LIVING IN THE GRAY: FACULTY PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL ROLES UNDER CONTEMPORARY MANAGERIALISM

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Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
1 Peter 4:10

Although my words are insufficient to the task, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge some of the people who helped make this venture possible.

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Abstract: As our society has changed, calling for a focus on transparency and accountability, so have our perceptions of both the roles higher education and its purveyors, the faculty. As a result, university administrators have turned to managerial assessment strategies to provide stakeholders with quantitative measurements of what has historically been an understood intangible value (Dumay & Guthrie, 2012; Secundo et al., 2018). This research delves into faculty perspectives of their roles as they relate to contemporary administrative oversight, finding that faculty perceive indirect affronts to their autonomy as well as academic freedom, leading to a series of negative emotions and consequences including depression and defeat.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to improve retention and build self-esteem in their students, in 2004 Benedict College enacted a rule requiring professors to base 60% of a student's grade on effort. After refusing to comply, two untenured professors were fired for insubordination (Gilroy, 2005; Grin, 2004). In another case, a tenured professor at LSU was removed from a biology class mid-semester because students complained about the grading practices, and the course had a quickly increasing attrition rate. LSU officials stated that the grade distributions for the class were out of line with the historical pattern of biology courses for non-majors, and the professor brought in as a replacement retroactively raised the grades of all students in the course. One administrator stated that if all classes had the attrition rate of this professor's, then LSU would have a hard time graduating any students. According to LSU, allowing professors free reign in assigning grades could inhibit learning and compromise standardization. Furthermore, LSU administration indicated that they would consider how much grading freedom professors should be allowed in large introductory classes (Glenn, 2010).

The Benedict College and LSU examples show how contemporary administrative practices are affecting the traditional, autonomous professional role of the university academic; these changing practices date back to the 1990's when college began to be viewed as an expensive commodity (Gilroy, 2005). Higher education started treating its students as customers and, as is often stated in business, "The customer is always right." But what does the higher

education consumer want? The answer is, a lot of things, but not necessarily rigorous academics or assessment. According to some studies, recent students have stereotypical expectations of college life, anticipating exciting social lives and moderate academic demands (Ozga & Sukhnandan, 2002; Thomas, 2010). Other studies have found that the majority of students believe themselves to be academically above average and respond poorly to criticism (Courts, 2010; Loffredo & Harrington, 2012; Twenge, 2014).

Students spend an average of 27 hours a week on academic activities, which is less time than an average high school student spends at school (Arum & Roksa, 2011). Yet, students and parents believe payment of ever-increasing tuition and fees entitles students to good grades with minimal effort, and displeased consumers are happy to take their business elsewhere (Levine & Dean, 2012). To keep their retention rates up, many institutions focus on ensuring customer satisfaction. As a result, some college administrative teams introduced institutional practices to which faculty are expected to adhere or suffer the consequences.

It seems there is a trending power shift away from university academics to administration. As a staff member of an institution of higher education, I have witnessed many changes, and I wonder about faculty members' perceptions. How do they perceive the way these changes affect them? Do faculty believe the changes are compromising the integrity of their work, or do they believe the changes help their efforts? Do faculty continue to see themselves as professionals in light of new forms of administrative oversight? These were some of the questions that led me to pursue this proposed research.

Context

Higher education holds a unique position in our society. Society views individuals who choose to teach in institutions of higher education as curators of truth, and the institutions themselves as the birthplace of new knowledge and discovery (Tierney & Lechuga, 2010). By providing society with instruction, research, and scholastic contributions, higher education has long asserted itself as a leading influence in the advancement of the public good (Tierney &

Lechuga, 2010). Historically, professors in institutions of higher education are afforded a level of independence intended to protect the integrity of honest scholarship. They are viewed as autonomous professionals, experts in their field who have the best understanding of their roles, charting their courses of study and instruction (Osakwe et al., 2015). Institutions employ constructs such as academic freedom and tenure in higher education specifically to protect faculty autonomy.

However, despite its strength, higher education is also uniquely fragile. Relying on stakeholders for funding creates a dependency that leaves higher education vulnerable to intrusive machinations; dependence on government resources and tuition dollars creates a situation in which higher education is subject to the priorities of outside stakeholders, whether those priorities are driven by political goals or the desire for accountability (Fuchs, 1963). The recent emergence of managerialism, a concept arguing that institutions of higher education should be managed in the same manner as for-profit businesses, introduced an environment that threatens the notion of the university academic as an autonomous professional (Joseph, 2015). The administration component of the university is growing in power, as evidenced by the increased administrative spending accompanying the continuous rise of tuition and decrease of state support (Fowles, 2014; Hedrick et al., 2009). As institutions of higher education seek to prove to stakeholders that they are receiving an adequate return on their investment, increases in spending and administrative power are leading to internal demands for greater accountability measurements and quantifiable results (Huisman & Currie, 2004).

Institutions of higher education must be financially viable. However, higher education serves society by seeking truth, teaching content and critical thinking skills to future leaders, and advancing societal development through research. Compromising that work is detrimental to society and, most particularly, to democracy. The changes outlined above bring the roles of higher education and university academics into question.

Historically, society recognized the importance of the professional academic role, as evidenced by the introduction of academic freedom and the freedom to seek and foster "truth" regardless of economic or political environments (Tierney & Lechuga, 2010). Policies that associate a university academic's effectiveness with customer service are measuring something other than the attainment of these ideals. Does managerialism, and its inherent customer service culture, compromise the value of higher education to students and society, thus reducing university academics to laborers focused on pleasing the consumer (Gates et al., 2015)? University academics are not infallible, but they are experts in their fields. If external pressures are compromising their ability to realize their professional expectations, then their roles within society are being diminished, and we are losing a valuable means of societal development.

How should higher education define its purpose? Is it to produce higher persistence and graduation rates, or is it the development of contributing members of society? What should higher education use as the measure of accomplishment, grade point averages, or the ways in which students use their knowledge and abilities to contribute to the development of society in meaningful ways? These are questions at the forefront of higher education today. University academics express concern that focusing on quantitative accountability detracts from the ideals of quality education, contributing instead to a notion of the student as a customer, and the university academic as a customer service representative rather than as an autonomous professional (Gates et al., 2015). As a result, higher education, and the role of the university academic lie at a critical juncture. A better understanding of the impact of contemporary administrative policies on the role of the faculty warranted an exploration of the way faculty make meaning of those policies in relation to their practice as professionals. This was the motivation behind the proposed research.

Problem Statement

Historically, academics have been afforded a level of status and autonomy absent in non-professional careers, but comparable to other professionals. In the past, academics have been respected as both teachers and subject matter experts, and their voices were powerful and

formally embedded in the organization through systems such as faculty governance. However, their professional identities are shifting in nature as academic systems respond to external corporatization pressures by increasing focus on performance-based accountability and curriculum and pedagogical change (Kerby, 2015; Othman, 2016).

Academics are losing their ideological control over the subject-matter being taught and are being treated as a new proletariat (Halsey, 1992; Herr, 2015; Stolz, 2017). Managerialism, the practical implementation of corporatization, is nurturing a culture in which students are treated as customers. Therefore, rather than adhering to their professional ideals of academic excellence, academics are required by increasingly powerful administrative managers to provide quantitative proof of sufficient professional progress and customer satisfaction.

Although change is an inevitable aspect of higher education, it is vital to systematically consult faculty members, who have traditionally and collectively led U.S. higher education institutions, about their perceptions of these particular changes as they relate to faculty as autonomous professionals.

Research Questions

The purpose of this single case study was to explore tenured and tenure-track faculty members' perceptions of administrative oversight at a large land-grant university in the south-central United States. This study was guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

How do tenure-track and tenured faculty members at a research university perceive that contemporary administrative oversight influences their research and teaching?

a. In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight has changed the nature of their work during their time as tenured or tenure-track professors?
b. In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight impacts their expected academic freedom?

Significance

Higher education will always be in a state of change. Its inherent nature of discovery and research will allow for nothing else. However, change always brings consequences, some good, some bad, some intentional, and some unintended. This case study examined tenured and tenure-track faculty members' perceptions of the impacts that recent changes toward the corporatization of higher education have on their roles as autonomous professionals. The results of this study have significance in the three core areas of research, theory, and practice.

Research

Although there is significant literature about higher education in the current climate, very little of this is conducted from the faculty members' perspectives. Given that faculty members are the foundation of higher education, it is important to garner their reactions to these changes. As autonomous professionals, they have the best understanding of their roles. Therefore, this lack of representation is a gap in the literature that requires attention. This study contributes to filling this gap.

Theory

Though this study did not ascribe to an a priori theoretical framework, its focus produced some data related to the theories of psychological ownership and sensemaking, as well as organizational power. In the early days of combing and coding my data, I was struck by its complexity, layering, and nuance. I found that no singular theory could be used as a lens for understanding. However, I believe the application of multiple theories produced outcomes that offer additional insights and applications within the academic environment for the theories of psychological ownership and sensemaking.

I turned to international researchers for additional insights and found the framework for the "third mission," a set of activities undertaken by universities in an effort to contribute to society through continuing education, social engagement and technological innovation and transfer (Secundo et al., 2017), and the use of intellectual capital (IC) in the assessment of that

mission. It is primarily this framework through which I evaluated my data. I believe the analysis of this research could lend itself to further research and the development of a theory or theories related to the need to incorporate IC into the assessment of faculty work as it relates to societal development, or "third mission" activities.

Practice

Higher education must continuously adapt, exploring different and possibly more efficient means of educating and researching. However, it is also critical to maintain levels of academic excellence, wisdom that has long lived with university faculty. This study contributes to our understanding of university academics' perceptions of external pressures and how those may be compromising their ability to realize their professional expectations, which are generally accepted as contributing to the evolution of society. Given that these pressures may be compromising societal development, it is my hope that the findings of this research will stimulate additional and important discourse about this issue.

Higher education needs both academics and administrators to function well, however, these two parties do not always communicate as effectively as would be ideal in a collaborative environment. It is my hope this study strengthens the lines of communication between these two groups in such a way that institutions are working holistically for the *both the betterment of the students and the healthy development of higher education*. It is my hope institutions will be able to use the results of this study, and others like it, to *begin conversations between university academics and administrators* that will influence the way higher education moves forward. With this research I believe I have uncovered perspectives that can start a discussion between university academics and administration that will *influence future policy* in a way that benefits all stakeholders.

Study Overview

Details of the methodology are covered in Chapter III. The following section provides an overview of the philosophy of the research and the approach.

Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective

Working from the epistemology of constructionism, the premise that individuals assign meaning to phenomena (Patton, 2015), and the theoretical perspective of interpretivism, which considers the cultural and historical interpretations of social groups (Crotty, 1998), this study examined the perceptions of the participants. There is a relationship between the observer and the observed, and it is this relationship rather than any kind of inherent value that provides meaningful reality. The observer assigns meaning to the observed and creates a dialogue of sorts. This dialogue reflects the manner in which the context of the subject interacts with the properties of the object, combining the objective properties of the observed with the subjective properties of the observer's contextual interpretation to create a situation in which unique meaning is constructed rather than created (Crotty, 1998).

Theoretical Framework

Though influenced by psychological ownership and sensemaking, this study did not ascribe to an a priori theoretical framework. Rather, theoretical framing was dictated by the data, which resulted in the a posteriori use of a framework addressing the utilization of intellectual capital in the assessment of faculty work as it relates to social development via technological innovation and advancement, continued education, and social engagement.

Approach

The case study utilized qualitative methods of inquiry to explore the experiences and perceptions of tenure-track and tenured faculty members as they seek to construct meaning in relation to their environments and their roles. Qualitative methods were particularly appropriate for this research as they seek rich and detailed descriptions of the participants' impressions and reactions to objects and situations (Creswell, 2014), allowing the participant to tell his or her individual story and engage with the researcher to construct unique meaning.

Data Collection and Analysis

This case study employed three methods of data collection: interviews and interview fieldnotes, drawings, and documents. All participants were asked to participate in the interviews and drawing exercise. I recorded and transcribed interviews verbatim and analyzed and sorted all data via open-coding and a theming process.

Definition of Terms

Below is a list of the definitions used in this study:

- Corporatization of Higher Education: The introduction of neoliberalism to higher education
- Intellectual Capital (IC): The collective knowledge of the individuals within an organization that create value and give that body a competitive advantage, consisting of experience, intellectual property, information, etc. (Dumay, 2016, as cited in Secundo et al., 2018)
- Managerialism: A concept advocating the idea that universities should be managed in the same manner as for-profit business models (Joseph, 2015)
- Neoliberalism: The theory that the application of the free market to all economic, social, and political spheres will lead to economic success (Harvey, 2005; Lavigne, 2019)
- Professional: Experts in their fields who are largely autonomous, determining the relative importance of their various responsibilities and obligations (Osakwe et al., 2015)
- Professors: Refers specifically to tenured and tenure-track professors in institutions of higher education
- Third Mission: A movement among European schools in the 90's intended to hone them as engines of economic and societal growth. This societal development was the third of three missions, the first and second being teaching and research (Secundo et al., 2017).

- Faculty: Refers to individuals who have reached professor status in an institution of higher education
- University Academics: Individuals teaching in institutions of higher education, including both tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenured

Summary

Within this chapter, I discussed the context of the problem, briefly speaking to the corporatization of higher education, the move toward managerialism, and the resulting loss of faculty members' professional identities. I introduced the problem and purpose of the study to explore a small number of tenured and tenure-track faculty members' perceptions of their roles as autonomous professionals in relation to contemporary administrative oversight, as well as discussed the design of the research. I addressed my epistemological stance of constructionism and theoretical perspective of interpretivism. Additionally, I provided a list of term definitions. In the next chapter, I will go into more detail about the context of the problem as I present the literature review.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Higher education is in a constant state of flux. As society evolves, perspectives change, priorities shift, and struggles for influence ensue. One of these current struggles lies between administration and faculty, and it appears that administration has the upper hand. The fact that finances devoted to instruction per FTE (full-time equivalency) are being outpaced by finances devoted to administration per FTE is one example of a shift in thinking and in practice (Hedrick et al., 2009). In some ways the conflict seems senseless, as both areas are attempting to work for the good of both the institution and the success of the students. However, it could be argued that the source of the conflict lies in the way each group defines success. According to Prichard and Willmott (1997), universities are in the business of mass production, and the administration "…often speaks in managerialist terms of inputs, outputs, per unit costs, and potential revenue streams" (Roberts, 2004, p. 465). For example, the Wisconsin Legislature took action to remove tenure protections and to weaken faculty powers because these protections and powers interfered with effective top-down management procedures (Schmidt, 2016). This is an example of a managerial approach to education that demands accountability, resulting in intense scrutiny and assessment of higher education academics and their perceived effectiveness (Gappa et al., 2007; Lewis & Altbach, 1996). However, as previously discussed in Chapter I, the move toward a more managerial approach to higher education may be in direct contrast to societal goals of higher education and to the professionals who have historically led higher education—the faculty. This chapter provides the literature review undergirding this research study. It begins with a discussion

of the purpose of higher education; continues with a discussion regarding faculty members as professionals, including overviews of academic freedom and shared governance; and then moves into a discussion of sensemaking and psychological ownership, two theories that influenced the design of a discussion of the corporatization of higher education, and the way its influence led to a culture of managerialism in universities and colleges. Finally, I move into a discussion of the way that accountability has reframed the nature of higher education, bringing me to a discussion of IC, the concept of the "third mission," and the use of IC in performance management systems that measure the success or value of faculty work.

Search Process

The literature reviewed in this study came primarily from three sources, the ERIC database, Google Scholar searches, and references in relevant works. The first stage of the research consisted of searching ERIC and Google Scholar for key words and phrases related to the topic. These terms included *managerialism*, *neoliberalism*, *professional faculty*, *academic freedom*, *sensemaking*, and *psychological ownership*. These searches resulted in many articles and books that, upon review of their works cited, provided further sources. I reviewed these articles and books in detail and *synthesized* the information into the following information.

Purpose of Higher Education

The purpose of higher education is a topic of some debate. Although most tend to agree that higher education holds a valued place within our society, the exact nature of that value is hard to discern. According to Goodchild (2007), since 1636 the mission of higher education in North America has been the advancement of learning, knowledge, and professional practice. However, there have been many changes in higher education since its initial inception. Church bodies, accrediting agencies, governments, and student bodies have influenced the development of higher education. Schools tend to be highly reactive, attempting to meet perceived needs in an effort to serve the betterment of society.

Originally instruments of the church, institutions of higher education were born from a desire to seek spiritual truth (Goodchild, 2007; Perkin, 2007). As time passed, the search became less about spiritual truths, and institutions developed new forms of curricula geared toward specific purposes. For example, George Washington supported the idea of a national university in the hopes that education would assuage the inter-colonial tensions. He advocated for an educated populace, allowing citizens to intelligently participate in the political process. Specifically, he believed that teaching a curriculum espousing republican principles would ensure future leaders' abilities to protect the civil liberties of the newly founded country (Benson & Boyd, 2015). As education continued to evolve, different institutions began to serve a wider audience. Institutions at the baccalaureate level focused on classical studies, while other schools, such as normal schools, focused on vocational training. By the mid-nineteenth century, faculty research and lectures had replaced the older forms of recitation. By the mid to late 19th century, students were developing their own courses of study rather than adhering to a pre-determined classical curriculum. It was in this era of pragmatism that land-grant schools and research institutions came to be, designed to encourage modern innovation and application of practical and scientific knowledge (Goodchild, 2007; Perkin, 2007). The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 was intended to provide agricultural and economic returns that would make the United States competitive on the global stage (Benson & Boyd, 2015). The German concept of *Wissenschaft*, the value-free advancement of knowledge, was in full swing (Goodchild, 2007). Higher education had shifted in focus, but it was still seeking truth.

The early twentieth century witnessed a focus on increased academic preparation, or a new professionalism (Herbst, 2007; Lagemann, 2007). The goal was to create more educated and skilled citizens. Regional and specialized accreditation was introduced in an attempt to better society, and faculty were legally recognized as professionals who were free to determine who was permitted to teach, what was taught, how it was taught, and who was allowed to study. It was during this time that faculty research was recognized as key to the advancement of national

imperatives (Goodchild, 2007). This recognition aligns with Neumann's (2011) assertion that institutions of higher education are the entities to which the public looks for the development of credible knowledge that is the key to society's advancement.

Although history would seem to indicate that the search for truth and the betterment of society have been the overarching themes of higher education, contemporary higher education in the U.S. appears to have three competing goals: social mobility, social efficiency, and democratic equality (Labaree, 1997; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). Of these three, social efficiency and democratic equality are aligned with the idea that education is meant for the public good, focusing on the creation of an educated workforce and socially engaged citizens. This alignment is supported by the fact that students of institutions of higher education show increased levels of political participation and involvement in social causes (Benson & Boyd, 2015). Social mobility, on the other hand, places the individual above society, focusing on the improvement of life for individual consumers. From this perspective, the focus is on outcomes rather than inputs, and often aligns with the idea that school is more about a credential than the pursuit of the truth, a message often conveyed to prospective students by institutions themselves. According to Saichaie and Morphew (2014), the concept of social mobility seems to be replacing the ideas of social efficiency and democratic equality as institutions of higher education rely on the kind of advertising practices that businesses utilize to appeal to potential customers. These practices include tactics such as target marketing, focus groups, and branding. Institutions of higher education paint themselves as institutions that will cater to the needs of the consumer, focusing on the college lifestyle rather than the scholarly pursuit of education. According to Hermanowicz (2011), the academic culture stands as a guard of culture, providing a level of learning for individuals that contributes to the advancement of civilization. Yet, the messages currently being communicated by some institutions of higher education to prospective students virtually eclipse the notions of social efficiency and democratic equality in favor of the promotion of social mobility and the satisfaction of the customer (Molesworth et al., 2009; Saichaie & Morphew,

2014). It appears the historical purpose of higher education is being eroded, and the role of the faculty member is being reduced from that of a professional contributing to the public good through the pursuit of truth and the contribution of knowledge to that of a disseminator of information (Brint, 1996; Shaker, 2015).

Faculty Members as Professionals

Historically, faculty members of nonprofit institutions of higher education have been considered professionals, meaning that they are largely autonomous, dictating their own professional growth and progression. As autonomous professionals, it is academics themselves who determine the relative importance of their various responsibilities and obligations (Osakwe et al., 2015; Sullivan, 2007). Characteristics of the academic profession include pursuit of truth, altruistic concern for students, the generation of knowledge, community service, and scholarly identity (Gibbs, 2009; Sullivan, 2007). Academic freedom, or the unimpeded pursuit of truth in the interest of building a democratic society (Tierney & Lechuga, 2010), is also a crucial aspect of the professionalism of university faculty members. Interestingly, Tierney and Lechuga (2010) found that although professors at nonprofit institutions believed that academic freedom was necessary for the discussion of controversial issues and the encouragement of public engagement, professors at for-profit universities placed little value on academic freedom. For-profit institutions follow a business model in which university academics are transmitting material rather than acting as scholars, and students are treated as customers purchasing products rather than students pursuing an education (Birnbaum, 2004; Farrell, 2003). This disparity is telling.

In their qualitative study examining the effects of internal and external resource pressures on organizational structure, academic work, and professionalization in two public research universities, Rosinger et al. (2016) found that an academic's relationship with administration was directly related to the amount of tuition that faculty member could generate. Many interview participants expressed the opinion that resources were allocated to high-resource units rather than low-resource units. According to Rosinger et al. (2016), "This exercise of managerial authority

was possible because tuition revenues were allocated centrally, and it was perpetuated because administrative decisions tended to increase the teaching burdens of faculty members in low-resource units" (p. 42). In other words, the academics in the low-resource units were doing far more teaching than those in the high-resource units, but they were not provided a fair share of resources (Rosinger et al., 2016). In an environment that suffers from some level of scarcity, it seems fair to assume that the dissemination of resources may influence the way a faculty member is required to conduct his or her professional responsibilities.

