliance on student evaluations of faculty teaching, universities continue to use them to measure faculty effectiveness. However, since the results may also be used in determining faculty merit, promotion, and tenure, these instruments and methods are of vital importance to faculty. This research attempts to determine if differences exist in results between traditional methods and online evaluations and to assess the resulting implications. Also, this study proposes a model which shows variables, such as class environment which may affect the validity and reliability of online faculty evaluations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of student evaluation of teaching remains controversial with mixed findings. The advantages of online over traditional in-class, paper methods include reduced costs, ease of reaching representative samples, the ability to validate data during collection, and rapid dissemination of results (Couper, 2000). Also, accounting administrators found a statistically inverse relationship between the weight given the evaluations and the emphasis placed on teaching (Read, Rama, & Raghunandan, 2001). However, some administrators are concerned that the misuse of evaluations may result in faculty members engaging in various activities designed specifically to affect student ratings on teaching evaluations, rather than to improve instruction (Simpson & Siguaw, 2000). In addition, faculty may be concerned that the evaluations do not accurately

reflect their teaching skills. On the other hand, Hobson and Talbot (2001) concluded that well-developed student evaluations with adequate data may provide some of the best measures of teaching effectiveness. Nevertheless, the question remains as to the best method of obtaining student evaluations to obtain valid and reliable data.

The classic method of obtaining student evaluations is the traditional paper and pen survey, as compared to online surveys. In considering a change to online course evaluations, researches assessed how such a change would affect the quality of course data. The conclusion showed that online evaluation methods lead to lower response rates, but that lower response rates do not affect mean scores. Consequently, a change from traditional methods to online evaluations is unlikely to adversely affect faculty evaluation scores (Avery, Bryant, Mathios, Kang, & Bell, 2006). Furthermore, Donmeyer, Baum, Hanna, and Chapman (2004) discovered that online evaluations produce essentially the same scores as traditional evaluations (Dommeyer et al., 2004; Layne, DeCristoforo, & McGinty, 1999). Although they found that online response rates are lower, the mean scores of the traditional evaluation are essentially the same as the online course evaluations.

In addition, smaller classes tend to have higher response rates with online surveys while response rates increase over time. Johnson (2002) noted that response rates increased yearly from 40%, 51%, 62%, and finally 71% during the last year of evaluations. Another research project found that students who completed the online surveys responded more favorably toward faculty than students completing the paper format. Consequently, class evaluations results became more positive for faculty (Carini, Hayek, Kuh, Kennedy, & Ouimet, 2003)). Interestingly, when students used online surveys, they typed seven times more in comments than with in-class paper evaluations. Likewise, research in a graduate management class found that students typed an average of four times as many words online as they did using a traditional method (Hmieleski & Champagne, 2000).

Anderson, Cain, and Bird (2005) found that online evaluations are less subject to faculty influence, since students are allowed to have as much time as they desire with flexible time periods to complete the instrument. Another line of research examined student attitudes toward the methods of evaluation and discovered that the online method has a lower response rate than does the in-class method. Further, online respondents (1) expressed concerns about anonymity of their responses; (2) complained that the process was time consuming; and (3) disliked the complicated login procedure (Dommeyer, Baum, & Hanna, 2002). However, Layne et al. (1999) reported that students prefer completing electronic evaluations com-

pared to traditional ones. Ravelli's (2002) research project involving focus groups indicated that online evaluations are easy to use, allow for more confidentiality, and provide more time for comments.

Online evaluations, such as RateMyProfessors.com, may provide some insight into factors affecting evaluation processes. Lawson and Stephenson (2005) discovered several factors that affect student perceptions of professors using the RateMyProfessors.com information. However, they concluded that students are subjective in their evaluations (Lawson & Stephenson, 2005). On the other hand, Kindred and Mohammed (2005) concluded that the student evaluations of professors matched their actual concerns regarding the quality of instruction in terms of competence, knowledge, clarity, and helpfulness. Interestingly, they stated that personality and appearance were not as important.

Other factors influencing student evaluations include class size, difficulty of the class, percent of students responding, and length of the class. Furthermore, expectations of higher grades resulted in more favorable student evaluations; however, the relationship is significantly different depending upon faculty rank (Read et al., 2001).

METHODOLOGY

The basic research question is as follows: Are university online evaluations an effective method to measure class and faculty effectiveness? To answer this question, classes were chosen in a college of business administration and students were asked to evaluate the class in the traditional method as well as online. Eight classes in a college of business administration were selected to participate in the study. The classes were as follows:

MANA 3311, MANA 5320	Organizational Behavior
FINA 3311	Principles of Finance
MARK 3311	Principles of Marketing
MANA 3325	Entrepreneurship
MANA 4310	International Management
FINA 3330	Security Analysis & Portfolio Mgmt.

Students were asked to use the traditional evaluation instrument which consisted of eight questions and was identical to the online evaluation. The traditional pen and paper evaluation was performed at the end of the semester as the instructor left the room and followed standard procedures. The administration requested students to go online to evaluate all of their classes, including those out-

side the college. Students were made aware that the online evaluations would be placed on the university website for public viewing.

To encourage student participation and a high response rate, the university administration used an incentive where students would be able to see their final grades early if they completed the online class evaluations. Surprisingly, the university received a 65% response rate in its first attempt to use the online system.

Students were asked to rank eight questions on a Likert scale using strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree (see Table 1). In assessing differences, mean scores for both the traditional method (pen and pencil) and online were calculated. T-tests were conducted to determine if significant differences existed between two sample means for each question in the eight classes.

The following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: No significant differences exist in traditional (pen and paper) method and online class evaluations.

FINDINGS

Means and standard deviations for both the traditional and online version were obtained for each question on the survey (see Table 1). Next, the probability points based on a two-tailed Student's t-distribution were obtained using built-in Excel statistical functions.

The results showed that no significant differences in mean scores existed in six of the classes. However, Table 2 shows that two of the classes had significantly lower online course evaluations (t-test values ranged from 2.23 to 7.23). These two classes had an end-of-semester project that had not yet been graded when they used the traditional evaluations but had been completed and graded when they completed the online evaluations. Figure 1 further illustrates this phenomena, showing that factors exist that can seriously impact the results of student evaluation results.

The t-test results for six of the classes indicated that no statistically significant difference existed between the mean scores for each question in the traditional evaluation and the online evaluation, with probabilities ranging from Ø.Ø7 to 1. It is also noteworthy that for the six classes without an end-of-semester project, the instructor and or-

Table 1
Student Evaluations Mean Scores according to Traditional and Online Classes
Where No Significant Differences Exist

Questions	MANA 3311.04 In Class n=25 $\bar{x}$	s	Online n=18 $\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)	MANA 3311.01 In Class n=32 $\bar{x}$	s	Online n=24 $\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)	MANA 5300 In Class n=9 $\bar{x}$	s	Online n=5 $\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)
The course was well organized.	4.20	0.71	4.39	0.61	0.20	0.94	**0.35**	4.50	0.51	4.63	0.49	0.13	0.97	**0.34**	4.88	0.35	5.00	0.00	0.12	1.06	**0.31**
The instructor communicated effectively.	4.40	0.64	4.33	0.84	0.24	0.30	**0.77**	4.50	0.57	4.54	0.59	0.16	0.25	**0.80**	4.88	0.35	5.00	0.00	0.12	1.06	**0.31**
The instructor showed interest in progress of students.	4.30	0.75	4.33	0.77	0.24	0.13	**0.90**	4.40	0.81	4.63	0.58	0.19	1.24	**0.22**	4.88	0.35	5.00	0.00	0.12	1.06	**0.31**
Tests/assignments were graded and returned promptly.	4.40	0.58	4.44	0.51	0.17	0.24	**0.81**	4.80	0.40	4.58	0.58	0.14	1.60	**0.12**	4.88	0.35	5.00	0.00	0.12	1.06	**0.31**
Free to ask questions, disagree & express ideas.	4.20	0.82	4.11	0.90	0.27	0.34	**0.74**	4.50	0.77	4.42	0.93	0.23	0.34	**0.73**	4.88	0.35	5.00	0.00	0.12	1.06	**0.31**
Course has been of value.	4.30	0.80	4.06	0.94	0.27	0.88	**0.39**	4.40	0.55	4.25	0.90	0.21	0.72	**0.47**	4.88	0.35	5.00	0.00	0.12	1.06	**0.31**
Overall, this instructor was	4.30	0.79	4.06	1.00	0.28	0.85	**0.40**	4.30	0.68	4.42	0.65	0.18	0.67	**0.51**	4.88	0.35	5.00	0.00	0.12	1.06	**0.31**
Overall, this course was	4.00	0.79	3.89	0.96	0.28	0.40	**0.69**	4.10	0.67	4.13	0.85	0.21	0.14	**0.89**	4.88	0.35	4.80	0.45	0.23	0.32	**0.75**

Questions	FINA 3330 In Class n=22 $\bar{x}$	s	Online n=22 $\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)	FINA 4330 In Class n=21 $\bar{x}$	s	Online n=24 $\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)	MARK 3311.01 In Class n=36 $\bar{x}$	s	Online n=33 $\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)
The course was well organized.	3.68	0.89	3.55	0.96	0.28	0.47	**0.64**	3.67	0.97	3.33	1.17	0.32	1.06	**0.30**	4.64	0.49	4.54	0.51	0.12	0.82	**0.41**
The instructor communicated effectively.	3.27	1.16	3.27	1.35	0.38	0.01	**0.99**	3.52	1.03	3.38	1.24	0.34	0.42	**0.67**	4.69	0.47	4.54	0.51	0.12	1.31	**0.20**
The instructor showed interest in progress of students.	3.59	1.05	3.59	1.05	0.32	0.00	**1.00**	3.90	0.77	3.67	1.05	0.27	0.86	**0.39**	4.67	0.63	4.33	0.87	0.18	1.82	**0.07**
Tests/assignments were graded and returned promptly.	4.36	0.73	4.27	0.55	0.19	0.48	**0.63**	4.10	0.89	4.04	0.86	0.26	0.21	**0.83**	4.72	0.51	4.71	0.46	0.12	0.10	**0.92**
Free to ask questions, disagree & express ideas.	3.95	1.05	3.82	0.91	0.30	0.46	**0.65**	4.24	0.70	3.96	1.00	0.25	1.09	**0.28**	4.64	0.54	4.58	0.58	0.14	0.43	**0.67**
Course has been of value.	3.41	0.91	3.64	1.14	0.31	0.74	**0.46**	3.33	1.11	3.42	1.14	0.34	0.26	**0.80**	4.47	0.61	4.46	0.59	0.14	0.08	**0.93**
Overall, this instructor was	3.27	1.12	3.18	1.30	0.37	0.25	**0.80**	3.81	1.12	3.42	1.25	0.35	1.10	**0.28**	4.58	0.69	4.33	0.76	0.18	1.44	**0.15**
Overall, this course was	3.45	0.91	3.23	1.19	0.32	0.70	**0.49**	3.38	1.12	3.33	1.09	0.33	0.15	**0.88**	4.42	0.69	4.21	0.66	0.16	1.27	**0.21**

TABLE 2
STUDENT EVALUATIONS MEAN SCORES ACCORDING TO
TRADITIONAL AND ONLINE CLASSES
WHERE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES EXIST

Questions	MANA 4310							MANA 3325						
	In Class		Online					In Class		Online				
	n=25		n=14					n=30		n=24				
	$\bar{x}$	s	$\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)	$\bar{x}$	s	$\bar{x}$	s	SE	t	(ρ)
The course was well organized.	4.64	0.49	3.21	1.05	0.30	4.81	**0.0000**	4.63	0.56	2.60	1.47	0.32	6.42	**0.0000**
The instructor communicated effectively.	4.69	0.47	3.14	1.35	0.37	4.17	**0.0002**	4.57	0.73	2.32	1.55	0.34	6.55	**0.0000**
The instructor showed interest in progress of students.	4.67	0.63	3.43	1.28	0.36	3.39	**0.0017**	4.67	0.55	2.88	1.51	0.32	5.51	**0.0000**
Tests/assignments were graded and returned promptly.	4.72	0.51	3.79	0.70	0.21	4.37	**0.0001**	4.53	0.63	3.68	1.28	0.29	2.99	**0.0043**
Free to ask questions, disagree & express ideas.	4.64	0.54	3.86	0.86	0.25	3.06	**0.0041**	4.63	0.61	3.04	1.37	0.30	5.29	**0.0000**
Course has been of value.	4.47	0.61	3.79	1.05	0.31	2.23	**0.0319**	4.53	0.68	2.40	1.38	0.31	6.93	**0.0000**
Overall, this instructor was	4.58	0.69	3.00	1.24	0.36	4.41	**0.0001**	4.63	0.61	2.40	1.41	0.31	7.23	**0.0000**
Overall, this course was	4.42	0.69	2.93	1.21	0.35	4.23	**0.0001**	4.57	0.63	2.48	1.36	0.30	6.95	**0.0000**

ganization of the course had the highest probabllity of statistically significant differences, both with probabilities of less than 0.4.

The remaining two classes involved in the study, however, showed very different results: the maximum probability was calculated to be 0.0043, indicating a statistically significant difference between mean values for the traditional and online evaluation. This phenomenon is further illustrated in Figure 1, which shows average probability (*p*) based on question type for classes with end-of-semester project and without end-of-semester project. In short, the

results of this study indicate that, barring additional factors, the results of online evaluations do not significantly differ from those obtained using traditional methods. Figure 2 shows the mean responses according to average probability (*ρ*) values.
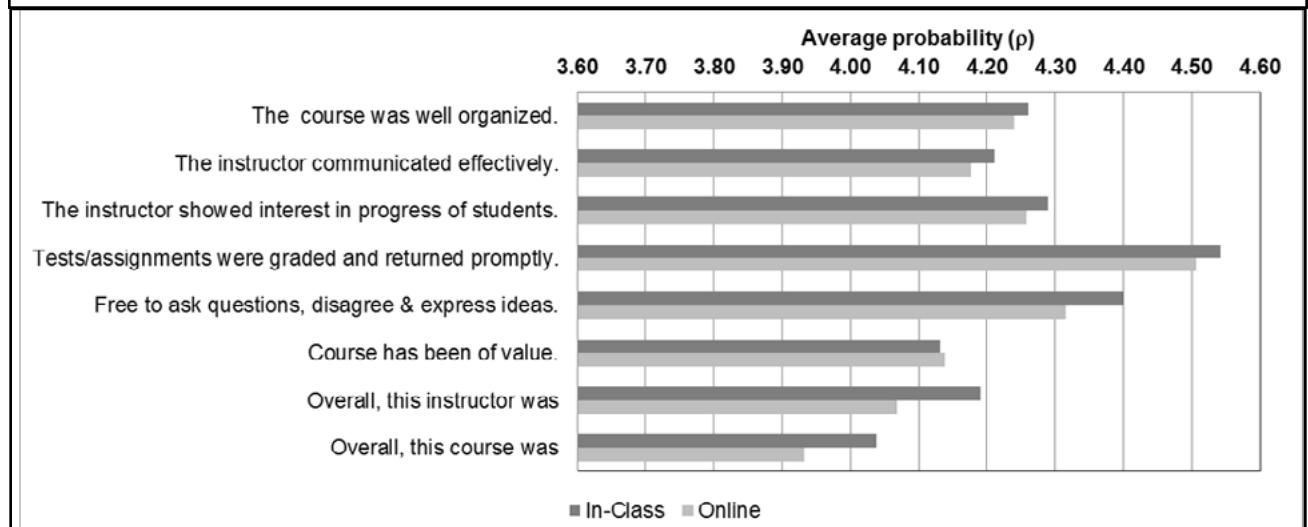
PROPOSED MODEL AND IMPLICATIONS

The following is a discussion of several variables, which may affect the success of online evaluations. Next, a proposed model is offered.

FIGURE 1
AVERAGE PROBABILITY (ρ) BASED ON EACH QUESTION
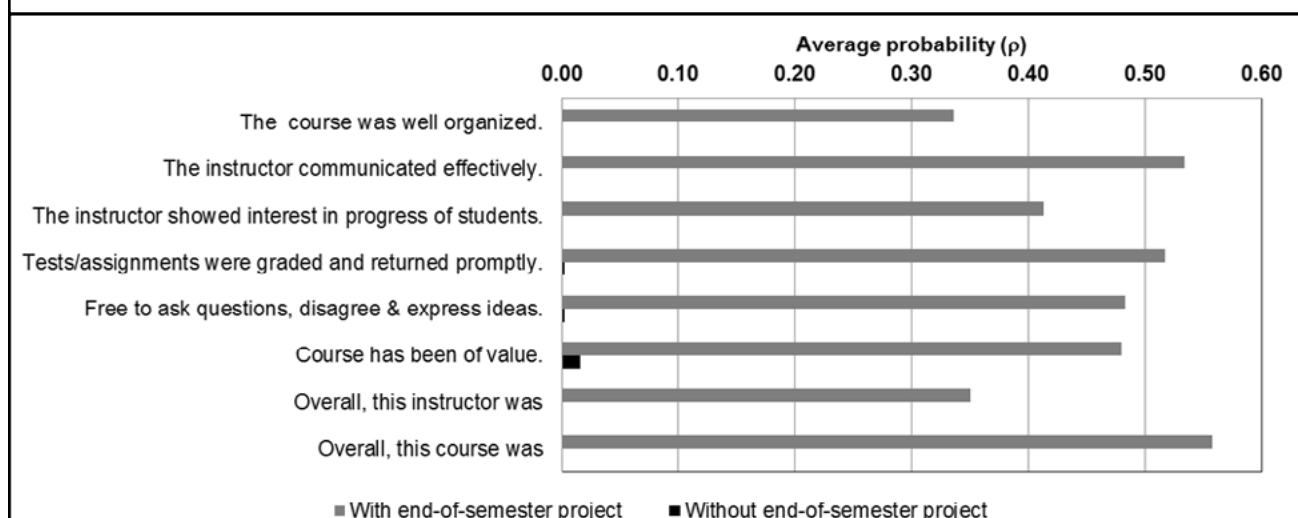
FIGURE 2
MEAN RESPONSE FOR EACH QUESTION

Institutional Variables

In order to increase the response rate, incentives are used, such as a drawing for an iPad or priority viewing of exams. If the questions are short and the process is easy to answer, students should be more prone to complete the online evaluations. The survey data show no significant differences between the two methods with the exception of those classes where a large end-of-semester project was involved. However, other variables which could affect the online effectiveness include incentives, ease of comple-

tion, types of question, and grade perception as shown in the proposed model (Figure 3).

A major issue in assessing the reliability of the method is in terms of obtaining a large participation percent. If the sample size is not large enough, non-response bias could exist. In other words, care should be taken to increase the sample size and include a cross section of students within the class. However, it is possible that students who complete the online evaluations are biased in that they have

Figure 3
ENVIRONMENT AND VARIABLES AFFECTING ONLINE FACULTY EVALUATION
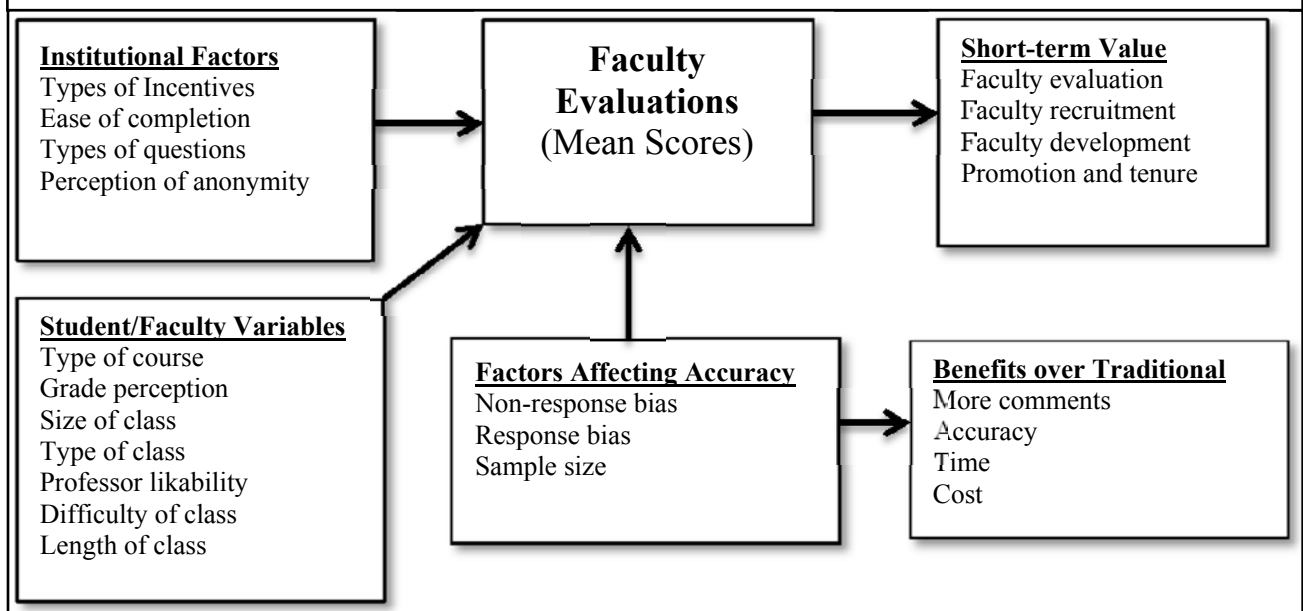
either an extremely positive or negative perception of the course, and the results are, therefore, skewed.

Student/Faculty Factors

A major finding revealed that no significant differences existed in the two methods with the exception of courses with a major project. Students may have an idea of what their project grade was before the evaluation. After the evaluation, the grade may indeed be lower and thus students gave much lower evaluations. It seems that a professor must give students short-term feedback with potential grades during the semester in order that a student may have adequate assessment of his/her performance.

Certainly, whether the course is graduate/undergraduate, online, or distance learning would have a bearing on the student's evaluation. Also, students' perception of anonymity and likeability may affect the results. Furthermore, the size, length and difficulty of class may be variables in the final evaluation.

Benefits

Faculty evaluations are important for a number of reasons including merit raises, faculty recruitment, and promotion and tenure decisions. For this reason, administrators should be cognizant of their strengths and limitations. Many faculty and administrators believe the major purpose of such evaluations is for faculty development only.

DISCUSSION

While faculty evaluation methods continue to expand, providing up-to-date, accurate information in a timely manner presents an additional challenge. Administrators should enhance their efforts to develop and coordinate the most efficient methods for faculty evaluation to achieve institutional, departmental, and faculty objectives. Therefore, it is vital to have accurate information to measure teaching effectiveness. This research shows that online evaluations have positive implications with certain variables being examined. Although no significant differences existed in the majority of the classes sampled, a 3.6 (in-class) or 3.3 (online) mean value may be different in the minds of the students and other viewers. Also, it is important to note the type of class may be a major influence on evaluations. If the professor gives no feedback until the end of the semester, it could be a potential problem in overall evaluations.

Administrators may need to enhance new methods to increase sample size. Various incentives should be examined, such as immediate access to grades or a drawing for several iPads. Also, faculty and staff could provide an announcement on Blackboard or other sites explaining the procedure. This communication should emphasize and clarify the purpose, outline, and purpose of these evaluations.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The major limitation of this study was the use of only eight classes within one college and for one semester. Future research would do well to have a formal study of a large number of classes within the entire university to determine where differences exist.

Information derived from this research may be used to assess the purpose and methodology of faculty evaluation and provide better insight into improving the instrument and overall procedure. Both methods have been examined as to their role in effective teaching, but this study compares the results of two methods of obtaining student evaluations and determines if significant differences exist and their implications. Although other research examines the two methods, this research is different as faculty and students were aware that the results will be placed on the Internet for viewing. Therefore, obtaining accurate results appears to be even more important.

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Learning and Celebrating:
The Glamour of Design Lecture Series

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the celebratory aspect of the Design Lecture Series, a tradition in architecture schools and interior design programs, its meaning for all constituent parties, and its contributions to creating professional identity and community. The Design Lecture Series is a public event popular in design programs, ranging from graphic and industrial design to interior and architectural design. At these events, prominent professionals and academics present their newest work and discuss ideas in the making. The research design is a case study, conceived from a Symbolic Interactionist perspective in accordance with the principles of Grounded Theory methodology. The project unveils the complex and multilayered universe of the Design Lecture Series and depicts how all of its components fuse in a flamboyant celebration of professionalism, academic achievement, and community outreach.

INTRODUCTION

The Design Lecture Series is a public event popular in design programs, ranging from graphic and industrial design to interior and architectural design. This event is both a professional celebration and a celebration of the profession. At these lectures, prominent professionals and academics present their newest work and discuss ideas in the making. The event might take place once a year or once a month, depending upon each school's resources and customs. This is an occasion to showcase prominent practitioners and academics and to discuss their newest ideas. The purpose is to keep design students current on the most advanced developments in their field, and to do so in a timely manner.