Another factor that may be affecting the professional role of academics is self-interest and administrative assessment of an academic's performance. The work of a professional relies on autonomous action that involves the creation of new things, whereas the work of a laborer consists of repeating an action or improving on a process (Gibbs, 2009). Student evaluations, an administrative tool of assessment which effectively encourage repetition or process improvement, affect promotion, tenure, and salary decisions (Haskell, 1997). Given that both tenured and tenure-track professionals are more committed to organizations when resources, feedback, and rewards are satisfactory (Ott & Cisneros, 2015), these evaluations are a highly influential form of assessment that may encourage faculty members to make the pursuit of their professional goals secondary to achieving favorable ratings in the surveys. As a result, the use of such evaluation tools may facilitate the transition of the role of faculty members from professionals to laborers, thus relegating the academic profession to a commodity (Gibbs, 2009). Gappa et al. (2007) argue that faculty are required to meet their professional obligations in environments of escalating demands and outdated support structures that can create overwhelming workloads. Aligning faculty responsibilities with consumer expectations creates higher levels of labor than are compatible with the role of a professional (Gibbs, 2009).

Academic Freedom

For over a century the higher education community has contended that academic freedom, as practiced in teaching, research, and scholarship, provides a unique service to society

(Altbach et al., 2001; Boyer, 1990; Dewey, 1902; Kerr, 2001; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Tierney & Lechuga, 2010). Through the support of open inquiry and the expansive sharing of ideas, academic freedom plays a prominent role in the promotion of democratic values and the public good. Specifically, John Dewey (1936) argued that academic freedom was critical to the development of a democratic society, that democratic values and academic freedom are inextricably connected. Academic institutions are intended to contribute to the public good, ensuring the pursuit of free inquiry. Accordingly, throughout most of the 20th century the purpose of higher education was clear, and higher education was viewed as a major impetus in the development of a civic and democratic society (Tierney & Lechuga, 2010).

Yet, there is no doubt that there are contradictory views of democracy and education. For example, Ernest Boyer (1990) explored the balance between faculty research and teaching, arguing that the criteria employed to award tenure should be modified to lessen the emphasis on research to give greater weight to instruction, essentially positing that if scholarship was to serve the public good, higher education faculty members needed to do more than participate in what amounted to ivory tower research. This argument is in line with the ever-increasing concern that higher education is essentially disengaged from public concerns and reality, that such disconnection is detrimental, and that academic freedom may contribute to that detachment.

Many in the higher education community maintain that academic freedom acts as the vehicle for public discourse, serving as the foundation from which to build a democratic society (Dewey, 1936; Tierney & Lechuga, 2010). Defined primarily as a university academic's right to determine his or her own path of inquiry without fear of external hindrances, academic freedom serves as a social contract between academia and society, establishing that an academic's right to pursue truth best serves the public good. Academic freedom is designed to provide professors with the autonomy necessary to pursue truth as they see fit (Dewey, 1936; Tierney & Lechuga, 2010).

Academic freedom also contributes to the university academic's autonomy, as it provides a layer of protection from outside influence, which has been consistently recognized as a First Amendment Right by the Supreme Court. In *Keyishian v. Board of Regents of the State Univ. of New York*, 385 U.S. 589 (1967), the Court determined that requiring faculty to sign a certificate attesting to the fact that they had never been communists violated the faculty members' First Amendment Rights (Kaplin, 2014). Specifically, the Court stated:

> Our nation is deeply committed to safeguarding academic freedom, which is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned. That freedom is therefore a special concern of the First Amendment, which does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom. … The classroom is peculiarly the "marketplace of ideas." The nation's future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth "out of a multitude of tongues, [rather] than through any kind of authoritative selection." (Euben, 2002, p. 2)

That our future leaders are being influenced, mentored, and educated by institutions of higher education supports the unique position and importance of the university academic as he or she contributes to society, and as such, supports the notion that institutions should treat the university academic as an autonomous professional rather than as a laborer. However, academic freedom is far from all-inclusive; legally, university academics "…possess whatever academic freedom is guaranteed them under the faculty contract-either an individual contract or (in some cases) a collective bargaining agreement" (Kaplin, 2014, p. 287). Given that administrators oversee faculty contracts, there is a delicate balance at play. Administrative policies and procedures designed to quantify results and build accountability into the academic system do not necessarily challenge academic freedom directly, however, these regulations contribute to an environment in which university academics must balance their professional goals against those of a results-based system.

Even tenure, a collective bargaining agreement that operates as a policy designed to support academic freedom (Haskell, 1997), does not necessarily shield university academics from the external influences affecting their roles. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) defines tenure as an "…indefinite appointment that can be terminated only for cause or under extraordinary circumstances such as financial exigency and program discontinuation" (AAUP Issues, 2017, para. 1). Tenure is a policy implemented as a legal contract that offers university academics the protections required to promote learning and societal betterment without concern for professional ramifications (Cameron, 2010), and provides long-term positions with the necessary time for scholarly work (Gappa et al., 2007). However, those who oppose tenure believe it creates an environment in which academics can hide within their "ivory towers," contributing to the notion that academia is out of touch with reality, and that university academics focus on their interests to the detriment of the students (O'Meara et al., 2008). Specifically, O'Meara et al. (2008), argue that detractors of tenure believe it is nothing more than a policy designed to protect underperforming academics from the accountability practices that would result in their dismissal. Yet, proponents of tenure argue that it operates from the assumption that the professional university academic is the expert, best suited to oversee higher education instruction and assessment, as opposed to the current trend to keep the customer satisfied. In this regard, tenure and the current culture of accountability and customer service are at direct odds.

Shared Governance

Shared governance refers to the processes and structures utilized by academic institutions to balance the organizational control of multiple governing systems (Birnbaum, 2004). The system composed of administrators and trustees is based on legal authority and was born with the founding of the first institutions of higher education. The faculty comprise a system based in professional authority, which was first supported by the University of Michigan's President Tappan, who argued that faculty should control teaching methods and curriculum (Birnbaum, 2004). In 1920, the AAUP's Committee on College and University Governance released its first

statement on the need for faculty involvement in institutional decisions that dealt with personnel, budget preparation, the selection of administrators, and the development of educational policy (Shared Governance, 2019). Several years later, the issue was formally addressed in the *1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, jointly developed by the American Council on Education (ACE), the AAUP, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) (AAUP, 2001; Eckel, 2000). Frequently referred to as the *Joint Statement*, this document outlines the roles and responsibilities of administrators, faculty, and trustees in higher education decision making. For example, according to the document, the president should oversee the generation of resources; the trustees should control the endowment, and the faculty should develop the curriculum. However, despite those delineations of responsibility, the *Joint Statement* also indicates that many decisions, such as those regarding general education policies, budgeting, and long-range plans should be made jointly (Birnbaum, 2004; Eckel, 2000). Per the *Joint Statement*, important areas of action, whether based in maintenance or some sort of initiative, should involve all components of the university, and the balance of influence among those areas should be related to the level of responsibility the components hold for the area and action (AAUP, 2001; Birnbaum, 2004).

This joint action is time consuming, and the majority of campus employees find the decision-making process onerous (Campbell & Bray, 2018; Kezar & Eckel, 2004). Yet, despite calls for improvement, there is a lack of in-depth study into governance (Campbell & Bray, 2018). Governance is complicated and difficult to define, and the operational mission is not always well understood by its participants (Campbell & Bray, 2018; Grasmick et al., 2012). Although the *Joint Statement* provides guidance in the exercise of governance, it is also a source of confusion, as the descriptions of responsibilities are so broad that it leaves ample room for arguments about purview (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Eckel, 2000). As a result, governance is inconsistent, interpreted and exercised differently from institution to institution (Campbell & Bray, 2018; Fletcher & Friedel, 2016). As the numbers of administrators increase, and their roles

become more specialized, the administrative role becomes more professionalized (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Rosenzweig, 1994; Waugh, 1998). Some believe that this professionalization decreases the need for faculty involvement (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Hansen & Guidugli, 1990). In an increasingly managerial environment, shared governance is viewed by many as inefficient and outdated (Birnbaum, 2004; Eckel, 2000; Waugh, 1998). Stakeholders, who control financial support and employment of graduates, seek to influence curricular design (Del Favero & Bray, 2010), and arguments abound that faculty obstruct progress in an effort to maintain the status quo, preventing governance systems from working in a timely or appropriate manner (Birnbaum, 2004; Eckel, 2000). However, these arguments fail to consider that faculty involvement provides a more thorough examination of issues, and that fast decisions may lack the consideration that protects core institutional values (Birnbaum, 2004; Campbell & Bray, 2018).

Theories of Influence

As previously noted, this study did not use an a priori theoretical framework, however, it was informed by multiple theories on how individuals in organizations, such as faculty members, process and make sense of the shifting organizational environment. Two theories in particular, however, were of particular assistance in thinking about this research: sensemaking and psychological ownership.

Sensemaking

At its heart, sensemaking is a theory based on the connection of cues that allows individuals to make meanings of their environments (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Sensemaking argues that organizations are social constructions composed of individuals in a constant state of change as they seek to make meaning of their roles within the organization (Kezar, 2013; Weick, 1995). Therefore, it is important for leaders to bring a sense of coherence to an organization through a shared message that helps individuals make meaning. This message is particularly important when the organization is undergoing change (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Kezar, 2013). Construction of identity and maintenance of that identity are key elements of sensemaking (Degn,

2018; Kezar, 2013). Therefore, individuals in an organization must understand why an organizational change is necessary, and how that change will affect their role or identity within the organization. Should the change result in a perception of identity transformation, the individuals within the organization may experience existential problems that result in resistance (Bridges, 1986; Chreim, 2002; Degn, 2018; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Although sensemaking has been an extremely influential theory in the field of organizational theory, there are scholars who disagree with its tenets.

Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015), for example, argue that the sensemaking studies have actually been retrospective studies of interpretation. Other scholars maintain the validity of the theory, arguing that we should view sensemaking as a practice that incorporates learning, embodying a process approach that moves beyond mere interpretation (Colville et al., 2015). According to Kezar (2013), this learning and re-integration of identity is the key to helping the individuals in the organization become change agents. Identity is a deeply embedded aspect of an individual's being, and Degn (2018) found that academics would rather struggle to make sense of being an academic in a changing environment than adopt the perception of a less problematic identity construct.

Psychological Ownership

Psychological ownership, the state in which an individual feels that something, whether tangible or intangible is theirs, ties in closely with the idea of identity, specifically arguing that the target of ownership becomes a part of the self (Dirks et al., 1996; Furby, 1978). According to Olckers and du Plessis (2012), psychological ownership could be used as a managerial construct exercised for the purposes of improving organizational effectiveness and talent retention. Olckers and du Plessis (2012) found that organizations would benefit from environments that encouraged autonomy, responsibility, accountability, a sense of belonging, self-identity, and self-efficacy, all components of promotion-oriented psychological ownership. According to Brown et al. (2014), there are three routes to psychological ownership: control of the target of ownership, intimate

knowledge of the target of ownership, and the investment of self in the target of ownership. This argument ties in with McIntyre et al. (2009), who found that an individual's locus of control affects their level of psychological ownership. According to McIntyre et al. (2009), psychological ownership is directly related to self-efficacy, self-identity, and establishing a home. All of these arguments would seem to suggest that the concept of professionalism historically associated with academics and psychological ownership share some common traits. Yet, Martin (2008) argued that there was a positive relationship between the service climate and job satisfaction, suggesting that higher levels of customer satisfaction equated to lower job tension, and decreased psychological dysfunction. However, in Martin's study on the service climate as it related to psychological well-being in university employees, fewer than half of the 340 subjects surveyed were considered academics. This may have been a factor, given that the roles of university academics and university staff are vastly different. According to Pierce et al. (2001), there is a strong correlation between the degree of psychological ownership an individual exhibits and control of the target of ownership, depth of association, personal investment, and assumed responsibility. Brown et al. (2014) argue that the perceived complexity of a position is directly related to both level of performance and psychological ownership.

Corporatization of Higher Education

Higher education exists in a delicate balance. It is extremely powerful, influencing the thought processes and development of generations of students, thus affecting the development of society. Yet it is also vulnerable to its wide array of stakeholders, who, advertently or inadvertently, influence the ways higher education develops. This vulnerability is the reason that the AAUP was formed, as a means of protecting academic integrity against edicts handed down from administrators who may have conflicting interests (Eastman & Boyles, 2015). There has always been a struggle for control of higher education, but it was the introduction of neoliberalism in the 1970's that began the corporatization of higher education as we know it today (Eastman & Boyles, 2015; Edmond & Berry, 2014; Turner, 2008; Wijaya Mulya, 2018).

Neoliberalism argues that the workings of the free market create successful enterprises (Harvey, 2005). As a result, it was during this decade that higher education began indenturing itself to the corporate world, exchanging research and skilled labor for compensation (Eastman & Boyles, 2015; Edmond & Berry, 2014). In the following decade of the 1980's, societal demand to balance the federal budget while maintaining industrial subsidies to bolster job creation resulted in further erosion of educational subsidies (Johnson, 2018), ultimately strengthening the private sector's influence in higher education (Rizzo, 2006). In an effort to compensate for the lost government subsidies, the focus of higher education shifted from learning and discovery (Molesworth et al., 2009) to the generation of revenue (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Institutions of higher education began seeking alternate funding, increased tuition, donors, and corporate partnerships (Johnson, 2018; Lane, 2012; Matkin, 2001; Pruess, 1999). Universities began to make themselves more attractive to corporations, increasing research facilities and focusing on research at the expense of instruction (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017; Eastman & Boyles, 2015; Kimberling, 1995; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

In addition to the increased focus on research, institutions of higher education began to focus on tuition as a source of income (Rizzo, 2006). As sought-after commodities, admissions departments began strategically marketing to students in ways that maximized revenue (Ehrenberg et al., 2006; Hossler & Kwon, 2015; Joffey-Walt & Goldstein, 2012; Lavigne, 2019; McDonough, 1994). Universities recruit students with intentionality, focusing on those with specific financial profiles in an effort to meet retention and financial targets (Hossler & Kwon, 2015; McDonough, 1994). Students have access to a wide array of financial aid opportunities, and universities market to those students as though they are customers (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Universities utilize marketing and branding techniques that emphasize the student experience, focusing on social interactions and social mobility (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014), thus increasing the customer service culture (Molesworth et al., 2009). In an effort to better market and support their brands, institutions invest in the aspects of the university that

appeal to consumers, such as athletic facilities and student unions rather than directing those funds toward academic expenditures such as library facilities, or non-profitable research (Eastman & Boyles, 2015). However, these improvements come at a price, and in a neoliberal environment higher cost is only sustainable if the customer is satisfied. Therefore, institutions work to please student consumers, most of whom value social interaction over academics (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 2002; Thomas, 2010). Student cost rises and the quality of education decreases as a result (Arum & Roksa, 2011).

Despite the increased cost of higher education, more of today's jobs require a college degree than in the past (Elejalde-Ruiz, 2016), and students feel the need to go to college to secure financial stability for themselves, an aspect of social mobility (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). Yet, rather than focusing on learning, students view themselves as customers purchasing a credential (Hassel & Lourey, 2005), a credential for which many students go heavily into debt. Between 1963 and 1964 the average student borrowed about 20% of their educational cost. Between 2000 and 2001, that percentage increased to 58% (College Board, 2014). According to Stolba (2019), student loan debt is now second only to mortgage debt. As students accrue more debt to attend universities, they demand more satisfaction; universities work to meet those demands by bettering the "college experience" and increasing cost. It is an unsustainable cycle.

Administrators in a neoliberal environment must be skilled CEOs, carefully budgeting and managing their resources (Connell, 2013; Wijaya Mulya, 2018). Results must be quantifiable and easy to understand to satisfy stakeholders (Eastman & Boyles, 2014; Wijaya Mulya, 2018). The university must both satisfy their customers and their stakeholders, so the focus shifts from learning, which can be difficult to measure, to maximizing output while minimizing input (Eastman & Boyles, 2015). In this environment, administration has begun to target graduation rates, retention rates, time-to-degree, and revenue as measures of success rather than the education of the student, which has historically been the primary work of the faculty.

The Rise of Managerialism

Managerialism aligns with the tenets of scientific management, which approaches organizations as though they are machines with interlocking parts that rely on a prescribed sequence of events (Morgan, 2006). Specifically, organizations operate from the premise that managers should run organizations in relation to mechanistic objectives and goals. Scientific management espoused the following ideals of Frederick Taylor:

1. Managers design and plan, and workers implement.
2. Scientific strategies determine efficient practices.
3. Select the best individual for the position.
4. Train the worker to work efficiently.
5. Monitor performance to assure desired results. (Morgan, 2006)

These practices have been used in many different ways, including factory assembly lines, fast-food chains, and even hospitals. As a result, productivity in these fields has increased, but with a cost. Skilled individuals are being replaced by unskilled laborers at an increasing rate (Morgan, 2006). It is the managers' responsibility to gather and study as much data as possible to streamline the process and educate the worker to serve the needs of the machine (Au, 2011). According to Morgan (2006), it is this division of the thought process from the action that is frequently perceived as the most dangerous aspect of this approach. Workers become easy to replace, as all the power and control resides in the individuals who control the ideas and comprehension of the machine, whether it be literal or figurative.

Proponents of managerialism believe that its practices offer an objective means of providing assessment and requiring accountability. Managerialism identifies the variables at play and establishes measurable goals. The employees are presented with clearly stated expectations, and the manager can function from a neutral state, making objective judgments of performance effectiveness based on quantitative rather than qualitative information (Stolz, 2017). Processes, perceived as transparent, effective, and efficient replace the need for trust, and clear goals provide

an overt target, thus trading a subjective construct for an objective one (Kolsaker, 2008). These goals and objectives are evident in many administrative policies that apply to university academics, such as tenure requirements, student assessment, the monitoring of grades, and other various types of quality audits. Proponents of managerialism argue that it is this objective approach that not only enhances both professionalism and performance but is vital to the maintenance of faculty autonomy and society's trust of university academics (Kolsaker, 2008). However, as Stolz (2017) argues, managerialism does not offer the morally neutral measurements that it presupposes.

Managerialism in Higher Education

According to Huisman and Currie (2004), as education costs rose in the U.S., the stakeholders began to develop the opinion that higher education was delivering inadequate value, and accountability systems shifted from more qualitative internal methods to more quantitative external ones. The desire for external accountability encouraged the implementation of managerialism, as this form of management demands quantifiable results, allegedly proving the effectiveness of the practices exercised and illustrating a measurable return on investment. Managerialism, a concept relatively new to the world of academia, posits that universities should be managed in ways that resemble the techniques of those used in for-profit business models (Joseph, 2015). As a result, more emphasis is placed on the role of administration than has been in the past, as evidenced by the fact that the 1990's saw an increase in administrative expenditures that outpaced those of instructional expenditures (Hedrick et al., 2009). The increase in administrative spending is particularly interesting, especially in light of the ever-rising cost of tuition, and the ever-decreasing support of the state (Fowles, 2014). With fewer sate dollars coming in, universities have been forced to seek alternate funding methods.

The change in funding structure creates an interesting challenge for higher education, as the financing of an institution, whether private or public, places the entity supplying the funds in a position to exert influence over the behaviors of the institution, regardless of whether the

influence is at odds with the institutional mission (Fowles, 2014). Administrators working from managerialist ideals tend to make judgments based on monetary considerations. Administrators at less selective institutions focus more on enrollment numbers, retention, and graduation rates than on cognitive development or critical thinking skills (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bok, 2006; Brint, 2011). Rosinger et al. (2016) determined that the quality of relationships between university academics and administration were directly related to tuition generation and that high-performing units were allocated more university resources than low-performing units. There is a strong relationship between revenue patterns and institutional expenditure. In the face of declining state support, this relationship suggests that university outputs will be seriously affected (Aschenbrener, 2016; Fowles, 2014; Rizzo, 2006). Stakeholders demand measurable results, and audits are one means of making that kind of quantitative assessment.

Although there is a common assumption that faculty members resist audit-based assessment, according to Cheng (2011), faculty members are not necessarily opposed to quality audit. They see the value of this assessment tool, as long as the audits are internal and engage the academia in a meaningful way. Some faculty members actually view this kind of internal quality audit, one that involves collaborative work, peer review, and one-on-one feedback, as a contribution to the success of the institution (Cheng, 2011; Huisman & Currie, 2004). However, according to Gates et al. (2015), faculty members perceive that an increase in quantitative accountability creates the expectation that, rather than providing a quality education, they provide customer service to students, offering curves on test grades, granting generous make-ups, and personally contacting struggling students. The customer service attitude arguably inherent in managerialism simultaneously decreases the worth of the bachelor's degree and reduces the faculty members to customer service representatives (Gates et al., 2015). Field (2015) examined the views of academics at a single university as they related to merit-based pay. Interviewees in Field's (2015) study argued that ideologies related to managerialism, such as students as customers, treating learning as a product, the audit culture, administrative surveillance, and the

constant attempts to reduce complicated ideas to cost benefit analyses are distractions from the historical purpose of the real university.

At the same time, universities must remain marketable if they are to contribute to the search for the truth and the betterment of society. This means that universities must change with the times in order to meet evolving demand. In Herr's (2015) ethnography, a school was attempting to create an online program in an effort to attract a greater student body. The faculty attempted to meet the needs of a competitive marketplace while maintaining academic integrity. However, the faculty were encouraged to step aside to allow online instruction experts to develop the necessary curriculum. Administration believed they knew what their prospective customers wanted, and they sought to supply that demand. According to Herr (2015), it was at this point the faculty realized they did not own their own curriculum. Proponents of managerialism argue that it provides objectivity, thus removing the power from individuals with personal biases, and positioning control within an objective system. However, it appears that rather than removing bias, managerialism merely moves it by concentrating the power of decision processes in the individual or individuals who establish both which variables should be measured and the means of measurement (Morgan, 2006). This concentration of control is in line with scientific management, which was partially designed to establish control over the workplace (Morgan, 2006). As a result, the biases of the decision makers are applied to the entire system, negating the idea of objectivity.

This is an ongoing battle in higher education, and one that may have been started by academics (Harvey, 2004) as a natural extension of the accreditation practices. Both accreditation and managerialism are primarily about the exertion of control, and it was the academy itself that called for this control. One individual interviewed in Harvey's (2004) research into academics' and administrators' views about accreditation argued that an external perspective can offer a more objective view, thus provide a more thorough and accurate evaluation. An objective external body can see more about the needs of the academic institution than can academia. However, Harvey

(2004) argues that this objectivity could be tempered with the self-interests of the external body, rather than presenting an unbiased viewpoint. Another interviewee stated that it was concerning when professional bodies exerted control over academic judgments, such as assessment, curriculum design, and content. According to Harvey (2004), accreditation is a process that adds another layer of accountability and compliance to the managerialism that continues to erode the professional autonomy of academics, creating a feeling of distrust, the perception of de-skilling, and a lack of freedom to make academic judgments. Managerialist accountability practices are reshaping both the responsibilities and the identities of the university academic, adjusting university academics' responsibilities to align with the expectations of the consumer (Gibbs, 2009).

In a study that surveyed accounting professors at four-year universities about the validity of student evaluation questionnaires, Crumbley and Reichelt (2009) found that university academics pander to students in a number of ways to achieve high student assessments, including curved grading, easy exams, grade inflation, and eliminating cumulative exams. They suggest that the focus on quantifiable measures and the shift in control from university academics to administrators is the reason for this behavior. Managerialism focuses on metrics and accountability practices in an effort to please the customer. When university academics fail to achieve sufficiently high marks they are penalized (Gates et al., 2015; Stone, 1995). As a result, despite the damage that inflating grades does to their authority, university academics engage in the practice in an attempt to secure positive assessments and high enrollments (Brint, 2011; Hassel & Lourey, 2005).

From the perspective of managerialism, accountability requirements are necessary for the successful function of the organization in the current economic environment. Free-market economics, one of the premises upon which managerialism is based, argues that the consumer is a self-interested individual who is the best judge of his or her own needs (Olssen & Peters, 2007). Therefore, those organizations that meet the perceived needs of the consumer are best serving the

individual. It is a survival of the fittest philosophy that is almost Darwinian (Olssen & Peters, 2007). However, in this case, the consumers are students, many of whom are adolescents in various stages of development. Should they be considered the best judges of their needs? Swagler (1978) argued that students lack the education necessary to make "a market-driven judgment" (Lavigne, 2019, p. 33). According to Brint (2011), current education practices align with student interests, focusing on entertainment rather than rigorous educational practices that would result in increased learning. Loffredo and Harrington (2012) found that the majority of college students consider themselves above average, which contributes to a sense of overconfidence that leads to less effective learning (Dunlosky & Rawson, 2012). Students value credentials over knowledge and want easy classes that will allow them to earn high grades with little work (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Molesworth et al., 2009; Rolfe, 2002; Stone, 1995). Hassel and Lourey (2005) argue that the emphasis on grades over learning results from the idea that students are customers purchasing degrees. Treating students as though they are customers leads to treating education as a commodity (Edmond & Berry, 2014). Managerialism creates environments in which there is insufficient support for professional expectations, workloads are out of line with professional identities, and accountability practices diminish collegiality (Billot, 2010; Gibbs, 2009). Treating the student as a customer creates a situation that challenges university academics' professional authority, as they are pressured by administrative expectations to satisfy the students' demands regardless of whether that behavior compromises the university academics' professional goals.

Financial resources are a constant concern. In their study, Rosinger et al. (2016) looked at the departments of two research universities, categorizing the departments according to revenue sources. Those departments that generated funds via external research and development were referred to as high-resource, whereas those departments highly ranked by the National Research Council, but unable to attract external research revenues, were ranked low-resource. Rosinger et al. (2016) found that academics in high-resource departments would often pursue funds at the expense of all other academic responsibility, including teaching. Faculty in low-resource

departments emphasized teaching much more strongly, essentially justifying their existence because their inability to bring in grants deemed them low status (Rosinger et al., 2016, p. 39). However, those academics in high-resource departments often found themselves pursuing lucrative, rather than interesting, study. While it would seem that academics in high-resource departments fared better than their counterparts in low-resource departments, the results are debatable (Rosinger et al., 2016).

The assessment practices common in managerialism are causing friction in institutions of higher education. Academic roles are being adjusted in response to institutional pressures to meet accountability requirements, and negotiations between administration and faculty members are a struggle. As a result, faculty members are experiencing a reshaping of academic responsibilities, creating tensions between their perceived professional identities and the identities being assigned to them by their employing institutions (Billot, 2010). Yet, despite the faculty belief that these managerial practices create schisms in academic identities and introduce values at odds with those of traditional higher education belief systems (Anderson, 2008; Winter, 2009), Kolsaker (2008) observed that faculty members were unwilling to stand against managerial directives. According to Kolsaker (2008), this behavior suggests that academics continually construct their identities in relation to their environments, and their unwillingness to stand against managerial practices is a tacit approval of managerialism as an effective means of governance. Although it is possible that faculty silence serves as tacit approval, it is also possible that the silence represents feelings of resignation and defeat as faculty lose not only control of their work (Herr, 2015), but also their very sense of self and identity.

Administration sees the accountability requirements as a natural and necessary reaction to today's economic environment, however it seems that administration has failed to adequately incorporate faculty members in the planning of the institutional changes. Using a Foucauldian lens, Kolsaker (2008) proposes that there must be an interdependency between agencies. Although Nixon et al. (2001) do not refer specifically to an interdependency between agencies,

they posit that a change in the concept of academic professionalism is necessary for the successful integration of accountability procedures into institutions of higher education. Successful integration of accountability procedures would include redefining research, placing priority on the teaching relationship, professional development, ensuring collegiality, re-examining workloads, and enacting interdisciplinary practices that respect disciplinary differences (Billot, 2010; Nixon et al., 2001).

Collyer (2015) conducted an empirical, qualitative study that examined the perspectives of academics as they related to the impacts of marketization on the social sciences and Australian universities. Nearly all interviewees in this research saw the marketization of academics as negative, a practice that creates dissonance within the university setting, and annual performance measurement policies illustrate that. Many of the interviewed academics found these measurements insulting, however two distinct groups emerged, conformers and resistors (Collyer, 2015). One interviewee indicated that resistance requires more energy than conforming, but that academics develop coping strategies, such as writing multiple journal articles that lacked in-depth study or putting the least amount of possible effort into peer reviews. This allows the academics to produce quantity, but at the loss of quality. Some academics conform by finding ways to play to the rules of the game, using emphasis on grants and research to negotiate promotions and lighter teaching loads. Yet others conform by creating images of their fields that offer competitive marketing. It is a means of competing for resources (Collyer, 2015). Of course, this manipulative behavior does not apply to all academics, and Anderson (2008) found that some faculty members actually employ discursive resistance as a means of obstructing managerial edicts. As a result, the struggle between faculty and administration continues.

Collyer (2015) suggests that higher education professionals might benefit from adjusting their perceptions of the professional role rather than seeing the current change as a struggle between professionalism and hired workers. Professional/social capital refers to not only the world of academics, but also the broader social and economic perspectives. Collyer (2015)

proposes a contestation by the "new professionals" to challenge the historical view of good knowledge, the relationships between academics, and the value of various skills and techniques. Universities are under increasing pressure, both financial and political, to provide systems of mass higher education (Herr, 2015). External accountability systems are replacing the self- and peer-review historically practiced by professionals. Time is dedicated to documenting performativity, indicating a loss of trust in the professional, and solidifying practices designed to measure the accountability of the worker rather than assessment designed to capture the full scope of academic work (Collyer, 2015; Herr, 2015).

"While the capacity of the academy to retain some level of control over appointment processes is retained, control over other academic resources in the modern context is diminished. This suggests marketization is altering the basis of academic capital" (Collyer, 2015, p. 326). The power structure of higher education is changing, and although well-established academics have the political capital to stand up against unpopular changes, newer academics, those early in their careers, are at the most risk (Collyer, 2015). With a new generation of academics at stake, it is the responsibility of higher education professionals to examine the state of current affairs and find a path forward that will nurture the healthy development of higher education in an environment demanding increasing levels of accountability.

Reframing Higher Education in an Era of Accountability

Toward the end of my process, and upon analysis of the data, I realized I needed more information. Although the data provided a solid picture of the current situation and the challenges faculty were experiencing, I needed more context regarding what this meant for the future of higher education, so I returned to the literature.

As our world changed technologically, politically, and ideologically, our priorities shifted, creating an environment in which long-standing entities must find a way to either adapt or perish. Higher education is one of these entities. As a field established for the purposes of advancing learning and knowledge (Goodchild, 2007), and providing opportunities for citizens to

develop the acumen to intelligently participate in political processes (Benson & Boyd, 2015), higher education in the U.S. has been held in high regard, and society trusted that faculty and administrators were working for the betterment of the world. However, new legislation and decreased funding created increased pressures for universities, forcing them to seek opportunities for academic entrepreneurship (Philpott et al., 2011), which Beckman and Cherwitz (2009) define as the creation of new values and ideas through a cooperation of university and community efforts (Secundo et al., 2018). Additionally, as technological developments created more access to information, and the cost of higher education rose, the general public called for more transparency and accountability. Given the influence higher education has on both society and individual lives, transparency is a fair request, but it has challenges and unintended consequences. Unlike industries that produce tangible goods or services, the success or effectiveness of higher education is difficult to measure. It is unquantifiable and attempts to quantify can have the effect of changing the nature of the work as faculty and administrators strive to fit a mold never intended for this type of endeavor. Per Dumay and Rooney (2011), "Managing via numbers has been identified as one of the 'deadly sins' of managing" (p. 344). Yet, the call for transparency and the need to assess value are justified. How does higher education move forward and how do faculty members, the foundation of this intellectual enterprise, find this affects their role?

As I reviewed the literature on U.S. higher education, I found very few answers. Little research had been done on this subject and almost none from the perspective of faculty members. As a result, I found myself turning to international literature. The differences between higher education in the U.S. and other countries are undeniable. For example, among other things, higher education is often free outside of the U.S., and there is less diversity in the nature of the institutions available to students. These differences are bound to impact the way institutions function. However, there are also similarities, that being that research and education are at the heart of the matter. As I explored international perspectives, I realized other higher education systems approached assessment from a different perspective. Rather than looking exclusively at

easily measurable points of hard data, such as numbers of publications or graduation rates, some international researchers were attempting to measure the intangibles of intellectual capital and its effects on society at large. From a European perspective these efforts relate to the third mission institutions, which addresses technology, continuing education, and social engagement (Secundo et al., 2017). Although I do not suggest higher education in the U.S. should model itself after the design of the European system, after reading about their efforts to incorporate intellectual capital into performance management systems, I believe we should explore the possibility of assessing value creation rather than focusing exclusively on quantitative measures.

Intellectual Capital

Although universities have a wide variety of assets, the largest proportion of those would be classified as intangible, or intellectual capital (IC) (Ramírez Corcóles et al., 2011; Sánchez et al., 2009; Secundo et al., 2010; Secundo et al., 2017). IC has been defined in a number of ways across industries, but the three main components are widely recognized as organizational capital (OC), social capital (SC), and human capital (HC) (Bart, 2001; Boedker et al., 2008; Guthrie et al., 2006; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Secundo et al., 2017). However, Vagnoni and Oppi (2015) argue that the three components are insufficient without considering a fourth element, the connectivity of OC, SC, and HC (Secundo et al., 2018). This connectivity is especially important in organizations that focus on the various facets of knowledge such as research centers or universities, as it highlights the ways in which the three dimensions of IC relate to one another and work together (Habersam & Piber, 2003; Secundo et al., 2018). According to Edvinsson (2013), IC is a collection of honed and organized information or knowledge that can be utilized to add value. Essentially, IC is "…the sum of everything everybody in a company knows that gives it a competitive edge" (Dumay, 2016, p. 169). IC includes all knowledge, experience, intellectual property, information, etc. members of an organization exercise in value creation (Dumay, 2016). In a university setting IC is centered with faculty members. Unlike businesses, a significant part of higher education's mission is not the accrual of profit, but rather the development, protection,

and dissemination of knowledge. For example, Feld (2012) argued that a university's most valuable contribution to a developing community is its students, and the ideas they bring; per Bontis (2001), human capital provides new avenues of innovation and strategy (Secundo et al., 2018). Therefore, most of the value created by and within universities is intangible, and not easily measured by standard quantifiable practices. Because of the intangible nature of the value of both higher education and IC, some researchers suggest that institutions should assess effectiveness based on contributions to social value, whether direct or indirect (Castellanos & Rodriguez, 2004; Secundo et al., 2018). Institutions of higher education within European countries such as Austria, Spain, and Italy have been attempting to provide IC-based assessment for approximately 20 years (Secundo et al., 2017). Beyond monetary wealth, assessments of value based on IC attempt to measure social capital, utility, and sustainability (Dumay, 2016). Of course, value is a subjective thing as it relies on perceptions and opinions of individuals interacting with the object or construct in question. Value must be defined, but by whom? This question brings us to the idea of the third mission, and the stakeholders at play.

The Third Mission

Beginning in the 1990's, European institutions of higher education began work to establish themselves as leaders in economic and societal growth, a movement frequently referred to as the third mission, with the first and second missions being teaching and research (Secundo et al., 2017). This is an interesting parallel to higher education within the U.S., which also bases itself on three pillars meant to spur the creation and dissemination of knowledge, those of teaching, research, and service, the primary difference being the concept of service versus that of the "third mission." Teaching and research are relatively well understood, however, the concepts of service and the "third mission" remain murky, in many instances, and require more explanation.

In the U.S., service may be either internal, in service to degree program, the unit, the college, and/or the institution, or external, a means by which institutions externally communicate

the ways in which higher education meets societal needs (Guarino & Borden, 2017; Ward, 2003) or indirectly contributes to the larger research community through peer review responsibilities and leadership roles. Beyond the understanding of internal and external, however, the concept of service is wide and varied. There is a tacit understanding that service should contribute to the betterment of society, but the specifics are nebulous, and the lack of clarity as service relates to the faculty role can lead to constrained involvement (Holland, 1997; Ramaley, 2000; Ward, 2003).

The European third mission, on the other hand, has no general definition, but third mission activities are understood to be external and comprise activities related specifically to the transfer and innovation of technology, continuing education, and social engagement (E3M, 2010; Secundo et al., 2017). (The literature on third mission activities does not highlight the specifics of how it ties to faculty governance and/or internal representation.) This mission arose in response to many societal developments including decreased public funding (Rosenberg & Nelson, 1994) and the introduction of new fields of knowledge (Zucker et al., 1998), changes that necessitated universities to adopt more entrepreneurial goals as they sought to remain viable (Sánchez-Barrioluengo, 2014). The "entrepreneurial university" (Clark, 1998; Etzkowitz et al., 2000; Gibb & Hannon, 2006) became a term used to describe institutions of higher education "…that effectively transcend their traditional mission by advancing innovation and transfer technologies" (Secundo et al., 2017, p. 229).

Although the third mission is a loosely defined concept, it is arguably better defined than the concept of service. The third mission specifically references external relationships and influences on society, considering universities a foundational aspect of economic and social development (Bercovitz & Feldman, 2006), thus impelling institutions of higher education to develop strategic rather than administrative modes of operation (Secundo et al., 2018). Institutions that adopted the third mission openly recognize the ways in which society has evolved and worked to find ways for higher education to be seen as relevant in an environment

that may not otherwise recognize its value. The European Commission acknowledges universities as key to both economic and cultural development, thus encouraging universities to work with regional stakeholders to facilitate economic growth and technological imperatives (Romano et al., 2014; Secundo et al., 2017). According to Görason et al. (2009), third mission functions will substantially vary between countries and contexts, but Rothaermel et al. (2007) argue that it is the assets and activities, such as university licensing or incubators, of a university that fall under third mission (Secundo et al., 2017). Hsu et al. (2015) list a multitude of mechanisms through which universities can facilitate third mission activities, including collaborative research, contract research, exchange of research staff, graduate education, consulting services, and the launch of technology-oriented start-ups (Secundo et al., 2017). According to Bramwell and Wolfe (2005), third mission activities can have a social and economic impact beyond research, but these activities are only effective if the university's intangible assets are consistent with stakeholder needs, creating value from collaborations among university faculty, staff, students, graduates and local communities, government, and industry (Secundo et al., 2018). It is the intangibles, the IC of a university, working in tandem with external stakeholders that generates value, driving societal development (Redford & Fayolle, 2014; Secundo et al., 2018). Therefore, it seems reasonable that these intangibles would be included in any assessment of value.

Performance Management Systems

Performance Management (PM), defined by Aguinis (2013) as "…a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization" (p. 2), is a highly influential means of assessment employed by the vast majority of organizations (Schleicher et al., 2018). Interest in and employment of PM systems is affected by environmental factors such as economic crises, which seem to spur usage (Cabrera et al., 2014), as evidenced by the increased adoption of PM in higher education as government funding decreased, an adoption intended to inspire efficiency and effectiveness (Decramer et al., 2013; Schleicher et al., 2018). However, Nadler and Tushman

(1980) posit that a successful PM system must be composed of elements that exist in balance, thus increasing in effectiveness as the various components increase in congruence (Schleicher et al., 2018). Therefore, as system inputs such as the economy (Cabrera et al., 2014) or the nature of the work change (Godin, 2009; Howard, 1995), PM systems should adapt to assure valid assessment (Schleicher et al., 2018). Strategy, mission, and assessment must be aligned, because no matter what leaders say or want, people turn to the evaluation system to guide their efforts. An institution's mission must be addressed by assessment initiatives if leaders seek valid measurements of effectiveness (Bart, 2001). If leaders communicate one message but the evaluation system is focused elsewhere, people will gear their efforts toward those actions being evaluated (Kerr, 1995). If it is central to the value of the institution, then the PM system must reflect the desired intention, otherwise the PM system could prove counterproductive as individuals are rewarded for achieving metrics rather than accomplishing the desired goals of the institution (Dumay & Rooney, 2011; Kerr, 1995). If universities are truly vested in the third mission, then, according to Borin and Donato (2015), institutions must increase focus on the creation and development of IC (Secundo et al., 2017). This focus, in turn, leads to the need to evaluate value in relation to IC, which Castellanos and Rodriguez (2004) argue should be assessed according to its social value (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), which Dumay (2016) describes as societal benefits provided by an organization (Secundo et al., 2017).

Many researchers have proposed frameworks for the assessment of IC, including Secundo et al. (2018), who argue that IC should be used in the evaluation of universities because,

> …the way universities are being evaluated by society is also changing (Paloma Sánchez and Elena, 2006; Paloma Sánchez et al., 2009). Universities were once focused on teaching and research. Today, universities need to contribute to a third mission: developing society and economies (Bercovitz and Feldman, 2006; Laredo, 2007). (p. 159)

PM systems designed for IC should be based on four questions, “What?,” “Who?,” “Why?,” and “How?” (Secundo et al., 2018). Through the use of these questions, PM systems address university goals in relation to the three missions (What?), establish all stakeholders, both internal and external (Who?), outline motivations and goals of IC management that acknowledge the efforts to build entrepreneurial competence in individuals, assist institutional development through technological innovation and transfer, and support regional engagement designed to encourage the entrepreneurial skills needed for the creation of social value (Why?). Finally, a PM system designed for IC should utilize individuals and education to attract faculty talent, enhance infrastructure through research development and innovation, and propel regional development through community involvement related to research and development (How?) (Secundo et al., 2018, p. 161). Essentially, this framework is designed to encourage collaborations between internal and external stakeholders with the goal of spurring societal growth and creating social value, while meeting the needs of the institution and invested parties (Secundo et al., 2018).

Researchers have attempted to develop quantitative metrics for the assessment and reporting of third mission undertakings, but no comprehensive systems have proved adequate (Secundo et al., 2017). According to Montesinos et al. (2008), the third mission fails to provide the structure necessary to describe the specific role of universities in this endeavor (Secundo et al., 2017). Wright et al. (2004) argue that universities lack the tools and specific information necessary to adequately report on their performance as it relates to the third mission (Secundo et al., 2017). However, Dumay and Rooney (2011) posit that quantitative measurements are not necessary for the successful implementation of third mission activities as organizational measurement must constantly evolve. Their case study of the Land and Property Management Authority of NSW (Lands) discussed the ways in which Lands utilized narrative rather than discrete measures in its reporting, providing a non-quantitative mechanism for assessing value and engendering organizational change (Dumay & Rooney, 2011). Thus, although the intangible nature of IC and social value evade quantification, narrative reporting allows for a discussion of

the complexity of the issue that may not be fully captured in a balance sheet. Souder (1987) and Bart (1991) also note that numbers fail to fully capture the story, arguing that quantitative measures are unable to account for the variety of variables at play, both internal and external, and must be interpreted (Bart, 2001).

Regardless of method, the measurement of IC is intended to capture real world implications as they relate to the creation of value rather than capturing IC measurements, and the incorporation of external stakeholders is critical in the development of strategy that utilizes governance, performance measures, and accountability in the development of an entrepreneurial organization (Secundo et al., 2018). As institutions shift their attention from monetary value to societal value creation, they begin the process of "…switching from a managerial to an ecosystem focus" (Secundo et al., 2017, p. 232). In return, with a new focus on creating social value, universities will likely reap institutional benefits as they become more competitive (Grimaldi et al., 2013; Secundo et al., 2017) and attract funding as they are able to demonstrate how research provides value for society at large (Coccia, 2004; Leitner & Warden, 2004; Secundo et al., 2017; Senker, 2001).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that the relationship between administration and faculty is at a tipping point, perhaps each with its own definition of the purpose of higher education. It appears that administrators are trying to ensure that institutions run effectively, and academic are trying to protect the historical value of higher education as well as their professional status. There will be no satisfactory resolution between these two groups until we are able to create a meaningful dialogue that will allow each to see and make sense of the situation and, as evidenced in the literature, faculty members seem to be more inclined to adapt to and manipulate an increasingly suffocating system than to resist it. Indeed, managerialism itself is partly built upon silencing the thoughts and voices of the worker. A balance must be reached. Thus, to create this critical dialogue, more research must be done with academics themselves—performing case studies at

various universities and listening to academic voices provide reasons for both academic integration and resistance. Perhaps then we will begin to grasp the schism between the groups in ways that allow us to pursue a contemporary and meaningful purpose for the university. Faculty members and administration must come to an agreeable understanding to reverse the sense of demoralization currently prevalent in universities and colleges, seeking to understand the value of the other group to successfully work together for the betterment of higher education (Winter, 2009).