The lecture draws together students, faculty, university administrators, practitioners, and local community members in an atmosphere of celebration and student pride. The design lecture series is considered an extracurricular activity, but it has tremendous potential for fostering students' development and growth into young, ambitious design professionals. The lecture series bridges classroom experiences with professional lifelong learning, and in doing so, it has become an important component of design culture. In this respect, I have conceptualized the current study as a component of a larger project on design culture and design education. There is no literature on this colorful phenomenon, but it deserves its fair share of research because of its great potential as a tool for educational and professional growth. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the nature, structure, and functions of this event, and to promote this understanding as a means of enhancing the quality of design education.

Here I interpret the lecture series as a component of design culture and design education, and it is from this perspective that I discuss its traits. Although this delineation of the scope of the phenomenon provides a focal point for my research, there are a number of other aspects that are of particular interest. My research highlights those aspects of the lecture series that are relevant to the quality of design students' education and professional growth. Furthermore, it also addresses matters pertinent to event logistics and space planning. In this respect, the study has several functions and may be of interest of a number of professional groups, among them design educators, university administrators, advisory board members, researchers, and even design practitioners.

Design culture is very important for design education, lifelong learning, and professional growth. Unlike many other occupations where the work process happens only from nine to five, in the designer's mind, the design process continues around the clock. Designers have a myriad of reasons to celebrate after days and weeks of work around the clock. Design culture is about work ethics, motivation, values, and attitudes that foster a drive for achievement and professional excellence. Design acculturation makes people study and work over and above what is usual among other professionals in our society, and, I would posit, over and above what they are paid. Design

culture is also about competition and the celebration of winning, or even just of putting forth maximum effort to meet a given challenge.

Design culture also reinforces educational and work processes, sustains individual perseverance, and keeps people in their right mind in a field that is marked by a deluge of information, overwhelming task complexity, and stressful timelines. In this respect, fostering a lively design culture is indispensible for design education and is a necessary step toward the preparation of design practitioners. This explains my interest in design culture and in the mechanisms for generating and reproducing it.

My initial impressions of the lecture series have indicated that this is an exceptional phenomenon in terms of its many layers, its human interactions, and its myriad meanings and implications. I am mesmerized by the energy and vibrancy of the lecture series, which can be construed as a celebration of the profession, complete with the festive atmosphere of a professional holiday. In some ways, it is comparable to the spirit and festivities at professional conferences and symposia, although on a different scale and with different ramifications. This unusual fusion of functions and meanings has generated my research interest and has presupposed the directions of the inquiry. This same fusion has also influenced my decisions regarding appropriate research methods, sampling, and site selection.

In keeping with the tradition of academic research, it is typical to start with a literature review. I searched several databases with numerous combinations of key words, but these searches failed to yield anything related to the topic of this project–the lecture series as a component of design culture within programs and schools ranging from graphic to architectural design. There are hundreds of announcements about such lectures, but no analyses of the phenomenon. My interpretation of this lack of analysis is that, although exciting and interesting as a phenomenon and an event, the design lecture series as an object of study has yet to attract the interest of design researchers, design educators, cultural scholars, and sociologists. The lack of published materials presupposes the initiation of an exploratory study with a qualitative research design. The methodology of my research is elaborated on later in this paper.

I have delimited the scope of inquiry to programs of architectural and interior design. Based on commonalities in the culture, traditions, and ways of thinking in all of these programs, and in order to conceal identities (as well as for reasons of brevity), I will often use the term "design" without particular specification of the type of design and program.

This study is intended to contribute to several research areas and professional communities. My research on lecture series enhances the body of knowledge within the domains of design pedagogy, curriculum planning, and extracurricular activities in interior and architectural design programs. The study also encourages design educators to take full advantage of the lecture series as a means of facilitating student learning and professional growth, the development of professional identity and self-esteem, and engagement with both local practitioners and community members.

METHODOLOGY

My initial interpretations of the Lecture Series phenomenon indicated that I needed a research perspective that could make sense of social interaction and the construction of meaning in multifunctional and multifaceted situations, without the benefits of previous publications. These considerations led me to selecting Symbolic Interactionism as a guiding paradigm and to adopt one of its field research strategies, the Grounded Theory methodology (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This methodological platform is one of the best for understanding human interaction and the social construction of meaning, and also for unveiling hidden functions and implications surrounding the research subject. I also made use of some additional methodological and epistemological considerations following Guba and Lincoln (2000), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland (2005).

The problem formulation and the goal structure of the study were developed as part of a long process of analysis and interpretation. The problem was construed in light of the insufficient information that exists—or rather, does not exist—about the nature and implications of the design lecture series. The goal of the study was to explore the design lecture series as a component of design education culture with the purpose of enhancing its value for learning, creating a design community, and fostering student growth and professionalization. The objectives were to unveil the multifunctional nature, the meanings, and the generative mechanisms of the lecture series, as well as to investigate the functions and contributions of these events toward creating educational synergies and augmenting the quality of education.

The sampling considerations were based on the goals and objectives of the study and with respect to the epistemological principles of Grounded Theory. The unit of sampling was the design lecture series event. In this project, I emphasized understanding the phenomenon rather than transferability of the findings. I wanted to under-

stand the lecture series in its most developed form, with its most pronounced interrelationships and contributions to design culture and design education. I also wanted to produce findings from best-in-class practices and to present information that could be useful for design educators. Consequently, I adopted an extreme case sampling strategy (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) and searched for exemplary, best-in-class situations, as in qualitative management research.

With that in mind, this project involved one geographic setting that I studied over a period of eight years, with a total of five events, as well as three auxiliary settings. The main research setting was at an interior design program at a Midwestern university. It displayed high levels of energy and vitality. Both faculty and students were immensely dedicated and inspired, and they participated with enthusiasm and passion. In addition, the setting allowed for prolonged engagement, leading to rich data and descriptions. This setting was explored until theoretical saturation. The three auxiliary settings were also situated at Midwestern universities, within architectural design programs and schools. The auxiliary settings were used to ensure that the findings were comparable to events of this sort and that the biases were controlled. A major role of the auxiliary settings was to indicate that while an outlier in terms of its richness, energy and vibrancy, the main setting is not an unusual representation of design lecture series.

The sampling of respondents for guided interviews was performed after prolonged observations and informal, conversational interviews. The intention was to reach representatives of different participating groups in order to build a realistic and coherent picture of the event and to create basis for comparisons. Participants were selected for their potential to present either typical or heuristic views. The respondent selection strategy was to look both for informants with insightful and heuristic viewpoints and for people who represent typical participants in order to search for insights into the phenomenon and to compare and consider individual biases. Twenty-seven participants were interviewed. The number of interviews was guided by considerations for information saturation.

Data quality procedures were developed with concerns about the trustworthiness of the information. Trustworthiness was conceptualized as truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. The truth value concern was interpreted through the concept of credibility. Regarding credibility, several techniques for ensuring quality of data were employed during the data collection stage, including a methodological log, triangulation by source, triangulation by method, member checks, peer debriefing, and referential adequacy. During the analysis and interpretation

stages, several other methods were used; these included performing negative case analyses, establishing referential adequacy, obtaining structural corroboration, and practicing reflexivity. The issue of consistency was interpreted in terms of quality and, in particular, dependability of instruments. The research process involved modifications of the interview tactics, interview guide, and probes, as well as emerging insights and digressions. The techniques used for managing these threats included an overlap of methods, stepwise replication, an audit trail, and a dependability audit.

The data analysis techniques used during coding and interpretation were adopted from the authors on Grounded Theory I mentioned previously. The interview narratives were processed with open, axial, and selective coding. In addition to the most common Grounded Theory methods, I used several complementary techniques borrowed from Lofland et al. (2005): questioning, analysis of phrases and words, flip-flop techniques, comparisons, use of a conditional matrix and conditional paths, and "thinking units." Multiple comparisons and close-in comparisons were made for each of the interviewees, each research setting, and each annual event at the main research setting.

RESULTS

Lecture Series as an Event and Behavior Setting

The Setting

The composite picture of the design lecture series used in this analysis is based predominantly on the events in the interior design program of the Midwestern state university that was chosen as the primary research site. The lecture series has become a renowned tradition of the program, and has a strong reputation, high expectations, and a festive atmosphere. The program invests numerous resources and maximum effort into the organization of activities. The lecture is attended by students and faculty from several colleges and programs and has acquired the status of a university event. Furthermore, alumni and guests from local firms and professional communities endow it with even higher status.

The event takes place in a new and modern student union that comparable to a small conference center. It is the newest and most luxurious building on campus. For the event, almost half of the second floor is booked and adapted to the needs of the students. There is a 250-seat theater with a spacious lobby, a large ballroom, and several large spaces adjacent to the theater suite. On the day of the lecture, all these spaces are filled with life and people. The public nature, central location, and attractiveness of this space generate a special air of importance. The excellent quality

of the physical environment and the privilege students feel in using it contribute to the atmosphere of the event.

The lecture itself is held in the theater. The ballroom houses a concurrent trade show with dozens of manufacturers' representatives, furniture sales associates, and practitioners from local design firms. The lobby of the theater and the large spaces around it accommodate event registration, receptions, delivery of refreshments, and occasional additional activities for small groups.

The Actors

There are several groups of actors involved in the lecture event. The main participants are current students and faculty from the interior design program. Attendees include a large number of guests, some of them of particular importance: the dean of the college, the school director and program chairs, deans and administrators from other colleges, the leaders of the local chapters of professional associations, students and faculty from other programs, emeritus faculty, alumni, design practitioners, and product manufacturers and sales associates. The students are both the main actors and the guests of honor as the entire event is organized for them. They are at the center of the action. They actually "make" the event, just as the event is made for them.

Most of the students are female (with only a few exceptions); they are of traditional student age and generally hail from small Midwestern towns. Many students see the design lecture as an upscale occasion and dress accordingly. Others dress up because they are encouraged to do so by the faculty. Many young women trade jeans and sneakers for skirts and high heels for the first time in several months, and some of them wear makeup. The high heels evidently make some of them uncomfortable, but they diligently resolve to walk in them anyway. Students are also encouraged by the faculty to act professionally, to immerse themselves in this situation with professionals, and to prepare for a possible meeting with prospective employers. All students wear specially prepared name tags received at registration, which indicate their affiliation with the program and create a sense of community. A vast majority of students, first-year students and sophomores in particular, have rarely taken a class together. This event is the first time many understand the true size and scope of their program.

The guests also contribute to the professional atmosphere. They come in their office attire, in keeping with their own routine. The attendance of several dozen design practitioners and salespeople changes the usual demographics in the program and introduces an element of maturity to the event, contrasting with the atmosphere of a typical campus event in the student union. These guests make the lecture series to look more like a professional conference or a trade show instead of an ordinary lecture in a university setting. Since many of these practitioners and salespeople are alumni of the program, they still remember the faculty and some students.

The guests are given slightly different name tags, indicating that they belong to the community but at the same time have a professional status. Local design practitioners and furniture salespeople enjoy particular attention. They are the role models and the future of the students. They can also help in a very pragmatic way by offering job prospects or at least tips for gaining employment after graduation. Alumni provide the lifeline between the university and the Real World. They are the vital bridge that everyone hopes will be open at graduation. This opportunity for students and off-campus people to both integrate and differentiate produces an atmosphere comparable to a homecoming or open house. This is one more reason to feel the celebratory spirit of the occasion.

Activities and Experiences

This lecture series is an incredible constellation of activities, characters, and settings. In it, several spheres intersect: intramural and extramural, academic and professional. These aspects fuse to produce a complex and multilayered student experience. The lecture series involves several activity hubs, each one with a different nature and contribution to the overall experience. Not all of these activity hubs take place at each and every series, but I do include them in the composite picture of the event. Here I talk about the lecture itself, the trade show, the pre-event and break activities, and the reception.

The lecture itself is the axis of the event. It is the main reason for everyone to attend. Everything else is scheduled and organized around the lecture and acquires specific meaning only in relation to it. The lecture is delivered by a prominent professional and educator, usually someone who operates at national level. The lecture is customized for the occasion and usually presents new ideas or information. It can be about the design method of the speaker, his/her new projects and future plans, or new conceptualizations of design. The idea is to introduce students and local practitioners to the field's newest ideas and developments, which may not yet be included in books and journals. The lecture is an opportunity for students, practitioners, and faculty to update their knowledge and learn about the state of the art of the profession. That alone is a good incentive for everyone to eagerly await the lecture invitations.

The lecture usually opens with addresses and introductions by the dean of the college and the school director. The high ranks of the university administrators and the

prominence of the speaker endow the event with importance and status comparable to a conference. This also creates similarities to a conference keynote address or a special plenary session. In some ways, the physiognomy of the event is shaped after the image of a professional conference with keynotes, receptions, and vibrant professional socialization. Although most of the students have never attended a conference or professional symposium before, they have heard about the routines and now enjoy the experience of something very similar.

The trade show portion is a way to bring a glimpse of the "real world" of the profession directly into the design school. The trade show involves several dozen product exhibits, along with a few design firms. It takes place in a large space, usually the ballroom in the student union. Every exhibitor has a table, and some participants bring their portable exhibit hardware. Although a far outcry from high-tech national exhibitions, the trade show has enough "oomph" to endow the lecture series with a sense of prominence and importance. Because the show requires a great deal of resources, it is not organized yearly; however, it is mentionable since it brings synergy to the lecture and other event activities.

Students love the product exhibition for a number of reasons. For many of them, it illustrates one viable professional career track – that of the product or furniture sales associate. For others, it is an opportunity to see new products, to touch and feel them, and to obtain more information about their design applications. It is important for them to obtain experience in searching for new products, interacting with salespeople, and obtaining information, advice, and tips about applications. In this way, they get a glimpse at the real process of product inquiry and specification that takes place in design practice. It is also enables them to feel like a practicing designer, something that every student dreams about and looks forward to with eagerness. Some students enjoy the special treatment by the exhibitors, who try to attract their attention and spur interest in the products they sell. Still other students love the fair atmosphere and the vibrancy that comes with the large crowd. The young people are delighted by the honor that the expo came to them, rather then their having to travel dozens of miles to go to the expo. Students appreciate the work of the university and faculty to create this special experience.

The lecture and the trade show are related by their connection to design education and by their contributions to professional growth. However, the actual forces that bring together these two activity hubs stem from the social interaction that takes place at the lecture series. This socialization process is equally important for professional development. With the exception of the lecture time itself, the socialization process and development of connections take place everywhere constantly, concurrent with other activities. Students may be found socializing in the theater while waiting for the speaker to start his/her talk, after the lecture while they wait for the crowd to move out of the space, or in the line while they wait to talk personally to the speaker. The proximity of the seats in the theater brings young people together, encouraging them to introduce themselves, starting conversations or perhaps future relationships.

The groups in the theater lobby before the lecture, in the mid-lecture break, and after the lecture provide opportunities to meet people and to socialize. These are the times when young people can see other students from the program, be seen by their classmates, and be seen by passersby in the student union. This is a good opportunity for them to make contact with the guests, and in particular, with the local practitioners. Students get excited and become impatient to see friends and meet new people. They appear surprised at how many new faces they see as they begin to recognize how large their program actually is. This "strength in numbers" gives them confidence and reassurance. Students engage in cheerful chatting and laughter. They pass each other with salutations and friendly gestures. These future designers start moving around with confidence and a sense of pride and importance, like celebrities. They have reason to feel this way, as they sense the curious and envious stares of passing students from other programs. This imbues the event with a special air of triumph and celebration.

The crowning moment of socialization is the reception. For once, the students' enthusiasm is not so much about free food, although the food is both free and excellent. Rather, the excitement is about the high status and the importance of many of the guests – the university administrators, the speaker, and the leading officers of the local chapters of professional organizations. For students, it is uncommon to have opportunities to socialize with so many people of importance, both from the university and from the local professional community, in one place. For a moment, students feel that they have friends in high places, and that they are living life at the top. The reception reinforces the significance of the event, providing an air of future professional meetings, including the cocktail party or reception, although without the fancy drinks.

Many students look at the event not only as a special occasion and a thrill, but also as an opportunity to talk to potential employers, and maybe even to get an informal interview. Add in the trade show with practitioners and salespeople, and the reception begins to resemble a business cocktail party. Resumes are exchanged for business cards. Some savvy students prepare in advance for this oc-

casion. The conversations are about work opportunities, careers, and "real world" challenges. Students are thrilled to learn more about the professional life of the guests, such as daily activities and the scope of their work. Students also use this time to inquire about job opportunities, internships, co-ops, and other future possibilities.

DISCUSSION

Developing Design Culture

The design lecture series is a phenomenon that emerges at the intersection of several spheres of design education and design culture. For this reason, it acquires both complexity and polyfunctionality. In this way, it can be seen as a multifaceted and multilayered phenomenon in terms of activities, functions, and experiences that transcend the boundaries of the intra- and the extramural, the mundane classroom experience and the holiday, the celebration and the professional acculturation. The discussion highlights several major aspects and their constituent components.

Professional Celebration

The lecture series is a celebration. This is both evident from and perpetuated by the festive atmosphere in the anticipation of the reception and at the reception itself, from the vibrant fairground ambience of the trade expo to the exuberant social interaction in the lobby and in the corridors of the student union before and after the main lecture. The celebration is obvious from the dressy attire, the makeup, the cheerful faces, and the animated conversations. This atmosphere is also created by the catering and the prompt service that are can be seen everywhere at the event venues.

The celebratory element is all pervasive, penetrating deeply into the nature of every activity and experience and coloring each element of the event. The celebratory element is not only a part of the lecture series, but it is also a driving force and a mechanism for accomplishing a myriad of objectives and tasks with graciousness and enjoyment. Many of these benefits are unintended, but very useful and highly valued. The celebratory moment provides a synergistic capstone to almost all other aspects and activities. The festivities provide a medium for fusing all other features in order to attain numerous constructive outcomes regarding design culture and education in a relaxed manner. The celebration creates the magic of the event and the miracle of learning without effort. That is what Millennials (or GenY-ers) seem to dream about and enjoy with their full being (Espinoza, Ukleja, & Rusch, 2010).

The lecture series is both a professional celebration and a celebration of the profession. There is some difference in the way these vantage points are construed. The professional temperament of celebration comes from professional culture and traditions. It is the way the profession celebrates. This is an important moment in professional acculturation, because the professional character and personality are built up not only by professors, bosses, and motivational speakers, but also by professional retreats, respites, and celebrations. The lecture series illustrates this invisible process very well and provides ample reason for investing in such events.

The celebration of the profession is another key aspect of the design lecture series. It is about celebrating the social standing and impact of the profession, the untold stories and contributions of the thousands of men and women engaged in it, and of course of the students of that profession themselves. This celebration of the profession is a very modest way for students to be endowed with the social prestige of the profession and to get credit for becoming a part of it. It is a way for students to achieve self-actualization.

The lecture series is also a straightforward celebration of the design school, the department, and the program, in several respects. This event rides on the prestige of the profession, but it is also based on the actual achievements and contributions of these university units. While students enjoy the status and prominence they attain during the celebration, the administration and faculty are happy to display their units and to showcase to the campus and the outside world their accomplishments and successes. It is a demonstration of professional pride, regarding both the occupational and the educational aspects. It demonstrates pride in a job well done, in contribution to society, and in engagement in the education of the new generation. It is not accidental that the event is generously sponsored and well attended by high-ranking administrators. This celebration of the school's achievements provides a tribute to the effort and expertise of faculty and students in service to the local community and design practitioners.

At the individual level, the lecture series is a display of personal pride: pride with the professional affiliation, with the program, and most of all, with one's personal achievements. I see the personal reasons for students to celebrate and to enjoy the day, and I see the different ways in which they do so. This is the way to celebrate successfully submitted projects, sleepless nights, and self-imposed restrictions in the name of achievement. This is the way students treat themselves for all the sacrifices they have made during the semester. At such times, students feel the halo of their martyrdom and have a sense that everybody around them sees it as well. They then feel rewarded for their dedication and for the energy and time they have devoted to learning their profession.

Professional Socialization and Acculturation

Celebration is an overarching experience during the lecture series and permeates all activities. It provides a framework and background for professional socialization and acculturation. Celebration also melds all of the activities into a coherent event and in this way further reinforces and enhances the effectiveness of socialization and acculturation. The acculturation takes place in the process of social interaction and in building professional community. On the other hand, professional networks constitute a component of design culture and are an important mechanism for acculturation.

Because the major activities that take place at that event stimulate students to familiarize themselves with and to adopt professional values and patterns of behavior, the lecture series is important for developing design culture. By observing the behavior of practitioners attending the lecture, students are introduced to the idea of learning outside of class, learning at public lectures, and going to lectures long after graduation. In conversations with alumni and other practitioners, students learn about the realities of the world of design—about hard work, long hours at the office, compressed due dates, project schedule discipline, and many other issues and problems of professional life. Students perceive and trust practitioners as role models, and they emulate their behavior, views, and values. This approach promulgates smooth and effortless professional acculturation. Such learning about the real world of practice has important implications for increasing the work ethic and motivation for learning at school. During this acculturation process, students build a foundation for developing professional ethics and values, and for networking, bonding, and developing camaraderie.

The lecture series also brings with it an infrastructure for building a professional community. Students learn how to interact with unfamiliar colleagues—with people that they may not have seen up to that moment, but that they need to approach to establish a relationship. It helps develop skills for conducting a professional conversation, obtaining information, creating a good impression, and making friends. Students also learn how to network in the presence of large groups of people. In the process of the events, celebrations, and interactions, students start developing a sense of belonging. In this way, they start feeling the emergence of community. They feel budding bonds of camaraderie. This is an exceptional experience with important educational and professional implications.

The Lecture Series, Design Culture, and Their Effect on the Educational Process

The Lecture Series as a Lifelong Education

The lecture series goes beyond and yet draws together the boundaries of intra- and extracurricular learning by illustrating a model of lifelong professional development and learning. This is not new to the design profession, which contends with constant technological innovations, stylistic developments, and evolving user culture. The lecture itself introduces new and unpublished ideas and visions. The concurrent events, such as the trade show and meetings with practitioners, foster new experiences and cultivate new ways of learning. Students develop personal methods for obtaining knowledge outside the classroom, on their own, and "on the go."

In many ways, the event emulates the ways practitioners learn and update their knowledge. The continuing education unit (CEU) system of professional development is a routine in most associations across design specialties. However, the university sponsorship of the event introduces new elements and specifics pertinent only to academic institutions. This hybrid nature provides a mechanism for transition and for bridging the two worlds.

The Lecture Series and Professional Growth

The design lecture series has several major implications for student growth, for the development of design culture, and for the overall quality of design education. As a major event of this type, the series becomes an important landmark in the professional development of students. In a single day, students grow professionally by years. They have learned, seen, and experienced an immense amount. They have met many real practitioners, have connected with them, and have started professional networking. Students also appreciate that administrators from all levels have honored the occasion and paid attention to their development.

As a result of their participation in the event's settings and activities, students feel appreciated, celebrated, and important. This leads to increasing student confidence, self-esteem, and maturity. Students develop a new perspective on their program, their studies, and their future. They start seeing themselves within the context of the professional community—of future professional life and careers. This in turn positively influences student motivation and morale. In the long run, these changes will translate into more diligent study, more attention to studio projects, better discipline, and better performance as a whole.

Design Culture and Education

My inquiry at one of the research sites in the last ten years indicates that the lecture series have produced tangible results in respect to building stronger interest in the pro-

fession and in developing design culture. Although it is important to keep in mind that the purpose of Grounded Theory methodology is not meant to account for causal relationships, and taking into consideration that there are might be other influences and factors, the painstaking but steady growth of the students at that research site is obvious. Their faculty has noticed this as well. Alumni also mention that the lecture series has made them feel different—more confident and inspired to work.

Culture is more than knowledge and education. Building new culture is impossible without fostering new world views and new values in the process of doing, discussing, and experiencing. The design lecture series provides the arena for juxtaposing different cultures, including the cultures of students, faculty, practitioners, and outstanding professionals. By participating directly in lectures, discussions, observations, informal talks, social interactions, and many other activities, students not only learn, but also analyze, compare, relate to role models, and make decisions regarding which way to go in their careers and which ideas and values to accept. The active nature of professional acculturation during the lecture series events is fertile ground for nurturing professional world views and values, as well as understanding about design, design practice, and the process of study.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I hope that this study will contribute to design education by providing an understanding of the value of the lecture series for developing design culture, suggesting some best practices in conducting the lecture series, and encouraging design administrators and faculty to support the lecture series as a vehicle for delivering high quality design education. The study offers insights to educators who might wish to explore possibilities for employing similar events for increasing the quality of education in their programs; an event of this scope may be incorporated as an educational tool in many other professional areas. There are already precedents from other fields, for instance Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), where educators are studying architectural design culture with the purpose of adopting some of its most productive features to their area of teaching. I have grounds to believe that the introduction of events like the design lecture series in other programs will have a positive impact on creating professional culture and identity, and also on boosting student self-esteem and motivation to study.

This study provides a stepping-stone for other researchers who wish to work on this topic. It delineates an area of investigation that is important and beneficial for design education, particularly in the area of interior and architectural design. Considering that this is only a beginning,

there are untold opportunities ahead. Other researchers can develop the work begun in this project and take it in a number of directions. Additional studies can follow with larger samples or different populations in order to widen the area of transferability of the findings. Researchers can also explore in more detail particular activities that compose the lecture series, new points of view and new aspects, as well as their implications for design acculturation and enhancing the quality of education.