Chapter Summary

Within this chapter, I described my literature search process and discussed much of the literature relating to the purpose of higher education, the role of faculty members as autonomous professionals, the concept of academic freedom, and the rise of managerialism and its current role in higher education. I discussed two theories that influenced this research, as well as my need to pivot in my analysis of the material, moving away from the theories of influence to a new framework dealing with IC, the concept of the "third mission", and the use of IC with performance management systems. In the next chapter, I will address the methodology for this study. I will re-address the problem statement, purpose, and research questions. I will also discuss the research design, the epistemology and theoretical perspective, the research approach, the theoretical framework, the context of the research, the participants and the means of recruitment, as well as the process of collection and analysis. Finally, I will speak to my researcher statement and the significance of this research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As the corporatization of higher education marches forward, and managerialism becomes more prominent in higher education, so does the customer service culture, creating an environment in which university academics are regularly required to provide proof of academic contributions and customer satisfaction (Winter, 2009). Professional goals of academic excellence are taking a back seat to the demand for quantifiable evidence, pressuring university academics to renegotiate their relationships with their environment in meaningful ways. Within this chapter, I will discuss the purpose, research questions, research design, participants and research site, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness for this study. This study explored the perceptions of tenured and tenure-track professors as they view their roles as professionals in light of contemporary administrative policy and oversight.

Problem Statement

Historically, academics have been afforded a level of status and autonomy absent in non-professional careers, but comparable to other professionals. In the past, academics have been respected as both teachers and subject matter experts, and their voices were powerful and formally embedded in the organization through systems such as faculty governance. However, their professional identities are under fire by external corporatization pressures carried out by a changing academic system that demands increased focus on performance-based accountability, as well as curriculum and pedagogical change (Kerby, 2015; Othman, 2016).

Academics are losing their ideological control over the subject-matter being taught and are being treated as a new proletariat (Halsey, 1992; Herr, 2015; Stolz, 2017). Managerialism, the practical implementation of corporatization, is nurturing a culture in which students are treated as customers. Therefore, rather than adhering to their professional ideals of academic excellence, academics are required by increasingly powerful administrative managers to provide quantitative proof of sufficient professional progress and customer satisfaction.

Although change is an inevitable aspect of higher education, it is vital to systematically consult faculty members, who have traditionally and collectively led U.S. higher education institutions, about their perceptions of these particular changes as they relate to their roles as autonomous professionals.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study was to explore tenured and tenure-track faculty members' perceptions of administrative oversight at a large land-grant university in the south-central United States. This study was guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

How do tenure-track and tenured faculty members at a research university perceive that contemporary administrative oversight influences their research and teaching?

a. In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight has changed the nature of their work during their time as tenured or tenure-track professors?
b. In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight impacts their expected academic freedom?

Although service is an important aspect of the faculty role, the expectations around service in varying fields differ markedly, thus, I chose to focus exclusively on teaching and research.

Research Design

Upon obtaining IRB approval, I conducted a qualitative, single case study focused on tenure-track and tenured professors' perceptions. Specifically, I was interested in professors'

perceptions of their roles as autonomous professionals and how they perceive these roles as being influenced by contemporary administrative oversight. As a result, the study was crafted to explore and reflect reality as constructed by the participants.

Qualitative research offers inquiry methods that allow participants to guide the research, bringing out the aspects they deem important. The nimbleness of qualitative studies is uniquely appropriate for educational issues, which are often researched narrowly and rigidly (Trainor & Leko, 2014). As relatively little research has been conducted on university academics' perceptions of their roles as professionals (Collyer, 2015), the freedom for me, as the researcher, to probe was crucial. Rather than establishing predetermined parameters for the research, qualitative methods offered the flexibility to explore.

Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective

Although research is the quest for new knowledge and understandings, it must be conducted in a methodic fashion subject to a specific philosophy (Creswell, 2014). The worldview, or epistemology, establishes a foundation for the research. The epistemology is integral to the internal validity of research, prescribing guidance for the researcher and creating context for outside observers (Pallas, 2001).

Constructionism abandons the ideas of objectivism and subjectivism in favor of a combination of the two, employing intentionality. The observer reaches out to the observed, creating a dialogue. This dialogue informs the meaning constructed between the subject and the object (Crotty, 1998). Given these characteristics of constructionism, I believe it was best suited to this study. I explored professors' perceptions of their professional roles as they believe those roles are influenced by administrative actions and oversight. Specifically, I was looking at the results of the interaction that professors have with the administrative aspect of higher education. In their roles as professors at a research university, participants are creating meaning for themselves as a result of the way they interpret the administrative actions, or the object.

The theoretical perspective of a research study is a philosophical approach that guides the choice of method and methodology, lending credence to the methodology and methods employed by the researcher (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998). I employed interpretivism, a theoretical perspective often used in conjunction with constructionism, as it "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

Approach

I approached this qualitative research as a single case study. Case study is a qualitative method that can be focused on anything from an empirical unit to a theoretical construct. As a result, the researcher is free to define the case for herself, so long as the case represents a bounded system (Patton, 2015). Instrumental case study is employed when the researcher seeks understanding of a phenomenon through the study of a single case. As I was looking at the perceptions of tenured or tenure-track professors at a single research institution in an attempt to better understand how professors perceive the influence of contemporary administrative actions on their roles, instrumental case study was an appropriate approach.

According to Stake (1995), the first criterion for case selection is the maximization of what we can learn. As recommended by Stake (1995), I sought participants who were accessible and interested in participating in this inquiry. Specifically, I worked with tenured or tenure-track professors from a single land-grant institution located in the south-central United States. In addition, all participants came from either the humanities or the social sciences fields.

Fields as a Criterion for Case Selection

The decision to use humanities and the social sciences as specific fields for cases in this study was not made by chance. Historically, higher education depended on governmental subsidies for its financial viability. However, as federal subsidies decreased, higher education became more reliant on corporate stakeholders and additional revenue that the institution can generate (Rizzo, 2006). With the increase of corporate funding and the focus on financial returns comes a neoliberal value system that encourages managerialism, a philosophy that argues that

institutions should be run according to for-profit business models (Joseph, 2015). In this managerialist climate, academic administration has grown in numbers and influence (Fowles, 2014; Hedrick et al., 2009), and the focus of universities has shifted to issues of accountability measurements and quantifiable results (Huisman & Currie, 2004). In an environment that places enrollment, retention, and graduation rates over cognitive development (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bok, 2006; Brint, 2006), the role of the university academic as an autonomous professional is threatened (Joseph, 2015).

I believe that faculty in both the humanities and the social sciences face similar challenges in relation to their perceived profitability and their subjective assessment in an arguably managerial climate. These areas of study include subject matter that can be difficult to assess and quantify, and they are less likely to attract the kinds of substantial research grants found in STEM fields. These challenges were unifying factors that contributed to the exploration of the ways that professors make meaning of their roles in an administrative environment that emphasizes the production of quantifiable results. Although the information gathered in instrumental case study is not generalizable, it may be considered transferrable and contributes to the study of specific phenomenon (Stake, 1995).

Theoretical Framework

All studies are influenced by, and should be situated within, theory (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). While this study was not specifically designed *to* a theory or theories, two primary theories influenced its design. The first was sensemaking which, according to Weick (1995), is the act of making sense. Operating from the perspective that organizations are continuously evolving social constructions, sensemaking theory posits that individuals comprising organizations are always attempting to make meaning of their surroundings (Kezar, 2013). These individuals are continually recreating their realities and must be able to engage meaningfully with change (Kezar, 2013). Change efforts that do not allow for sensemaking will be challenging to enact.

The second framework influencing the study design was psychological ownership. Psychological ownership theorizes that individuals fuse the notion of self, or the needs of the self, with ownership of a construct, in this case an organization or organizational constructs, models, or ways of doing things (Dirks et al., 1996). Individuals possess variables that can help determine whether they will accept or reject changes. Self-enhancement, self-continuity, and a sense of control or a sense of efficacy are the three primary needs of the self that determine whether an individual will contribute to or resist change efforts (Avey et al., 2009; Dirks et al., 1996). Individuals who are deeply attached to an organization or organizational construct will most likely resist change when the change threatens one of the three variables. However, changes that contribute to the health of the notions of self will often result in the individual's support of organizational change.

Although both sensemaking and psychological ownership influenced my study design, neither served as an a priori theoretical framework. Rather, I chose to avoid an a priori framework in an effort to remain more open to the data that emerged from my participants' experiences and perceptions. Although I found myself unable to use a single theory to analyze the resultant data, I leaned heavily into the work of international researchers' hypothesizing the need to apply IC to performance management systems as a way of assessing the value faculty members are bringing to the growth and development of society. Additionally, I was able to apply both psychological ownership and sensemaking to pieces of the data, and recommended theories I believe could be utilized in future studies less exploratory in nature.

Research Context

This research was conducted at a top-tier research university, as classified by the Carnegie Foundation, in the south-central United States. As a land-grant university, this institution was historically established to make higher education available to those individuals who may not have otherwise had access, focusing on research, service, and instruction in the applied sciences to improve both the general economy and individual welfare (Williams, 2007).

Today, the institution remains committed to a very similar mission. Located in a relatively rural community of approximately 50,000 people, the university is mid-way between two major cities and serves a large student body of approximately 25,000 students (University, 2019). Roughly a quarter of these students travel from other states or countries. Founded in the late nineteenth century, the institution is well-established and recognized as one of the United States' premier land-grant universities. The university offers a 20:1 student-to-faculty ratio and has six academic colleges, as well as a veterinary school and a medical school that is located at a branch campus. The institution offers 200 undergraduate programs, 79 masters' programs, and 45 doctoral programs. The Greek community is exceptionally strong with 34 fraternities and sororities. The institution offers over 500 student organizations, and the sports program is nationally recognized. The students and faculty are primarily Caucasian. In 2016, approximately 4% of the undergraduate population self-identified as African American, 6% as Latino/Hispanic, and 9% as Native American (University, 2019).

Participants

I utilized snowball sampling to identify potential participants (Creswell, 2014). Snowball sampling is a form of purposeful sampling, often used in case study, designed to ensure that the participants are "'information rich' and illuminative" (Patton, 2015, p. 46). This sampling technique is intended to home in on participants experiencing the effects of the phenomenon rather than an "empirical generalization from a sample population" (Patton, 2015, p. 46). I selected six tenured or tenure-track professors from a combination of the humanities, such as music, theatre, and foreign language, and the social sciences, such as education and social foundations. Participants met the following criteria:

- employed full time (9, 10, or 12 months per calendar year),
- traditionally classified faculty (assistant, associate, professor) or clinical faculty with the option of tenure,

- tenured or on the tenure track,
- have their primary work assignments in the humanities or social sciences, and
- have a minimum of five years of instructional experience in higher education.

I did not include adjunct academic professionals, visiting professors, clinical or teaching faculty who were not eligible for tenure, or emeriti faculty. Neither did I include professors who were currently holding administrative appointments. Given the small number of participants involved, I did not consider age, gender, diversity of experience levels, or ethnicities in my selection.

Recruitment of Participants

I began recruiting participants by asking two professors with whom I had established relationships to join the study. In an email request, I included a brief overview of the purpose of the study and a description of the methods I would be using (Appendix A). Once an individual agreed to participate, I asked him or her to provide me with two or three names of additional individuals who met the parameters of the study. I then invited those individuals to participate, utilizing the same means I employed with my original participants. After two rounds of emails, I had secured three participants. At that point I approached my advisor, who recommended several names of faculty who met the aforementioned criteria. Using these references, I was able to obtain three more participants, bringing my total to six.

Data Collection

Data collection for this case study consisted of four components: basic demographic form, interviews and associated fieldnotes, drawings, and documents. Although participants maintained the right to refuse participation at any time, they were asked to participate in all activities.

Demographic Form

Using email, I collected information on a brief demographic form (Appendix B).

Interviews

Within this study, I explored the experiences and perceptions of tenured and tenure-track professors. An effective way to gather this kind of data is through interviews. According to Patton (2015), semi-structured interviews can be conducted in such a way as to be flexible and nimble enough that I was able to probe and explore to find the issues most relevant to my research questions. Additionally, participants were able to address their areas of concern rather than being constrained by the limitations of my specific questions. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a dialogue meant to help the participants formulate their thoughts in ways that were meaningful to them, and to truly tell their stories. The researchers of case studies act as interpreters (Stake, 1995). Conducting interviews provided much of the data needed to interpret and tell the participants' stories, representing their perspectives of the phenomenon of focus in this bounded case study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom in a private location, audio recorded, and lasted approximately 90 minutes to two hours. I had 18 prepared questions that served as a research guide (see Appendix C); however, the semi-structured nature of the interviews provided opportunities for adjusting as needed, including probing and following the interviewee's lead to unplanned but related topics of discussion. The semi-structured interview plan offered both a semblance of consistency and a nimble enough design that the participants and I were able to pursue their constructed realities in meaningful ways. I conducted a single set of interviews.

Fieldnotes

During the interviews, I kept fieldnotes, noting non-verbal communication and other observations that added to the depth of the data and allowed for thick description. I took notes about the environment while the participants were engaged in their drawing activities. I also made notations during the actual interview process. These observations included such things as

descriptions of the rooms, actions of the participants, and headnotes that occurred to me during the interview process.

Drawings

In addition to interviews, I asked each participant to draw two images, one that represented his or her role in relation to administration, and one that represented what his or her role in higher education meant to the participant (see Appendix D). Upon completion of the drawings, I facilitated a discussion with the participant about what he or she had drawn. I offered to supply all participants with two blank, white 8.5" x 11" sheets of white paper, a pencil, and a box of crayons for the drawing exercise. As it was necessary to conduct all interviews via Zoom in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I mailed these supplies to the participants in advance of the meeting. All participants accepted the drawing implements with the exception of Gwen who declined the offer, using her own drawing supplies. Participants were given ten minutes to complete each drawing. During the drawing session, I muted my microphone and turned off my camera in the hope that the participants would feel more comfortable. I verified with the participant that he or she had no questions prior to my "exit," but let them know that I would be readily available should questions arise. When a participant finished before the allotted time had passed, he or she asked me to reactivate my camera and microphone. Upon completion of the interview, all participants, except for Gwen, were asked to mail the drawings to me in self-addressed, stamped envelopes that I supplied with the drawing materials. Gwen volunteered to provide her own envelope and postage. In addition to mailing, both Peterjoe and Madelyn chose to scan their drawings and email them to me. Unfortunately, Eric's original drawings were lost in the mail, and I was left with only my notes and the transcription of our discussion.

A drawing used as an elicitor in an interview is an effective way to access emotions that participants may not otherwise be comfortable revealing and provides an opportunity for participants to "…frame their own experiences…," thus supporting the creation of meaning (Kearney & Hyle, 2004, p. 362). This method of inquiry was designed to provide insight into

participants' emotions regarding their perceptions of their professional roles, and helped participants access insights and feelings that they might not have otherwise verbalized.

Documents

Finally, with the permission of the site, I collected documents used at the school/department, college, and university levels to evaluate faculty performance. These documents included policies and processes typically created with both faculty and administrative input. As I had hoped, reviewing the documents gave me more insight into the university context.

Data Analysis

Throughout this research process I engaged in reflexive writing, writing meant to capture my thoughts in a tangible way (Luttrell, 2010). These memos, consisting of jottings, observations, and headnotes, pulled from all the data sources, and helped begin the process of synthesizing the data into a cohesive story that reflected participants' perceptions and meanings. In addition to reflexive writing, I performed thematic analysis of all the data, following the six steps as described by Braun and Clarke (2008).

I began by familiarizing myself with the data. I recorded and transcribed all interviews verbatim, and closely reviewed the documents. This gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in the data, reading and re-reading the transcriptions and making initial notes and ideas. Next, I generated the initial codes by performing a pass of open concept coding on transcripts and documents, looking for the big ideas expressed in the data. Upon completing multiple passes of open coding, I had a total of 353 individual codes. I used the information that emerged from the open coding to determine that no single theory was appropriate for the data. I then searched for potential themes, collating the relevant codes into groups. I reviewed the six themes and two sub-themes and determined that they worked in relation to not only the individually coded items, but also to the case as a whole. At that point, I defined and named the themes, refining each so that it had a clear definition and name. This step helped me to construct the story that the data tells.

Finally, I produced the final report, selecting the most illustrative extracts to relay the story of the case.

Trustworthiness

The three sources of in-depth data (exclusive of the demographic form) assisted with triangulation of sources. I also provided thick description of the interviews and conducted member checks with the participants. All these practices contributed to the trustworthiness of the study (Patton, 2015). Trustworthiness, or rigor, according to the seminal work of Lincoln and Guba (1986), is the qualitative equivalent of the combination of the measures of internal validity, reliability, and objectivity found in quantitative research. Specifically, Lincoln and Guba argue that credibility aligns with internal validity, transferability is the equivalent of external validity, dependability refers to reliability, and confirmability is parallel to objectivity. In Table 1, I have displayed how I employed practices that contributed to trustworthiness within my study.

Additionally, all participants' information was kept confidential. Written documents and recordings were kept on either my personal computer, or OneDrive, both of which are password protected.

Table 1

Techniques for Establishing Trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Standard	Technique	Study Example
Credibility	Triangulation	Interviews Drawings Documents
Transferability	Thick Description	Purposeful Sampling
Dependability	Audit	Member Checks
Confirmability	Reflexivity	Reflexive Writing Interviews Drawings Documents

Researcher Statement

The nature of qualitative research dictates that the researcher act as an instrument of data collection. As an instrument, I acknowledge that I was influenced by my experiences and positionalities. I work with undergraduate students, university academics, and administrators, and I have come to realize that many professors are keenly aware of the contemporary struggle between university administration and academics. This awareness has the potential to affect their work, as well as students' educations and the future contribution and role of higher education.

I believe higher education's developing relationship with and desire for quantifiable data, and students' growing tendencies to transfer among institutions, has created an environment in which students are treated as passive consumers. I believe higher education should consider students contract holders, a relationship suggesting both parties must meet certain standards to maintain the integrity of the agreement. The world of higher education must adapt to societal expectations. However, I believe society will suffer if these adaptations come at the expense of educational quality.

Furthermore, as is often the case with "snowball sampling", I had prior relationships with some of my participants. Although I believe this allowed for a strong rapport that opened the door to invaluable data and information; that it colored the way I interacted with the data is inescapable, even if the effect was only subconscious.

My perceptions and attitudes inevitably influenced the ways in which I interpreted the results of this research. As I sought to create meaning with my participants, and tell their collective story, my experiences, perceptions, and beliefs shaped what I saw. However, I vigilantly worked to remain actively aware of my role as the researcher. I used analytic notes and jottings to clarify my thought processes and sought to view the data from multiple perspectives. The findings of this study are not generalizable, but it is my hope that they are transferrable, providing others a way to relate to their experiences with higher education.

Summary

In summary, I approached this work qualitatively, working from a constructionist epistemology and using an interpretivist theoretical perspective. Although I did not have an a priori theory, the development of this study was influenced by psychological ownership and sensemaking. This study used a simple demographic form, semi-structured interviews and related field notes, drawings, and document analysis as data collection methods. The means of analysis was coding and sorting. I purposefully selected participants, using snowball sampling, and participants were tenured and tenure-track faculty from a large land-grant university in the south-central United States. The use of quality criteria and its associated practices helped to ensure trustworthiness of this work. It is my hope the results of this research will encourage future researchers, administrators, and university academics to carefully consider the nature of the work of higher education faculty members, and how that work may be positively or negatively affected by administrative decision making.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND THEMES

The purpose of this study was to explore tenured and tenure-track faculty members' perceptions of administrative oversight at a large land-grant university in the south-central United States. Participant interviews, participant drawings, and institutional documents served as data sources. I also engaged in purposive sampling, member checks, and reflexive field notes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within this chapter, I will introduce the six themes and two sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis. The presentation of themes will be supported by the participants' statements, their drawings, and institutional documents.

However, before I proceed, the evolving context of my research is critical to the presentation and resulting interpretation of the data. This research was conducted over multiple years and, during that period, society experienced unprecedented upheaval at an accelerated pace; the constant change was exhausting, especially when there appeared to be no end in sight. Individuals were tired, frightened, and hurting, states of being that cannot be overlooked when considering attitudes and behaviors. The most obvious source of these maladies was the Covid-19 pandemic, which came with a host of fears related to mortality and the loss of freedom. Less obvious, however, was the ways in which the pandemic affected the evolution of higher education. According to the AAUP, shared governance was already eroding before Covid-19, but has since become a landslide (Zahneis, 2021). For example, institutions across the country moved to alter their faculty handbooks to allow for criteria less stringent than financial exigency to permit the suspension or termination of faculty. (Zahneis, 2021). An example of this was readily

available at Emporia State University in Kansas. In response to financial concerns related to Covid-19, the regents approved a policy for the state universities that allowed them the flexibility to suspend or terminate employees, including tenured professors, without a declaration of financial exigency (Pettit, 2022). Although faculty argued they were not meaningfully consulted, being given only two days to review the document, and that this act essentially nullifies tenure, their arguments fell on deaf ears as Emporia administration approved a "framework for work-force management" (Pettit, 2022, p. 1), which allowed the university to terminate employees relating to issues such as restructuring, performance evaluations, resource alignment, low enrollment, department or school, revenue, market conditions, etc. (Pettit, 2022). According to the Emporia president, the move was necessary in the face of rising expenses and declining enrollments (Pettit, 2022).

In addition to exacerbating the decline of shared governance, it could be argued the pandemic widened the political divide within the United States. Political parties already at odds became openly antagonistic to one another; political ideas and agendas became more extreme (Kafka, 2021), and partisanship spread to academia. Partisanship became paramount, threatening the ability of board members to prioritize their institutional interests over various political agendas (Ellis et al., 2020). Politicians openly challenged universities' free speech policies and curriculum, and students argued that exposure to views contrary to their belief systems was a form of violence, shouting down any voices with which they disagreed (Kafka, 2021). Ultimately social media drew the world into what may have been localized incidents in the past. Rather than serving as bastions of free speech and thought, universities were becoming political landmines.

Covid-19, the financial crisis of higher education, polarized politics, and the surge in social media worked together to inflame tensions already inherent in higher education (Kafka, 2021).

In addition, and at the site level, half the participants in this study were reaching the latter stages of an extended merger of two colleges. The faculty were informed of the merger decision

made by upper administration, which included changes in units and college names in an attempt to save on administrative costs, leverage strengths, and capitalize on existing and potential collaborations. Senior administration hired an outside consulting company to make recommendations regarding the structure of staff units, and hired a second firm to lead administration from the two colleges in the visioning of a combined faculty framework. In addition to the two outside firms, administration utilized staff reports to identify redundancies and opportunities, listening sessions to gather feedback and information about the two colleges, and a steering committee chaired by a member of faculty. The process was lengthy and came on the heels of another major college change that had fared poorly. At the time of data collection, these participants were exhausted, and not entirely satisfied with the resulting merger, in addition to the previous events discussed; this certainly influenced, in ways unknown, the data collection process.