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What Is the Experience like of Leaving a College Presidency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of Lutheran college presidents leaving the presidency. The purpose of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of former college presidents who were associated with Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America (ELCA) colleges. Research on university and college presidents has focused mainly on those who lead large universities or small community colleges. The themes and meanings that emerged in this research are discussed in light of three phases: pre-exit, exit, and post-exit. The results of this research include significant and meaningful lessons learned by these former presidents that may be helpful for current and future college presidents. Implications for practice and future research are provided.

Approximately one-fourth of all institutions in any year are preparing for a presidential change, are in the midst of one, or have just selected a new president (George, 2004). Some of these presidents leave due to their own choice, and others leave involuntarily (American Council on Education, 2007). The individual circumstances may vary by institution, but the exit process is the same. A college president leaves and a search committee is formed to select a new one. Understanding the presidential exit process is an important part of leading a college in a healthy manner (Bornstein, 2003). The purpose of this study was to learn about the experience of leaving a college presidency of the ELCA.

As of 2005, there were 4,216 degree-granting institutions in the United States (Sanaghan, Goldstein, & Gaval, 2008). Each is lead by a president or chancellor. Before 1965, many state university presidents had much longer tenure in office than did their successors in the late 1990s. In 1965, 43.7% served 15 or more years in office. In 1997, it was only 3.6% (Davis & Davis, 1999). In 1984, the Association of Governing Boards warned, "The American college and university presidency is in trouble" (p. xix). Ten years later, Kerr (1994) observed that the office of president was still in trouble, stating, "I started out wondering why presidential terms were so short and getting shorter"

(p. x). Kerr raised a critical issue. Given the importance of presidential leadership in the nation's universities and colleges and the relationship between length of service and leadership effectiveness, little substantive research has been done on the topic (Davis & Davis, 1999).

A subset of universities and colleges in the U.S. are religion-affiliated colleges. Andringa (2005) estimated that there are 900 self-described religion-affiliated campuses in the U.S. "The American Council of Education reports that the average length of a college president of a religion-affiliated college today is about 5.9 years" (Bob Andringa, President of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, personal communication, July 28, 2005). A subset of U.S. religion-affiliated colleges is Lutheran colleges. The average length of tenure for a Lutheran college president has also dropped. Ralph Wagoner, Lutheran Educational Conference of North America (LECNA) President, said:

> I would maintain that we are in a different era with a different set of variables from those who served in the 1960s to late 1980s. I would predict that we will never see the long terms we read about from the 1920s to the 1950s. (personal communication, August 4, 2005)

In 2005, the average length of tenure for a Lutheran college president was 5.07 years. In 2006, the tenure was 4.79. As of mid-February, 2007, it had dropped to 4.68, and in August it was 3.86 (Arne Selbyg, Executive Director of Higher Education Division of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, personal communication, August 7, 2007). Lutheran college presidents do not serve for as long a period as they did in the past.

It is not just college presidents who are turning over more often. "In recent decades, college presidents have become more like Corporate CEOs" (Selingo, 2005). According to Pedderson (2007), more chief executive officers left their jobs in 2005 than in any other year. These frequent transitions can be disruptive (at best) (Bear, 2000) and very costly for the leader, the leader's direct reports, and other internal stakeholders (Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2006).

Turnover among top college presidents is also costly and related to job satisfaction (Glick, 1992; Vaughan, 1986). Turnover at the top ultimately results in slower change and less responsiveness throughout the institution (Padilla & Ghosh, 2000). A failed presidency is a tumultuous event for the entire college. A presidential failure hurts the institution, costing time and money, damaging reputations, and disrupting momentum in planning, fundraising, and recruitment. A failed presidency means that the board has failed, and, in the long run, the institution, faculty, staff, and students suffer (Bornstein, 2003b).

Previous studies have addressed some of the challenges of college presidents in large universities (Basinger, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002; Boggs, 1997; Bornstein, 2002, 2003a, 2004, 2005; Cotton, 2002; Evans, 1998; Rhodes, 1998; Selingo, 2005). Research has also concentrated on presidents of community colleges (Evans, 1998; Gregg, 2004; McFarlin, 1999; Oglesby, 1996).

Little, though, has been written about presidents of religious institutions, and almost nothing has been written specifically about Lutheran college presidents. Four books have been authored by former Lutheran college presidents (Carlson, 1977; Dovre, 2005, Frame, 2006; Rand, 1996), but none of the four is specifically about their experience as a president or of leaving the presidency. There is not much written or found on this topic in the current literature. This study of Lutheran college presidents' experiences can shed light on what it is like to leave a presidency. While there are only 26 Lutheran college presidents of the ELCA, the group serves as a microcosm of the 900 religion-affiliated college presidents in the country. These 900 colleges enroll more than two million students, employ upwards of 600,000 faculty and staff, and have operating budgets of more than $35 billion (Andringa & Splete, 2005). The president of each of the 26 Lutheran colleges has a complex leadership position that wields significant influence in terms of people and dollars managed (Tunheim & McLean, 2006). Such a study can help future religious college presidents understand their roles better, as well as what it means to leave a presidency. In addition, such a study can also help Human Resource Development (HRD) consultants in their work and consultation with these presidents and their institutions.

PURPOSE, NEED, AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of former college presidents who were associated with ELCA colleges. Past research on university and college presidents has focused mainly on those who lead large universities or small community colleges (Basinger, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002; Bornstein, 2002, 2003a, 2004, 2005; Evans, 1998; Gregg, 2004; McFarlin, 1999; Oglesby, 1996; Rhodes, 1998; Selingo, 2005).

This research contributes to HRD by concentrating on the experiences of former Lutheran college presidents in higher education and their turnover. It focuses on an area that has not been sufficiently explored in HRD, that of turnover of college presidents in religious higher education. It will increase the awareness of HRD scholars and practitioners, as well as current and future Lutheran (and other) college presidents, about the workforce needs of such leaders in the future. In addition, presidential or employee turnover is important for HRD professionals who are assigned the organizational role of developing and maintaining the expertise of human resources within such organizations (Peterson, 2004).

PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used an interpretive research methodology because it provides insights into what people's experiences are, why they do what they do, and what they need in order to change (Rowan & Huston, 1997). Phenomenology is the most appropriate type of inquiry for this study because it aims at understanding lived experiences and helped us understand the experiences of ELCA presidents while leaving and after leaving the position.

Phenomenology asks the question: What is this experience like? It allows the researcher to study a phenomenon to learn about it. According to van Manen, phenomenology is a "search for what it means to be human" and "attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday existence" (1990, pp. 11-12). It is "the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (p. 10). An underlying assumption of phenomenology is that humans

seek meaning from their experiences and from the experiences of others (Gibson, 2003). Phenomenology allows the researcher to study the experiences and their meaning, and through them we gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world (van Manen, 2001). Phenomenology studies the essence or the meaning of lived experiences that individuals often forget are present.

RESEARCH METHODS

According to van Manen (1990), hermeneutic phenomenology consists of six research tenets. This is not a linear process but, instead, consists of "dynamic interplay" between and among these tenets (p. 30). The research tenets are:

1. turning to a phenomenon that seriously interests us and commits us to the world

2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it

3. reflecting on the essential themes that characterize the phenomenon

4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting

5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon

6. balancing the research context by considering the parts and whole (pp. 30-31).

These six research tenets serve as the basis of the research. An important assumption of this methodology is that, unlike natural sciences research, phenomenology is not a science of empirical facts for generalization. The findings of this study are not meant to be generalized. They are intended to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied as experienced by the participants.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

There are approximately 25 former Lutheran ELCA college presidents who have exited the role in the last five years. Ten were selected to be research participants for this study, based on convenience. All but three were located in the Midwest. The participants included ten males whose racial/ethnic makeup is Caucasian. All are affiliated with the ELCA.

INTERVIEWS

Eight of the ten participants were interviewed face-to-face. The final two were interviewed by telephone. Permission was given to audio-tape the interviews, and transcripts were created. The study was conducted under the guidelines and approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university.

DATA COLLECTION

Each interview began with the research question, "What is the experience like of leaving the presidency of an ELCA college?" After a few probing questions, "Tell me more about that? What else did you experience?" two other questions were asked: "How did you feel during the process of leaving? What did you learn as a result?" These questions allowed the gathering of data about how the phenomenon was experienced by these ten former presidents.

The phenomenological interviewer must remain attentive to the quality and interpretive value of the lived experience data being gathered, constantly evaluating the depth and breadth of descriptions as they emerge (Becker, 1992; van Manen, 1997). Follow-up questions were asked typically probing for additional detail regarding the experience.

RESEARCHERS' VIEWS

One of the unique facets of phenomenological studies is that the idea for the study is typically conceived when a researcher finds a phenomenon that is interesting or fascinating and wants to understand it more (van Manen, 1997). The first author's interest in presidents of Lutheran colleges goes back 30 years, when she began attending Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. Before beginning the interviews, it was required for her to identify and reflect back on her own experiences at Concordia and with Lutheran college presidents. Her experiences as both a student and, more recently, as a consultant working with Lutheran college presidents were important. She started and maintained a journal as recommended to avoid biases that might have arisen from these past experiences (van Manen, 1997), to capture her thoughts and bracket her preconceptions. Through this process of journaling, she was able to set aside her own views concerning the exiting process of Lutheran college presidents. The second author also attended a religion-affiliated college and served on the boards of two such colleges.

DATA ANALYSIS

The interviews were subjected to hermeneutic phenomenological reflection to allow themes to emerge. A theme is "a major dimension, major aspect, or constituent of the phenomenon studied; expressed more simply, a partial descriptor of the phenomenon" (Tesch, 1987, p. 230). Texts were read a total of four times. The first two times were just to understand the data. Giorgi (1997) suggested that this is critical to assisting the researcher in understanding how the parts are constituted. The third time she read the texts through very slowly, highlighting important lines. Tesch (1987) described this step as one where the reader is looking for the material that is at the center of the experience. Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker, and Mulderij (1984) described it as looking for the "moments which fly up like sparks from the description" (p. 6). The fourth time the first author documented the highlighted lines from the texts and later categorized them by theme and participant.

Two Excel spreadsheets were then created: the first was a summary of the themes by former presidents and the second by the themes themselves. These documents served as the summary of the transcribed data.

Finally, after a review of the themes by the second author and subsequent revision, she sent the theme and sub-theme list back to the participants. She scheduled a second, follow-up interview. She talked with nine of the ten participants one by one. One was in Africa for an extended period of time and was unable to participate in this validation process. The former presidents shared their thoughts with her about this list and how it resonated with their own experience. The presidents offered their validation and also their disagreement with some of the themes. This feedback resulted in a final list of themes and sub-themes.

LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations influenced this study. The first is not really a limitation, but those who do not understand the methodology may see it as such; it is about the purpose of the research. Van Manen (1997) reminded us that "Phenomenology does not problem solve" (p. 23). This study's purpose is not to solve the Lutheran college turnover problem. According to Polkinghorne, 1989, "The objective of the phenomenological researcher is to help those who read the research findings come away with a better understanding of what it is like for someone to experience the phenomenon" (p. 41).

A second sometimes perceived limitation, though it really is not, is that the findings cannot be generalized. This study summarizes the themes from ten former Lutheran college presidents who each had a unique exit experience

from the presidency. The purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of these former college presidents who were associated with ELCA colleges. Generalization across these ten is not what was intended and cannot be done.

FINDINGS

An analysis of the interview transcripts produced four main theme categories and 13 sub-themes (Table 1). They are organized into a pre-exit phase, an exit process phase, a post-exit phase, and lessons learned. In this article, the first three themes, the three phases, are discussed. Some verbatim detail from the former presidents will also be shared to represent the text. Due to space limitations, only one or two texts per theme and sub-theme will be presented.

PRE-EXIT PHASE

All ten participants described a questioning period they went through and discussed when to exit the presidency with their spouse. Two themes emerged from the texts in this phase: there are institutional reasons that influence the timing of the decision to exit, and there are personal reasons that do the same.
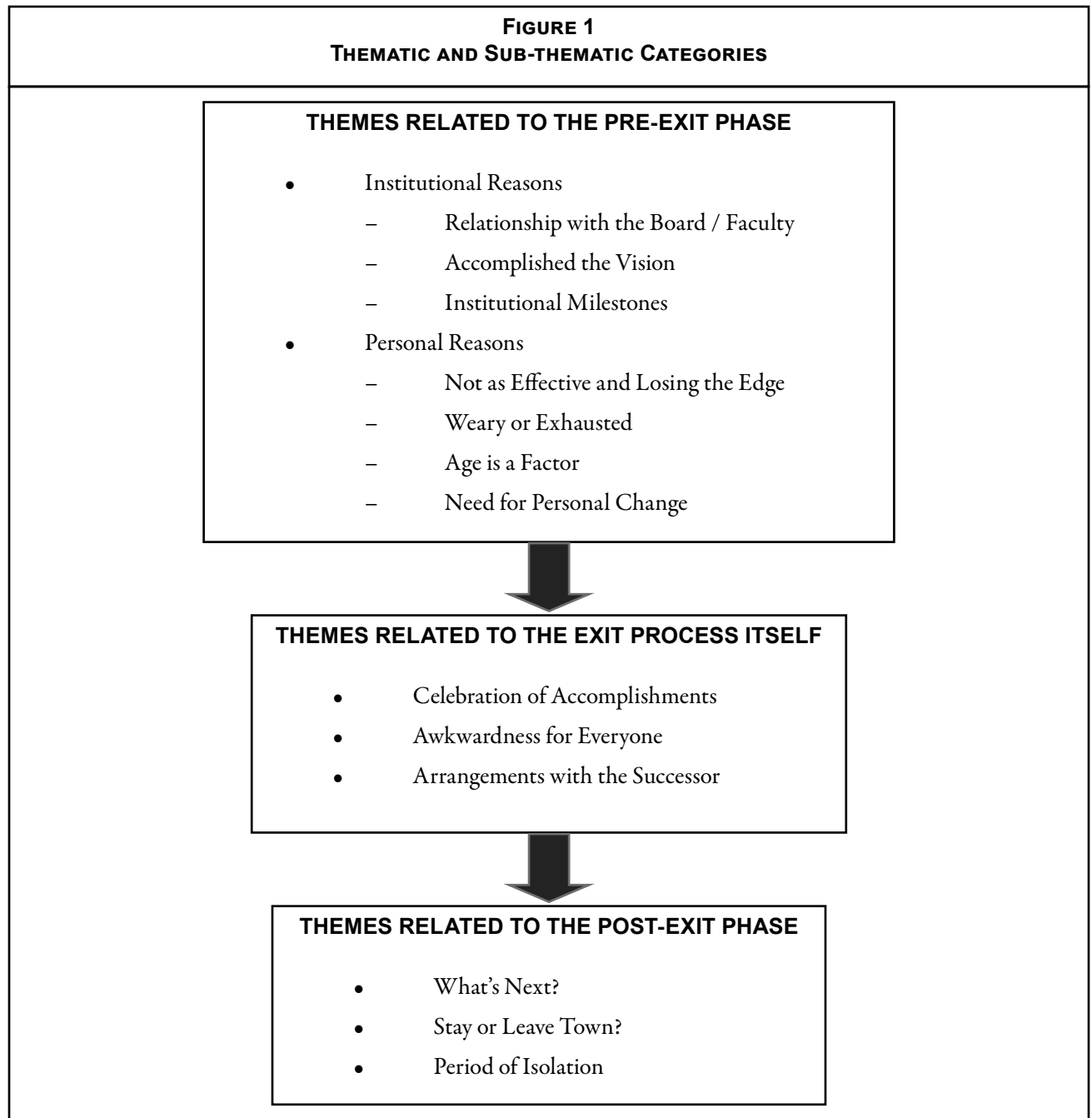
Institutional Change

Three sub-themes emerged from the texts relative to institutional issues causing presidents to start thinking about exiting: relationship with the board/faculty, accomplished the vision, and institutional milestones.

Relationship with the board/faculty. Eight of the ten former presidents interviewed stated that the relationship of the president and the board is a complex one. The board hires the president, evaluates the president, and can fire the president. The following excerpt represents the frustration a former president felt due to his weak board:

> We had accomplished a pretty significant agenda in the first three-year period. But in thinking about the future, I was beginning to question the commitment of the institution to really move forward. From a board standpoint, I think I had a very agreeable board but it was not a particularly committed board. It was becoming clear that it was going to be a difficult run. Looking forward, I was feeling less confident or optimistic in what the real commitment to change was going to be.

Accomplished the vision. Another reason why presidents begin to think about leaving their institutions is due to their success. One participant stated:

FIGURE 1
THEMATIC AND SUB-THEMATIC CATEGORIES

THEMES RELATED TO THE PRE-EXIT PHASE

- Institutional Reasons
  - Relationship with the Board / Faculty
  - Accomplished the Vision
  - Institutional Milestones
- Personal Reasons
  - Not as Effective and Losing the Edge
  - Weary or Exhausted
  - Age is a Factor
  - Need for Personal Change

THEMES RELATED TO THE EXIT PROCESS ITSELF

- Celebration of Accomplishments
- Awkwardness for Everyone
- Arrangements with the Successor

THEMES RELATED TO THE POST-EXIT PHASE

- What's Next?
- Stay or Leave Town?
- Period of Isolation

We completed the campaign. We got the Phi Beta Kappa Chapter. We had fifty years of being in the black. We had a balanced budget. You start thinking, "What am I going to do next?

Institutional milestone. The former presidents talked about completing significant fundraising campaigns and celebrating important anniversaries of the colleges for which they worked. The former presidents termed these as institutional milestones. These milestones became poten-

tial events or times appropriate for exiting the presidency. One reported:

I was hired during the 120th year of the college. I created, with the board's approval, a 125th anniversary commission to start the study and plan. We did some incredible things with almost no money. We got a $150,000 grant. But we had incredible things that went on during that 125th year. It became fairly clear to me that, as we wound up those celebrations, that was the perfect time to go.

Personal Reasons

Four additional sub-themes emerged from this issue: not as effective and losing the edge, weary or exhausted, age is a factor, and need for personal change.

Not as effective and losing the edge. A number of presidents shared how difficult the job was through the years, realizing at some point along the way that they were not as effective in their role as they had been in prior years. The following description sheds light on this aspect:

> I remember having feelings at times that I didn't have the patience anymore. I must have had a sense of not having many months or years left, and kind of tried to move things faster than they could be. I was lacking patience and tolerance. I also wasn't listening as well. It was hard for people to get my attention. That's another reason I decided to retire. I didn't trust my immediate reaction to things as much.

Weary or exhausted. All ten participants said that the job requires a lot of time and energy to do it right. After working in the role for a number of years, they found themselves exhausted without much time for a break or personal renewal. One respondent described this exhaustion:

> I have been out of the job for almost a year now and I am tired still! A president feels like he is always "on" in this job. The job was so very intense, I didn't know if I had it in me to stay longer. Everything is immediate. I mean everything. There was much more needed to be given by the president. And I didn't know if I had it in me to give much more. Therefore, it felt like it was time to go.

Age is a factor. Energy can also be tied to biological age. This reason was also an influencing factor with regard to when to exit the presidency. The participants talked about their age and how that factored into the timing of the decision to leave. This participant spoke about the timing for retirement:

> The timing to leave was just perfect. I was 59 and a half and that made me eligible for retirement. It seemed like the timing was just right to leave.

and

> My wife had retired three years ago, and I turned 70 in May. That's long enough.

Need for personal change. This sub-category was the most personal of the themes. These presidents self-disclosed important personal reasons for exiting the presidency, namely, grandchildren and a low level of motivation.

> I thought it is time while we still have our health and the ability to do some other things. Our grandchildren live in another city and we can't see them enough.

and

> I was not interested in doing a big strategic planning process again. I just didn't want to go through all of that again.

EXIT PHASE

All ten presidents talked in great detail about their own, unique exit story. Three themes emerged: celebration of accomplishments, awkwardness for everyone involved, and arrangements with the successor.

Celebration of Accomplishments

All ten men shared their exit story. Each mentioned that there was a celebration of accomplishments, whether they had been in the position for a long or short period of time, and whether the decision was a free choice or they were being pushed out of the position. A former president highlighted his celebrative ending experience:

> We really left on a high. The community was very, very gracious and affirming of us, more than I could have imagined. We had such a marvelous experience. My wife and I met wonderful people. We loved the kids. We just absolutely felt that we were blessed to know these young people. As president and first lady of that college, we were really part of the learning community with them. Another participant was very intentional about his exiting celebration period.

Awkwardness for Everyone

Most of the former presidents described their feelings about leaving their institution. I was surprised when four former presidents reported that it was awkward for everyone involved. One said:

> It got a little awkward when the search started. You don't know whether you should be involved in it in any way or not. It's the recognition that things are going to be different and need to be different. And things have to be better even than you may have thought they were when you left. There's a certain awkwardness about it all.

Arrangements with the Successor

Eight of the ten former presidents commented on the agreement they made with the incoming president. They ranged widely. There does not appear to be a best practice in this area. Each outgoing president decided to do what was right for him and the incoming president. It is their individual relationship to determine. It appears that some agreements are implicit and some are explicit. At one end of the continuum, three former presidents gave the gift of space and said very little:

> I told my successor over a one hour lunch, "I'm going to do you the best favor I can. I'm moving 800 miles away." I never call him. He's doing fine on his own.

Another participant responded with a completely opposite point of view:

> My predecessor could not have been more helpful. He was a perfect gentleman. He was available to answer questions. I never heard the slightest hint of criticism of anything I was doing that he might have dropped, not even too far away. He was just wonderful about that. I've tried to emulate that with my successor. We have a very good relationship. We're trying to meet once a month so that the president can pick my brains and just unload if they want to.

POST-EXIT PHASE

This phase references after the president and spouse leave the institution. Three themes emerged: what's next, stay or leave, period of isolation.

What's Next?

All ten of the former presidents talked about what they did after leaving the presidency. Three of them retired completely and have not taken other jobs. Seven went to work in other positions, three as interim presidents or deans. Three different responses show the continuum of feelings at this point in one's life:

> There's a sort of the "end-of-the-earth syndrome" after a presidency. Where does it drop off to? I really struggled with that.

and

> Leaving the presidency meant that on the one hand, it was a very considered decision and an obvious decision for my wife and me for which we were prepared. We said, "Okay, now we're on to a new chapter. Let's see what things present them-

selves." We had some ideas about what might happen, but nothing firm. We had confidence that that it would work out. And it has.

and

> Thank the good Lord I had something else to go to. I think it saved my marbles and my marriage!

Stay or Leave?

Should the exiting president continue living in the college community or move away? This question has been debated quietly by exiting presidents for years (Moore & Burrows, 2001). Most would say, "Get out of town so that the new president can get established." Andringa (2005) reported that there have been a number of situations where the past president stayed around, generally fundraising for the college. He suggested that the majority of presidents believed this has caused numerous problems for institutions and successor presidents.

Of the ten Lutheran college presidents interviewed in this study, eight left town. Of the two who stayed in town, one immediately took a series of interim positions. Essentially he left town but kept his same residence. The final president did not move, and, from his perspective, things appear to be going well in that situation.

Again, there were differing opinions among the participants:

> We wanted to stay here and live here. We've been here 13 years. We have a lot of friends here. We like this community. We like the people. What I told the board chair and my successor is that although we live in town, I was going to keep a very low profile, especially for the first year. And I didn't want people to misinterpret that. I think the only function I have been to is one football game. People know we're around. They know that I have a high opinion of my successor. I never ask anyone how things are going. That's a huge mistake. Whichever way the answer goes you don't want to hear it. It's just not a good idea to ask. If anyone asks me about something at the university, I say, "Well, that's interesting, you know. But that's not my problem." It's not my problem and it's become a mantra.

A different president stated:

> I think you have to get out of town. It's the Old Lutheran Pastor model. If you leave, the new pastor can get things going. The same goes for presidents.

Period of Isolation

One of the biggest surprises was to learn about the post-exit period of isolation that typically occurred. After they moved out of the presidency, there appears to have been a quiet, lonely phase. Seven of the ten mentioned it. Some seemed surprised by this period, while others were not. Three separate points of view are illustrated here:

> My wife and I absolutely disengaged. We didn't go to anything. We just stopped. I wanted to stay out of it. Some people would write me notes. I'd say, "Look, I'm not there anymore. It's not my problem. It's none of my business, frankly."

and

> Since leaving, there's some sadness that remains. It didn't end the way I wanted it to.

and

> It took me two and a half years to get my feelings in line. My wife and I were driving in the car, driving down to Chicago, and we had on a tape and they were talking about loss and grieving. She was driving and I remember leaning forward saying, "That's it. I've been grieving." She said, "Of course you are." She knew it all along. But I had to get it through my thick head. She said, "I wondered when you'd figure this one out."

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study offers a number of possible recommendations for consideration. Care must be exercised with these recommendations as findings from phenomenological research cannot be generalized.

Recommendations for Practice

First, current presidents and boards may need to get even more intentional about Lutheran college presidential preparation and succession. They may need to send high-potential staff and faculty to the American Council on Education or Thrivent Fellows Leadership Development programs that are available. In addition, they need to develop these high-potentials in the areas of finance, fundraising, and the personal side of being a president. Succession planning is done quite well in business (Bullock, 2007). Academia needs to be more intentional about building the pipeline inside each institution and among the 26 Lutheran colleges.

Second, presidential finalists may need to do a thorough job of learning about the finances at the institution before they accept the position. Eighty percent of new presidents are surprised about something when they get the job (Moore & Burrows, 2001). The literature reports that it is usually in the area of finances (Sanaghan, Goldstein, & Gaval, 2008). Doing as much due diligence as possible will help reduce the number of surprises, which, in turn, could help new presidents be more successful and turnover less.

The third recommendation is that board development may need to continue to be a top priority for presidents and board chairs. Presidents need to encourage their board chairs to go to AGB (Association of Governing Boards) seminars and learn from other successful board experiences. Getting a board engaged with "their noses in and fingers out" (R. L. Torgerson, personal communication, June 24, 2006) is often touted as the key to success.

Fourth, former Lutheran college presidents may need to be tapped more to mine their wisdom and expertise. This group could serve as an advisory or type of consulting group. They could vet presidential finalists for search committees or assist with performance evaluations for boards. Their expertise is rich. It needs to be utilized more than it currently is.

Another recommendation is that presidential evaluations may need to be conducted after the first year of a presidency, so that the new president can learn what is going well and what is not going well. Most boards wait until the third year and sometimes these formal evaluations do not happen until the fifth year of a presidency. Presidents need to know what is working and what is not, so that they can make adjustments.

Presidents, vice-presidents, and board members could also benefit from change management training. Learning about Lewin's (1956) unfreezing, freezing, and refreezing stages could help with strategic planning. Bridges' (2003) phases of endings, neutral zone, and new beginnings could help faculty as they cope with changes that all new presidents are going to eventually need to make. Kotter's (1996) eight steps to organizational change could be meaningful, as well. This knowledge would help all involved in making change happen on a large and small scale on campuses, perhaps with fewer no confidence votes.

Outgoing presidents may need to have explicit and clear arrangements with their successor. Whether their contact will be a little or a lot, having clear expectations and a healthy relationship will benefit everyone at the college.

We want to encourage more former Lutheran college presidents to write about their presidential experiences. We were surprised at how little has been published from

this group. Incredible learnings will be lost if they are not documented in one-way, shape, or form. With today's technology, we suggest that videos could be made if a president does not want to write a book. Aspiring presidents would greatly appreciate hearing former presidents tell what worked, what did not work, and why. Passing the institutional and presidential stories down could be important history lessons that should not be lost and need to be preserved.

Recommendations for Research

This study invites additional research. The themes that emerged in this study that had little to no literature with which to compare are excellent places to begin. For example, research could be explored in the pre-exit phase relative to presidents feeling as though there were not as effective and were losing the edge. In the post-exit phase, we could find little to nothing published relative to a period of isolation from the people and the institution. In addition, more could be learned about how lonely it is while a president and spouse are in the presidency.

This study suggests that presidents who take on leadership roles at financially-strapped institutions may need a different skill set than presidents at more financially-secure institutions. Do they need to be faster change agents? Do they need to offer more hope to the constituents? This could be a topic of future research.

More needs to be researched on presidential spouses, especially as more females become presidents. Female and minority presidents need more research attention, as well, as both are slowly increasing in the presidential role.

Finally, more research needs to be conducted on the job satisfaction of Lutheran college presidents. Surveying this group as a whole would be an interesting and informative study. In industry and business, the use of engagement surveys for faculty and staff could also be extremely helpful in leading change in these Lutheran colleges. We have not seen much use of these OD tools in Lutheran colleges. We observe presidents and institutions surveying students, alumni, and parents, but not faculty or staff to the extent that other industries do quite successfully.

We also suggest conducting this same study with other groups of college presidents. It would be interesting to see if the same themes emerged with a group of Jesuit or Methodist or other denominational college presidents. Repeating this study in other small, liberal arts colleges could affirm themes or identify new experiences while leaving the presidency.

We plan an additional article emerging from this research on the Lessons Learned by these college presidents, the

fourth theme that emerged from the data analysis. This, too, will suggest additional areas for research.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests three phases for the ten presidents in this study during his or her exit from the presidency: a pre-exit, exit and post-exit process. Themes emerged for each phase that the ten former Lutheran college presidents experienced. These data, once confirmed with positivistic research, might be helpful for boards of trustees and presidents to consider before, during, and after the decision has been made for a president to leave the position.

Switzer (2005) stated: "The U.S. college and university presidency is a complex position that requires an exceptional combination of expertise, life balance, and leadership" (p. 13). McLaughlin (1996) reminded us that, even though it is a complex and difficult role, "a presidency can be deeply satisfying" (p. 84). Showalter (2005) advised college presidents to give their institutions one last gift, a graceful exit. These exits are the end of a long or short tenure at an academic institution. Springer (2003) reminded us what is most important, "It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." (p. 28).

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DEGREE COMPASS:
THE PREFERRED CHOICE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

While engaged in academic reading, a college provost converged on an idea to use a preferential approach to students' selection of college courses, similar to the recommendation ideas based on Netflix and Amazon. The result of this idea came to be known as Degree Compass and was implemented on the campus of Austin Peay State University in 2011. Herein the reader will learn about the idea, the program, and the results of students' surveyed perceptions of efficiency and effectiveness regarding the programs' use at the university.

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN, implemented a "Netflix approach" program called Degree Compass. The idea was formulated and subsequently implemented by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Tristan Denley, after consideration of and employing ideas emerging from reading on preferential decisions in recent literature.

Denley (2011) described Degree Compass as a course recommendation system developed by Austin Peay State University. Inspired by recommendation systems implemented by companies such as Netflix, Amazon, and Pandora, Degree Compass successfully pairs current students with the courses that best fit their talents and program of study for upcoming semesters. The model combines hundreds of thousands of past students' grades with each particular student's transcript to make individualized recommendations for each student.

This system, in contrast to systems that recommend movies or books, does not depend on which classes are liked more than others. Instead it uses predictive analytics techniques based on grade and enrollment data to rank courses according to factors that measure how well each course might help the student progress through their program. From the courses that apply directly to the student's program of study, the system selects those courses that fit best with the sequence of courses in their degree and are the most central to the university curriculum as whole. That ranking is then overlaid with a model that predicts which courses the student will achieve their best grades. In this way the system most strongly recommends a course which is necessary for a student to graduate, core to the university curriculum and their major, and in which the student is expected to succeed academically.

Recently, the system has gained national attention and played a central role in Tennessee's successful Completion Innovation Challenge application, which received a $1,000,000 award from Complete College America and the Gates Foundation to support implementing Degree Compass at three other campuses in Tennessee.

The authors of this paper will extend the idea to gauge patterns of usage and students' perceptions of effectiveness, impact, and efficiency regarding the use of the program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ayres (2007) described data-based decision-making and provides examples of quantitative prediction and its role in "reshaping business and government," positing that experiential and intuitive expertise are increasingly discounted in favor of number crunching. Using large datasets, the Super Crunchers employed statistical analyses that "impact real-world decisions." Not only are they impacting the way decisions are executed, but also the decisions themselves. In effect, different and better choices are being made as a result of number crunching, across different contexts affecting people (e.g., consumers, patients, workers, and citizens).

He concluded that data-based decision-making is not a substitute for intuition, ideas, and experience, but rather a complement evolving to interact with each other, resulting in a new cadre of innovative Super Crunchers. These new thinkers will go back and forth between intuitions and number crunching envisioning more than either could in isolation (Ayres, 2007).

Thaler and Sunstein (2008) posited the idea of choice and preference, as means to success across the many areas of life issues: money, health, and freedom. They coined the term "choice architect" as a person responsible for the contextual organization in which people make decisions. Comparing choice architecture with the traditional form of architecture, they concluded foremost that a "neutral" design does not exist, as in everything is important for the resulting design to be effective once completed, in addition to being attractive. Major impact emerges from details even from what some would consider as insignificant. Consequently, power emanates from seemingly small details by pointing the users' attention toward a specific direction. In other words, a choice architect can "nudge" others toward certain choices or decisions.

According to the authors, nudging "alters people's behavior in a particular way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives." Choice architects can make major improvements to lives of others by designing user-friendly environments (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). The authors pointed out one false assumption and two misconceptions about freedom of choice. The false assumption is that all people will elect choices that will promote their best interest or the choices made by someone else on their behalf.

One of the misconceptions centered on the thought that avoiding influencing other's choices is possible, noting there are situations where an entity must choose an option affecting behavior of other people, whether or not that was the intent. Secondly, there was a misconception that paternalism, defined as a mandate by a government

or other entity, is always coercive. The authors concluded that developments in the public sector must strengthen both the "principled commitment to freedom of choice and the case for the gentle nudge" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Button and Wellington (1998) developed a modified version of the O'Banion academic advising model called the Integrative Advising Model. The original model, as designed by Terry O'Banion (1972), consisted of five elements in the process of advising students:

a) exploration of life goals; b) exploration of vocational goals; c) program choice; d) course choice; and e) scheduling options. The linear progression of his model progressed sequentially and became the basis for future advising decisions. With the Integrative Advising Model, the elemental dimensions become interactive in that students are continuously returned to the initial two elements at each advising session, as refinement of life and vocational goals impact program and course choices. The authors concluded that this approach tends to be "flexible and useful" with diverse populations, allowing connections to all the elements simultaneously, rather than proceeding through a tedious structured process (Burton & Wellington, 1998).

Hannah and Robertson (1990) concluded that approximately 45 percent of freshmen at surveyed institutions indicated the need for assistance to make choices regarding education and occupation. In addition, they found that college freshmen need more information than they actually received.

Precursors to Degree Compass emerged in the past with similar purposes. In 2006, Shugart and Romano reported that Valencia Community College had implemented a developmental advising program called Lifemap, in 1994, to direct students' attention on developing educational and career plans. College resources, including faculty and staff were integrated into a 5-stage conceptual model, based on selected developmental theory. Lifemap tools permitted students to create and save educational and career plans, their portfolio and job search information into a portal platform. Student self-sufficiency, as one goal of Lifemap, afforded students the capability of accessing transcripts, degree audits, and financial aid information.

Redesigning student services delivery also resulted in the replacement of traditional offices (e.g., admissions, financial aid, advising) with answer centers of cross-trained staff members. Sughart and Romano (2006) concluded that it was important to have a conceptual model of transformation and collaboration which focused on the college's student experience.

Software suggestion of student courses was highlighted by Young (2011), comparing it to when Netflix, the movie database giant, suggested movies according to the frequency that renters liked the movies. Describing Degree Compass at Austin Peay State University, he noted that the automated system takes into account students' planned major, data on their past academic performance, and finally data on how well similar students performed in a specific course. Early findings indicated that students who took courses from the software recommendation earned grade point averages a half point higher than students who selected courses not selected by the software.

Perry (2011) described how colleges mine data to improve education and inform decisions. Comparing data mining for this purpose to the *Moneyball* approach (Lewis, 2003), a book and later a movie, where the main character reinvigorates a struggling baseball team through statistical analyses of predicting players' success. He described a process as a robot adviser assessing the profiles of students and suggesting courses in which success is likely. Students' transcripts are compared with countless others of past students to make suggestions for each individual student.

As students logged on to the online portal, called Degree Compass, a screen labeled "Course Suggestions for You" appeared and suggestions were ranked on a scale of one to five stars. A complex algorithm exists behind the recommendations, including computation of degree requirements and common courses (e.g., freshmen writing) that is used in most programs. Similarly, courses in which student may display a talent, based on previous grades in high school or American College Test (ACT) scores, were suggested (Perry, 2012).

Quoting Dr. Tristan Denley, Perry (2012) noted that a common theme emerged that when people are presented with a myriad of options, but little information, difficulty existed in making wise choices. With students, they tend to do substantially better when they enroll in the courses that are recommended. The author also indicated that three other colleges in Tennessee had adopted the software, and that other institutions are exploring similar ideas.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study sought to explore student usage and opinion of the Degree Compass Tool. The study explores five separate research questions in relation to the demographic information of gender, age, ethnicity, classification, type of student (traditional and non-traditional), family educational history (first generation student and non- first generation student), number of years in attendance at the university, and Pell Grant recipient status.

1. Who is aware the Degree Compass tool exists?

2. Who is using the Degree Compass tool?

3. Who has taken classes based on a Degree Compass recommendation?

4. Who feels that Degree Compass accurately predicts course success rate?

5. Who would suggest using the Degree Compass tool to a friend?

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

Data for the current study was collected from a survey distributed via e-mail to Austin Peay State Universities undergraduate student population in the Fall of 2012. The self-created survey contained a total of 21 items. Thirteen items dealt with student perception and understanding of the Degree Compass Tool, while the remaining 8 items related to demographic information. For purposes of this study, the first five questions were explored as well as the last 8 items dealing with demographic information. The survey was peer checked amongst faculty at the university as well as by the creator of the Degree Compass Tool. The Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test was used to determine the survey to be at an appropriate reading level for entering college freshmen.

The University undergraduate population consisted of 8841 students. Surveys were returned, via Campus Lab's Baseline program, from 875 of these students. The survey sample size constituted analyzed results reported at a 95% confidence level with a confidence interval of 4. An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess demographic differences.

RESULTS

The descriptive results indicated that the majority of students (>55%) were aware of the Degree Compass Tool prior to the distribution of the survey. An independent samples t-test was conducted for each demographic to assess differences on the awareness of the Degree Compass Tool. Results indicated statistically significant differences based on classification ($t_{(961)}$ = 1.97, p = .007), type of student ($t_{(961)}$ = 1.82, p = .015), and Pell Grant recipient status ($t_{(961)}$ = 1.92, p = .041). Results suggest students who have entered "Senior" status, non-traditional students, and Pell Grant recipients to be more likely aware of the Degree Compass Tool.

The descriptive results indicated that the majority of students (>66%) have not used the Degree Compass Tool in any capacity. An independent samples t-test was conduct-

ed for each demographic to assess differences on who has used the Degree Compass Tool. Results indicated statistically significant differences based on classification ($t_{(961)}$ = 1.23, p = .01), type of student ($t_{(961)}$ = 4.32, p = .00), and Pell Grant recipient status ($t_{(961)}$ = 3.33, p = .14). Results suggest students who have entered either "Junior" or "Senior" status, non-traditional students, and Pell Grant recipients to be more likely to have used the Degree Compass Tool.

The descriptive results indicated that the majority of students (>82%) have not taken a class based upon a Degree Compass recommendation. An independent samples t-test was conducted for each demographic to assess differences on who has taken a class based upon a Degree Compass recommendation. Results indicated statistically significant differences based on classification ($t_{(961)}$ = 3.45, p = .01), family educational history ($t_{(961)}$ = 3.12, p = .03), and Pell Grant recipient status ($t_{(961)}$ = 4.9, p = .00). Results suggest students who are non-traditional, first generation, and Pell Grant recipient to be more likely to have taken a class based upon a Degree Compass recommendation.

The descriptive results indicated that the majority of students (>86%) who took a course based on a Degree Compass recommendation (n=160) felt the tool was accurate in it's predictions of success in the course. The majority of these students (>93%) would suggest using the tool to a friend. Significance in relation to suggesting the use of Degree Compass to a friend and Pell Grant recipient status was found ($t_{(160)}$ = 3.11, p = .00). Results suggest students who are Pell Grant recipients to be more likely to suggest using the Degree Compass tool to a friend.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper was to explore the usage and opinions of The Degree Compass

tool amongst the population of undergraduate students at Austin Peay State University. Though Degree Compass has been implemented on the campus of APSU, the developmental process of the tool is on going. This research serves the purpose of aiding in the direction of this developmental process.

Of the 171 students who reported having used the tool to select a course, one hundred and thirty eight (86.25%) reported the tool to be accurate in its predictions of success. The complex algorithms and analysis driving the suggestions generated by Degree Compass are attributed to this success. If the percentage of students aware of the tool (>55%) knew of its success rate in predictions of success, it is possible the percentage of students using the tool (<34%) would increase. Researchers suggest this success

rate be advertised to the student body, along with the increased advertisement of the availability of the tool itself.

Analysis of demographic results suggest students reaching "Junior" and "Senior" status, Non-Traditional, Pell Grant recipients, and first generation college students likely more invested in the educational process to the extend of being aware of available resources and the usage of these resources. Students coming from these backgrounds are generally older in age and are likely to have overcome economical hardships in the quest for their degree. The researchers suggest students who are older in age and students who have overcome economic hardships to be two separate areas of concentration for which the degree compass tool has proven to be effective. It is suggested that through the increased advertisement of availability and success of the tool, that students outside of these two areas could become more aware of the tool and would be more likely to use the tool.

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The Compensation and Benefits of Private University Presidents

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the determinants of the salaries of private college and university presidents. Ordinary least squares estimates suggest that institutional size, performance, and prestige are linked to presidents' compensation. Pay is for performance. Externally recruited presidents are paid more than those promoted from inside, which confirms the relationship between pay and performance. As well, the impact of tenure is positive and significant, but its magnitude increases if a quadratic term is added. In contrast, there is evidence that larger class sizes and lower alumni giving rates are positively associated with compensation. Also, nondenominational institutions tend to pay more than religiously affiliated ones. In order to deal with potential simultaneous equations bias, the model was reestimated with two-stage least squares. Two-stage least squares causes enrollment's effect on earnings to increase. The impact of various school characteristics on longevity as president is also investigated. Probit models indicate that the acceptance rate is negatively associated with the probability of remaining in office.

This study analyzes the determinants of the compensation of private college and university presidents. It extends previous work by including additional variables as well as by using two-stage least squares (2SLS) to account for potential joint determination of earnings and institutional characteristics. It estimates probit models in order to determine whether presidents who perform well have higher probabilities of keeping their positions.

Over the past several years a growing literature has studied the determinants of business firms' executive compensation. Proponents (e.g., Bebchuk and Fried, 2004) of the managerial power hypothesis claim that executives are able to extract rents through their connections to corporate boards. Moreover, Bebchuk and Grinstein (2005) present evidence that from 1993 to 2003 corporate executives' pay grew at a higher rate than could be explained by market capitalization or other market-related factors. However, with respect to the pay of corporate executives, Kay and Van Putten (2007), Hall and Murphy (2003), and Murphy (2002) claim that the intent of corporate

boards is to pay for performance. Hall and Murphy (2003) find that premiums are paid to externally hired executives. This evidence is inconsistent with the managerial power model because, compared to those who are already employed, outside hires are unlikely to be able to influence corporate boards.

Our finding is that private college presidents are rewarded based on measures of institutional performance such as enrollment, SAT scores, and a peer assessment index. Indeed, the estimated impact of enrollment rises after 2SLS is used to adjust for simultaneous equations bias. Moreover, our results parallel those of Hall and Murphy (2003) in that premiums are paid to externally hired presidents. We do not find evidence that private college presidents are able to extract rents through their ties to boards of trustees.

Much of the impetus for research concerning executive compensation stems from the pay gap between corporate executives and average workers. From 1980 to 2007 the ratio of corporate CEOs' to average workers' earnings rose

from 40 to 364.[1] The gap between college presidents and faculty also has risen. From 1997-1998 to 2007-2008 the real earnings of academic presidents rose 36%. The corresponding figure for full professors was 13%.[2] A better understanding of the compensation of college presidents and their longevity in their jobs may contribute to a better understanding of academic labor markets and also provide insights into how markets for executives function.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past 20 years several studies have analyzed the factors that influence college presidents' salaries.[3] Pfeffer and Ross (1988) suggest that certain institutions are intrinsically more complex: Schools with large enrollments or varied graduate programs are difficult to administer. Hence, presidents of larger schools earn higher pay. Pfeffer and Ross also assert that it is riskier to run private than to run public colleges because private colleges' funding sources are uncertain. This line of argument would imply that there is an earnings premium associated with being a private college president. However, over the past few decades public colleges have been underfunded compared to their private counterparts, which suggests that this may no longer be true; presidents at public institutions may face increasing risk and so be entitled to expect increasing pay. Indeed, Ehrenberg (2006) argues that cutbacks in state funding have made it increasingly difficult for state institutions to compete. Nevertheless, Monks (2007) finds a large private/public differential. He has several explanations for this result. First, he suggests that the gap may reflect unobserved differences in ability. Second, running the two types of schools may require fundamentally different tasks. Third, leaders of private institutions may have less influence on public policy, so the observed premium reflects a compensating wage differential. Fourth, public schools may be under pressure from state legislators or taxpayers to keep their compensation relatively low.

Since Pfeffer and Ross's (1988) study, the research in the area has relied on single equation models. This work has included variables related to institutional quality. These include Peterson's selectivity index (Boulanger and Pliskin, 1999), average SAT scores (Bartlett and Sorokina, 2005; Ehrenberg, Cheslock, and Epifantseva, 2001), average faculty salaries (Ehrenberg et al., 2001), and institutional quality (Tang, Tang, and Tang, 2000). The research

has measured the human capital of college presidents with variables such as years at the current position (Boulanger and Pliskin, 1999; Ehrenberg et al., 2001), age (Ehrenberg et al., 2001), and prior presidential appointment (Monks, 2007; Bartlett and Sorokina, 2005; Ehrenberg et al., 2001). These studies have included a gender dummy variable (e.g. Monks, 2007; Bartlett and Sorokina, 2005) and measures of risk (Bartlett and Sorokina, 2005). The literature has concluded that both the human capital and institutional variables have the predicted signs and are statistically significant. There does not appear to be a gender differential.[4] Among tier one liberal arts colleges, Bartlett and Sorokina (2005) discover that risk is positively associated with earnings, which suggests a compensating differential. However, this pattern is reversed for schools in the other tiers.

FOCUS OF CURRENT STUDY

This study seeks to extend the existing work on college presidents' pay in a few respects. First, several new characteristics are added that do not appear in previous work. For example, we examine whether nondenominational institutions provide a pay premium as well as whether there is a pay differential for externally hired presidents. Except for Pfeffer and Ross (1988) and Boulanger and Pliskin (1999), previous studies have not included an internal/external hire variable. Pfeffer and Ross find that internally hired presidents earn significantly less, but they do not control for institutional quality variables that became available from the U.S. News and World Report subsequent to their study. The estimates of Boulanger and Pliskin (1999) indicate that internally hired college presidents earn more, although this finding is insignificant. Because of the importance of this variable to the pay-for-performance debate, it deserves a fresh look. We also include measures of alumni contributions, class size, and an institutional peer assessment measure. We investigate whether the results are robust to a few alternative specifications.

Second, we redo the earnings equations using a new econometric approach. Prior studies are limited to single equation models where the independent variables are presumed to be exogenous. There are strong reasons to believe that there is a causal link between college char-

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1 See Institute for Policy Studies (2007)

2 These figures were calculated from the salary surveys from the Chronicle of Higher Education. These can be obtained at www.chronicle.com.

3 Monks (2007) provides a succinct review of most of the recent work.

4 The estimates by Monks (2007) and Ehrenberg et al. (2001) did not reveal a gender differential. Bartlett and Sorokina (2005) find that female presidents of tier one liberal arts colleges earn more than their male colleagues, but this pattern does not hold for tier two or tier three schools. Pfeffer and Ross (1988) find a gender differential in the expected direction.

acteristics and presidents' compensation.5 However, it is quite plausible and even likely that there is a simultaneous relationship among institutional characteristics including size and the ability levels of faculty and administration.6 More talented executives may be selected into institutions where their skills are more efficiently employed so that both institutional and personal characteristics determine their pay. Rosen (1982) reaches this conclusion in his model dealing with the sorting process of managers into different firms. He describes the underlying intuition succinctly:

The most capable foot soldier is not very effective if he is fighting the wrong war. Under these circumstances it pays to assign the most talented persons to positions of greatest power and influence. Though other, less talented individuals could manage these organizations, it is inefficient for them to do so.

It seems reasonable that this line of argument may also apply to college presidents. Moreover, it is possible that presidents aim to expand budgets and enrollments in order to increase their own compensation. In order to obtain consistent estimates of the impact of institutional characteristics on the earnings of their presidents, it is necessary to use an instrumental variables approach.

Third, this study considers an issue closely related to the one immediately above. There may be a superficial understanding of the market for college presidents if the level of earnings is the only dependent variable being considered. In particular, college presidents who are able to improve institutional performance may benefit not only through greater earnings but also through greater longevity. We consider this matter by estimating probits where the dependent variable is whether or not a president retains his position.

DATA

This study uses pooled cross-sectional data for the 1999-2000 and 2005-2006 academic years. Presidential compensation for 1999 and 2005 was obtained from the annual Chronicle of Higher Education survey.7 This data set uses information from Form 990. We define pay as being equal to the sum of base pay and benefits. The sample used in the ordinary least squares (OLS) and 2SLS models uses a pooled cross section of 641 observations. The denominational affiliation was obtained from the U.S. News and World Report website and from the colleges' own websites.8 Enrollment data for the two years were obtained from College Board handbooks (College Board, 1999; College Board, 2005). These texts also indicate the year that each school was founded and the size of the local community.