Overview of Data Sources

I utilized snowball (purposeful) sampling (Creswell, 2014) to identify participants who represented tenured and tenure-track professors from the humanities and social sciences. Participants brought a wealth of experiences and perceptions from which to draw. A total of six participants took part in this study, resulting in six Zoom-based interviews and twelve participant drawings. In addition, I gathered institutional documents (see Table 2) that addressed various administrative procedures and expectations within the participants' university. Some documents were provided by the participants. Others I gathered from department heads and non-participant faculty members.

Table 2

Institutional Documents

Institutional Body	**Document**	**Year**
University	Policy Statement to Govern Appointments, Tenure, Promotions, and Related Matters of the Faculty	2020

University	Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Process for Ranked Faculty	2015
University	Statement on Grandfathering Modified Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Standards for Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty	2013
College of Arts & Sciences	Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Checklist	2020
College of Arts & Sciences	Cumulative Review Policy	2012
College of Arts & Sciences Departmental	Policies Concerning Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure	2020
College of Arts & Sciences Departmental	Policy and Procedures Regarding Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure	2020
College of Arts & Sciences Departmental	Personnel Procedures (RPT)	2016
College of Arts & Sciences Departmental	Criteria for Creative Activity and Research	2016
College of Education	Policies, Procedures, and Academic Standards for Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure, and Cumulative Review	2020
College of Education	Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure	2018
College of Education	Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Timeline	2016
College of Education	Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Guidelines	2014
College of Education	Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Workload Expectations Policy	2012
College of Education Departmental	Guidelines for Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure	2018
College of Education Departmental	Guidelines for Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure	2009
College of Education Departmental	Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure	2009

In the spirit of thick, rich description and qualitative research, Table 3 provides participant demographic information followed by a brief description of each participant.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Participant	**Birth Year**	**Gender/Sex**	**Race**	**Title**	**Yrs as Higher Education Faculty**	**Area**	**Tenured**
CP	1969	Male	White/Caucasian	Asst. Professor	15	Humanities	No

Brian	1960	Male	White/Caucasian	Professor	23	Humanities	Yes
Eric	1966	Male	White/Caucasian	Professor	27	Humanities	Yes
Gwen	1973	Female	White/Caucasian	Assoc. Professor	7	Social Sciences	Yes
Peterjoe	1960–1970	Female	White/Caucasian	Assoc. Professor	22	Social Sciences	Yes
Madelyn	1957	Female	White/Caucasian	Assoc. Professor Graduate Faculty Fellow	20	Social Sciences	Yes

As previously indicated, all participants came from either the humanities or social sciences and worked within either a College of Arts and Sciences or a College of Education. All participants were traditionally classified faculty who were employed full-time for nine, ten, or twelve months of the calendar year, with seven to twenty-seven years of experience in higher education. None of the participants were currently in administrative positions within higher education. All participants were White/Caucasian. This is, in part, reflective of the limited diversity in faculty at the institution. Given the size of the study and the small number of participants involved, criteria for participants did not address issues of gender.

Humanities

All participants from the humanities area worked within a College of Arts and Sciences. For the purpose of the study, the humanities included American Studies, Art, English, Music, Philosophy, Religion, and Foreign Language.

CP

CP and I met for our interview on April 29, 2020. I have known and worked with CP for several years, and we have a friendly relationship, so the initial greetings were comfortable and familiar. CP was dressed in a bright salmon colored t-shirt and was seated on what looked like an oversized beige chair or possibly a sofa. From my limited view (via my computer screen), it appeared he was tucked into a corner of a room decorated in neutral colors and various pieces of art. A shaft of what looked like sunlight streamed in from off-screen to highlight a number of

pieces hung in a straight orderly line on the walls. Although I saw four hangings, the only two I could clearly discern were what appeared to be a front-page newspaper article and what looked like a print of water lilies, each hanging in a simple frame that emphasized the art. CP spent the interview leaning slightly forward, as would be expected of one speaking into a laptop that was set on a coffee table, or a similar piece of furniture. This was my first interview via a telecommunication platform, so we spent the initial minutes making sure that the technology was recording properly. CP was helpful and invested in the process.

The interview lasted nearly an hour and a half, during which CP was attentive and thoughtful. He smiled and laughed throughout the process, but it seemed as though it was a defense mechanism as much as it was an expression of humor. There was genuine laughter at times, but this interview seemed to stir a lot of emotions in him, specifically angst, anger, and fear, and it seemed as though he used humor as a way to diffuse the tension. He also appeared to be somewhat nervous at times, stammering more than was normal for him, and starting sentences that he never finished as he seemed to momentarily lose himself in the unspoken thoughts and feelings.

A middle-aged male, CP had been teaching in higher education for 15 years. He was not yet tenured at the time of this interview, and he seemed depressed and defeated by the challenges he had experienced with administration since coming to his current institution. At one point in the interview, he discussed friends of his who had left academia to pursue other interests, and he seemed to be envious. “I mean, I have some friends that left academia and one’s making beer. Another one’s computer programming. So, I’m [extended pause]. But they had passions in those things.” Although unsaid in the moment, he seemed to be expressing a feeling of defeat. He appeared to be a man who felt trapped by his circumstances rather than a confident faculty member who felt as if he was contributing to his profession.

Brian

Brian and I met together on April 30, 2020. I have known and worked with Brian for many years. We are social and have had many conversations that were both work and non-work related. However, despite that, Brian presented himself in a very businesslike and professional manner. Supplied with a glass of iced tea that he sipped throughout, Brian was dressed in a purple, collared, button-down shirt with rolled-up sleeves. He appeared to be calling from his office, a room with a weighty ambience, adorned with dark wood and painted a rich, deep red hue. From my screen, I could see a wide variety of decorations and art covering the walls, ranging from ornate Renaissance Madonnas to whimsical wooden cat plaques. Bookshelves, heavy with texts, lined the wall behind him, and the sun filtered through the window to his left. As the interview progressed, the light grew dimmer and dimmer as the sun set.

Brian was deliberate and serious with his answers, taking the time to actively consider both the questions and his responses. It was apparent that these were issues he had considered before, occasionally referencing specific books that he thought were applicable to the situation, however he gave each question careful thought and consideration before answering. Sometimes I could almost see him mentally testing words and phrases before speaking. He spoke with confidence and assuredness. He addressed emotions that he had experienced as a result of administrative actions, but he did so in a distant, almost clinical way, as though he was not going to allow himself to feel the emotions in the moment. Specifically, Brian addressed his feelings of anger:

> If we haven't prepared our students to immediately graduate from here and join the workforce…what? If they're not prepared to get a job right after graduation, then we have failed them as students. And that was a department head speaking. That makes me EXTREMELY angry, because that's 100% counter to my vision of what a university is, of what a higher education means, or should mean. I guess I'm a dinosaur. I'm fighting being squished into water.

A tenured member of faculty, Brian has been in higher education for more than 20 years. Despite the anger and various other emotions that he addressed, I received the impression that, although Brian had serious issues with the changes he was perceiving in academia, he was still passionate about the importance of higher education and his role.

Eric

Eric and I met on May 14, 2020. Although Eric and I are not social, we knew each other from a production of a community play we worked on together several years ago. We never discussed education during that production, but we were somewhat familiar with one another. Dressed in an eggplant-colored, polo-style shirt, Eric called me from an austere white room that was nearly barren in appearance. It is possible there was more beyond the frame of the camera, but from my perspective I could see only a single piece of art on the walls. It was a relatively small, framed piece, and the hues were warm ambers and yellows. It looked as though it might have been an abstract painting inspired by a character from an Eastern language, but I was looking at it from an angle, so I could not be sure. Periodically we would hear the strains of someone practicing trumpet in another room in his home. It threw Eric off balance at first, but I tried to put him at ease by explaining that I am very used to and comfortable with working in an environment in which one can hear musicians rehearsing. We laughed about it, and he seemed more or less comfortable after that.

Eric was conscientious and pensive with all his answers, taking the time to choose exactly the right words to convey his meaning. He was also extremely careful to differentiate between perceptions that he thought were well grounded, and those he felt had less merit. Unlike the two former interviews, I did not pick up on intense emotions from Eric. He had definite opinions about modern administration, but he seemed comfortable accepting that his perceptions might not be entirely accurate:

> There is a kind of apprenticeship relationship between teacher and student. Of course, it's much tighter at those graduate levels than at the undergraduate level, but the relationship

> between apprentice and master is a very different kind of relationship than the relationship between a customer and a business that delivers a product. In other words, I see there being more tension between my vision of what academia is supposed to be and administrators' …operational understanding, whether it's their theoretical one, when I look at higher administration from a distance. But that's an impression that made, that is filtered down and is one that I take with a grain of salt.

A tenured faculty member who had been in higher education for more than 25 years, Eric had experienced many changes, but he believed that lower-level administration, department heads and comparable positions, shared his perceptions of higher education for the most part. He had different perceptions of upper administration, but he was concerned that his perceptions of upper administration might have been compromised by distance and lack of familiarity.

Social Sciences

All participants from the social sciences came from a College of Education. For the purpose of this study, the social sciences were considered areas such as Educational Leadership, Educational Psychology, Educational Foundations, and Recreation. All participants were chosen from one of these areas.

Gwen

Gwen and I met on June 12, 2020. It was mid-morning, and Gwen called from what appeared to be her home office. The camera frame afforded me a relatively narrow perspective but, in the background, I could see a painting of what looked like a village on the water at sunset set against a neutrally colored wall. The painting was rich with warm tones, dark reds, buttery yellows, and fiery oranges. Each home in the scene had a window or two that shone with what could be interpreted as firelight escaping from the hearth. Next to the painting was a piece of furniture that looked as if it could be an armoire built from cedar. A medium weight metal handle hung from each of the closed doors. On top of the armoire, I could see glimpses of what seemed

to be framed family photos, and some sort of cut glass or crystal sculpture. Gwen was dressed casually, in a white sleeveless top, and her hair was pulled back into a ponytail or bun.

Gwen appeared alert and earnest, and she gave great consideration to her answers, frequently looking up or to the side as she spoke, but returning her gaze to the screen as she would visually check in. My assumption is that she was trying to connect through eye contact in these moments, but that's difficult to determine via Zoom. She was matter of fact with her answers, but there were some slight hesitations and small sighs during certain parts of the conversation that led me to believe she might be experiencing more emotions than she was comfortable discussing. Overall, Gwen seemed to be of the opinion that there was a discrepancy between the declared purpose and the actual practices of higher education:

> What I would like the purpose of higher education to be is to help develop people who have critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, who walk away with an ability to find information they need, vet that information they need, and continue to learn beyond the classroom, and because of that they can become engaged and informed citizens in society. That's what I would like for it to be. …I think it claims to be those things, but I think at this point… we've shifted a little bit and so rather than thinking about what's needed to make those things happen, we're more driven by what makes our stakeholders happy, which are our students who are paying tuition and our donors that give us money. So, I think there's a lot going on that's being driven by…other forces right now.

As a tenured faculty member who had been in higher education for about seven years, Gwen had fewer years of experience with higher education administration than some of the other participants. When talking about her drawing of herself in relation to higher education (detailed in a later section), she specifically said that she wanted to pick a place on campus "that would be pretty." I got the impression that Gwen wanted higher education to be "pretty," but that she was starting to become disillusioned with the priorities emphasized by the administration.

Peterjoe

Peterjoe and I spoke on September 2, 2020, and she called me from what she called her "dining room office." It didn't look as though there were any lamps or lights in the room, and much of what I could see was dark enough that I wasn't able to make out details. Toward the back of the room was a set of shaded French doors that were inlaid with glass, and a large window covered by a blue and white flowered curtain with a thick, blue border dominated the foreground to Peterjoe's right. The walls were painted in what looked like a neutral eggshell, but the light filtering through the curtain gave the room a cool, blue cast. Directly behind Peterjoe was a dark wooden table, covered by an assortment of odds and ends and flanked by two matching chairs. Beyond the table, as the light faded, I could see dark hardwood floors and a blue, patterned area rug on which sat what looked like the backside of a recliner. There were hints of furniture surrounding the chair, but too little light for me to be able to see anything clearly. Peterjoe was comfortably dressed in a dark cornflower blue sleeveless halter, with her hair pulled into a tight ponytail at the top of her head. She sat at a slight angle to the camera, and from the camera's perspective, most of her focus was directed at a place low on the monitor. I assumed that is where my image appeared for her.

Peterjoe was direct and decisive in her speech, coming across as assertive and confident. Unapologetic about her opinions, she gave the impression of a woman who not only did not suffer fools lightly, but also would never hesitate to speak her mind. She was analytical and appeared to be careful to be fair about her statements, but there was never any doubt about her opinions on a subject. She spent a lot of time talking about the practical aspects of higher education and expectations of administration, and how they related to her day-to-day existence:

> It's also really hard to get to the research part when somebody has to make the world work, and somebody is going to teach their undergrads…This happens at almost every single faculty meeting I go to…Inevitably, at some point during the meeting it will be said, we need to get these laundry list of things done. Who's going to take them up and

> do them? And it's all ridiculously time-consuming stuff, like chairing the curriculum committee, or being a member of that curriculum committee or going to this recruitment thing or, it's all service. And making the world work service. And then, in the very next breath will come, you need to spend more time on research. Or, we have this class that nobody has, that doesn't have anyone to teach it. Who's gonna teach it? So, the practical reality of a day informs my attitude a lot.

A tenured faculty member who had been in higher education for 22 years, Peterjoe had a wide range of experience, and seemed to be of the opinion that it was consequences of circumstances, rather than any actual motive, that was contributing to discrepancies she was witnessing between administrative goals and the goals of faculty.

Madelyn

My interview with Madelyn took place on September 9, 2020. She called from a room that appeared to be designed for working rather than relaxing. A large window with half-drawn shades dominated the wall to Madelyn's right. The light coming through the window was bright, but the resolution of the camera was not high enough for me to see much beyond a patch of green outside. I could see framed pieces hanging on the back wall, but Madelyn was directly in front of them, so I couldn't tell what the frames held. What looked like a metal file cabinet covered in an assortment of objects sat in the far-right corner of the room, and directly opposite were shelves full of books sitting slightly off-kilter, as though they were frequently in use rather than decorative. Adjacent to the bookshelf, along the back wall was a set of double doors that I assumed led to a closet. Dressed in a gray hooded sweatshirt and a multicolored top, Madelyn sat in a black mesh office chair, and leaned slightly into the camera.

She was reflective and attentive and grew quite emotional as she recalled various events in her past. She spoke haltingly, as though she needed to gather her thoughts often to be sure she was saying exactly what she wanted to communicate. At one point she struggled to hold in tears, and confessed, "I didn't know I was going to get emotional about this." At times the interview

seemed almost cathartic for her, as she told me story after story. Madelyn emphasized her belief that higher education is meant to help people better themselves, and that the student relationships were what she most valued:

> I think if I look at my experience with the overall bureaucracy of higher ed, the overall inertia of higher ed, that's one aspect. But for me, an aspect that I try to focus on the most is relationships with students, the relationships I've built with students through the years. And like yesterday, for example, I got an email from a young man, not young but a man that's getting ready to retire…he took it as an opportunity to say, "Hey, Dr. Madelyn, guess what? July 1, 2021, I will retire after a rewarding career". And then he named his school and he said, "Thanks to you". Those are the things that I cherish the most. I don't cherish bureaucracy, administrators who I don't feel are qualified for the position they're in. None of that is appealing to me. It's a relationship with students.

Tenured, and having been a faculty member in higher education for 20 years, Madelyn stated that she had to be careful not to grow cynical and frustrated in her role as she worked to navigate her professional goals while adhering to administrative expectations:

> I think if, as long as I keep my focus on the students, and the ultimate good, hopefully, that my teaching my service and my research is done…I feel very satisfied. If I start focusing on the fact that it's the most idiotic rule I've ever heard of, why are we doing that? Then I'll get really cynical and really frustrated in a hurry. And I've had to really just work with myself to try to keep my focus on why am I here. (Madelyn)

Emergent Themes

Completion of data analysis resulted in six themes and two sub-themes. The following themes use emic language from the participants:

- The feeling of psychological safety is probably gone.
- I'm trying to find value in what I do.

    - I don't have a passion for the job anymore.
- What actually I take a lot of my time doing is administrative tasks.
- I think what we're doing is focusing on the wrong goals.
    - Acknowledging a superior force is not weakness.
- There is a nod to teaching…and an emphasis on research.
- The university is a business and students are customers.

I will further discuss these themes as supported by participant excerpts in the following pages.

I Think the Feeling of Psychological Safety is Probably Gone

"I think when things are so chaotic, and in upheaval, anyone's productivity is going to be affected. And ***I think the feeling of psychological safety is probably gone****."* (Madelyn)

This theme focuses on the internal waves of change participants reported experiencing during their time as faculty. Reported changes ranged from basic process updates, such as modifying the means of applying for a general education designation, to changes as consequential as the merging of colleges. Although some of the referenced changes appeared to be significantly more substantial than others, they all seemed to contribute to the stress levels of the participants in question. Most of the participants in this study discussed the amount of change they had witnessed in the last few years of their employment, and the impact that the constant change had on their ability to function effectively. For example, when I asked Madelyn how administrative initiatives and policies had affected her professional development, she responded with,

> Anybody in either one of our colleges would say it's a detractor… because we've been in a constant state of turmoil. We're going to be merged. What's the name gonna be? I mean, we have been through all kinds of things…Now we're doing unit realignment, which basically means there are duplicate programs, and we all know what that means… So, when the environment is a 'got you' kind of attitude… I'm going to catch you. And I'm going to punish you in some way, whether it's on an evaluation or whatever…It

> really factors into your stress, your mental, emotional, physical health. I've seen it over and over again over the last couple of years.

According to Gwen,

> One of the biggest challenges I've had is being able to focus on my own career because there has been so much transition since I've gotten to [institution], right? So, we've reorganized as a college once, which would be an initiative that came from administration [laughs]. And then, a year-and-a-half later, we were told we're merging with another college, and are reorganizing again. And not that those things maybe didn't need to happen…but, I will say that the effort, the energy, the mental focus you need…the drain that happens when you're in a space that's so fluid and unstable……is really hard, right? I think that's been probably for me the most difficult thing to kind of figure out. How do I focus on this other stuff when all this other area is just chaotic and unstable? I mean, before we reorganized as a college, we re-carpeted our building and repainted, you know? …. When your physical space is disrupted, and then your mental space is disrupted, it's just, that's been really hard…. really hard.

Peterjoe also gave an example of the ways that constant change in leadership and policy disrupted her professional development:

> We had been told for 10 years straight, if you want to save up your professional development money over the years …and if you have a bigger conference you want to go to, like an international one… if you're doing that, and you still need to have a little more money to present at some conferences, then just come talk to me and put it together. And then we had a department head change, or school head change, before the reorganization and before the merger. And literally, the person looked me straight in the face and said, well, you still have money in there. Use that. It was like, okay, well, what about the last 10 years of policy? Oh, well, you just don't need it. You don't need to do that. Knowing

> full well that she told somebody else the exact opposite……Other than that, it's been pretty much, you know, go and do your professional development as you see fit.

Although all three participants from the social sciences referenced the merger, Peterjoe stated that it was "actually a takeover. It was not a merger." This statement aligns with Madelyn's perceptions of her colleagues' feelings about the change:

> One of the things that's a little concerning to faculty right now, the merger, is how that's all going to shake out, what that's gonna look like because their processes are a little different than ours. And I think that's creating too some angst… I have more than once lately thought I'm glad I'm already tenured because I have the ability to not be as concerned about that.

Although none of the participants from the humanities addressed any changes as large as a college merger, CP discussed challenges related to the number of department heads he had worked with in six years:

> For me what's been really difficult is the amount of change in the leadership. So, when I first got here, [Don, a pseudonym] was here and then it was [Winstin, a pseudonym], and then it was [Calvin, a pseudonym], and now it's [Jeremy, a pseudonym]. And, with each of them there's a sort of a learning about each other and our roles and where you are and then, I can't do any sort of long-term planning. It's really hard. It's really hard to do something 'cause [institution] is very slow and… to do something takes a year to two years. And then if you keep changing leadership…it is exhausting. It really is.

In addition to having difficulties making long-range plans, CP discussed the inconsistencies in the way each of his heads weighed his professional activities in his evaluations. According to CP, his current head stated that despite prior practice, people would not be, "…getting the highest rating. Yeah, you have to do something… almost win a Nobel Prize kind of. That's a ridiculous overstatement. But, for me, I guess it would be like publishing a major book." CP experienced changes in the way leadership viewed grading practices:

> I think it was literally my first semester. Don, he goes "You know, CP, your DFW rates are too high" and then I think we must have had a dean change or something, so no one cared for a while about DFW rates, but it was always in the back of my head…And now with Jeremy, he's back to the DFW rate.

He also spoke to the change in the way student evaluations were used:

> It's just always changing here…leadership is changing. Up until Jeremy, I don't think it mattered for student evaluations. I don't think it actually had any impact, but Jeremy …when I went up for tenure, I had one class in particular that had a lot of praise for me and so…he said it changed his mind, that he was going to give me something subtly lower and he raised it up. That's the first time I think that student evaluations ever had an impact.

Gwen also addressed the challenges that changing leadership posed to her efforts to grow and develop as a faculty member. According to Gwen, "I've only had one administrator write my letter two years in a row." She went on to say, "Because there's been so much transition, they're just starting to figure out what I do the first year and then the second year it's somebody else so…" Brian speculated that much of the transition in leadership was due to the introduction of business principles to the world of academia:

> My first department head was department head for sixteen years…and that person has gone on to be the head of schools of music at several other places. So, this person went from being a member of the faculty who did his bit for three years and then became a professional at it……and that's all I see. Now we've had…one person who has stepped into department head position from the faculty, and after a set period of time went back to being full-time person. Only one in the twenty-two years I've been here. All of the rest…have come from the faculty, but they became professional administrators. And some are climbing the ladder, and how do you go from…being a faculty member to a

> department head, to an associate dean, to a dean, to provost? How do you do that? You do the same things that you do to climb the corporate ladder in business.