One potential drawback is that we do not have information about details of the compensation arrangements. For example, a president may receive a bump after a certain period of time or after raising institutional ranking by a certain amount. Some presidents may receive compensation from foundations and other outside sources, and some may receive nontaxable fringe benefits. However, these measurement errors occur in the dependent variable, and it is plausible that they are random. If so, it is well known that the estimated coefficients will not be biased, although the standard errors will be higher than otherwise.9

Several published archival sources were used to determine the individual presidents' characteristics such as year of hire, age, and whether or not theirs was an external hire. These sources included college websites, newspaper articles, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) proxy statements for presidents on corporate boards, religious denominations' newsletters, and direct inquiries to the presidents. For about 25% of the sample the year of birth was estimated by subtracting 22 from the year of college graduation. When archival sources were used to estimate year of birth, email inquiries were also sent to the presidents. Of this group, 26% (91 of 346 presidents) responded with their dates of birth. In this sample the ages of 72 of them had already been estimated by using the year of college graduation. The correlation between the actual and estimated year of birth was 0.983--which implies that this imputation method has almost no measurement error.

Information about the individual colleges was obtained from the U.S. News and World Report website for the years 1999 and 2005. The values of nominal variables for 2005, such as compensation and revenue per student, were

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5   The empirical link between firm size and the compensation of workers (e.g. Ferrer and Luis 2008, Hettler 2007, Brown, and Medoff 1989) and executives (e.g. Kostiuk 1990) has been well documented.

6   For example, Garen (1985) analyzes the situation where larger firms have relatively little information about worker productivity. This induces them to base salary decisions more heavily on observed characteristics such as schooling, which in turn leads to an equilibrium whereby more educated workers are employed at bigger companies.

7   This information is available at www.chronicle.com.

8   The U.S. News and World Report website is www.USNews.com/rankings.

9   This result is discussed by Pindyck and Rubinfeld (1981, pp.176-77).

converted to 1999 dollars using the Consumer Price Index. This data set includes a number of quality measures, including a peer assessment score, SAT scores at the twenty-fifth percentile, freshman retention rate, the percentage of classes with fewer than twenty students, and the percentage of applicants admitted. 10,11 Explanations of these variables are available on the U.S. News and World Report website. Public institutions, community colleges, and professional schools are not included in this study.

The sample used in the empirical work had to be cut because not all schools provided the relevant information. In particular, higher-ranked colleges are more likely to provide information to the Chronicle of Higher Education. In 2005 the response rates to the Chronicle of Higher Education surveys of tier one national and liberal arts institutions were 90% and 94%, respectively. By contrast, the corresponding figures for tier four schools were 37% and 55%. There was a comparable gap among Midwestern schools with master's programs. Among this group 65% of tier one programs provided the relevant information, whereas only 13% of tier four programs did. The sample being used is not random because elite schools are oversampled, and it is not clear how the parameter estimates might be affected. 12

The number of observations is reduced for additional reasons. First, only one comprehensive institution provided data to the Chronicle of Higher Education. Second, not all of the schools providing salary information had matches in the U.S. News and World Report data set. Third, schools that did not provide salary data to the Chronicle of Higher Education were eliminated.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 1 provides an overview of the institutional characteristics for the 641 observations in the sample. The mean president's salary in 1999 dollars is $247,055. The 25th

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10   The peer assessment index ranges from 1 to 5. It is based on a survey by *U.S. News and World Report of presidents, provosts, and admissions deans. It is intended to account for dedication to teaching and other intangibles.*

11   The 25th percentile SAT score is used in the empirical work below. In some instances only ACT scores were available. In these cases the ACT scores were converted to SAT scores using a conversion table provided on the Educational Testing Service website.

12   In a study of nationally ranked liberal arts colleges, Bartlett and Sorokina (2005) find that the coefficients of some variables depend on the tier. However, overall they find that the overall pay-performance link is weaker than is found in our study.

TABLE 1 **MEANS OF VARIABLES USED IN** **CROSS-SECTIONAL AND 2SLS MODELS**	
Variables	**Mean (Standard Deviation)**
Real Total Presidential Compensation** (in 1999 dollars)	247,055
	(132,340)
25th percentile SAT Scores*	1040
	(141.6)
Female	0.20
	(0.40)
Tenure at Current Job	8.9
	(6.45)
Internal Hire	0.20
	(0.40)
Total Enrollment	3919
	(4620)
Institutional Religious Affiliation	0.30
	(0.46)
Freshman Retention Rate	81.4
	(9.3)
Age of President	59.4
	(6.3)
Peer Assessment***	2.98
	(0.69)
% of Alumni Who Contribute	25.6
	(13.2)
% of Classes <20 Students	61.8
	(12.8)
% of Applicants Accepted	65.9
	(20.0)
National University	0.18
	(0.39)
Revenue (millions of dollars) Per Student	0.039
	(0.06)
Observation from 2005	0.67
	(0.47)
N	641
* In some cases ACT scores were provided and converted to SAT scores using a formula on the Educational Testing Service Site.	
** All nominal figures converted to 1999 dollars	
*** This lowest value of this index is 1 and the top value is 5	

percentile SAT score is 1040.13 Twenty per cent of the presidents are female. The average job tenure is 8.9 years. The institutions have a mean enrollment of 3,919, and 30 per cent are religiously affiliated. The mean president's age is 59.4.

RESULTS OF OLS EQUATIONS

The single equation OLS estimates are provided in Table 2. The coefficient of the institutional denominational dummy variable is of interest because religious affiliation has only been considered peripherally in the previous literature. Ehrenberg et al. (2001) find that college presidents who are clergy members earn roughly 19% less than their colleagues, which may reflect their being less market oriented or disproportionately employed in religiously affiliated institutions. The results in Table 2 imply that, ceteris paribus, denominational schools pay approximately 15% less than other private institutions. It follows that the estimates of Ehrenberg et al. (2001) may reflect institutional religious affiliation rather than individual characteristics. It is not immediately clear why a differential would exist between denominational and nondenominational institutions. Monks (2007), as noted above, argues that private college presidents perform different tasks from their public college counterparts. In particular, they are heavily involved in fund-raising. It is plausible that a similar explanation applies here and that presidents of nonsectarian schools must work harder at this task than presidents of colleges that can draw on church resources. It is also possible that members of a religious denomination may receive psychic rewards from serving denominational colleges that compensate for lower pay.

The coefficient of the gender dummy variable is insignificant. This result is similar to that of other recent studies (e.g. Ehrenberg et al. 2001, Monks 2007).14 However, the earlier work of Pfeffer and Ross (1988) finds that female presidents earned less than their male colleagues. It is plausible that there has been a gradual reduction in gender discrimination in the market for college presidents.15

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13   Information about the 75th percentile SAT score was missing for many observations, so this variable is not included in the empirical work below.

14   The regressions of Bartlett and Sorokina (2005) indicate that among tier one national liberal arts schools, female presidents earned more. However, this pattern did not hold for the other tiers or for the overall sample.

15   The proportion of college presidents who are female rose from 9% in 1986 to 23% in 2006. June (2007) discusses the changing demographics of college presidents.

The coefficient of the 2005 year dummy variable is approximately 0.06. This implies that, holding other variables constant, the real earnings of college presidents rose by approximately six percent during this period.

The impact of tenure is statistically significant, but its estimated impact depends on the specification used. Most previous empirical studies have not included a quadratic term.[16] The first four models presented in Table 2 follow the earlier approach and yield estimates of the impact of tenure that are similar to earlier work (e.g., Ehrenberg et al., 2001). However, the results change when the square of tenure is included. These estimates are shown in the fifth column. For example, the first four models imply that five years of service are associated with a 3% rise in real earnings. By contrast, the last regression suggests that they are associated with a 10% real earnings increase--roughly three times as much. The simpler models predict that 10 years of service will raise real earnings by 6%. The corresponding figure is 25% if the quadratic term is included.

INTERNAL VERSUS EXTERNAL HIRES

Although some studies have analyzed whether the earnings of college presidents depend on whether or not they have previously served in the same position (e.g., Ehrenberg et al., 2001; Monks, 2007), less attention has been paid to whether there is a pay differential between internal and external hires. With respect to corporate executives, Hall and Murphy (2003) find that outside hires receive a premium, which contradicts the managerial power hypothesis. Our estimates in Table 2 corroborate that such a differential exists in the context of private academic institutions and that internally hired presidents earn approximately 15% less than those selected from other institutions. This result may initially seem counterintuitive as the former ought to have institution-specific human capital. As well, they are in a stronger position to extract rents through their more extensive ties to the boards of trustees. Hence, the lower compensation of internally hired presidents is inconsistent with the managerial power hypothesis.

It is also plausible that this gap reflects a compensating differential for the disutility associated with moving and changing jobs. Pfeffer and Ross (1988) suggest that the premium for external hires reflects a compensating differential for the disruptive effect of switching employers. Ransom (1993) extends this idea. He finds that seniority is negatively associated with faculty earnings after control-

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16   One important exception is Boulanger and Pliskin (1999).

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TABLE 2 **IMPACT OF COLLEGE AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS ON** **EARNINGS OF COLLEGE PRESIDENTS**					
Constant	11.5**	10.8**	11.6**	11.8	11.5
	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)
25th percentile SAT scores	0.00066**	0.00081**	0.00091**		0.00067**
	(0.00023)	(0.00023)	(0.00022)	–––	(0.00022)
Female	0.035	0.040	0.043	0.019	0.034
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.033)
Tenure at Current Job	0.0060**	0.0057**	0.0060**	0.0059**	0.024**
	(0.0022)	(0.0022)	(0.0022)	(0.0023)	(0.006)
Tenure Squared					-0.0007**
	–––	–––	–––	–––	(0.00022)
Internal Hire	-0.15**	-0.15**	-0.16**	-0.14**	-0.14**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Total Enrollment	0.000028**	0.000024**	0.000032**	0.000028**	0.000027**
	(0.000004)	(0.000004)	(0.000004)	(0.000004)	(0.000004)
Institutional Religious Affiliation	-0.14**	-0.16**	-0.16**	-0.15**	-0.14**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Freshman Retention Rate	0.0029	0.0034	0.0041	0.0066**	0.0028
	(0.0028)	(0.0028)	(0.0027)	(0.0024)	(0.0027)
Age of President	0.0012	0.0017	0.0013	0.0009	0.0008
	(0.0023)	(0.0024)	(0.0023)	(0.0024)	(0.0023)
Peer Assessment	0.106**	0.134**		0.142**	0.105**
	(0.036)	(0.035)	–––	(0.034)	(0.035)
% of Alumni Who Contribute	-0.0026*	-0.0018	-0.0027*	-0.0015	-0.0027*
	(0.0015)	(0.0015)	(0.0016)	(0.0015)	(0.0015)
% of Classes < 20 Students	-0.0039**	-0.0032**	-0.0044**	-0.0034**	-0.0039**
	(0.0012)	(0.0012)	(0.0012)	(0.0012)	(0.0011)
% of Applicants Accepted	0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0001	-0.0001	0.0001
	(0.0009)	(0.0009)	(0.0009)	(0.0009)	(0.0009)
Accepted National University	0.128**	0.195**	0.076	0.156**	0.127**
	(0.053)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Logarithm of revenue (Millions of dollars Per Student)	0.112**		0.136**	0.131**	0.111**
	(0.034)	–––	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.033)
Observation from 2005	0.063**	0.049*	0.063**	0.065**	0.057*
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.03)
N	641	641	641	641	641
Adjusted R²	0.54	0.53	0.53	0.54	0.55

Notes:
Standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable is the logarithm of real (in 1999 dollars) total compensation. *Significant at the 10% level (two-tailed test) ** Significant at the 5% level (two-tailed test) All nominal figures are converted to 1999 dollars. In some cases ACT scores were converted to SAT scores.

ling for total experience.[17] Ransom explains this result using a monopsony model where some employees have high moving costs. Firms are able to observe the preferences of their workers and pay less to those who are less willing to leave. It is reasonable that this argument also applies to college presidents. Although the evidence presented here does not support the managerial power hypothesis, there are other viable explanations.

PAY FOR PERFORMANCE

The models in Table 2 indicate that college presidents are well compensated for some performance measures, which in turn suggests that pay and performance are linked. Test scores, enrollment, revenue per student, national university status, and peer assessment are strongly associated with presidential salaries.

Evidence that selectivity measures like SAT scores influence presidents' compensation suggests the possibility of manipulation. Ehrenberg (2002) discusses many ways that schools can manipulate their test scores and overall ranking. For example, colleges can choose to make it optional for applicants to indicate their SAT scores. This will induce only those who did well on the test to provide information, which will artificially raise average test scores. This strategy may also induce students with lower SAT scores and perhaps inferior academic credentials to apply, which will allow these schools to raise their rejection rates and appear to be more selective. Ehrenberg (2002) suggests that some institutions may pursue a related strategy by encouraging relatively weak students to seek admission, which will allow them to reduce their acceptance rates.

Another hypothetical method is to expand early decisions programs. As those admitted under these plans often must enroll, colleges can use this option to raise their yield (i.e., the proportion admitted who enroll), thereby reducing the percentage of applicants accepted and thereby creating the false impression that they have become more selective.

STUDENT ORIENTATION

Educational quality and services provided to students appear to have little impact on presidential compensation. The coefficient of the freshman retention rate is generally insignificant, although in one specification the results imply that a 10% increase in retention would raise real earnings by approximately 7%. It is slightly more puzzling why the alumni giving rate and the percentage of small classes

(under twenty students) are both negatively associated with the earnings of presidents. The coefficient of the latter is negative and significant in all of the models reported in Table 2. The results imply that a 10% increase in the percentage of small classes would lower real earnings by roughly 3%.

There are a few explanations for these counterintuitive results. It is plausible that both the alumni giving rate and the percentage of small classes, particularly the latter, are proxies for an institutional orientation towards teaching and educational quality as opposed to research. There is evidence that the compensation of faculty members reflects the quality and quantity of research (e.g. Hamermesh, Johnson, and Weisbrod, 1982; Konrad and Pfeffer, 1990; Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1992) but not the amount of teaching or educational quality (Konrad and Pfeffer, 1990; Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1992). It seems likely that college presidents are better paid in research-oriented institutions with better-paid faculty.

Another hypothesis is that the alumni giving rate may reflect the extent of alumni involvement in college governance, which may serve to moderate administrators' salaries and other costs. A similar argument can be made by extending the framework of Hansmann (1980). He suggests that credit markets are imperfect and that since the cost of private higher education is high, private colleges would only be able to educate those from affluent families were it not for alumni donations. Colleges attempt to create an intertemporal arrangement whereby their alumni are pressured to support future students. (Alternatively, these gifts can be viewed as a voluntary installment plan whereby students pay for their own educations over many years.) Hansmann asserts that alumni are more willing to give to nonprofit institutions than to for-profit ones because there is some assurance that the money will be spent appropriately. Perhaps colleges that rely on alumni financial support choose to moderate the salaries of their top officers to signal that the gifts will be used effectively.

A third possibility is that the OLS results reflect heterogeneity in observed and unobserved school characteristics. In particular, it is plausible that the impact on earnings of such variables as the alumni giving rate and the percentage of small classes may vary along with institutional characteristics.

In order to pursue this supposition more closely, the models in Table 2 were reestimated separately for national universities and all other schools (the results are not reported here). In the model restricted to national universities, the coefficient of the alumni giving rate was positive but not close to being significant (t = 0.56) at any conventional level. Although this result may partially reflect the relatively small sample size of 118 observations, it appears that

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17   Moore, Newman, and Turnbull (1998) find that the negative impact of seniority disappears after controlling for various productivity measures.

the impact of the alumni giving rate does vary by the type of college being considered. That does not extend to the class size variable: For national universities the coefficient of the class size variable was negative at a borderline level of 10% (t = 1.6) just like the broader sample.

The pattern discussed above continues to hold for the somewhat larger group of institutions that are not national universities. In that sample, the coefficient of the alumni giving rate is negative and close to being significant at the 10% level (t = 1.6). The negative coefficient of the class size variable is smaller than the estimate from the overall sample, but the t statistic is near the borderline of significance at the 5% level (t = 1.94).[18]

2SLS ESTIMATES

The empirical approach so far has followed the existing literature by estimating single equation models. However, as noted above, it is plausible that college characteristics and presidents' salaries are jointly determined. For this reason a simultaneous equations approach is warranted.

One of the two instrumental variables used is the age of the college. This information is obtained from the College Board (2005). Tang et al. (2000) include in some of their models the year that the school was founded, which is equivalent to the variable being used here. However, their study only presents estimates from single equation models. There is no a priori reason to believe that college presidents are paid more because their institutions are older. For this reason, it is not surprising that their estimate of the coefficient of the school age variable is insignificant. Nevertheless, it seems likely that institutional performance should in part depend on the number of years that a school has had to establish itself. In regressions not reported here, the impact of school age on the peer assessment variable and total enrollment was estimated. Both coefficients are significant and explain a non-trivial amount of the variance in these variables.[19] Moreover, school age is exogenous and therefore meets all of the conditions to be a suitable instrument.

The other instruments are dummy variables for city size. The College Board (2005) indicates the size of the metropolitan area where each school is located by placing it into one of six categories: (1) very large city, (2) large city, (3) small city, (4) large town, (5) small town, and (6) rural community. The first two categories were combined into a group labeled big city, and the last two were aggregated together and served as the reference group. In regressions not reported here, the coefficients of the three dummy variables big city, small city, and large town were positive and significant, and the coefficient of the big city dummy variable was larger than the other two. Colleges in big cities were found to have approximately 4,600 more students on average than those in rural areas, and roughly 2,000 more students than those in small cities. City size was also found to be positively associated with the peer assessment index. It might appear that these dummy variables are inappropriate instruments because they could be linked to presidential compensation through their effect on the cost of living. However, this does not appear to be a problem. In their study of the determinants of the salaries of college presidents at national liberal arts institutions, Bartlett and Sorokina (2005) find that the coefficient of local housing prices is not close to significance (t statistics were often less than 0.5) at conventional levels.[20] As city size may only be weakly associated with housing prices and other measures of cost of living, it is even more reasonable to conclude that this is not a serious issue.

The chosen instruments appear to be legitimate; moreover, there do not appear to be others that are readily available. In order to achieve identification, the number of excluded exogenous variables must be at least as great as the number of endogenous variables in the structural equation. For this reason, OLS and 2SLS estimates are reported for simpler models where the two included school characteristics are the peer assessment index and total enrollment. Several of the causal variables (e.g. test scores, revenue per student) are omitted. However, these other quality measures are tightly linked to the peer assessment index. For example, the correlation between the peer assessment index and the 25th percentile of SAT scores is 0.8, and the correlation with the logarithm of revenue per student is 0.76. It follows that in these simpler models the peer assessment index can be viewed as a proxy for overall quality. A comparison of the OLS and 2SLS models can then be made to determine if the results are sensitive to this modification.

The results are presented in Table 3. Most of the OLS parameters, particularly those pertaining to the characteristics of individual presidents, are similar to those presented

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18   The coefficient of the class size variable is roughly -0.0024. By contrast, in the overall sample the coefficient from the otherwise identical specification is -0.0039.

19   The model implies that a college's peer assessment score rises by 1.2 points for each two hundred years of institutional age. This change would raise the ranking of an otherwise average school to a level comparable to the more elite institutions. The same increment in the age of the college would raise enrollment by 3400 students – which is not far below the mean enrollment of the institutions in the sample.

20   This study did find that housing prices were significant for presidents at tier three and four schools.

TABLE 3 COMPENSATION EQUATIONS USING OLS AND 2SLS		
Variable	**OLS**	**2SLS**
Constant	11.13**	11.22**
	(0.16)	(0.27)
Female	-0.017	0.008
	(0.036)	(0.038)
Tenure at Current Job	0.0046*	0.0057**
	(0.0024)	(0.0025)
Internal Hire	-0.16**	-0.18**
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Total Enrollment	0.000039**	0.000061**
	(0.000003)	(0.000011)
Age of President	0.0003	-0.002
	(0.0025)	(0.003)
Peer Assessment	0.313**	0.294**
	(0.022)	(0.068)
Observation from 2005	0.085**	0.095**
	(0.031)	(0.032)
N	641	641
Adjusted R2	0.45	0.45

Notes:
Standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable is the logarithm of real (in 1999 dollars) total compensation. *Significant at the 10% level (two-tailed test). ** Significant at the 5% level (two-tailed test). All nominal figures are converted to 1999 dollars. In some cases ACT scores were converted to SAT scores.

in Table 2, although the coefficient for tenure is smaller. The estimated impact of the peer assessment index is over twice as large as that reported in Table 2. This result is not surprising as several highly correlated performance measures are omitted. The effect of enrollment is slightly greater than obtained from the models in Table 2.

The key finding is revealed by comparing the two models reported in Table 3. If 2SLS is used instead of OLS, the coefficient of the peer assessment variable is mostly unchanged. (It falls from 0.313 to 0.294.) However, the coefficient of the enrollment variable rises from 0.000039 to 0.000061. Using 2SLS instead of OLS implies that a 1,000 increase in enrollment would raise earnings by 6% instead of 4%. It follows that the compensation of college presidents may be even more closely associated with enrollment and perhaps other performance measures than is implied by earlier studies and that pay is more closely linked to institutional performance.

IMPACT OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES ON LONGEVITY

The approach so far has paralleled existing work in that compensation is the sole dependent variable being considered. However, it seems reasonable to expect that performance will be linked to other outcomes as well. In principle, successful presidents should be able to move to more elite institutions or have greater longevity at their current positions.

The empirical work in this section uses the cross-sectional data from 2005-2006 but not from the earlier survey date. This information was used in conjunction with the employment statuses of these presidents as of August 2009. It was initially expected that a high percentage would have moved on to other positions. If so, it would have been appropriate to estimate a multinomial model where the dependent variable could take on several distinct values. In particular, it would have been possible to analyze the impact of these performance measures on the mobility of presidents to more elite positions. However, it turned out that only a small percentage of the sample took on similar positions at other schools. For this reason, a simpler approach was used. Single equation probits were estimated in which the dichotomous dependent variable is equal to one if the president observed in 2005-2006 was still in that position in August 2009.

The results are shown in Table 4. The coefficients of age and years of tenure are both negative and significant. These findings are not surprising; the mean age of these presidents was approximately 60 in 2005, so many of them were approaching retirement.

Nevertheless, the coefficient of the acceptance rate variable is negative and significant. In the earnings equations presented in Table 2, several performance measures (e.g., SAT scores, peer assessment, and enrollment) had large, statistically significant effects on presidential earnings. By contrast, the coefficient of the acceptance rate was insignificant. This pattern is reversed in the probit models. The key independent variables (e.g., SAT scores, peer assessment index) are insignificant. However, the coefficient of the acceptance rate variable is negative and significant at conventional (t = 2.04) levels. The mean acceptance rate is 65%. Evaluated at the mean values of all of the independent variables, a 10% increase in that figure would reduce the probability that a president would still be in office from 0.53 to 0.50. This roughly corresponds to an elasticity of 0.6.

The estimates in Table 4 suggest that studies of college presidents should not focus exclusively on compensation. Indeed, some performance measures that are insignificant

TABLE 4 PROBIT ESTIMATES OF THE PROBABILITY OF STAYING AT CURRENT POSITION	
Variable	
Constant	5.57**
	(1.87)
25th percentile SAT scores	0.00013
	(0.0013)
Female	-0.037
	(0.18)
Tenure at Current Job	-0.021*
	(0.011)
Internal Hire	0.20
	(0.17)
Total Enrollment	0.000015
	(0.000023)
Institutional Religious Affiliation	0.18
	(0.19)
Freshman Retention Rate	-0.126
	(0.015)
Age of President	-0.071**
	(0.012)
Peer Assessment	0.00077
	(0.2084)
% of Alumni Who Contribute	-0.0058
	(0.0079)
% of Classes < 20 Students	-0.0039
	(0.0062)
% of Applicants Accepted	-0.00986**
	(0.00483)
National University	-0.19
	(0.30)
Logarithm of revenue (Millions of dollars per Student)	-0.222
	(0.189)
N	395
Log-Likelihood	-240.8

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable is equal to 1 if the person was still president in 2009; 0 otherwise. *Significant at the 10% level (two-tailed test) ** Significant at the 5% level (two-tailed test) All nominal figures are converted to 1999 dollars. In some cases ACT scores were converted to SAT scores.

in earnings equations may influence longevity or other outcomes that have important implications for the present value of career compensation.

EXTENSIONS TO SAMPLE SELECTION MODELS

The discussion above has suggested that single equation earnings equations using least squares may provide an incomplete picture of many aspects of the market for college presidents. A key goal of this study has been to extend earlier work by estimating earnings equations using 2SLS instead of OLS and by using longevity instead of earnings as a dependent variable. Another variant of the standard approach may also be warranted. If length of stay is endogenous, it is plausible that estimates from earnings equations using either OLS or 2SLS may reflect sample selection bias. For example, poorly performing presidents may have a high propensity to leave, which in turn will bias the coefficients obtained from the remaining sample. Indeed, our probit models indicate that length of stay may be endogenous and depend on some performance measures such as the acceptance rate.

We have attempted to deal with this issue by estimating two stage sample selection equations using the well-known approach of Heckman (1979).[21] A condition for identification is that at least one variable must affect the probability of being in the sample but must not influence the dependent variable. We were unable to find effective instruments that meet this criterion. For example, alumni status might fill this role because it might influence the probability that a president stays at the job, but it might not influence compensation. However, this variable was insignificant in the preliminary first-stage probits. Nevertheless, further investigation into this area is warranted.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper analyzes the determinants of the compensation of private college presidents and their propensity to remain in their positions. Using OLS we find that certain performance measures, such as size, SAT scores, and revenue, are positively associated with presidential compensation. Tenure is also significant, and the effect rises dramatically if a quadratic term is included. Externally hired presidents receive an earnings premium, which casts doubt on the managerial power hypothesis. It does not appear that presidents within a school are able to extract rents from their affiliations with their boards of trustees. It is also found that presidents of schools with religious

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21   See Maddala (1983) pp. 231-240 for a discussion of these models.

affiliations are paid less than those who head nondenominational schools.

In several of these models, the coefficients of both the alumni giving rate and the proportion of small classes are negative. One explanation for these apparently anomalous results is that these variables are proxies for a focus on teaching and educational quality. Evidence suggests that the earnings of both college faculty and administrators depend primarily on research output. Alternatively, the alumni giving rate may be a proxy for alumni involvement, which in turn might serve as a brake on compensation. Nevertheless, these empirical results are not that robust. The models were reestimated separately for national universities and other institutions. In the former group, the coefficient of the alumni giving rate was in fact positive but insignificant at conventional levels.

In the next stage of the empirical work we estimate the compensation equations with 2SLS. We employ this approach because presidential earnings and school characteristics may be jointly determined. The estimated impact of enrollment is larger than that predicted by OLS. However, the effect of a peer assessment index) is unchanged.

In the final stage of the empirical work, we use the same performance measures but replace earnings with a dichotomous variable that measures whether or not the president remained in office. Some institutional characteristics that influence earnings become insignificant. The reverse is true for the acceptance rate. Although it did not influence earnings, it was found that an increase in the percent of students admitted reduces the probability that a president retains his or her position.

Despite the evidence that institutional characteristics appear to influence both earnings and retention of college presidents, lingering issues remain. First, it is plausible that college presidents may be able to manipulate some of these performance measures. If so, the results obtained in this study and earlier work may be flawed. Second, it may be useful to extend this work by using alternative empirical and theoretical approaches such as sample selection models. These issues should be considered in future work.

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MBA Curriculum:
The Role of an Introductory "Toolkit" Course

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ABSTRACT

Graduate business students enter MBA programs intent on completing their degrees to open new professional opportunities and enhance their prospective career earnings potential. Because of the diversity of backgrounds new students bring into their MBA programs, large variations exist among their academic and professional backgrounds. Curriculums address the disparity between undergraduate business majors and students with other undergraduate degrees by teaching foundation classes designed to level the respective skill sets. Typically, these classes focus on specific technical skills such as accounting and finance, or business perspectives such as economic and managerial principles. Broader, more general skills needed to maximize the core curriculum experience are presumed or ignored. This article details one school's project to strengthen the MBA experience by developing a "toolkit" class for incoming MBA students. The following pages describe the changes that were implemented within Samford University's Brock School of Business program, focusing specifically on the introduction of a new course to the MBA curriculum: BUSA 505 Managerial Communications and Analysis, a.k.a. the "Toolkit" Course.

BACKGROUND

For several years the Brock School of Business (BSOB) faculty working on the Graduate Education Process Committee (GEPC) examined the strategic positioning of the BSOB's Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program. The result of the committee's work was a set of recommendations for ways to improve the MBA program. The committee's proposals were of great value to the school, but administrative instability due to the de-parture and search for a new dean cast uncertainty over the implementation of the committee's proposals.

Upon the search conclusion and implementation of a new school administrative team, work began with the new chair of GEPC on ways to improve the MBA program. With the work of GEPC as a foundation and Assurance of Learning (AOL) data indicating room for improvement in written communication and data analysis, one area that had been highlighted for discussion was how the Brock School would handle students who needed coursework

and skills to get them "up to speed" before they entered the core courses in the program.

Previously, the School offered six "Foundations" level courses (Accounting, Statistics, Economics, Finance, Management, and Marketing). These courses were designed for students who either did not have an undergraduate degree in a Business discipline or who had not performed well enough in a given subject area as an undergraduate Business major to exempt out of the foundation course. With more students coming to the School with undergraduate Business degrees enrollment in these Foundations courses was trending down. Additionally, scheduling these courses pulled valuable course loads and course preparations from full time faculty. The decision was made to attempt to reduce the number of "Foundations" courses offered and required in the MBA program as well as provide for creative ways for students to exempt out of any remaining "Foundations" classes.

A thorough but informal discussion with each department chair and faculty member teaching within the MBA core revealed that the Foundations of Statistics was a course that could be a good candidate for alternative delivery, streamlining into an existing course, or elimination. Ultimately, GEPC recommended streamlining the statistical material into a new combined "Foundations of Economics and Statistics" course.

Discussions with faculty in the Department of Entrepreneurship, Management, and Marketing resulted in both of the Foundations of Management and Marketing courses being removed from the curriculum. The plan was for key concepts from these classes to be disseminated and taught in a new course in the MBA Curriculum: BUSA 505 Managerial Communications and Analysis.

With the total number of "Foundations" courses reduced from six to three, GEPC began to look at new ways to get students into the MBA core quicker. The School faculty voted to allow students to exempt out of any of the three remaining "Foundations" courses (Accounting, Finance, and Economics/Statistics) if they held a regionally accredited undergraduate degree in Business. Additionally, students could exempt out of the Foundations courses if they successfully completed individual undergraduate Business courses in Accounting, Finance, and Economics with a minimum grade of C- on any given course. Alternatively, students without the equivalent courses could choose a self-study route that led to them taking the final exam of the respective Foundations course. Scoring a 70 or greater on that final exam would allow the student to exempt a given foundation course and move into the core curriculum.

In adding Managerial Communications and Analysis (BUSA 505) as a required course for all enrolled students the total MBA increased by three additional credit hours. The faculty also decided that a course that had been an MBA elective, Managing Corporate Integrity, should now be included in the MBA Core to better match with the University's Christian Mission. This change increased the total required hours to complete the MBA from 30 to 36 hours. There were some concerns that an increase in credit hours (and thus cost) would damage the demand for the Brock School MBA. GEPC and the Faculty argued that a better MBA would be the result and that the market would recognize the improved quality of the MBA as compared to the competition.

With the structural framework in place for the new MBA program, efforts turned to developing a new and inventive course, Managerial Communications and Analysis. This course was designed to be taken in the first semester of enrollment, and would provide a set of skills needed for optimal success as students matriculated through the Brock School's MBA program.

MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ANALYSIS—THE TOOLKIT COURSE

In the Brock School's standard Fall and Spring semester students attend a class for a total of 30 contact hours. Classes meet two hours a night for one night a week over a 15 week semester. The next challenge was to determine how to divide up and allocate those 30 hours of seat time given the desire to have multiple skills and concepts taught to the students while preparing them for the rigor of their upcoming core MBA courses.

In the early course development process, School administration worked closely with GEPC and the faculty at large to develop a desired set of skills that should be included in the Toolkit Course. The elimination of foundational courses in Management and Marketing made concepts from those disciplines a priority for the toolkit course. Additionally, faculty determined desired skills to be covered included oral and written communication, computer spreadsheet software, and general instruction on graduate expectations for case analysis and presentation. After negotiating time allotments for each topic, School administration sent out an email soliciting faculty participation and involvement in the delivery of the respective "modules" within the course. Faculty were offered compensation in line with hourly rates for training and consulting rather than have any portion of this class count as part of their assigned teaching load. All faculty members teaching within the MBA program were invited to attend the first night of class to begin the process of forging relationships and opening the channels of communication with

the incoming class of students. The final schedule included 4 hours of written communications, 2 hours of oral communications and presentation skills, 4 hours of case analysis, 4 hours of instruction in Microsoft Excel, and 6 hours each of management and marketing foundational concepts.

The course syllabus included grading elements for two content related exams (Management and Marketing concepts), class participation (based on peer evaluation), student use of Excel in their case analysis project and the final written case analysis. The students were divided into teams to work on their case analyses and each team member was instructed to evaluate the participation of their team members. The students analyzed a case written explicitly for this course by an experienced healthcare consultant. The case analysis, which was used as the basis of the "final exam" for the course, combined elements of management and marketing along with spreadsheet applications for data analysis. Additionally, students were required to present the case in class before a panel of participating faculty members and turn in a written case analysis. The project is a multipart assessment of how well students have grasped the skills and concepts of the class.

In additional to the curriculum improvement and enhanced student success within the program, the Toolkit class offers enhanced credit hour production. Samford offers a three week mini-term during January. In the past, limited MBA courses had been offered in this semester but the Toolkit course seemed well suited for this session and offering the course allowed students to begin taking a full slate of core or elective classes in the Spring semester which followed. Subsequent experience has shown the class to be easily adaptable to more concise summer terms as well. The following sections discuss each of the modules offered in the Toolkit course.

CASE ANALYSIS

A significant number of the core courses in many MBA programs employ case analysis as either a primary or a secondary learning tool. Depending on the course, students may be expected to analyze cases or mini-cases as part of class discussions, individual or team writing assignments, individual or team presentations, and/or exam questions. Because cases form such an important part of both the learning experience and the grading process, two separate two-hour class meetings of the Toolkit course were devoted to introducing students to the case method and how it will be utilized in subsequent courses within the program.

In the initial course iteration, faculty members decided to begin the first session regarding case analyses with a discussion of two things that the students should not expect

to learn from the session. First, some students enter MBA programs thinking of their classes as simply the fifth and sixth year of college. Faculty felt it was quite important to make sure that the students knew that this particular session was not going to be devoted to providing them with a checklist they could follow, which would give them a guaranteed "A" on a case analysis.

Second, many incoming MBA students have no way of knowing that the term "case analysis" does not mean the same thing to every professor. Purists might describe a case analysis as presenting students with a situation and telling them, in essence, "Go to it." At the other extreme, some cases are actually designed as directed problems; there are various shades in between those two extremes. So, in addition to explaining to students that there was no checklist for earning a guaranteed "A" on a case analysis, it was critical to make clear from the start that there also is no single template for a "standard" case analysis.

With those key points established, the next step was to make the students aware of three key learning objectives of the ensuing discussion: how studying cases can benefit their education, questions they should ask themselves when they read a case, and how to approach the preparation of a case analysis.

An initial concern was that even with a "sample case analysis" coming during the second two-hour session (see "Purinex Inc." in Case Studies in Finance: Managing for Corporate Value Creation, Sixth Edition; by Robert F. Bruner, Kenneth M. Eades, and Michael J. Schill; McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2010), it would send mixed signals to use a lecture-only format in an entire two-hour session regarding something as participatory as case analysis. Further, it also seemed useful to utilize student input as a means of creating student buy-in to the ideas being presented.

Thus, after the introductory comments outlined above, the instructor distributed a handout in which students were asked what skills they expected to develop and/or improve as a result of performing case analyses as part of their graduate education. Students were told up front that the instructor for this session, along with the course coordinator, would evaluate their written answers and that additional course credit could be earned for outstanding answers.

After the students had written their comments and handed them in, the instructor then opened up the floor for discussion, modeling the manner an instructor might do in asking open-ended questions to set the stage for discussion of a particular case. After allowing a reasonable amount of time for this discussion, the instructor then

went through prepared comments regarding the topic, integrating earlier student comments where possible.

The instructor followed a similar pattern for the topic of what questions a student should ask in reading a case, and again for the topic of what a good "plan of attack" would be for actually writing up a case analysis. For each of these questions, the forms on which students were to provide their initial written reactions made clear that they were being asked how to approach cases in general, regardless of the particulars of a given case.

The aforementioned discussions combined were designed to take all of the first two-hour class session, and a modest portion of the second. At the time of the first session (i.e., one week prior to the second session), the students were also provided with an example of the type of case that they might be requested to analyze in a future course. Students were also provided with a set of questions designed to prompt their thinking on various issues in the case. Most of the second session was spent discussing the assigned case, simulating as closely as possible the way an instructor might conduct such a discussion in a core class.

There was one aspect stressed at the time the case was distributed, but which in hindsight merited additional emphasis. In order to make sure that the students' attention is where it should be on this "trial case," experience shows it is important to stress there are no expectations regarding the ability of the students to carry out an actual graded analysis of the case in question. Clearly, many of the students in this course will not have been exposed to any of the material that someone in a core course would be familiar with by the time a case analysis of this nature was conducted.

Rather, the key is to put the students in a position of fighting their way through a case. Indeed, during the actual case discussion the following week, the instructor pointed out that many case analyses will end up sending the students scurrying for various forms of reference materials, and that this is perfectly normal. However, in subsequent iterations of the course more attention has been paid to stressing this idea before the fact, as well as after.

WRITTEN AND PRESENTATION SKILLS

Early in the semester students were provided guidance on accepted styles for academic writing and research. The Brock School collectively has a preferred citation format (APA) to which the students were oriented. They engaged in writing activities and exercises and were informed about the importance of attribution and citation of sources in academic writing.

The presentation skills section of the class focused on effective public speaking, for both monologues (speeches) and group presentations. You Tube video examples were presented of both good and poor public speaking. Points of emphasis included enunciation, clarity, pacing, pauses and transitions, and voice inflection. The final speech of Dr. Martin Luther King, "I Have Been to the Mountain Top," was used to highlight passion, pacing, pausing and voice inflection. Then Presidential candidate Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign debate moment was used to illustrate body language, personalization of message, and empathetic connection with the audience. The videos were shown in class and discussed. Students responded very positively to the King video, stating that his passion and personal conviction motivated them to buy into the message and created desire to join his efforts to fight for equal rights. Reaction to the Clinton video was decidedly mixed; some students felt like his decision to leave the podium and walk out to the edge of the stage to address the individual who raised the question was very effective in personalizing the message, while others stated that his (now known) propensity for less than full truthfulness made him unbelievable. An instructional take-away was that using political figures as classroom examples proved polarizing and detracted from the emphasis on public speaking skills.

The class also focused on the use of visual aids in presentations, primarily PowerPoint slides. Again, You Tube videos were shown on how to use Power Point effectively and to illustrate some of the more egregious mistakes oft-repeated. Points of emphasis included font size and readability, color schemes and contrasts between text and backgrounds, single slide information overload, readability and effectiveness of graphs, minimization or avoidance of animation, and pictures and use of clip art. Students were cautioned against reading slide content to the audience, and class members shared their ideas for avoiding this mistake. The general consensus that emerged from class discussion was that less is more, both in individual slide content and regarding the total number of slides comprising the presentation. A take-away from this portion of the class was the use of roadside billboards to highlight effective and ineffective slides. The average motorist has less than 3 seconds to digest a billboard message, and this analogy was used effectively for Power Point slides as well.

Finally, the class concluded with a short discussion on the logistics of group presentations, particularly regarding case studies. Emphasis was noted on effecting smooth transitions from one presenter to another, avoiding redundancy, and discussing where and how many presenters should be standing during the presentation. There was some debate on whether non-presenting members of the group should be standing or sitting, with a consensus they should be standing off to the side to avoid distracting up and down movements as speakers transitioned. While no one standard of professional presentation practice was identified, emphasis

was placed on practicing presentation and using both audio and video to record and critique practice presentations.

MARKETING CONCEPTS

The three-week marketing component of the course aimed to familiarize students with the fundamentals of marketing. Due to clear downward trends in the average age and experience of new MBA students within this program, the marketing component was structured with the assumption that the students may not have had any formal business training or work experience.

Emphasis was placed on key marketing principals and an overview of the marketing function in the context of organizational strategy. Major topics covered included market planning, management of the marketing mix, segmentation, marketing research, market positioning, and branding.

The marketing component incorporated four chapters of material from a popular marketing management textbook appropriate for graduate and executive education. In addition, the students were expected to read assigned articles from the popular press including the school provided *Wall Street Journal* which were discussed in class meetings. An in-class test was provided at the end of the component to assess the students' understanding of the marketing content covered.

There were several challenges associated with the marketing component of the course. First, it was difficult to provide a thorough overview of a major functional area of business in only 6 class hours. Second, there was vast variability with respect to the previous business education and work experience of the students enrolled in the course. Further, it was difficult to position the marketing material in the context of the other course topics and instructors; uneven communication among different module instructors made it difficult to know exactly what content had been previously presented, and how the marketing material could best be presented in the context of the full course content. Finally, given the uncertainty just noted, it was challenging to present the marketing material in a manner that would best inform the business strategy case to be completed at the completion of the course.

In subsequent course offerings, care was taken to more fully understand the entire course content and to more thoroughly address the key marketing issues relevant to the assigned business strategy case.

MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

In advance of the Management section students were provided several outside readings. These were primarily focused on organizational structure concepts; especially that of the matrix organization.

In lieu of a textbook, the instructor provided an electronic copy of a PowerPoint presentation leading the class through the historical management periods and the significant leaders within each. Also each lesson stressed competitive advantage, value chain, and the four functions of management (planning, organizing, leading, and controlling).

Following the organizational structure lecture (Theories X, Y, Z, Matrix and Generational Differences to Motivation, etc.) the instructor conducted one in-class assignment consisting of four mini-case studies divided among the group. The students were asked to use sticky notes to develop an organizational structure based on their assigned case; they developed an organizational chart with titles and functions which was arranged on the class wallboard. The issues mirrored many of those found in the assigned course case. Each group had to explain the rationale for their organization structure and whether or not their structure was a matrix. This practical approach helped them to understand how to work together, quickly evaluate a case, and set them up for the coming assigned course case.

From a pedagogical perspective the lectures were designed to focus the class on many of the salient points within the assigned course case, however, the instructor specifically tried not to give leading answers. In a more consultative approach, the instructor stressed the need to consider all aspects of the case and look for clues that would fit within the context of the lectures and the case.

Much like the marketing module, time became a central roadblock to the effective introduction and application of the salient management topics. In an attempt to secure more "in class" time in subsequent course offerings the instructor plans to use a take home test to reserve class time for more discussion and instruction.

There were also concerns that the management portion of the course was placed too late in the semester and that students would have benefitted from getting both conceptual / topics based modules (management and marketing) earlier in the semester and more of the "tools" later in the semester. As with the marketing module, current events are viewed as a must for effective discussion going forward and will be a part of ongoing class participation for each session.

SPREADSHEET SKILLS

One of the key challenges of this skill module was to recognize that MBA students come to an MBA program with differing levels of knowledge and experience with respect to using Microsoft Excel. This acknowledgement reassured students that there would be reasonable expectations for

all students. This tactic may have resulted in some students finding the material covered to be too elementary; however, the module was built to provide even the "power-users" with a few tips or some new ways to do things using Excel. A unique feature of Excel is the fact that there are different ways to accomplish similar tasks; encouraging students to share with the class if they had a "better way" turned out to be a nice class participation technique.

The learning objectives for the Excel module of the Toolkit course were:

- Understand common uses for Excel
- Familiarize students with basic Excel features
- Introduce keyboard shortcuts for efficient usage
- Introduce some Excel functions that will be used in subsequent MBA coursework
- Learn how to import data into Excel
- Introduce Excel macros

The Excel Toolkit component of the course was taught in a computer lab classroom using PowerPoint. Students were provided with an electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation along with an Excel workbook for use during two two-hour class sessions. The Excel workbook consisted of 17 worksheets with datasets used to illustrate a particular Excel feature. Also included on each Excel sheet was an embedded Power Point slide with applicable guidance for each topic. During discussion of a specific Excel feature, students were encouraged to practice the feature being illustrated.

The first several topics were very basic and included topics such as: entering data, worksheet navigation, selecting cells/rows/columns, copy and paste, insert, auto fill, formulas, cell references, renaming/moving sheets, freezing panes, format painter, printing, and worksheet protection. Again, students had the opportunity to practice various commands and procedures during class time.

Next, more programming oriented topics such as: VLookup, AutoSum Tool, Date and Time functions, text functions, If Statements, error trapping, freezing panes, filtering, sorting, and charts were covered. Students were given a problem and then the instructor demonstrated how the problem could be solved using Excel as a tool.

Next, basic functions were briefly covered. These functions included: sum, count, large, min, max, and subtotal. Similarly, time value of money functions such as FV, PV, PMT, IRR, and NPV were demonstrated. It was important to keep in mind that the purpose of the class was not to teach students about the underlying principles of the

functions, but merely to show them the proper syntax and the availability of some Excel features.

The finance faculty requested the Time Value of Money topic coverage, as well as specifics regarding data entry and calculation versus financial calculators. It proved to be a challenge to stay on task by introducing the Excel topics and leaving the subject matter for subsequent MBA coursework.

The next objective of the module was to introduce students to more powerful Excel features such as "What if Analysis" including Data Tables, Goal Seek, Solver, and Scenario Manager. Short pre-constructed examples with business applications were used. For example, the worksheet demonstrating Goal Seek contained a contribution approach income statement. Students used goal seek to determine the number of units that must be sold to breakeven. Various ways to import data and how to record macros as a means to speed up one's work where repetitive actions are often required were briefly demonstrated.

The remaining time was used to practice Excel skills within the context of a very large dataset. The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data set was used for this purpose. This database contains extensive details about every traffic fatality in the U.S. The FARS database provides a very large dataset that student can use to practice their worksheet navigation skills. Students quickly realize that common mouse usage of pointing and clicking is not always the most efficient way to select ranges of data. Finally, the use of this database is very practical for a first MBA course since it contains data that is familiar to students and does not require explanation of business concepts to practice data manipulation skills. Having this practice time allotted to the end of the class allows for some flexibility in terms of classroom time management.

The objective of the Excel Toolkit component is for students to at minimum understand the basics of using Excel, appreciate the capabilities of Excel, and have confidence in their ability to use Excel in their MBA coursework as well as on the job.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This paper highlights one school's attempt to both strengthen and improve its MBA curriculum. One specific course, Managerial Communications and Analysis, serves as a "Toolkit" course for entering MBA students to gain skills and concepts that will prepare them for success during their MBA program of study. This unique pedagogical approach offers both opportunities and challenges to administration, faculty, and students. Following the initial course offering, subsequent iterations of the class

have produced mixed results, with students in smaller enrollment classes providing much more favorable feedback than students in larger classes.

Faculty and administration plans to review all aspects of the course following the first year of implementation and make any necessary changes going forward. A more accurate assessment of the success of this course will occur as students matriculate through the entire MBA program over the typical two to three years and provide both formal and informal feedback to individual faculty members and during graduate student exit interviews.

All MBA programs face challenges associated with varied levels of age, professional experience and skill sets of incoming students. While faculty members attempt to overcome these challenges, students often express displeasure with the extra time and costs associated with foundation, or leveling, course requirements. It is hoped that this experience in designing a "Toolkit" class for all incoming MBA students will assist other programs in their graduate curriculum modification and review process.

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Supervising the Campus Media: U.S. Survey Finds Varied Approaches, Little Administration Interference

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ABSTRACT

Media Advisory Boards have been created by many colleges to mediate communication between administration and student media organizations. This national survey provided rich baseline data on how these boards are distributed across the United States, what kinds of schools are more likely to adopt media boards, and to whom these boards report. The study examined several neglected issues raised by the literature, such as the primary functions of Media Boards, the magnitude of the boards' sanctioning power, administrative influence on the boards, adviser satisfaction with board performance, and means of assessment. The results can inform administrators as to the variables that both describe and predict board effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

In contrast to most traditional media systems that depend largely on advertising revenue, the college student media ecosystem is a peculiar one. The stage for student voices is often funded, in part, by school administrations. If administrators take issue with news stories written by either impulsive or investigative student journalists, the reporters at public universities in the United States are able to advocate for their First Amendment rights and defend their work. Private school counterparts, however, enjoy far less free speech protection, even though arguments have been made to extend such rights to privately owned institutions (Lisosky, 2010).

Media Advisory Boards, sometimes called Publication Boards, have been increasingly popular across higher education institutions since the 1990s (Henderson, 2004) as a way to strike a balance between respecting the rights of the Fourth Estate and the need of colleges to protect their public images. These boards are typically comprised of student journalists, administrators, advisers to the student media, faculty members, students at large, and working journalism professionals. They can offer a variety of advice to the student press and function as a buffer between administration and student media (Click, 1993).

Despite an abundance of literature centering on the legal rights of college media rights in general, few studies have focused on Media Advisory Boards. They are a key mechanism in the ecosystem and a sometime peacemaker. They can help facilitate communication between student journalists and administration, provide oversight, and minimize confrontations that find their way to media outlets other than the school's own. Empirical research on Media Advisory Boards is even scarcer.