CP shared the perspective that leaders in academia were business minded, speaking specifically to his department head at the time, "My feeling is he's looking to move from middle management to upper management. And so, I think it's sort of more……he's looking out for himself more than anything."

Although frequent changes in leadership may be the most obvious challenge, other changes in administrative positions appear to contribute to faculty members' frustrations as well. For example, Peterjoe spoke about her experiences with the institution's recruitment efforts in the face of regular turnover:

> My favorite part is they will ask us for the same information, and they will come up with the same plan every time they change. And we'll have meetings about it to discuss how excited they are about it. And I'm sitting in there and I don't look excited, and they're like, "Why aren't you excited?" Because I had the same fucking meeting two months ago with your predecessor. Did they not leave you any notes? I had the same meeting a year and a half ago with their predecessor. Did they not pass on anything? If they did? Have you not read it yet? If you don't read your materials for the program, and you come and ask the faculty the same thing that every other 40 people who've been in your position have asked them, guess what? They're not going to be excited. I mean, you can have a dancing monkey in here, and I'm not going to be excited if I have to have the same meeting because you're new. And you're not going to do anything different. So, don't think I'm going to be excited.

Although the faculty expressed several frustrations with the frequent changes in administrators and their policies, there was also recognition that the administration was feeling its own set of challenges and pressures. In speaking about her perceptions of administration's role in higher education, Gwen shared her understanding of their difficulties:

> We have a lot of administrators, a LOT of administrators, and…(sigh) I would like to see…administration's role as providing that vision. And making that vision clear to everyone and then helping facilitate…everyone's ability to contribute to that vision. I don't know that that's what I see happening, 'cause I'm not always sure what our vision is, 'cause we keep changing administrators [laughing]. And, I honestly think they have their own stressors, and so that makes it hard for them too, right? They're dealing right now with budget constraints. That's a huge concern for them. I get it. They're not in a good position either, and that's the reality they're dealing with. And when…you are so constrained by that type of…issue it's hard to think in visionary ways.

However, despite expressing a level of empathy toward administrative challenges, Gwen expressed that the constant change had taken its toll, affecting her outlook and her motivation to engage in administrative initiatives:

> When you don't know what's gonna happen it's hard to know what to plan for, to prepare for. This latest reorganization, I've just kind of decided I'm less inclined to devote too much energy to it because the last one we got to have for a year-and-a-half, and then all that energy is gone, right? So, it doesn't feel like it's very worth it, 'cause I feel like if I invest it, I don't trust that it'll be worth the investment.

Interestingly, the participant who expressed the most positive perceptions of administration was also the participant who had experienced the least amount of change:

> I've had two unit heads over the course of my twenty years here and my experience with a department head…it's very much the department head says what is it that we want, right? What are our goals? And it's the faculty that then provides the goals, right? And then the unit head tries to facilitate the achievement of those goals. And that is a very collaborative thing… So, the unit head is providing a service for the department. (Eric)

However, most of the participants seemed to agree with Madelyn's assessment that administrative chaos and upheaval had both damaged the feeling of psychological safety and disrupted productivity.

I'm Trying to Find Value in What I Do

"I think part of it is I'm not as idealistic as I once was… ***I'm trying to find value in what I do,*** *and I guess I find value if I can help the student achieve their goals in life…I've almost given up on creating the well-rounded student. [laughing]"* (CP)

As professionals, tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to bring a level of commitment to their work that would not otherwise be found in a laborer. They have devoted years of their lives to studying their areas of expertise and have either proven, or are in the process of proving, their dedication and productivity to their institutions. They work to contribute to the betterment of society through the development of critical thinking skills, the discovery of knowledge, and the act of passing that knowledge and skill on to the next generation. As a result, faculty bring themselves to their work in a way that is deeply personal, which has the potential to make them especially vulnerable to changes in the nature of their work. One of the changes to higher education that many of the participants discussed was the perceived shift in focus, or mission, from one of development and growth to something focused almost exclusively on vocational goals.

Among these participants there appeared to be distinct differences in opinions about the ultimate goal of higher education that seemed to align with the faculty member's affiliation with either the humanities or the social sciences. To communicate these viewpoints most clearly, I have presented the data for the humanities and the social sciences separately.

Humanities

The participants from the humanities seemed to focus on the philosophy that higher education should be a vehicle for self-discovery, personal growth, and self-actualization rather

than a means of securing the vocational skills required for employment in specific fields of work. Brian described the purpose of higher education as,

> …a place to find you, it's a place to find your place in the universe. It's a way for you to learn who you are, who you really are. What you think, how to think. You become human on a higher intellectual level. To me a university is NOT vocational training… Certainly you specialize to a certain extent in an area of interest, but at the same time you are learning about the thought and philosophies of other minds that have gone before you, and you should be thinking about who you are. What is your place in the universe, and what do your interests have in that whole schema? So, to me higher education is NOT vocational. Its humanistic.

Brian went on to explain,

> I consider myself a humanistic educator because I believe that everything you learn, everything that you experience…if you accept it and consciously integrate it, helps you to be the person who you are… In that sense, the purpose of education is to grow as a human being. So, everything that you do, everything that you read, everything that you see, everything that you listen to, every problem that you grapple with and try to understand, if you know how to integrate that, all of those things help shape who you are, and education is valuable. Maybe it's most valuable for that.

Eric seemed to share Brian's perspective that higher education is not meant to be purely vocational:

> I think it has two purposes, both of which relate to knowledge, well, knowledge and wisdom, which are related, but distinct. One purpose is to develop new knowledge, new wisdom, and the other is to disseminate knowledge and wisdom. So, I see higher education as being in the business of expanding knowledge both in terms of its depth, how much we know, and in terms of the breadth of distribution, how many people know it.

Specifically, Eric spoke to the ways that he believes his students are enriched through their study:

> College undergraduates……typically…they're an age where they're out of their home and on their own in a sense for the first time, and they are asking themselves who am I? And what is my life about? What is life about? And how they answer those questions matters for how successful and happy and well-adjusted they are in life, as well as how good citizens they are. How good people they are. Right? … And so, I see part of my job as providing the resources that can help answer questions that aren't specifically tied to a career, but are tied to what does it mean to be a good, happy, successful, human being. And that's certainly not a racket, right? It's not a pyramid scheme. It's providing something that everyone, no matter what they do, no matter where they go, can have as a valuable deposit of their college experience that they can bring into the world with them.

However, even within the quote above, Eric seemed to feel the need to defend the value of his work, arguing that it is not a "racket." At another point in the conversation, Eric pointed out that even if his field wasn't directly applicable to a specific career path, its study provided an opportunity to develop valuable skills that were applicable to employment:

> The clear-thinking skills, the communication skills, and personal resources that I think having studied [field] in depth can provide is beneficial no matter what career they end up doing… It is generally the case that they don't graduate with some clearly identifiable skill set that… qualifies you for this job. Instead, they come up with, I think, a well-developed set of what are sometimes called soft skills, and there ARE employers who value that and know the value of that.

Although he did not state it specifically, Eric did admit that "If there is one thing that I sort of really find myself wrestling with, partly because of my own experience, is that sort of feature of higher education and how that affects people's lives." It seemed to me as though Eric felt a need to quantify the value of his work in terms of employability.

In terms of employability, CP stated that he had witnessed a change in the focus of higher education, and that it had changed the way he approached teaching. When I asked about the purpose of higher education, he responded with,

> If you would've caught me maybe ten years ago, I would've said it's to help students become well-rounded, but I don't think that's the case anymore. I think today it is really trying to prepare students for a better paying job, or job that they would like to work in.

Specifically, CP stated that the goal of creating a well-rounded student was "old-fashioned." Brian argued that, "I think one manifestation of this vocational, rather than humanistic, kind of education is the business model of running a university that has been creeping in, well as of right now it has taken over." Brian went on to discuss the ways he saw these practices affecting students and the nature of his work:

> The out in four kind of idea, that means that you, as an entering freshman, you come into [institution] knowing exactly what you want to do. You declare a major first semester freshman, and you stay here for four years. You stay within that major. You never change your mind. You never flunk or fail or have room to fall down or room to fail. …You are not allowed to explore who you are, and what you're really interested in. You're penalized if you change majors, especially in an in and out in four guaranteed…kind of situation. So, it makes me extremely angry that [institution], and I'm sure most large state universities in the country, are moving toward that vocational model… If we haven't prepared our students to immediately graduate from here and join the workforce …if they're not prepared to get a job right after graduation, then we have failed them as students. And that was a department head speaking.

Brian pointed out that when trying to recruit students, "They're always touting the statistics that people with college educations make more money…over the course of their life than people without college degrees." According to Brian, "It's in the water. It's unconsciously taken for

granted that the reason why you come to [institution] is to get the education that you need to find a good job. There it is; it is entirely vocational."

Brian's argument would seem to be supported by CP's perceptions of his own experiences,

> I have a lot more pressure these days…The things that are not useful for getting a job or not useful for a student's career is downplayed……I get that from administration, but I also get that from the students. 'Cause, I think the students themselves, if they don't see it as useful, they don't really want to learn it…So it's from above and below that I'm getting that.

CP also discussed his experiences with administration, and his perceptions of their values as they related to the mission of the institution. According to CP, when he gets accolades from administration about his program it's because,

> They see the larger enrollment numbers, but they also see the potential for jobs and things like that. No administrator has ever told me you're doing a great job creating a well-rounded student. [laughing] I don't think I've ever been congratulated on teaching my gen ed classes, other than the class size. It's the only thing I've ever been complimented on. Not that I'm doing a great job of changing kids' minds about the world, or…being more open-minded about things…If I get any compliments from higher-ups, it's the class size.

Social Science

Interestingly, the participants from the social sciences seemed to have a slightly different perspective from those of the participants in humanities. Although they spoke to the importance of higher education as it related to the public good, they also spoke to the importance of preparing for professional opportunities. According to Peterjoe, higher education is multifaceted:

> I think it [higher education] has multiple purposes. First of all, I think it is to prepare people to be active citizens within a profession. So, active citizens in a community in a

> world and in a profession. So undergraduate education, I think it is also here in ways to…develop the next Professoriate. So, people that take our places. And then I think, depending on where you're at, and what types of universities or colleges you are, it's also to expand the knowledge of the world. So, through research and thought and writing, and presenting, it's to expand our knowledge of the world….and in the world.

At another point, Peterjoe addressed general education specifically, referencing its importance to the public good as it develops citizens who know how "to think beyond themselves, enough to where they can participate in society, and be thoughtful and engaged…and try."

> I think that…general education is here for a specific reason. And that reason is to develop informed, thoughtful citizenry…to have people who have thought about and looked at the world beyond just their little microcosm of that particular community, but now have diversity class and gone to history class and it's not vocational training. It is more than that.

Madelyn also argued that, "I think that at one time there was an understanding that we exist for the common good. We don't exist just to exist." This statement aligns with the other participants' arguments that higher education serves the public good. However, her use of "that at one time" might suggest that she believes that time has passed.

Interestingly, Madelyn was adamant in her belief that, "Higher education exists for what difference it makes in a person's life. That's what it exists for. And that's not a commonly held view, I would say in higher education." The idea that higher education is a means of self-betterment was something she returned to multiple times during the interview. Madelyn had witnessed the difference that higher education had made in her parents' lives, and that essentially shaped her perspective:

> My mother literally learned to sew, and to cook and take care of her family from extension homemakers. My father learned how to be a better farmer because the ag specialist that was in the county helped him with that…So, I saw a different side of

> higher ed as I grew up than the ivory tower…I saw a practical application of higher education with my parents. And so, I think that experience has greatly influenced my attitude.

According to Madelyn, "Generally speaking, for higher education, I think the purpose of higher education is to provide advanced degrees to allow people to have a successful life."

The differing perspectives about the role of higher education between the participants in the social sciences and the humanities is interesting, and I believe it may be a function of the areas in which they teach. All the participants from the social sciences were members of a College of Education, so they developed educators, a line of teaching that inherently leads students to a career path. The participants in the humanities did not necessarily teach in fields with such clearly delineated routes to employment.

I Don't Have a Passion for the Job Anymore

"It's sort of like an uphill battle…..I'm in a weird place right now. I don't know. I mean, if I were to inherit money right now I'd quit. I would. ***I don't have a passion for the job anymore****."* (CP)

In reviewing the data, it became apparent that the participants were experiencing many emotions. Most obvious were those of anger, depression, sadness, and disorientation. Participants also described feelings of frustration and expressed that they were tired or exhausted. While human emotions like happy, sad, angry, etc., were not requested of participants, they were spontaneously voiced by some participants. Human emotion, however, seemed to have a strong presence in the background of the data reported by all participants. For example, and as noted in the *I think the feeling of psychological safety is probably gone* and the *I'm trying to find value in what I do* themes, statements like "I don't trust," "It doesn't feel like it's very worth it," and, "I'm not as idealistic as I once was," are all "appropriate" expressions of human emotion for the workplace. They also tend to be summaries or outcomes of strong, negative human emotions, such as anger and depression, that are less acceptable to express about the workplace. Participants

also physically embodied signs of various emotions as they spoke, adopting sarcastic tones of voice, raising their voices, or physically gesturing in emphatic ways.

For example, Brian expressed intense anger toward administration over what he thought were futile efforts to improve his educational environment:

> For decades I have tried to make where I work better and have been…treated like crap, and so I have abdicated, have abdicated my possible positions to be an advocate for my students, or for good teaching simply to save my own skin. [pause] You can call that abdication. You can call that fear, or you can call that self-preservation. Maybe it's a part of all three, but my administration, people that I respect, whose opinions I respect, that I believe are genuinely trying to do well by the students…I don't know of anybody, that's above me in rank.

In drawing his relationship to administration (See Figure 1), Brian gave further examples of his anger and withdrawal from any kind of leadership within the institution:

> There is a hierarchy. I could have drawn a pyramid, but there is a…hierarchy of relationships and I have taken myself out of it… You leave me alone. I'll leave you alone. I haven't told anybody that, but that's how I feel.

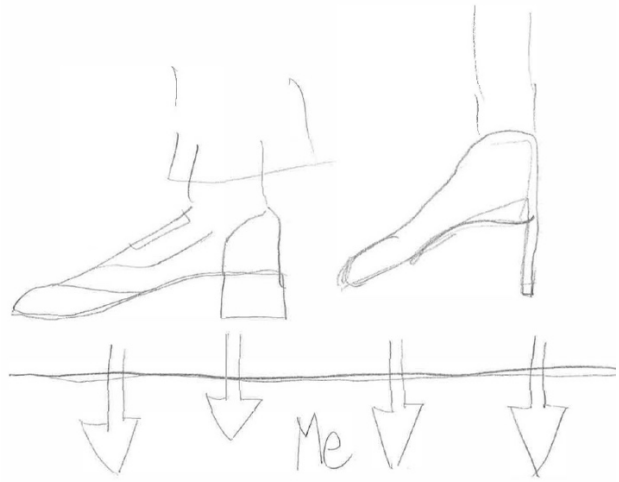
Figure 1

Brian: Relationship to Administration Drawing

According to Brian, he abdicated out of "self-preservation" and "disgust." "I might be a little chickenshit, too, you know. I give up." CP was not as blatant about his anger, but in drawing his relationship to his administration, CP drew feet standing or walking on a surface, with arrows moving downward from the feet to word "Me." (See Figure 2)

Figure 2

CP: Relationship to Administration Drawing



CP was clearly uncomfortable, shifting nervously, and he raised his voice slightly as he explained the significance of the arrows:

> That's the direction everything goes, down. Sort of power and everything. Top down, not this direction [gesturing up]. I mean, I think there's a clear divide between administrators and me as a faculty member.

When talking about his perception of the effects of administrative attention on grading practices, CP's feelings were readily apparent in his tone of voice, and the ferocity with which he spoke, "With the DFW rates I also have less control of the curriculum as well. I find every year I teach less and less content." CP made several references to fear throughout the interview, but when I asked him how he thought his tenure-track status contributed to his fear, anger was the emotion he expressed:

> Well, a lot. Yeah. Although…I've noticed in the last two years I don't give an F anymore. …I guess I'm not totally motivated by tenure. I should be. I mean sometimes after something happens, I go, "Wow, that was really stupid." Unless I have a job in hand, I should probably be a little more careful. But yeah, I think part of it is tenure.

Peterjoe seemed to be aggravated when talking about the constant changes in administrative positions, discussed in the previous section. Her additional comments further emphasized emotions of anger and frustration about what she perceived as changes that inevitably repeated the same cycles, wasting time and resources:

> Don't lie to me and think I'm not gonna notice. Surprisingly enough, I do. Big shock. I can't believe other people don't notice and say something. I mean, good lord, you hired us because, you know, we might be somewhat half smart.

Peterjoe expressed further frustrations about her workload, and the lack of appreciation or even recognition she perceived for the amount of work she was doing, "I have five or six doctoral students, and like, 28, no 25 master students. [pause] Most departments don't have that many students…So that was brought up and they were like, that's a lot. (pause…flat look) That's what was said."

Another point of frustration for participants was the lack of trust they perceived from administration. Although not every participant spoke to trust specifically, many of them described scenarios in which administration exerted strong controls over faculty practices. For example, Gwen described her frustrations in trying to plan a class:

> I oftentimes have the students help me determine what we're gonna do. So, we'll brainstorm what are different tools that we know of, and then we'll say okay, so this week let's try this tool for our class, and we're going to use it in this way. So, it's something that's kind of evolving as I go, and I can't plan it, especially when you have to submit things eight months ahead of time. Like, it's not just a couple weeks before school… To teach a class in the fall we have to have stuff approved by February of the

previous year [laughing]…I don't know even what's going to be possible by then, so that was a little frustrating, personally.

According to CP, this control seems like a rationalization to justify the administrative role:

> I know there's a need for leadership, but I find that in their need to sort of rationalize their position they sometimes cause more damage than they do to help. [pause] I don't know… I don't feel very trusted, and I haven't given them many reasons to not trust me.

CP went on to say that not only did he feel as though administrators didn't trust him, administrators had essentially told him as much:

> They hired me and my credentials and my background … At some point they need to trust me, but I don't always feel like they do. [pause] Many administrators have actually sort of told me that they don't trust us anymore because there are some of us that don't do what we say, or don't do a good job.

Interestingly, Brian believed that his perceived loss of trust and control was a result of faculty abdication, some of which was a result of "laziness," some of which was a result of a desire to be left alone to "do my work," and some of which was a result of "fear." This idea that some faculty had abdicated power partially out of fear may be supported by Madelyn's experience. During our interview, Madelyn spoke to her experiences and the lasting repercussions of working in what she perceived as an administratively hostile environment:

> That stymies your growth as a faculty member…I lived in fear. If the unit head said, "Hey, Madelyn, I need to talk to you," it was normally not a good thing. And it was normally because they thought I had been too outspoken or whatever. Even now, that's my first reaction. I noticed it the other day, after what I had been through, that when my unit head says, "Hey, Madelyn, I need to talk to you about that," I have sinking feeling in my stomach automatically. And it's not because anything that person did, ever; it's because of what my experience has been.

She went on to explain,

> I got so used to thinking somebody's about ready to get ya, and you better be careful. And so that kind of mentality manifests itself, to the point I became extremely, gun shy would be the only word I can think of …Everything I did, I second guessed myself to the point, almost to cause me to be paralyzed.

According to Madelyn, the relationship between faculty and administrators is "key" because an administrator

> …can take a perfectly good, great faculty member even, and cause that person to become so cynical and so afraid and fearful, that they're totally ineffective. A supportive one can take a mediocre faculty member…and they can develop a faculty member out of them if they genuinely care about the person, and what happens with the person and so forth.

CP's statements seem to align with Madelyn's thoughts:

> I've never had this experience with the chair before, where I'm at unease. I've had more sleepless nights… I'm not at ease. It's not a fun working environment. Actually, I liked working with Calvin [Calvin, a pseudonym]. I actually felt like I was a part of a team. Here, I know that I'm a cog that can be replaced… I do have nightmares, you know, that…I'll be replaced by somebody else…I mean, theoretically anybody could do my job.

As professionals, faculty members identify with their roles more intimately than might individuals who have invested less time into their chosen careers. Brian spoke to this when he addressed his fear in relation to his academic freedom:

> At this point in my career (tenured full professor), I'm not afraid of being fired or having my research agenda interfered with. What I, and probably others, fear is being marginalized, ignored, or taken for granted. There also is fear of being denied promotion or fear of not being supported, including financially, by the academic unit. I think all of those fears cause faculty to play it safe with research, teaching, and grading. So, yes, I believe that fear compromises academic freedom.

It seemed as though this fear of marginalization was an underlying concern for other participants as well. Marginalization wasn't specifically referenced, but the sentiment was present. In speaking about the changes happening in her college, Gwen's body language changed subtly. Her posture collapsed some, her voice grew softer, her words came more hesitantly, and she seemed generally more withdrawn than during other parts of the interview:

> I think, um, right now there are a lot of decisions being made and they're gathering input, I guess, through, like, surveys [pause] potentially [pause] or they've had some focus groups. And I participated in those things. I've responded to those surveys. I participated in the focus group. Um…I voted on the stuff that's come out that needs to be voted on…and, I don't kn…I don't…I guess I don't really know, if it's being, if that information is really being used. Or I, I don't, don't know. I've offered to be on a committee. I volunteered to, to be on one and, and my administrators forwarded my name to the dean, and the dean chose somebody else. [pause] He didn't want me. I don't know why, um, but wanted somebody else instead, so…

CP admitted he lived with the fear that administration would take his program from him:

> I mean they have every right to do it… so I do have that fear because that's the one slight thing I still have control over. I mean, it's still very slight, but for the most part, I still have it. It's a fake control, 'cause I'm sort of like that king with no clothing. I know I don't actually have any power, but I have the illusion of power at least.

CP also alluded to his fear of marginalization when he discussed his efforts to gain a general education designation for his class, and how it affected his role as a professor:

> I know some people that don't do what they claim for the gen ed, but I absolutely do…now I have to write a syllabus that doesn't reflect how I would write a syllabus. So, I have no control of what I write on a syllabus. And then, not only that, if I follow the syllabus, like I did in that grade appeal, it gets overturned…It was one of my biggest fears. It feels like high school is creeping into college… I feel like high school teachers

don't really have control of what they teach or…you know, a lot of control is taken away from them. And I'm starting to feel like that's happening now.