This study focuses on several issues revolving around the existence and operation of Media Advisory Boards. First, it provides a panoramic view of Media Boards across U.S. colleges. How often do media boards exist? What characteristics of a school help explain Media Board adoption? Second, we describe board characteristics, such as board longevity, composition, and organizational structure. Third, we explore into some of the key functions and responsibilities of Media Boards. Fourth, this study examines assessment measures used by boards nationwide, including self-evaluation and satisfaction rating.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It would be difficult to understand fully the various issues of Media Advisory Boards without looking at the college press context. Friction often arises when there is a disagreement between student journalists and the admin-

istration regarding the role student media should play. To the student journalist, a campus publication largely mirrors publications outside the Ivory Tower, only on a smaller scale. Student work for their own news organizations not only to learn skills required for future journalism jobs, but more importantly to experience core journalistic values such as advocating for justice and providing a voice for the underprivileged (Brandon, 2001). Administrators may or may not agree with these perceptions. When the president of Flagler College prioritized his student newspaper's mission as "to promote the image and reputation of the institution" in 2007 (Perhach, 2007), his position attested Mencher's (1965) warning issued more than forty years earlier that administration might regard the student press more of a "public relations arm" than a "laboratory of life" (p. 216).

School authorities tend to react immediately to "problematic" student media content, and student journalists often fight back by accusing administrators of First Amendment violations. Nonetheless, it does not take long for administrations to realize that such contention can be costly. Even though most of these battles do not end up in courts, wrestling with the student press often leads to unflattering publicity of the administration, especially when students have become increasingly more experienced in resorting to local and national media outlets to seek support. The Student Press Law Center, one of the major watchdogs for student free speech rights, regularly reports possible First Amendment infringements across universities and colleges nationwide (Student Press Law Center, 2009a). Additionally, traditional and social media have been showing growing interest in monitoring college media censorship in recent years (Creeley, 2012; Reimold, 2010).

Despite these advantages that college media enjoy, they sometimes are reluctant to fight the battle. Various forms of punishment can be imposed by administrators against a student publication or its staff, including defunding a publication (Student Press Law Center, 2001), terminating an office lease (Student Press Law Center, 2003b), charging a publication with violations of a student conduct code (Student Press Law Center, 2009b), and even threatening a student's graduation (Student Press Law Center, 2010a). Moreover, students often fear that while they may be winning a battle, they are losing the war in the long run. For example, Ocean County College settled a First Amendment lawsuit brought by three student journalists involved in investigative stories on the administrative corruption in 2005. They claimed a First Amendment rights violation and called for the college to reinstate an adviser. A settlement was reached promising the reinstatement and a more defined publication oversight. However, the adviser was later fired again, and a clearly structured

oversight remained largely absent (Student Press Law Center, 2010b).

Media Boards are often proposed during contentious times either by student media who feel the urge to find a third-part channel to initiate conversations with school administrators before the situation escalates into theatricality, or by administrators who want to use an advisory board to oversee college media without directly clashing with news staff. The lack of a mediating mechanism usually fails to offer a channel for mutually respecting dialogues. For example, students protested when officials at Flagler College in Florida changed quotes and edited content of an article. The conflict could have been avoided, according to the student media advisor, if there had been an advisory board to help mediate conflicts and disputes (Perhach, 2007).

Issues revolving around Media Boards typically stem from various kinds of administrative control over student media. Administrative and legal structures determine the degree of such control, ranging from direct control (Bert, 1952) and semi-autonomous, to completely independent (Duscha & Fischer, 1973).

William Click's (1993) book *Governing College Student Publications* has one of the most in-depth discussions on Media Boards. The chapter in his book devoted to Media Boards, however, stemmed more from experience-based reflection than empirical investigation. He described commonly practiced responsibilities and authority of a board, typical board size, selection, and composition. For instance, he suggested a "laymen vs. experts" approach to construct a board by balancing expert members "with training and expertise in journalism, law and business" and lay members "who represent leaders in general and who may be uninformed" about journalism and publishing businesses (p. 18). Benigni, Ferguson, and McGee (2011) also commented on board composition and strongly recommended using local experts and journalism professionals in all advisory boards in communication programs.

Other research findings on Media Boards seem to be scattered across broader academic studies. Kopenhaver (2009) surveyed college media advisors and found that 22.7 per cent of the schools had a Media Advisory Board as the legal "publisher." The Media Board was the publisher at 34.5 per cent at four-year public schools and 12.1 per cent at four-year private schools. The study also discovered that most student media reported to Student Affairs or an academic department, and none of them reported to a Media Board. Advisers were less likely to be involved in

Media Boards with only 13.3 per cent of full time advisers "responsible to a publication/media board or its chair, a decrease from 21.4 per cent in 2005" (p. 25). A more recent study of media boards, taken from this same dataset and designed for an audience of college media advisers, emphasized high levels of satisfaction among the advisers as to how the boards operated (Xie & Simon, 2012).

Depending on the magnitude of control, Media Boards, albeit well-intended, may be received in starkly different ways by campus actors. One interest group may fear a board will turn into a manipulative tool used by an opposing group in covert ways. For example, five top editors and the faculty advisor at Utica College in New York resigned when school officials proposed forming an oversight board. The resigned staff members worried that an advisory board of any sort might undermine editorial authority, control content illegally, and become detrimental to the students in general (Student Press Law Center, 2003c).

Disputes on Media Boards mainly hinged on three board characteristics: function, administrative presence, and sanctioning power. Disagreements exist in regard to what functions a Media Board should carry and what purposes it should serve. When the University of Nevada, Las Vegas attempted to remove the authority of Editor-in-Chief selection from the Media Board and instead transfer it to the student government, both faculty and the news staff protested, arguing that the change would simply turn the student newspaper into a student government newspaper. An agreement was later reached between the student government and the newspaper to return the authority to the advisory board (Student Press Law Center, 2012).

Another kind of controversy has to do with the level of administrative presence on the board. Editors at Boston College in Massachusetts called the proposal to form a Media Board including at least one administrator an attempt to limit the newspaper's independence (Student Press Law Center, 2003b). In a lawsuit settlement between the University of Northern Colorado and its student newspaper, the administration gave up its authority to appoint members of the publication board (Student Press Law Center, 2004).

Finally, there have been frequent complaints about the role that Media Boards play in sanctioning students for perceived malfeasance. Many Media Boards can vote to remove editors based on the inappropriateness of the content published (Student Press Law Center, 2003a). The former executive editor of The Carolinian, a student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, said that the advisory board made him sign a contract stating that he would be accountable for (1) advertising revenue and business practices, (2) preparation for a budget for the fiscal year and (3) meeting as often as

necessary with the adviser, who was appointed by the Office of Student Life. Considering the heavy burden on the editor and considerable sanctioning power accompanying these requirements, the newspaper staff decided to stop printing The Carolinian halfway through the fall 2002 semester until a new media board was established that the newspaper could trust (Student Press Law Center, 2003a).

Studies have examined various aspects of Media Advisory Boards and Advisory Boards in journalism programs over the years, although very few focused exclusively on media boards. In a 2004 study, Henderson surveyed 61 Journalism and Mass Communication programs with current or former departmental advisory boards. She found interest in academic advisory boards in general had "recently experienced something of a resurgence" (p. 60) with more than half of the respondent acknowledging the growing popularity of advisory boards in journalism programs. She included a list of areas where boards have interacted with students, and one area was "student newspaper procedures" (Henderson, 2004).

In sum, we found several weaknesses in the literature that call for a more systemic investigation on Media Boards. First, research findings were too often too scattered to provide a comprehensive view of Media Boards across the United States. Second, most of the empirical research results were more descriptive than inferential and therefore could hardly be connected holistically to other variables in the college media environment. Third, even though researchers started to study the presence of Media Boards as early as the late 1980s (Kopenhaver & Spielberger, 1989), investigation on how well or poorly media boards are actually operating has been largely missing.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the lack of previous research on media advisory boards, this study first aims to provide baseline information on the boards to give the reader a sense of where they exist and how they vary.

RQ1: How do school characteristics, such as geographic location, enrollment size, public or private status, and two-year or four-year enrollment, relate to the existence of media boards in schools?

We then investigated a series of research questions, arising from the literature, regarding three major board characters: function, administrative presence, and sanctioning power. RQ2 to RQ4 tap into each of the three areas.

RQ2: What are the most common functions of Media Advisory Boards?

RQ3: What are the types of sanctioning power that Media Advisory Boards have?

RQ4: What is the perceived influence of the school administration on the operation of Media Advisory Boards?

As reviewed earlier, administrative influence has been central to most media board related disputes. To better understand this crucial dimension of issue, we looked at factors that may contribute to perceived administrative influence in a structural way. Potential factors, according to the literature, came from three levels—institutional, organizational, and individual. Institutional factors, such as private vs. public schools, relates to the discrepancies of free speech rights between public and private institutions (Lisosky, 2010). Administration presence on media boards—an organizational factor—seemed to be a frequent cause of friction (Student Press Law Center, 2002, 2003c, 2004). Because this study measured administrative influence via advisers' perceptions, we also wanted to find out how individual parameters, namely advisors' demographics, helped predict perceived administrative influence.

RQ5: How do school types (public vs. private, two-year vs. four-year), administration presence, and advisers' demographic characteristics help to explain an adviser's perception of administrative influence on media boards?

Given student complaints on some individual campuses about media advisory boards being heavy handed, the survey examined the level of satisfaction with the way the boards handled eight issues, most of which had the potential for being divisive. Most statements were cast in a positive frame and asked advisers to judge their own boards against an ideal situation, from a journalism point of view.

RQ6: Is there general satisfaction with board performance?

The final area of inquiry measured board effectiveness. In this time of increased importance placed on assessment of student learning outcomes (Avery, 2003; Posner, 2011) and moving from a stress on teaching to a stress on learning (Means, 2010), how does a school determine whether a board is effective?

RQ7. What means of assessment, if any, does the advisory board currently utilize?

RQ8. How effective is the current method of assessment?

METHOD

Participants

The study focused on U.S. colleges where an employee was affiliated with College Media Advisers; CMA, recently renamed College Media Association, is the primary trade group for university and college media advisers. It includes print, broadcast, web, and yearbook advisers. An initial CMA mailing list of 641 members in Spring 2011 was pared to eliminate entries with missing or false e-mail addresses and duplicates. A working population of 621 CMA members became the population of the study.

Survey

Advisers were sent an online invitation to participate in a survey anonymously. Those who did not respond within three weeks received a reminder e-mail. Only one response per school was included. Six schools reported the existence of a second Media Advisory Board; data on the second board were not included due to the small n. Eleven responses were discarded because they failed to answer a majority of questions or their responses defied face validity.

The final sample included 157 completed responses out of 621 requests, yielding a response rate of 25.3 per cent. The validity of a sample can be demonstrated, in part, by how well the sample characteristics mirror the parameters of the population being studied. There was a strong match on two key variables. About 68 per cent of the CMA population worked at public colleges and universities, compared to 66 per cent of the survey's final sample. Eighty-one percent of the CMA population worked at a four-year school, compared to 84 per cent of the survey respondents. Researchers expected the type of school (public vs. private, four-year vs. two-year) would help explain some of the variance in issues, such as whether a school had a Media Advisory Board.

A substantial percentage of respondents (62 of 157, or 39.5 per cent) reported that they did not have a Media Advisory Board at their school, allowing the researchers to compare the characteristics of schools with a board (95, or 60.5 per cent) and those without one. As we later note in limitations, relying solely on advisers for information does provide insight from someone engaged in the process, but it may not necessarily reflect the way others associated with the board feel about an issue.

The method produced a cross-section of boards that varied in many organizational characteristics:

- The average (median) board had been in existence for 25 years. Seventeen percent of schools with boards reported they have been in existence for five years or less.

- Seventy-fix percent reported operating under a set of bylaws; 68 per cent recorded minutes at meetings.

- The most common model was an advisory board that focused on the school newspaper and, in some cases, various other print activities (which could include the yearbook, a general interest magazine, and/or a literary magazine). A majority of the respondents (48 of the 97 schools, or 52 per cent), said they used this approach; 29 of the 48 focused solely on the campus newspaper. In contrast, a second model focused on a combined board for both broadcast and print activities; 39 schools, or 42 per cent, used this approach. Six schools reported using separate boards for individual student media activities. (They are reported separately here, but also could be listed under both print and broadcast.) Four schools reported a board dealing with just broadcast media.

- The size of media boards varied considerably, ranging from 3 to 43 members, with an average (median) size of 12 members. Student journalists (20 per cent) and faculty (20 per cent) were most heavily represented, followed by representatives of the student body (19 per cent). In contrast, administrators (11 per cent) and student government (6 per cent) representatives were much less visible in board composition. Given the average board has 12 members, a typical board might have two to three members who are student journalists, two additional students, one to two administrators, one to two formal advisers, two (additional) faculty members, one media professional, and another, varied member, such as a student government representative.

Only 51 schools with boards responded to a question about where the board was housed in the school's organization chart. The locations varied widely. One third of the boards (33.3 per cent) were described as wholly independent and not directly affiliated with any specific part of the university. In contrast, 17.6 per cent were housed in Student Affairs or in a mixture of settings including Student Affairs, and 13.7 per cent were directly affiliated with a specific department or other academic unit. For the final 35.3 per cent, a wide variety of other locations were mentioned, including through presidential appointment, through the faculty senate or a university committee, or reporting to the chancellor or Board of Regents.

RESULTS

RQ1 looked at a number of school characteristics, such as geographic location, two-year vs. four-year status, public vs. private, enrollment size, and aimed to find out which characteristics helped explain whether or not a school chose to have a media board.

The media advisory boards were not distributed evenly across geographic regions. Nearly three quarters (73.2 per cent) of schools surveyed in the South had a board, and they also existed at 61.8 per cent of Midwest schools surveyed. In contrast, only 46.2 per cent of school in the Northeast and 40.0 per cent of those in the West reported having such a board (U.S. Census regions were used to group states). The regional differences were significant (χ^2 = 9.56, df = 3, p = .02; Cramer's V = .25).

The type of school (two-year vs. four-year) also correlated significantly with the existence of a media board. About one-third of the two-year schools (34.6 per cent) reported having a board, versus almost two thirds (65.6 per cent) of the four-year institutions (χ^2 = 8.74, df = 1, p = .00; Cramer's V = .24).

Enrollment size was not a good predictor; the presence of the board was similarly distributed across small, medium, and large institutions. Public colleges were no more likely to embrace or reject media boards than their private counterparts.

In an attempt to answer RQ2, 11 administrative roles of media advisory boards were identified from the literature, including "select student media leaders," "serve as a bridge with administrators," and "offer post-publication critiques." The respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 5 (extremely important) the importance they assign to each function (Table 1).

Selecting the Editor-in-Chief, Station Manager or other top position received a mean score of 4.22, the highest score of the 11 variables used. Also receiving high scores were "Serve as a neutral sounding board if content is challenged" (mean = 3.11) and "Defend student media if content is challenged" (3.09). The lowest ranked functions were "preview content before release" (1.85); "select other staff leaders" (1.99); and "integrate the journalism curriculum" (2.00).

The advisers seem to see the board's role in broad terms rather than micromanaging the content or selecting of all staff leaders. Support for a "neutral sounding board" sug-

TABLE 1 PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF 11 COLLEGE MEDIA ADVISORY BOARD FUNCTIONS		
Funtion	Mean	SD
Select Editor-in-Chief/ Station Manager or other top position	4.22	1.38
Serve as a neutral sounding board if content is challenged	3.11	1.40
Defend student media if content is challenged	3.09	1.38
Serve as a bridge between the student media and administration	2.94	1.40
Give suggestions to improve workflow and production	2.36	1.25
Supervise the adviser	2.27	1.33
Provide ideas for media content	2.12	1.13
Critique content after release	2.08	1.16
Integrate the journalism curriculum	2.00	1.04
Select other staff leaders	1.99	1.18
Preview content before release	1.85	1.01

Note:
n=95. Responses were based the question: "How would you describe the current functions of the advisory board?" and ranged from 1 "not important at all" to 5 "extremely important." Results rank ordered by mean.

TABLE 2 ULTIMATE SANCTION A BOARD COULD TAKE AGAINST A STUDENT MEDIA LEADER FOR MALFEASANCE	
Dismissal	60.0%
Recommended dismissal	22.1%
Publicize its unhappiness with student	6.3%
None; no ultimate sanction	6.3%
Other	5.0%
Total	99.7%

Note. n = 95. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

To tap a related dimension, we asked respondents how they would "rate the influence of the administration on the board's operation" (Table 3). Again, while the literature includes scattered yet highly publicized complaints about administrative influence on boards, the results suggest such influence would be the exception rather than the rule. While 8 per cent of advisers said the administration was influential or very influential, 31 per cent said it was somewhat influential and 61 per cent said it was not influential at all. Given that boards usually include administration members and that they are often set up to serve as a buffer, the results might suggest administrators do not feel the need to exercise additional influence.

TABLE 3 PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION ON OPERATION OF MEDIA ADVISORY BOARD	
Very influential	4.0%
Influential	4.0%
Somewhat Influential	31.0%
Not influential at all	61.0%
Total	100.0%

Note:
n = 95. Responses were based on the question "How would you rate the influence of the administration on the board's operation?"

gests the board is there in case friction occurs between the student media outlet and the administration or any other external critic. The national norm as adviser –to maximize the educational value of campus media and avoid pre-publication censorship (College Media Advisers, n.d.) –is reflected in the low importance accorded to "preview content before release."

A consistent theme in the research findings here is that the boards govern with a light touch. But many have the ability to play a larger role in the management of the campus news organization if they wished to do so. For RQ3, we asked what the ultimate sanction was that a board could take against a student media leader for malfeasance (Table 2).

Some 57 of the 95 respondents, or 60 per cent, said the board could dismiss the student outright from his or her campus media duties. Another 22.1 per cent said the board could recommend dismissal, while 6.3 per cent said the ultimate sanction was to publicize its unhappiness with the student. Some 6.3 per cent said their board had no ultimate sanction, while 5 per cent offered other, varied responses.

RQ5 focused on predictive factors at institutional, organizational, and individual levels that explain the variability in perceived administrative influence. A multiple regression, $R^2 = .27$, $F(8, 79) = 3.73$, $p = .00$, showed a greater administrative presence on media boards ($\beta = .40$, $p = .000$) and, oddly, adviser's gender ($\beta = -.21$, $p = .046$) significantly predicted perceived administrative influence. Heavier administrative presence was significantly correlated to higher administrative influence, and male ad-

visers tended to perceive higher administrative influence than did female advisers (Table 4). Institutional variables such as public vs. private status, however, were not statistically associated with administrative influence.

RQ6 focuses on whether there is general satisfaction with board performance regarding eight issues taken from the literature, most of which had the potential for being divisive. Most statements asked advisers to judge their own board against an ideal situation from a journalism point of view. Answers ranged from a high of 5 (strongly agree with the statement) to a low of 1 (strongly disagree).

While advisers on individual campuses have complained about media advisory boards being heavy handed, here the boards generally received high marks. The strongest agreement came with a question on whether the board "understands that some student errors are part of the learning process," consistent with the overall goal of a college or university (mean = 4.16; 5 = "strongly agree"). The advisers also were more likely to agree with such statements as they were "generally satisfied with the board" (3.79), appreciate the watchdog role that a student media organization can assume (3.77), and felt the board was effective in its oversight role (3.75)

In contrast, there was little agreement with the statement, "The board would prefer the student organization to be more of a positive, public relations tool for the school." The question received the lowest mean score (1.92) of the eight indicators measured.

The final area of inquiry focused on measuring board effectiveness. Given the growing desire in academe to establish a formal means to measure success, in RQ7 we also asked schools how they assessed board performance. As-

sessment can take many forms, and it often calls for comparing performance against set criteria. (e.g., using a rubric, and/or establishing student learning outcomes at the start of the semester, then measuring how well students did in meeting the desired outcomes). We hoped the survey would generate a variety of approaches that could be used by other schools.

More than a quarter of the schools – 24 of 95, or 25.3 per cent – reported no form of assessment. The others reported a wide variety of ways of gauging a board's effectiveness, many of which would not meet the common criteria for academic assessment. The most popular answer referenced reliance on regular reports, meetings or interviews (nine responses, or 9 per cent). Other techniques included casual observation and general awareness of the media organization (six responses, or 6 per cent), formal evaluation of staff (three mentions, or 3 per cent), and informal discussion of media content at a board meeting (also three mentions, 3 per cent). Three schools said academic officials other than the board assess board performance.

Only four of the 95 schools described a process that might be able to pass muster as a means of assessment, broadly cast, and possibly serve as a model for other schools. The advantage of each approach is listed at the end of the bullet.

- The Faculty Advisers submit reports directly to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, a Board member. The advisers, in consultation with the student editor, identified goals for the publication at the beginning of the year and submitted an assessment of how well the goals were met at the end of the year. The Board, itself, is not assessed except as it functions as a subcommittee of the Fac-

TABLE 4 SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR PERCEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE INFLUENCE				
Predictor	B	β	t	Sig. (p)
Public vs. Private	.10	.06	.54	.590
Two vs. Four Year	.07	.03	.26	.793
Administrative Presence	2.29	.40	3.84	.000**
Gender	-.36	-.21	-2.02	.046*
Age	.01	.18	1.44	.154
Education	.14	.11	1.09	.278
Media Experience	-.01	-.07	-.63	.529
Advising Experience	-.01	-.07	-.66	.510
Note: *p < .05; **p <.01.				

TABLE 5 SATISFACTION WITH EIGHT MEDIA ADVISORY BOARD FUNCTIONS		
Functions	Mean	SD
The board understands that some student errors are part of the learning process.	4.16	0.93
As an adviser, I am generally satisfied with the advisory board.	3.79	1.09
The board appreciates the watchdog role that a student media organization can assume.	3.77	1.13
On balance, the board has had a positive impact on the student organization.	3.75	1.12
The board is effective in its role of overseeing the student organization.	3.51	1.19
The board can supply some continuity at times when the quality of the student organization dips due to graduation or other reasons.	2.62	1.29
I would recommend changes to the board's operation.	2.42	1.38
The board would prefer the student organization to be more of a positive, public relations tool for the school.	1.92	1.10
Note: n = 95. Responses ranged from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), based on the question "Do you agree/disagree with the following statements?" Results rank ordered by mean.		

ulty Senate. (Use of desired outcomes, established at start of year and then analyzed at the end)

- Readership and online usage surveys, response from students and community, advertising revenues and job placement. (Multi-method, including reliance on customer surveys)

- The board uses a rubric to grade the quality of the student newspaper. (A rubric usually consists of multiple indicators established ahead of time; each can be rated from high to low.)

- Spring and fall assessment of each of the six top student media leaders using an established form. (Again, standards established ahead of time and then applied in analyzing performance – in this case the media leaders instead of the board itself.)

Based on the form of assessment used (or not used), all advisers were asked to rate the perceived effectiveness of the method (Table 6). One quarter of schools (25.3 per cent) said there was no assessment conducted of board performance. Another 11.6 per cent described their assessment effort as not at all effective. Of the remainder, 28.4 per cent of assessment efforts were described as somewhat effective, 25.3 per cent were described as effective, and 9.5 per cent (9 of the 91 examined) were rated as extremely effective.

DISCUSSION

U.S. college administrators use a variety of methods to supervise and manage student activities on campus. One of the most difficult areas to manage is college media outlets such as a campus newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations. There is a long

tradition of independence associated with these endeavors. Administrators also may find any decision, recommendation or even casual comment turned into a news story as student editors use their media outlet to push back against any issue with which they disagree.

This study details how many schools use a Publication Board or a Media Advisory Board as a buffer between student editors and the administrators who often help fund the media organization. The boards vary widely in their duties. Some select an Editor-in-Chief or station manager. Some preview content before release; others critique content after release. Some supervise any faculty adviser; others work to integrate the media organization into the journalism or mass communication curriculum.

Beyond their responsibility, the boards can vary widely in their focus (a single media operation vs. both the campus newspaper and TV station); their composition; and where they are housed at the college or university.

TABLE 6 EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSESSMENT METHOD USED BY MEDIA ADVISORY BOARD	
Extremely effective	9.5%
Effective	25.3%
Somewhat effective	28.4%
Not at all effective	11.6%
No assessment; not present	25.3%
TOTAL	100.1%
Note: n = 95. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.	

This exploratory study, based on a survey of advisers to college media organizations, is part of the first formal national examination of the boards and therefore is designed to provide baseline data and explore implications for student affairs and higher education. Earlier, we highlighted what we saw as several weaknesses in the literature that, taken together, called for a more systemic investigation on Media Boards. We believe we have addressed those shortcomings in this paper. Using a representative national sample, we offer a systematic look at board functions, administrative influence, and sanctions to replace the often scattered findings in earlier work. We offer inferential results, rather than just descriptive results, in several areas to help look at multiple variables in a holistic manner. Finally, we offer judgments (albeit from a single perspective, that of the college media adviser) as to whether the boards have functioned effectively. In meeting these needs, we have generated strong baseline data that can serve as the basis for continuing work in this area.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

We are struck that the Media Advisory Boards generally live up to the promise, stated in the second word in the three-word title. They advise, rather than mandate or take a heavy handed approach to managing the campus media. Obviously the most common function is to play a role in selecting the Editor-in-Chief or station manager of the student organization. But beyond that, they seem more satisfied in serving as a third party, a buffer, and a neutral place where complaints can be heard and discussed. Previewing content before release was seen as the least important function of the 11 mentioned. In adopting this approach, the boards are consistent with the CMA Code of Ethics:

> Student media must be free from all forms of external interference designed to regulate its content, including confiscation of its products or broadcasts; suspension of publication or transmission; academic personal or budgetary sanctions; arbitrary removal of staff members or faculty; or threats to the existence of student publications or broadcast outlets. (College Media Advisers, n.d.)