What Actually I Take a Lot of My Time Doing is Administrative Tasks

"…we should really embody the things that we know about those areas in our own teaching practices, but that oftentimes takes… time to develop. I think ***what actually I take a lot of my time doing is administrative tasks****."* (Gwen)

Throughout these interviews, one of the most consistent discussion points was time and its role in the life of a faculty member. Participants stressed that one of their primary requirements was the time to engage in the research, writing, and reflection necessary to be productive academics. However, in addition to the traditional work expected of faculty, many of the participants indicated that they were spending substantial time carrying out more administrative tasks, which ultimately compromised their ability to work effectively in their professional capacity of teaching, research, and service. Time, or the lack of it, was an issue that was addressed by nearly every participant. Eric stated that time was a critical piece for him as a faculty member:

> Mainly, what I need for my research is the time to do it, and the computer [laughing] right? And access to the library and journals and books and things like that. Because that's the nature of my field. So, you know, time to think, time to write, time to read.

Gwen shared much the same sentiment:

> We need space to just think about ideas and have conversations about ideas, and come up with innovative ways to deal with stuff, right? That takes time. That takes time to just kinda sit and marinate in thought and have conversations.

Madelyn specifically said, "Oh time…time is a big key." Yet many of the participants expressed that they lacked the time to do what they considered the work of a faculty member. Gwen expressed a desire to

> …focus in on developing our research, developing our ideas…having those kind of rich conversations with students and colleagues and peers…it's that thinking, right? And a lot of times when you're thinking, you're not producing something hardcore. That piece that gets produced……happens somewhere down the road, and it eventually gets there but you have to work towards that. So, there's a lot of time spent just kind of engaging with … the what ifs or what abouts, and how does this idea connect with that idea?... We study learning and motivation and teaching, and so we should really embody the things that we know about those areas in our own teaching practices, but that oftentimes takes… time to develop. I think what actually I take a lot of my time doing is administrative tasks.

According to Eric, part of the work of an administrator is finding ways to provide faculty with the space and time they need to be productive:

> I think their [administrators] primary job is to serve the mission of…the university and it is the faculty who are directly engaged in doing that mission. And one aspect of the administrators' job, in terms of serving the mission of the university, is to enable the faculty to focus on that mission by doing the stuff that would be a distraction.

Yet, participants stated they spend a significant amount of time seeing to tasks that are not directly related to their stated responsibilities as faculty, those of teaching, research, and service. Both Gwen and Peterjoe addressed the time they spent recruiting students. According to Peterjoe,

> Our recruiters will go out to places and talk to students at high schools, but not about specific programs, just about the college in general. And they want the faculty to do a bunch of the recruiting, even though they, yeah.

Gwen described how the time she spent recruiting affected her work, and the ultimate consequences to the program:

> We've been told we need to help out with recruitment… when do I find time in the day to do that? Kind of let us do our thing, which is supposed to be research and teaching and advising and we would build the program that would attract students of high caliber. And

> we would …be able to have a large pool of applicants to select from rather than going out and trying to…pull people in that maybe it's not always the best fit, but we're trying to recruit them, so we have students to fill classes…That becomes a real challenge as well.

CP did not address recruiting, but he spoke to other administrative expectations, "They also give you lots of busy work, you know. I fill out a lot of paperwork that is just… a waste of time. Even applying for grants takes a lot of time." Some of this "busy work" seems to be related to changing practices in the institution, such as getting classes approved for a general education designation, "They keep changing the rules on it… even how you apply for it and how you maintain it. That is constantly changing" (CP), or dealing with systems changes. Gwen related her experiences with trying to change the format of a class:

> We have to get that approved [laughing]…So, I had to do a course deviation to get that into Banner in the way that needed to be……and I had to get that approved by administration. And I had to jump through a bunch of hoops to get that to happen, even though I'd been teaching the class that way for four years, you know. [laughing] There was never complaints about it. It took me three attempts to get that approved officially by administration because they wanted to know what are you doing in these online times, and how are you accounting for your minutes, and… (sigh) It was frustrating.

Many participants expressed frustration and dissatisfaction with the amount of time they spent "making the world work" (Peterjoe) rather than focusing on teaching, research, and service. According to Peterjoe, this increase in tasks was a relatively recent development, and ultimately a result of administrative decisions to restructure staff, "Rearranging the support for faculty has been one of the most drastic policy changes over the years from administration, and it has massively affected the work of a faculty member." Peterjoe went on to say,

> The policies that they implement in relation to what they do has changed drastically over time… They've siloed staff into more specialized areas and removed staff and support from the general faculty and lower-level administrators. Because forever ago, when I

started in higher ed, as a masters and doc student, out of 20 faculty they would probably have five or six administrative assistants, or secretaries, or clerical people, who would… keep their email cleaned up, and, you know, get them the correct stuff from their email …and respond to students' random question of what time is the final?

Peterjoe stated that rather than a ratio of one administrative assistant to four or five faculty members, she is now seeing something closer to a ratio of one to 20, "The example of 20 people and like four or five, maybe six… administrative assistants or clerical people, or whatever you want to call them, now it's one." CP described his perceptions of administrative offices, and the contrast he sees between their level of support and his:

> It's incredible, you know, when I go to their [administrators] offices, just how much nicer they are [laughing]. And not only that, they have office assistants! Literally, almost like a one to one or two to one ratio. That's the amount of support that they have, and it's the complete opposite experience that I have here.

According to CP, this disparity contributes to his feeling that administrators see him as "being beneath them." This perception that faculty are beneath administration seemed to be shared by Brian, who stated that administrators may have been faculty at one time, but "they climbed out of that."

Administrative decisions can have serious consequences, and some of the participants spoke to the effects of fewer staff members. Gwen discussed the tasks that she must oversee, and how that affects her productivity as a faculty member:

> We have lots of talking with students about a plan of study or what classes they should take…I've spent many times going over the classes that are listed in Banner that I oversee, and do they have the right instructor listed? Do they have the right enrollment listed? And, are they going to meet at the time that we can actually have them, and…I don't know how many back-and-forths we have over this class, still doesn't have the right instructor in Banner, and, oh, Canvas has two instructors listed in Canvas, but

there's really one, and so I get this person taken out. That kind of stuff EATS away at our time. And even if those are little tasks that don't take much time, you're mentally exhausted by the time you get them all done, that then the thinking stuff that you're supposed to do is harder to do and maybe not as productive.

Peterjoe stated that she believed the dearth of time faculty experience because of a lack of staff has compromised academic freedom. She did not believe that compromise was intentional, but a practical result, nonetheless:

> We do not have staff. And, because of the way universities have gone over the years, staff have become more specialized, and or been reduced, partially because of personal computers, partially because of other things. But, because of that, more clerical things are … being done by faculty. So, the intent of academic freedom is still there. Application or practice of it is not because all of this other stuff in the world that is going on at universities.

Despite the time and energy being invested into accomplishing these "making the world work" tasks, the participants' perception was that their efforts go unacknowledged. Peterjoe summed it up succinctly, expressing both anger and frustration:

> Different people in the university will call making the world work at the university, like course action forms, and MP or curriculum committee, they don't call that service, they just call it nothing. I'm like, well, you are calling it nothing. And you're giving nobody credit for it. That's why I'm doing most of it. So, you can just, you know, bite me.

Eric believed that his department head supported his work as a faculty member by "…freeing the faculty up to do what they're supposed to do, and by taking on these burdensome tasks that would be a distraction." However, he acknowledged that, although it was important for administration to evaluate faculty performance and how it is serving the mission of the institution, he believes that some of the requirements associated with that evaluation are essentially busy work:

> Another role that administrators can serve, and they do serve, is to evaluate how well individual faculty…are serving that mission. And I think that is an important role of administrators, right? I think it maybe … it goes overboard when that oversight role distracts from the mission.

As an example, Eric volunteered, "I'm a committee chair, so when I could have been working on [laughing] my work…the teaching and scholarship, instead, I'm doing these things, and it ends up being a distraction." On-the-whole, however, Eric felt he had the "time" and the "space" to do his work. Other participants felt differently. Madelyn stated that,

> I think providing the resources we need to do research is one area where often administrators don't do enough, in my opinion. If you really want somebody to be a prolific writer and scholar, you're going to have to provide some kind of support to them.

Peterjoe argued that although she believed administrators' intent was to give faculty the time and space they needed, it wasn't being executed effectively. As an example, she talked about the experiences she had with a provost:

> He, at the beginning, kind of came up with the "Let's make sure you have time for doing good research." Now I don't see any of that, even from him. It's more just like trudging through the world and trying to get going.

I asked Peterjoe if she thought the provost meant it when he told the faculty he wanted to make sure they had the time to do their research, and she responded with, "I think he really wants to mean it. I don't think he has a clue how to. So, I think he wants that for people, but he has no idea of a practical way to do that." She then went on to describe the difficulties administration faced when trying to assure faculty have time:

> If you took everybody in our school or department.. and randomly picked one, the day in the life of that person is going to look vastly different than a day in the life of another one. Because…say you have 20 people in a department, and three of them will just look straight at you and say, "No, I'm not going to do that because I'm going to spend the time

> over here writing and working with my students, or my doc students, so we can pump out more articles." …Let's say…10 of them are untenured, and so the school head or department chair will say, "Oh, no. We're not going to have them do that. They need time to get their classes together and to get the research going, and to write and so they can get tenure." Well, that leaves six people to do the work of 20… literally take me and one other person out and we're going to look so vastly different you're gonna think we're from different universities. So, I don't think he knows how to do that, other than support somebody who just says, "No, screw it. I don't care if you get anything done. I'm gonna do my own thing." And that's really not what he's trying to do at all…That's the effect of what happens, though.

It is a complicated problem, and complicated problems require innovative thought. Gwen addressed the challenges administration faced in trying to fix the issue. Specifically, she believes the institution is so focused on immediate problems they fail to effectively develop solutions and vision that will enable the institution to achieve its mission:

> The current climate just makes it really hard. It's kind of like what I said earlier, where we need space to just think about ideas and have conversations about ideas and come up with innovative ways to deal with stuff, right? That takes time…Right now everything seems so critical and so urgent all the time when it relates to funding, and …those metrics and assuring our stakeholders that they're getting their money's worth, and so it's hard to have time to think differently. And how to really address these problems.

I Think What We're Doing is Focusing on the Wrong Goals

"It's all about funding. ***I think what we're doing is focusing on the wrong goals****, right?"* (Gwen)

Faculty members and administration have different roles within a university, so it seems obvious that they would have different foci. Administrators are responsible for making sure that operations run smoothly, and that the bills get paid. Faculty, on the other hand, are the curators

and disseminators of knowledge. On the surface, these are not responsibilities that would appear to conflict. However, the participants in this study discussed several times in which administrative values affected the way the faculty went about their work, perhaps particularly in terms of how administrators value or devalue the work of faculty members.

One of the things the participants discussed was administration's business-oriented focus, which "…lends itself to favoring quantifiable evaluative measures over unquantifiable ones" (Eric). This quantitative focus is evident in the ways administration evaluates faculty. For example, CP talked about the administrative attention he received for an article he wrote for a popular journal:

> I've published a lot in my lifetime, but the one thing that's gotten the most attention… about 2,000 people read it every month…it was just a popular online kind of thing, but they [administration] noticed it 'cause they can actually track it, 'cause they can see how many people read it. I got invited to something that really should be very prestigious; a major university in England invited me to talk and no one cares about that. [laughing]

CP's experience seems to support Eric's argument that the use of the business model was affecting administrative perspectives in faculty evaluation:

> You also get things like, someone who's going up for tenure writes a really great, interesting, wise paper that is published … in a fairly small niche sub-discipline journal that has a very narrow distribution, but is going to be read by the other specialists in the field. But the journal doesn't have a high-impact number… So, if you're thinking about…this person's value or this person's contribution in terms of, has this person expanded our wisdom and made an impact in terms of enriching our wisdom, you'd be more likely to look at … quality of the work itself… But in the business model you'd ask, okay where was that paper published? What is the impact factor of that journal? (Eric)

Participants talked about the use of student evaluations, and their role in the evaluation of faculty, as well as their potential effects in the classroom:

> Teaching evaluations should be, in my view, purely qualitative, right? Not a numerical scale of one to five sorts of things because that really doesn't …provide actual feedback that can be used. On a scale of one to five this teacher got a five for clarity…That tells me something, right? That they [students] at least think they understand what I'm saying [laughing], and maybe they don't, but they think they do [laughing]. But, that numeric value can be used evaluatively in assessing teachers according to quantitative measures and so it gets the prioritization. And it's obvious that there's some connection between the grades that you give, how you evaluate the students, and these numbers, right? Even if there's not a one-to-one connection or any sort of direct connection, there's some connection and that's going to exert, at least on a subconscious level I think, some pressure on faculty to be easier graders than they might otherwise be. (Eric)

Gwen talked about administration's focus on "those quantifiable things that are really quick," explaining that these measurements are often used because administration lacks the time to look at things on a deeper level. Like Eric, she spoke to the use of student evaluations:

> It's an easy metric to use, right? They have a hard, fast number so it gives you something to hold onto…specifically, and it takes less time. I mean …in our school he's gotta do a couple dozen annual reviews, right? And, so how do you get through that quickly? You can't sit and pore over their syllabus [laughing]. They can't come and observe you. I mean, there just isn't time. So, things like student evaluations are quick. They're readily accessible, and...I don't know how accurate this is anymore, but I know in the past they kind of had this threshold …we check to see if everyone's kind of hit that threshold in their student evaluations, and as long as they're better than that they're good. If they're below that, then we take a deeper look, right? So, it's kind of a quick screener. But there's other things that go on, so it's also counting the number of students you have as advisees, right? So, those quantifiable things that are really quick. Or, how many

committees you're on in terms of student committees, maybe. So, there's some of that that gets looked at as well.

In addition to student evaluations, Eric discussed the use of student credit hours as a measurement of institutional success, and the effects of that practice:

> How do you measure success? … It's not always quantifiable and the best approaches I don't think are quantifiable. But… the standard business model works with numbers because it works with dollars, right? And the ultimate determiner of someone's success is how many dollars are they bringing in, right? How are they contributing to the bottom line? Now, as adapted to the academic environment, the bottom line is not dollars, but SCHs [laughing], student credit hours, and that becomes a measuring stick for a lot of things.

In talking about administrative influence on teaching and developing curriculum, Eric reported that he had "complete freedom to design the course," however, the administrative focus on student credit hours prevented him from teaching classes he deemed important to the growth and development of his students. Specifically, he described an instance in which a class he felt was "just too important not to teach" was administratively canceled due to low enrollment:

> Since it's a course that hasn't been taught in a very long time there was no prior word of mouth about it …and it got an enrollment of about ten students. And, I was prepared to go ahead and teach it anyway. That would be great, actually… With ten interested students we could get into real depth, have some really successful conversations about these things and, after teaching the course, if it was a good experience for them, they would talk it up wherever they came from, and then it would become a more popular course. But, the dean basically came down and said no, we cancel it.

Eric went on to say,

> This was an instance in which I felt … this is a course that really needs to be taught, and I wasn't able to teach it because of an administrative decision that was related not to the content of the course, but to the number of students who enrolled.

Eric also made the point that the focus on student credit hours could ultimately affect what happens in the classroom. He speculated that in an environment where the focus is on class size, or student credit hours, faculty might feel pressure to modify their teaching or assessment because, "If you're too hard a grader you might get smaller class sizes." CP spoke to the administrative focus on student credit hours as well, "I'm always being told you know, class size numbers, great, number of students that are either dropping or flunking your class, not great."

Brian talked about his perceptions of administrative values, arguing that administrative priorities were directly related to a business mentality, focused on a steady flow of students rather than good teaching:

> They say they prioritize teaching, but they don't. They want to keep the students coming in and graduating…on time [air quotes]. They want to keep the graduation rate up. They want a constant flow of students going through. So, they don't really care about teaching…That's a commitment to the business model of getting them in and getting them out.

Gwen argued that this focus on student numbers and student flow is an administrative attempt to combat a legitimate problem, but that the attempt is short-sighted:

> I think we oftentimes get, maybe to go back to what you said, we treat the symptoms and not the disease, right? We find little ways to deal with it, like, how do we get more students? That's not…a visionary way of thinking, right? That's figuring out what do we do right now to solve this issue. It's very short-sighted, but it's driven by the very REAL problem of our budget… Our budget has just evaporated in the blink of an eye. What do we do to recapture that?

Brian also spoke to the issue of funding:

> With declining state revenues, you have to bring in money…and we're bringing in more and more of that. And since less and less is coming from the state, we have to get more and more out of the students.

According to Peterjoe, the focus on student numbers is a constant presence, "Oh we talk about retention all the time, recruitment and retention. We have the same conversation, actually, about recruitment and retention, I would say, at least every six months." Brian stated that administration is focused on "attracting students and getting them through the program so that you've got more students coming in behind" because "a constant flow is a constant inflow of cash." According to Eric,

> It's possible that kind of concern and administrative interest in student retention has, over the long haul, over many years, contributed to the phenomenon of grade inflation…It used to be if someone wrote an essay answer to a question on the exam and there was nothing wrong with it…in terms of no glaring errors, but it didn't go into a lot of depth… that would've been a B. These days, if you can't say what's wrong with it you feel a lot of pressure to give them an A for that essay answer.

CP also spoke about the pressure he felt in relation to assessing students:

> If the student doesn't put in any effort, they shouldn't pass a class. I mean…to be honest, we probably shouldn't have students pass 100% unless… we had the best students in the world. But the reality is we don't. But …the pressure's there for me to make sure that everybody passes.

As a new faculty member in an area with a lot of faculty turnover, and in an environment with an administrative focus on student numbers, Gwen found it challenging to not only determine the appropriate standard for student success, but also to take action when students were unsuccessful:

> When you're the new person and you don't have that senior faculty to help you kind of figure out what is the standard? What is the…bar we hold, and students have to meet that bar regardless? It can be challenging to figure that out. And when you find a student who

maybe isn't doing what they need to be doing, it can be very difficult then to get the support needed to counsel that student out.

According to CP, he received direct pressure from administrators about student grades:

> I even get pressure from higher-ups about grades. Either it's because a student's coming from a high-profile family, or because they're getting pressured that too many students are getting D's or F's or dropping or withdrawing. (sigh/laugh) It's not based on whether the students are learning. I can tell you that.

Another instance of conflicting priorities seemed to be a shared perspective that despite faculty interests or opinions about the importance of research topics, administration was focused on research that would result in funding, "It became very clear to me that the administration continually says and advocates for more research, more external funding" (Peterjoe). As a whole, the participants seemed to attribute this focus on grants to the change in the level of government support. "Now, courting donors is way more important than courting legislators. And coming up with outside funding, and promoting that, is way more important than lobbying the governor because we're getting way less money from the state" (Peterjoe). However, despite recognizing the institution's financial challenges, Gwen expressed strong feelings about the way the administrative focus on grants affected her work:

> I have a REAL problem with having to go out and find MONEY to do the job that the university has hired me to do. I really don't appreciate that…What I'm doing then is diverting funds away from people who really do need…maybe they need an MRI machine because they study brain waves, and that's a huge expense. And that should be what grants are for, right? They should be for that kind of thing… not to buy me out of a class that I was hired to teach, and I would love to teach, so that I can go do something else for the time that I should have to do research in the first place.

Although all the participants agreed that administration never told any of them what they should be researching, research that produced capital was more highly esteemed. Madelyn

expressed a passion for doing "…research that's gonna make a difference to teachers in the classroom. If it doesn't make a difference to teachers in the classroom I have no interest in doing it." Yet, she felt administration "pressured" her to research for the purpose of raising funds. At one point in the conversation, I suggested that perhaps administration was encouraging research that brought in funding, but not pressuring faculty to produce research specifically to raise money, and Madelyn responded emphatically with,

> Oh, we're pressured to do so. No, no I don't want to give that impression. We're absolutely pressured to do so. But they've not told me it has to be in a certain area. …They've never come to me and said you need to research this.

Essentially, Madelyn felt as though the administration did not care what she studied, as long as it was profitable. Eric also addressed the pressures faculty feel to choose their research topics based on finances:

> You, as a scholar, are researching in a way that leads you to discover something that excites you, right? That captivates you. What excites you and captivates you may not be the same as what is going to get grant money (small laugh), or the topic that … you're sure to get published in a journal. I think people do their best work and contribute the most to our body of knowledge if … they're allowed to follow their bliss, so to speak…but there is a pressure to choose research projects based on very different criteria than that.

Unfortunately, many areas lack access to substantial grant money. For example, according to Peterjoe, "I work in a field where there's not a ton of external funding. And that's just the way it is." CP blatantly said that, "There are not many grants for humanities" and that administrators "don't value" the kind of research he wants to pursue. When I asked Eric if he thought his research choices had been influenced by administrative ambitions, he laughed and said,

> Personally, I have simply followed my bliss and ignored those pressures. And, fortunately, I have had… immediate administrative…in terms of department head, who have been very supportive of that approach…They share my ideas about that. And, I think partly I've been able to do that because I'm in [field], right? [laughing] And there isn't money.

Eric did, however, discuss his perception of the way the administrative focus on funding affected tenure-track faculty members:

> In general, you have junior faculty being steered away from doing what they love…and I think there are costs to that. …There is a risk that when they're in the classroom they are going to be less exciting, less energized, less capable of helping students to fall in love with the discipline. And, they're more likely to become jaded, and there are long-term costs to that. So, that would be one of the areas in which I think there is a bit of a disconnect between what I see as what serves higher education in terms of its mission and administrative priorities.

Eric's point seems to be supported by CP's statement below. A tenure track faculty member, CP felt as though administration did not support him:

> We're a research one institution, but …I have no funding to do research or to go out and present or…even in the publishing world now, you need help from your institution… So, where they choose to spend their money shows where they really are interested, and I haven't really seen that they have any interest in me flourishing.

According to Peterjoe, this focus on grant money has had unintended repercussions:

> The higher emphasis on external funding is a policy shift that has had an effect because what you can do and how you can do it and be able to get paid for anything has definitely changed. So, that has changed not the intent, but the practice of academic freedom.