Contrary to what literature has suggested, we were surprised that there were not more complaints by the respondents, the college media advisers, about administrative interference with the board or with student media operations. The boards have the ability to dismiss (60 per cent) or recommend dismissal (another 22.1 per cent) of a student media leader for malfeasance. Yet only 8 per cent of respondents reported the administration was influential or very influential on board operations; in contrast, 61 per cent said the administration was not influential at all. Greater administration influence was not significantly correlated with such variables as public vs. private school status,

two-year vs. four-year programs, or adviser characteristics such as age, education, media experience or adviser experience. Only the size of the administrative presence on the board and whether the adviser was a male seemed to play a role.

These results do not minimize the highly publicized cases of individual college and university administrators imposing their will on campus media boards and student operations. But these appear to be exceptions, however unfortunate, rather than the norm. Instead, there was widespread satisfaction among advisers with many of the board functions and norms, such as understanding student errors are a part of the process and the student media's potential role as a watchdog.

In designing the survey instrument in Spring 2011, we included some questions on assessment because of pressures on campuses, including our own, for college leaders to do a better job of trying to measuring what students actually learn. The results here suggest the media boards, like many other components of colleges and universities, have a long way to go in fully understanding what is meant by assessment and using it effectively. We were generous in even highlighting four of 95 schools that had some semblance of an assessment protocol in place. We imagine that percentage will grow in the coming years, as it will at all parts of academe.

The experience of the two authors with a new Media Advisory Board at their own school is consistent with many of these findings. One author sought to block creation of a board for 15 years, fearing it would be used by administrators in a heavy handed manner. After an off-color opinion column offended some newspaper readers and sparked a campus protest, a board was formed (Student Press Law Center, 2009). The other author succeeded the first as campus newspaper adviser and a member of the board, and no examples of administrative overreach have been seen in the first two years.

LIMITATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The results are limited by the single perspective captured by our survey: that of advisers to campus media. Additional work needs to be done to capture the views of the many other stakeholders: student media leaders, administrators, and perhaps the student media audience. Researcher may also be interested in adding other comparative dimensions to better understand how and why various stakeholders react to administrative interference and media boards in different ways. For example, do reporters and advisers in schools with media boards and those without perceive administrative influence differently? Would a content analysis reveal apparent administration influence, despite adviser disclaimers?

CONCLUSION

College Media Advisory Boards can play a prominent role on campuses, especially when a media organization finds itself engaged in a controversy over its handling of news, its ethics, organization or budget. We believe the baseline results can be useful to schools considering creation of such a board, to various constituencies – student editors, journalism faculty, and administrators – involved with the student press, and to schools assessing the operations of their current board.

We also believe that this study has opened the door to many other follow-up inquiries that invite future research. If media boards work well in many schools, why are not other schools adopting the practice? Are schools without boards seen as Utopias that need no neutral sounding board? Has a less-than-happy administration-media relationship complicated efforts to form such a board? Given this study stemmed from the perspective of media advisers, how are the boards viewed by other stake holders? We hope see concerted efforts to investigate the issue in years to come.

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Principals' Transformational Leadership in School Improvement

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ABSTRACT

Purpose—*This paper aims to contribute experience and ideas of the transformational leadership, not only for the principal want to improve leadership himself (herself), but also for the school at critical period of improvement, through summarizing forming process and the problem during the course and key factors that affect the course.*

Design/methodology/approach—*Using case study method, we draw some conclusions of improvement of principal leadership skills, by choosing two typical cases of the transformational leadership of principals in primary schools, rethinking the practice of school improvement profoundly.*

Findings—*There has been three periods: embryonic stage, basically forming stage and mature stage. That discovering problems, understanding the relationship between the problems and finding solutions, are the major consideration in the process. The transformational leadership skills of principal can be seen in forming the ideas, building shared vision, power sharing, gaining credence and experiencing success.*

Practical implications—*Providing references for the principal to recognize the importance of transformational leadership during the school improvement, in order to force the principal to improve their transformational leadership in practice.*

Theoretical significance—*At first, put forward that transformational leadership is the core of leadership; prove that principal's transformational leadership is very important in the school development through the fact that home-school cooperation study; emphasize that principal's transformational leadership should play a key role during the critical period of school improvement. Principal transformational leadership's work should base on different school members' actual situation and different school periods' fact, and then find different solutions.*

INTRODUCTION

The goal of school development is the school members' direction. If the school wants to develop, it should have different goals during different periods to encourage school member constantly working hard. Because different school members have different expectations about the school development and their own development, they may performance various level of morale when considering the school goals. So the principal need improve his transformational leadership in the process of school improvement. The principals need to create conditions to stimulate the morale of the school members with their higher level of leadership, making different members at different times can be motivated, respected, trusted and improve satisfaction, and gradually reaching a consensus with the overall objectives of the school. Therefore, what the principal should focus on is the school members' need in each stage. Only if the principal can solve the key is-

sues, can the school members' belief be improved, so that the school can transform successfully, and then step to a higher goal. All of these require the principals a lot; he should continue to set new goals and choose different behavior for different people; he plays an important role in those parts for promoting continuous improvement and development of the schools.

METHOD

Case study; Action Research

From June 2009 to May 2012, under the supported of Building Excellent School and Foster Prestigious Principal Project designed Tiedong District education bureau, more than 20 team members and I. (including five professional teachers from Northeast Normal University, 10 doctor-postgraduate and postgraduate), had been doing a

research of school improvement in three years, working with the principals and teachers from Lieshishan Primary School and Hunan Primary School (located in Tiedong District, Anshan, Liaoning province, China). In the past three years, my team and I travelled between Changchun and Anshan per semester, heading for the two schools two or three times to discuss school improvement with the principals and teachers. We did the whole research by multiple ways: researchers giving lectures at the two schools, inviting outstanding teachers in Changchun to talk about their experience, principals attending international conference, establishing hand in hand cooperative with prestigious school, and researchers getting into the classroom and studying teachers' lesson. All these approaches make us come down to the school's philosophy and school regulations and curriculum, teachers' professional development and student assessment. While respecting for independent development of two primary schools, we response to the problems arose in them, and give suggestions as references. What made more sense is the concern about how the transformation leadership of principals develop in a school improvement and how important it is to school development. Hereby some details in the improvement course of the two school will be described to help us rethink problems and achievements they came across and realize the contribution principals made to school development. It's significant for evolution in schools and principal.

MAIN BODY

Transformational leadership (James Kouzes, 2009, pp.100) refers to leadership skills in those principals who can pioneer the school to a new level at the hinge of school development. A school does not always innovate smooth. Different circumstance and factors make the process appear different---sometimes is advance, sometimes is logjam, much worse is reverse. We all prefer advance to logjam and reverse. Laying emphasis on transformational leadership, we expect principal could create conditions inspire all school members with their higher level of leadership for school improvement at the very time, finally make school get out of mess and realize transition in difficulties. Thus transformational leadership is a crucial quality of principals. However, principals who want to possess transformational leadership can be confronted with challenges from practical problems. Researchers as my colleagues and I are, working with the principals, we experienced and summarized the practice of transformational leadership improvement while watching the school personally and discussing.

The obstacles in developing transformational leadership

Have difficulty finding out real problems in the school. Schools need gradually improving in order to develop, and sometimes it would not achieve the goal. In the process of school improvement-finding problems out, especially issues matters school development progress in the nick of time, challenge the principal seriously. There are three kinds of status principals cannot find out real problems in the school. First, being ignorant of problems--- does the school has any question? It shows that the he principal doesn't possess transformational leadership. Probably he is green hand in principal works, lacking of rational cognition and knowledge of school management. This kind of principals is appointed for their teaching abilities, not for management ability or leadership skills. The two principals cooperated with us are early on their leadership. Though it has history of 50 years, one of them did not have its own specific school idea, which the principal didn't think as a problem. It implies principal was unaware of what school idea mean to a school yet. Without schooling philosophy, principals take stopgap measures and partial methods in school management. Secondly, being puzzled by problems---where is the question. New principals always act like this because of knowing little information about the whole school. Without any doubt discovering problems is hard for them. Thirdly, misunderstanding the problems--- what's the real question, they could make a mistake in settling matters when do not understand what's the true issue (Dunne, 2002, pp.151). On the premise of lacking of understand overall situation, principal is unable to acclimatize oneself to school works. In that way, their partial view of school easily lead to wrongly problem identification, result in taking pseudo-question for real problem. For example, a principal biased him by thinking the fact that the portion of the teacher aged 30 to 40 years old is larger than less than 30 years old indicates an aging teaching body. Actually teacher's professional development is a dynamic developing process. For teachers' development and maturity, 30 to 40 ages is the best of times when teachers are in the prime of one's life, which makes for educational and teaching tasks. The thought that regard these ages as graying ones, not only give positive situation of teacher staff a cold shoulder but also blanket practical matters about teaching team building. In other words, the real issue on teaching fellow is rather the incorrect age structure than aging team.

Have difficulty analyzing how the relationship between problems. In school, question arises all at once; some of them are obvious, some are invisible. Some link must be between them. Some problems' existence, development and disappearance are dependent on certain is-

sues. It requires principal being good at telling dominant problems apart, settling them helping subordinate issues be solved. All of those can be seen as a test of whether the principal possess the transformational leadership on finding and resolve key problems. Whereas lacking of transformational leadership principal can't find it in time, in that sense he couldn't take steps to solve it appropriately. Two reasons maybe can be used to explain it. We blame principals knowing scarce school information and being weak in insight into hidden problem firstly, that principal irrespective of priority fails in getting to what's important and attaining the results expected. Secondly that root cause isn't be exactly grasped by principals, is responsible to targeted solution. In new and old teacher pair (Greenblue), for instance, old teachers are keen on to discussing questions with new teachers, and to helping new ones designing and assessing lessons. Enthusiastic assistance and careful design get the new teachers more dependent on old ones. In the situation of independent thinking absent, the classroom will lose initiative and vigour; the new ones will not deal with teaching problems well; certainly it will affect the ability of new teachers' developing. In this case what the principal wants to solve is the problem of new teachers' development, but he overlook the new problem caused by old guiding new and the relationship between existing problem and new issue. The new issue upon new and old teacher twinning could be corrected timely; the old problem about new teachers' development cannot receive expected effect.

The basic process of developing transformational leadership

Enhancing principals' transformational leadership requires a process; this process can be divided into three stages. The first stage is transformational leadership's embryonic stage. In this stage, the principal have no clear sense, and they can't play the role of transformational leadership consciously and correctly. The principal in this period maybe not the new, but the one works for years in low ability and achievement. That not means they don't have the literacy of transformational leadership, may be just because this literacy is potential and cannot play its proper role. This potential also prompt the principal think about the school development, proposed the strategy. But these thinking and strategies may not correspond to the actual of school, may not help to promote school development. This situation shows that the principal under the transformational leadership's embryonic stage have the desire to develop the school, but lack of ability to lead the development of the school. Especially during the key point of the school development—when the school face the turning point, principal's leading ability mainly performance in transformational leadership.

The second stage of transformational leadership is the basically formative stage. In this stage, the principal's transformational leadership has undergone considerable development; they can think of the school actual consciously and rationally, and come up with some new strategy, then use these strategies to achieve the purpose of promoting the school development. But during this period, principal's transformational leadership is not yet mature. Although they are actively in thinking and solving problems, their consideration are accidentally or divergent. They still can't put the school development into a dynamic and systematic situation, and their strategies may be less of gradual progress. That means the school have difficult into the sustainable development of the state under the leadership of principal. Hence, principal's thinking often questioned by the teachers and superiors. The principal's good desire may be subject to others' misinterpretation. So during this period, we should understand and help the principal by improving their initiative to prompt the principal's transformational leadership.

The third stage of transformational leadership is the mature stage. In this stage, principals have been able to think freely about the school's development problems; they can continuously put forward effective strategies for solving problems based on the actual situation of the school; they can proposed to further thinking about promoting on the peak of the school development. Their design about school development obviously performance like these: follow the school management rules; look upon the school's current situation in a dynamic and develop vision; design the future of the school purposeful and systematic; strive to make the school into a track of healthy development. The mature of principal's transformational leadership provide an important influence for school development. Under this influence, school members can have positive attitude; school development can performance upward trend. Thus, the school development and the principals' transformational leadership becoming integrated guarantee schools' education quality.

It's worth noting that transformational leadership does not mark with how long being a principal but with putting forward significant options at the very time in school development. A principal, who can always come up with effectual solution or improvement strategy, is equipped with strong transformational leadership.

Some important steps of transformational leadership improvement

Just like the development of the country, school development requires constant transformation. A principal should have strong transformational leadership enhancing and help the school through the hard time to mature

as soon as possible. In the cooperation we realize enhancing principals' transformational leadership progressing step by step, which can be realized by forming the ideas, building shared vision, power sharing, and gaining credence and experiencing success. (YingXiu Yang, 2012, pp.16-18)

Transformational leadership improvement is based on forming the ideas. The school idea determines the development direction of the school, which is the school management's awareness or beliefs after the principal's thinking activity of the objective existence. But school idea's formation based on the reflection of the school management issues. Only if have the solution ideas, can the principal reflect the transformational leadership. The principal can express the school improvement direction and guide the school members from one stage to another by idea. After the discussion, Lieshishan Primary School established the idea of "Respect for Childlike Innocence" and Hunan Primary School determined the idea of "Sunshine Education" which would reflect the students' character. "Respect for Childlike Innocence" cares of Children's rule of development, pays attention to spiritual, give their own life and happiness back to children, and make primary life a beautiful experience worth remembering. "Sunshine Education" cares about creating colorful campus that each child develops harmoniously. Sunshine stands for Life and hope providing living things indispensability energy. The "Sunshine Education" notion require the school to be concerned with each student's growing well; to building school culture and spirit favors full of sunshine, through humanization and individualized emotional care and educational measures; encourage students initiative attitude towards life and learning; ensure their mind and bodies develop healthily. The two ideas differ literally, but share a strong will of solving school problems. It's this will that makes series meaningful moves on school management taken later on.

The school idea does not belong to the principals, but belongs to all the school members. If the school staff and members don't agree with the school idea, it is impossible to convert idea into school action. School members' recognition firstly performance in understanding of the school idea. School members' understanding of the school idea includes literal meaning and extended meaning. Understanding the literal meaning by way of explain the idea and understanding the extended meaning need higher literacy. The school members should profoundly understand the idea of connotation. Secondly it performs by school members reach a consensus with the school idea, and then through the action to show the idea. Caring for school members' recognition of school idea does not mean that the school idea pay no attention to every member's personality. Different members have different background,

therefore the idea have unique effective on their development. For instance, Lieshishan primary school which take "Respect for Childlike Innocence" as their idea, design large-scale opera group calisthenics for their students, and teachers with students participate in the learning of the opera group calisthenics together. They can not only taste Chinese culture in learning, but also understand the spiritual content of different roles in the opera; moreover, they can shape the spiritual of teamwork. By understanding of Peking Opera characters, a student's learning attitude quietly changed: from suffering to enjoying learning; just because he has a judgment of right or wrong to the opera roles. Participating and changes what it leading to prove that the school idea resonates with the school members, and school idea is feeding the school members continuously development, and this development is just the transformational leadership works through ideas.

Building shared vision is the core of transformational leadership improvement. Vision is desired intention or blueprint created and shared school members, also can inspire them to make concerted efforts for certain sake (Peter Senge, 1998, pp.238.). If school members find strength and courage in shared vision, school core capabilities lift and school personality highlight. A school vision is far from principal's vision. It can't be anything but a future and development strategy planning of the school. A principal's transformational leadership lies in leading school members to build shared vision and attempt it. Vision is directional and oriented, making school members strive with clear goals and communication. School members could gain wisdom and grow together, when they try to understand and achieve their vision. Because of this, both Lieshishan Primary School and Hunan Primary School set up the visions of which final goal is students' development, and attempt to make space for students' development by realizing the visions. At that time, students are happy, parents are satisfied, and social is approbatory. When building a vision, principal's transformational leadership would make it has more vitality. A viable vision has the following characteristics.

First it is appealing to school members. The appealing comes from vision making work concrete and caring about their lives. An appealing vision invites them to think school is the best place for their growing and development. With the noting of "Sunshine Education", Hunan Primary School designs three kinds of curriculum to make courses function. National curriculum includes Chinese, math, English, music, sport, art; school-based curriculum includes handwriting, art appreciation, leisure sports, classic reading; student-based curriculum includes art, sport, science, puzzles. National curriculum as staple food provides much needed energy, student-based curriculum as microelement and vitamin C provides

life-sustaining nutrients and school-based curriculum as dessert meets different tastes. This design gives vitality to school vision. The vitality can be seen in the student-based curriculum appealing and in the whole courses caring for physical and mental development, also in the selective student-based curriculum making much of individual difference. Selectivity exactly reflects purposeful and personalized principal leadership style, namely transformational leadership.

Secondly it is germinant itself. School vision is based on comprehensive analysis of school advantages and disadvantages. Growing points appear constantly for the sake of vision. No growing point, no life force in the vision. "Rearing Morality with Aesthetic Education" is a moral education model put forward by Hunan Primary School. Students should listen100 famous pieces, read 100 famous book and Paintings, called "triple hundred". But the principal didn't satisfied. Based on the several semesters' practice, they came up with 100 games, finally forming "four-hundred" moral education model. new growing points add to the vision, being more in accordance with students' developing physically and mentally, more suit students' desires, and more helpful to reduce stress on learning. The more new growing points appear, more viable the school vision is.

Thirdly it is cohesive to school members. School shared vision can be compared with aids to navigation. Where there is a flag there is a destination school member going to. The vision of school, different team, members' will integrate as one. Every member needs to take spontaneous actions to achieve the school vision. This purpose demand principals of understanding internal demand and making right decision about meeting the demand. Such as teacher' professional development need, principal should create professional opportunities and conditions. In the process of school improvement, teachers benefit a lot from "Shadow Training" between schools established by Hunan Primary School, which also increase teachers' trust in school.

Gaining credence is the key to enhance principals' transformational leadership. Gaining credence means a lot in the school improvement. School improvement is the principal and school members' sincerely cooperate. If it doesn't have enough trust, the cooperation won't be successful. The first reason is that the members of the school personnel are interrelated subsystems, looking at the relationship between the system and system, it needs to be built on the basis of mutual trust, mutual support. The second reason is that mutual trust between the school members reflects the mutual respect between them; respecting others and being respected by others are both the inner need of the members. If the member can be respected in the school environment, he can also

respect others. The third reason is that the mutual trust of the school members is a reflection of the school's healthy interpersonal. It can make the school members feel the relax atmosphere and work unreservedly; enhance the level of goal achievement; improve the effectiveness of school education. Therefore, the principal's taking appropriate leadership style, gaining credence between school members, prompting their win-win cooperation is his essential transformational leadership.

Gaining credence can demonstrate the principal's expedient thinking. Research on leadership style, for example, Fred E.Fiedler proposed expedient thinking about that the effectiveness of leadership behavior depends on situational factors. He thinks situation includes the trust from subordinate to leaders; how clearly the task is; the leader's status and power (Yaojun Sun, 1987, pp.693). The principal's status and power in school is changeless, in that way, school members' trust to the principal and the clear school task are very important. To obtain the trust of the school members, principals should pursue suitable leadership style for school members. Based on Karman's life cycle theory of leadership (Yaojun Sun, 1987, pp.714), if the principal wants to gain the trust, he can use expedient thinking to face the members in different level of mature, he can use command leading, convince leading, participate leading, decentralized leading, and so on. For example, Hunan Primary School based on the characteristic of the students designed the student-based curriculum, in that way, principal and students gain credence from each other. Lieshishan Primary School's "Green-blue" project (the old teachers help the new teachers), which embodied community spirit, also do favors with stimulating different teachers' positive, so that they can achieve the goals of resource sharing and mutual trust (Ferdinand Tnnies, 2010, pp.43).

Gaining credence can enhance principals' transformational leadership. Due to different members have different expectations to school and personal development that they will performance different positive to the school vision. For this, if the leader wants to prompt his transformational leadership during the school improvement, he should create conditions, and use higher-level leadership to stimulate members' enthusiasm and morale, making different members get encouragement, respect and reliance on each stage. Choosing different behaviors based on different people is the key performance in transformational leadership. Take Lieshishan Primary School as an example. It has built up a Comprehensive Quality Evaluation System. The system pays more attention to the ideas and skills' process, diversity and encouragement, which provide superior environment for teachers and students.

Sharing power is the opportunity to enhance the principal's transformational leadership. Principal's power comes from the school members. Although the principal is the administrative leader, if there is no school members' commissioned, he won't have any power (Jacques Rousseau, 1980, pp.73). Under the commissioned by members, the principal centrally exercise the power to serve the members of the school. In this sense, when the principal is using his power, he is fulfilling obligation at the same time. Hence, the core problems of enhancing school improvement's effect are concerned about the proper use of power and efficient allocation of interests. Lieshishan Primary School's and Hunan primary school's principals insist the democratic style of work, try to implement flat management, and actively explore the strategies of power sharing. These not only reduce the burden of the principal, but also mobilize the enthusiasm of the school members.

Sharing power is the opportunity to school improvement. Sharing power means returning the power to the school members, what's more, it means the principal's higher expectation to the members, and he believes everyone is an excellent leader. This indicates that sharing power means trust and respect, and it is the best way to encourage the members. School improvement is a step-by-step process, if we don't have enough accumulation, we won't achieve transcendence success. So, school development is each teacher and student's duty and they should work hard together. When every member participates in school management positively, the school will have foundation of teamwork, and then the higher school efficacy become possible. Therefore, the essence of the power sharing is to stimulate the enthusiasm of the members, to develop their potential and to promote school development.

Sharing power should provide various develop opportunity for school members. If the principal wants his members release their potential, it is necessary to provide them with more opportunities. To the members, an opportunity means power sharing, encouragement, and possibility of getting ahead. Thence, each member expects opportunities. The more opportunities give, the more space of development has. An important performance of transformational leadership is creating more develop opportunities for school members, such as an opportunity to help others, an opportunity to broaden horizons, an opportunity to show themselves, an opportunity to exert creativity and so on. Lieshishan Primary School designs different incentive mechanisms for different levels of teachers, which formed the professional development path of subject rookie, subject backbone, subject elite, subject chief, and subject expert. That makes every teacher can gain develop opportunities during their growing, because they can see the hope for development, adding to the confidence of the development. Hunan primary school let each student take part in the art activities, admitting different students have different performances, and provide opportunity to each child to show itself. If the principals provide development opportunities for school members, he is providing possibility for the school development at the same time.

Experiencing success is the lifeblood of transformational leadership improvement. School improvement aims at developing the teachers and students. Progress and success should be possible for school gradually improvement. Meanwhile school members can feel the pleasure of success in the process. In return, pleasures gain their trust in themselves and sense of responsibility for school, thus it produce new driving force in school development. This circulation is the source of the viability of school. Principal's transformational leadership should focus on giving members more opportunities for success. Nevertheless, because of member's different understanding of chance and abilities, when taking the opportunity, they may success, also may fail. Giving members more opportunities for success requires principal's to improve transformational leadership in providing suitable opportunities for different members.

The secret of school improvement success is keeping moving. A success ends with a new start. Each improvement needs drawing resources; this must be in the modern school management system. Because the school development is dynamic and school improvement is in the social systems. Without dynamic development idea, school cannot create success. Without resource integrating, school cannot be successful. What we have done for research is beneficial for resource integrating in school improvement. Resources came from education administration and university including manpower, material resources and financial power. That's a lot of resources for schools. Of course, resource integrating benefits researchers' academic development, providing new space for combination of theory and practice. A principal the leader of a school, taking this as an opportunity to improve transformational leadership, will certainly gain a lot in school improvement.

CONCLUSION

Principal's transformational leadership is the key to prompt school development. It can help the school solve problems pertinently and obtain various degrees of improvement on different stage. The process of forming transformational leadership includes: embryonic stage, basically formative stage and mature stage.The transformational leadership skills of principal can be seen in forming the ideas, building shared vision, power sharing, gaining credence and experiencing success. There are a lot of examples in the practice prove that the principals' lead-

ership plays a key role in the schools development. So enhance transformational leadership is the principal's duty.

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NOTE

The two principals who worked in Lieshishan Primary School and Hunan primary school was respectively transferred to another two school to be principals by the Education Bureau of Tiedong District when our research was conducted in the third year. And the two schools had new principals then. But this didn't affect our study about transformational leadership. Because from the two new principals, we can still find the quality of transformational leadership that makes our research be able to continue.

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