Acknowledging a Superior Force is not Weakness

"It's not worth it. I'm trying to maintain in my mind the old motto. ***Acknowledging a superior force is not weakness****. So, I withdraw. I withdraw from the field."* (Brian)

The participants in this study all referenced conflicts they experienced between their values and those of administration, discussing their perceptions of the consequences. There seemed to be a common agreement that much of what they were seeing was a result of a business ideal that focuses on money as the measurement of success, that administrative directives designed to improve and economize efforts and increase funding had effectively, if not intentionally, created an environment in which the focus had shifted from education to income. But how did this shift in focus come to be? Eric was unsure that this focus represented an actual change in the priorities of higher education. Although he stated, "This sort of business model seems to shape the administration's role more today than when I started my academic career," he also pointed out that he moved from a private institution to a public one, which may have influenced his perspective:

> There's all sorts of other differences between a small private liberal arts university and a large public university. So, it's hard for me to, with confidence, say that this shift towards a more business-oriented model of university governance is a change that has occurred within academia.

Brian, on the other hand, had no qualms stating that the priorities of higher education had shifted, and giving his opinion as to why. Referencing a book, Brian discussed what amounted to the abdication of the faculty:

> The author credits what's going wrong with higher education to the fact that we now have a professional class of administrators and that the faculty have, in effect, defaulted… Sometimes they've just given up, allowed it to happen, or sometimes they've fought and lost…I mean, what's the most important thing in higher education right now? Money. Staying open. Smaller state support, more support from the students…How do

> you attract students? Beer and circus. It's down to money, and so I think higher education has suffered greatly from the displacement of faculty as higher education members to a professional class of higher education administrators.

Brian discussed the abdication of the faculty further, going into more detail about the possible reasons for the behavior:

> I think that faculty have abdicated their position in running the university. Sometimes it's through laziness. Sometimes it's through fear. Sometimes it's, you know, just leave me alone and let me do my work. We've, the faculty, I think, has probably allowed it to happen, but then, that's not to say that there haven't been hostile takeovers too.

Gwen related one example of a clash of opinions that led to faculty acquiescence:

> I do know our last assessment report…I know that there was some frustration with feedback that was given from administration on, you need to take this part out. This isn't relevant. And we were like, this tells our story. This is why we do think it's relevant, and it is important to how we assess our program. It matters but…we were told to take it out-delete it. And, so there is some frustration there.

Ultimately, despite their objections, the faculty gave in and made the changes because, according to Gwen, "…otherwise they (administration) wouldn't sign off on it and send it forward [laughing] you know?" Madelyn shared a similar story about the removal of collegiality from their personnel document:

> Administrators at the time wanted it out of there because they thought it was a liability…they thought it was subjective. The faculty as a whole thought it should be kept. But at some point, you just agree and go on, you know?

It seems some participants felt as though they were forced to give in to administrative directives if they wanted to make any progress.

In other cases, as with Gwen, it may be that faculty give up investing efforts that ultimately seem futile. Specifically, Gwen talked about the amount of energy she had invested in

her school's last transition, and her concern that another investment of similar energy would be wasted. Despite those concerns she participated in focus groups related to the latest school merger, but she wondered "if that information is really being used." She volunteered to be on a committee for the change, but "the dean chose somebody else. He didn't want me." Although she admitted that she did not yet know this dean, Gwen speculated that he was hesitant to put her on the committee because he did not want dissenting opinions to cause problems:

> I'm somebody who often will push, or ask why, or suggest maybe we should be doing it some other way, so it's not always the um…[substantial pause] I don't know. Maybe sometimes it's just easier to not listen [laughing] or invite that voice to the group…if you already have an idea what you want.

Ultimately, she chose to preserve her energy to "sit back and… just do what I need to do in my own space and…let the chips fall where they may."

Other ways that faculty abdicate is through silence. CP admitted that, "With the dean and the president, and the provost, I will never actually say what I think. I'll drink the Kool-Aid and tell them what they want to hear." According to CP, he behaved this way because "they have the power to hurt me," going on to say, "I think they could you know, put me in a closet basically if they wanted to. So, I fear them." In some cases, the participants seemed to indicate that although they may not abdicate their power, they "play the game" (Madelyn), or find ways to meet, or even take advantage of administrative expectations, without substantially altering their behaviors. For example, Gwen described a time she was trying to get a new hybrid class approved. The class proposal, which required an explanation of how all class minutes would be utilized, had to be turned in a year in advance. It took her three attempts to get the class approved. Ultimately, she was successful, but she admitted, "It's kind of like you make stuff up to get it passed and then you do what you're going to do when you get there." Although research is the domain of faculty, in many cases they still see a need to "play the game." For example, Peterjoe described her strategies for completing the research requirements for tenure:

> I had research ideas that……will never, I didn't put any effort or interest in until after tenure, because I knew they would take too long, and not produce enough stuff quickly enough. So, I did research on stuff that was already in existence or already going or could get done quickly. And it was good, solid research, it was fine. But it was nowhere near change the world or passion.

Eric addressed this strategy for research as well, speaking to the importance of choosing research projects based on administrative priorities:

> I've been on college level RPT committees and so I see how in other departments, someone doing really interesting work … failed utterly to get any grant funding, because it's just so, sort of off the mainstream path. And they're in a field where grant dollars matter for tenure and their tenure case is on the line, right? …. Now, I think most faculty in those departments are steered by the departments and by mentors in a direction that basically says follow your bliss once you've got tenure, right? [laughing]. Do the things that you're really interested in then. For now, focus on these more mainstream, or these issues where there's clearly going to be market value to what you produce, so there's going to be private-sector funding available.

CP admitted to playing the game by watching administration to figure out how to tailor his research to their interests, "You learn what they seem to find interesting and then I go towards…either there's more funding towards it or they seem to, at least be more interested in it." Madelyn also spoke to the need to acquiesce to administrative imperatives:

> I know how to play the game of higher ed. I've had the advantage of being on tenure and promotion committees…. 12 years, probably. So, I've seen people get tenured … when they were a top-notch researcher, but a horrible teacher, pathetic. Students didn't like them; students avoided them. They were about as caring and compassionate as a brick, but they live for their research. And I've seen those people, because of the administrative support, get tenured when someone right next to 'em might not have had quite as much

research, but they're a fabulous teacher. They do tremendous service in the community, and in schools, etc. But that was not going to be what was ultimately rewarded.

There is a Nod to Teaching…and an Emphasis on Research

"We have the three pillars of teaching, research, and service. ***There is*** *[pause]* ***a nod to teaching*** *and service* ***and an emphasis on research.****"* (Peterjoe)

A faculty member's role is unique in that they are not only the keepers and creators of knowledge (research), but are also the ones responsible for its dissemination (teaching), and responsible application within society (service). These are three distinctive skill sets, yet the faculty role was designed to promote the synthesis of these three aspects of knowledge in such a way that knowledge is being fully explored and applied. The overall balance of the triad is critical to the stability of the healthy development of society. However, although the idea of a balanced approach to the creation and maintenance of knowledge is theoretically sound, these participants seemed to believe that the three facets of their roles designed to support each of these facets of knowledge were not equally valued by either their institution, or even possibly the greater arena of higher education. All the participants appeared to understand the importance of their roles in the university, speaking to the importance of the combined efforts of teaching, research, and service:

> Without us, we pretty much are gonna shit the bed as the university because it's not gonna work. It's not gonna happen. You can hire researchers all day long, and your university will not survive. You can hire only teachers and your world isn't going to make it a level one or a higher research-intensive university. If all you have is service people, again, you're still not going to have anything happen. Because if you don't have all three, and people having the ability to do all three, and being engaged in it, it's not going to hold up for long. (Peterjoe)

Yet, these participants emphasized the importance of their roles as teachers. Brian stated, "I feel like the only area that I can have any influence is in teaching. And teaching is by far my most

important job here." Madelyn was emphatic that, "My sole existence is service and teaching. Research is just something that I have to do. It's got its place, but it's only as helpful to me as what difference it makes to teachers in the classroom, our educational leaders." Gwen pointed out that, "In the College of Education we do value teaching," and Peterjoe said, "For me, personally, my attitude puts the emphasis on teaching."

However, despite their priorities, consensus was that research was most valued by administration. Madelyn believed that, "There's a lot of focus on research, external funding. I understand that. But I believe, at least in my previous school, teaching was not valued." She went on to elaborate,

> I think, in many instances in higher education, just broadly, as long as I'm a good researcher, I'm going to be set for life. That is not the purpose of higher education, according to me. That is not what we're there for. We are there to…yes, research, find out what current trends are. Yes, read the literature, all that good stuff. Yes, we need to do that. But then, how does that translate into my service and my teaching? If it's broken there, there's no connection, then I'm wasting my time. Not every administrator would agree with that. Now, there's some that would, so I don't want to paint 'em all as being a certain way. I have had a number of good administrators at [institution] and still do.

According to Gwen, her college values teaching, but "I still think that where priority lies is with research." When I asked her to talk about how administration weighed instruction as part of her annual evaluations, she replied with,

> It's so interesting 'cause…that [teaching] is supposed to be 50% of my time. That's what it's supposed to be. It's really 65% of my time, really…or more… probably 75% of my time, in terms of how many classes I teach. If advising is… considered part of teaching, then that increases it…we're not allotted time for it [advising]. But it's interesting, because I would say in promotion and tenure, I do think it matters if you're bad…right? So, if you consistently get poor evaluations, if you consistently have complaints from

> students about your teaching, I think then it will matter. But I think if you're good, it's not necessarily what helps. If that makes sense.

Peterjoe's response to that same question was,

> We have the three pillars of teaching, research, and service. There is [pause] a nod to teaching and service and an emphasis on research. [pause] Which I have a difference of opinion on, because without the undergraduate education and the service, higher education doesn't function well.

When I asked Brian about the use of instruction and research in his evaluations, he stated,

> It's all research. It's not teaching, research, and service in that order. They only really look at it if there are major signs that all of your students hate you. Then teaching would be a problem, but if you're barely competent, they don't care. For official actions, it's all research; it's very little teaching. Everybody knows that. It's unwritten.

In speaking to CP, he seemed to realize in the moment, "You know, it's funny. I don't think I've ever actually had anybody in the room… I've been videoed and supposedly they watched the videos, but I don't think…." Eric argued that, "There is a prioritization of scholarly output. But teaching does matter. If you're a terrible teacher that's not a good thing."

Overall, participants seemed to be of the opinion that administration had an expectation for a base level teaching performance, but that good teaching was not held in high esteem. According to Gwen, "I think if you're bad it can really hurt you, but if you're good that doesn't necessarily help you a ton. I mean, I think it…it helps, but I think what they prioritize is research." Peterjoe shared similar sentiments, "If your teaching sucks it makes a difference. If it's good or great, nobody cares." According to CP, administration is looking for a bare minimum of teaching ability, "I mean, basically they check the videos just to make sure that I'm not a terrible teacher. I think the bar is pretty low." Madelyn stated,

> I think anyone in higher education today would probably tell you, if they're being truthful…in a research institution, research is going to trump the day every single time…

> In fact, I can be deficient as a teacher, deficient in the area of service, as long as I've got enough research. I have a fundamental philosophical issue with that, but I can play the game.

Brian argued that, "Our priorities state, states everywhere: teaching, research, and service. Everybody knows, however, that research always comes first." And, according to Peterjoe, when it comes to instruction,

> The only time it's mentioned, other than doing a good job, student evals are fine, somebody came in your class, one of your colleagues, and they wrote you a supportive letter. Other than that, unless you consistently have low student eval rates, it's not really mentioned other than just at the top of the A and D, in that little box that says, doing good, keep going…There's expectation, but that's about it.

In speaking about the value of instruction and the way administration collected information, participants revealed that they believed peer evaluation was given little or no emphasis. According to Madelyn, "It's not weighed very heavily because it's not even required. That's the part I think is wrong. I can teach my whole career and never be evaluated by a peer." She went on to elaborate,

> I ought to have people in my classroom who are observing me, and I don't know that I would even use the word evaluate…that are mentoring me to help me be better. At no point am I required to do that. I should be; that should be part of my evaluation.

Brian spoke about the use of observations in the evaluation process:

> The personnel committee are supposed to have several people visit and sit in on your classes and there's an evaluation sheet, checklist of how well you did this and how well did you do that …. But nobody takes them really seriously [laughing] No one has ever sat in and watched one of my lectures. Even for both of my promotions, they were videotaped…I have never had anyone sit in on a class of mine and listen to one of my lectures, and watched me teach for an entire period. No one, in twenty-two years.

When I asked the participants about the use of student evaluations, they seemed to be of the opinion that student evaluations carried little weight unless they were overwhelmingly negative. According to Peterjoe,

> The student evaluations are important in the yearly A and D process, mostly just to say, yeah, you're doing stuff and you're fine. And if they're negative, then they become much more important. Basically, they're there to say you don't suck. Keep going. They have virtually no weight.

Brian believed that, "They're just one piece of info that may or may not be slipped into you're A&D. And things in your A&D might go into your letter." He did not think they carried much weight, "Because research is much more important than teaching." Gwen acknowledged that negative student evaluations could impact faculty, but that positive evaluations carried less weight, "I know of somebody who didn't get reappointed…had…not such good teaching evaluations, right? And, so I do think it matters but, I also don't know that we value it at the other end, when it's good, quite as much." Of course, as discussed earlier, CP related an instance in which an administrator told CP that the administrator had given CP a higher evaluation than he otherwise would have received because of positive student evaluations. However, CP was under the impression that was the first time student evaluations affected his evaluation in any way.

Overall, participants seemed to believe that teaching received little administrative attention because administrators were much more focused on research. According to Madelyn, "In higher ed, typically research is going to outweigh everything else. And it shouldn't be that way." Brian was of the opinion that this emphasis on research was a result of a focus on funding that was directly related to a business mentality. From his perspective, as long as faculty were successfully advancing students through their programs, administrators were not worried about instruction:

> In a sense, unless they're creating roadblocks for students by having high DFW rates, they [administrators] don't care, because what they really care about is you getting grant

> funding…and bringing in money, which is a business ideal, not an educational ideal. So, they pay lip service to teaching, but…what is it that they really care about? [counting on fingers] Income [pause], income [pause], and [pause] hmmm, income.

At the same time, Brian admitted that some of the emphasis on research might be related to the fact that outside peer reviewers "can't review teaching."

According to Peterjoe, this focus on research may be a shift that has occurred over time, but she was unsure because the shift in focus she witnessed could be a factor of a different institution, or a different role on her part:

> At other places, it was a bit different. And I was kind of in a different bubble. But here I see lip service to a lot of undergraduate education and focus on graduate education and research. So…I see a lot of similarities that administration has toward my understanding or view of higher education of expanding the knowledge of the world and preparing the next professoriate. But, I see a complete diversion of…the use of this, when it comes to undergraduate research, undergraduate teaching, and service.

When I asked Madelyn why she thought administrators were so focused on research, she responded with,

> That's the profile that they want… we want to be a tier one research institution. We want to be able to say we brought in x million dollars-worth of funding. Those are the things that we tend to want to praise. And I don't think that administrators are…I don't know if they were, I wouldn't say they, [pause] [sigh] I don't know if they purposely set out to send that message, but they do. For the most part, most of them do.

The University is a Business and Students are Customers

"The impression I have is that the higher you go up the administrative ladder, the more you have career administrators who haven't been faculty for a long time, the more kind of business model of academia prevails. That is that ***the university is a business and students are customers****, and they're delivering a product."* (Eric)

Although they shared many similarities with corporations, until recently there was a general consensus that universities and colleges were unique institutions separate from a business model. Students and professors existed in a kind of relationship that most closely resembled an apprenticeship or contractual obligation. Both parties had expectations of and responsibilities to the other. However, in modern society the idea of college as a business has become much more ubiquitous, and even those institutions that most rigorously defend their identities as hubs of education exercise business practices, and serve students who will readily identify themselves as customers, carrying with them the expectations that come with the identity. This shift to corporate ideals brings with it a new set of challenges that institutions of higher education must learn to navigate.

Within this study, most of the participants shared the perspective that the introduction of business practices and values was affecting the nature of educational practices. Although the participants recognized the challenges that administration faces, many argued that the shift in focus has changed the way we view students:

> Business mentality…has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with an education. And yet, we are calling students consumers. We are meeting demand. It's all about money. We have to retain students to retain their tuition dollars because we're getting less and less funding from the state, or, we don't have an endowment…So, in order to stay afloat you have to get more and more students. (Brian)

Eric argued that,

> I don't see academia as a business. I understand that there's money involved, right? And that you need to have a balanced budget, but students aren't customers buying a product. They are human beings trying to expand their knowledge and wisdom and improve themselves.

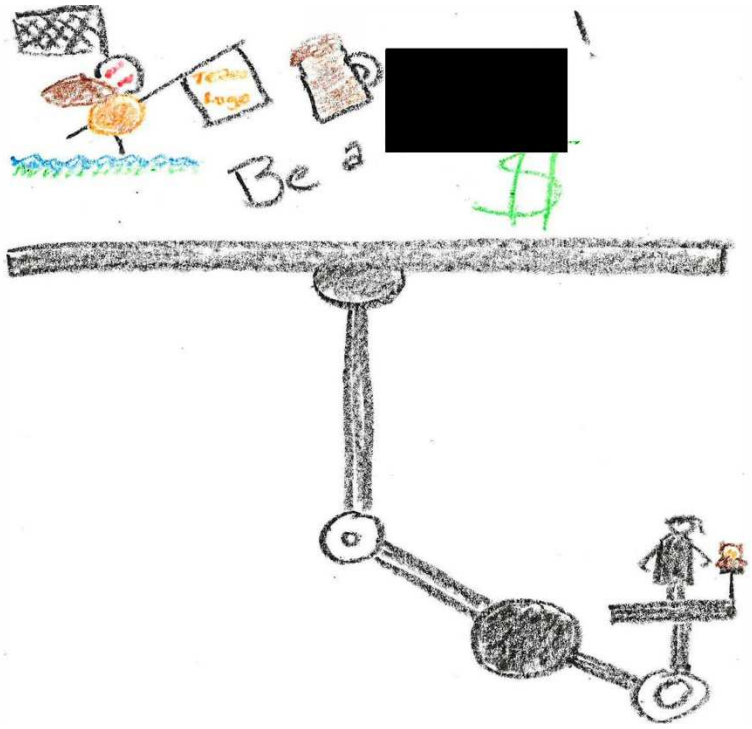
However, according to Brian, administrators have started employing advertising tactics to "attract a certain kind of paying customer, uh, student [sarcasm]."

> To get more and more students, you have to offer them an attractive package. You try to attract them with a lifestyle. If you look at… the advertising for [institution]. There's nothing that says come to [institution] and find out who you are. Come to [institution] and get a quality education. It's all come to [institution] and be a [mascot].

Brian stated that although he believes what he contributes as "a real educator outweighs beer and circus," universities focus so much on these "larger and much flashier" aspects of the university experience to attract students, that they diminish the value of the educational component. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3

Brian: Relationship to Higher Education Drawing



As a result of this advertising, and the focus on recruitment and numbers, many of the participants in this study seemed to believe that the nature of the student body and their expectations have changed. According to Gwen, it is difficult to ensure that the students entering programs come in with the right motivations and expectations:

> It's all about having more students enrolled and I think … we have students who maybe are no longer reflecting the… types of students that we want in our classes or feel like are, aligned with the missions of our programs and yet we still…[sigh] It's really hard to not have those students in your program anymore.

As Eric pointed out, the dynamics of the relationship between a student and an educational institution are "very different" than those of a "customer and a business that delivers a product." As CP discusses, there is give and take, and the student has a responsibility to engage and actively participate in their learning:

> I'm very frustrated with the students as well…the passiveness of the students towards learning, the aggressiveness on getting A's on the other side…I get they want that A, but they don't really want to do anything. I really don't have that, very many students that I'm…extremely proud of. I'm expending more of my energy to try to get them excited…It's kind of a weird relationship 'cause you know, I do feed off the students as well, their excitement, and they feed off of mine, but I feel like I'm the one that has to generate more of the enthusiasm towards…everything, and it's exhausting.

I asked Gwen if she thought current practices were affecting the caliber of students coming into the program. She responded with,

> I would say yeah, probably the caliber of students and that can mean a lot of things. It can mean their aptitude, right? Certain skills are needed to be successful in graduate school, but there's also kind of attitudes as well, right? So those are two different things. There can be that kind of entitlement position, you know. And so, if you don't have the skills AND you have that entitlement kind of perspective then it's really hard to help that student progress in the way that they need to versus a student who maybe doesn't have the skills but has that attitude of, but I'm really here to work really hard and I just need support. There's different things going on there, and retaining one student versus

retaining the other student creates different burdens in the system and undermines the integrity of the program in different ways.

Madelyn spoke to a specific incident in which a student believed that they had essentially purchased a degree:

> I'll never forget an undergraduate tell me one time that I owed him a degree. I said, "My friend, I don't owe you anything other than to be the best instructor I can be"…He felt like his parents had paid X amount of dollars, and he had a degree coming…and my answer to that is, we don't take a diploma and go to Staples and make copies of it. It's gonna have your name on it, and so it's about what you learn.

According to CP, the constant use of student evaluations has contributed to his impression that the student is a customer:

> We've sort of gone into the customer service business, you know. A student can write something terrible…it's like Yelp. They can say something terrible. Not only that, they can go on to Rate Your Professor. I mean that's hurtful too. And then, if they're really not happy, they can go to your "manager" [using air quotes].

Madelyn argued, "Teaching's more than my student course evaluations, needs to be." Eric speculated that grading practices may have changed as professors' focus on keeping students happy to secure good course evaluations:

> I think there has been this gradual grade inflation shift over the decades that what used to get B's now gets A's. I don't know everything that's to blame for that, but certainly it is the case that student teaching evaluations are taken into account and assessments. And it's certainly something that faculty think about, right? If you're too hard a grader, then how will that affect student teaching evaluations?

As CP points out, there is often a substantial conflict between what instructors and students want out of a class:

> I hate admitting this, but I don't even look at those evaluations…I actually don't read them for a couple reasons. In the past when I would read them, I actually found out my teaching got worse. Because, I think, students and professors have two different goals…For every class I have a goal of what I want students to learn at the end of the semester. Their goas is to get an A doing the least amount of work. And so, when you try to do what they recommend on your evaluations, what they're really saying is let's make this class easier and…so I stopped reading them. And then also, I pretend that it doesn't bother me, but it does hurt when somebody says something mean. And so, I don't actually look at them.

According to Madelyn, student complaints can carry a lot of weight, and instructors may have to defend themselves, "If you have a student complain, then you're probably going to have to justify the curriculum." Brian addressed a situation in which students complained about one of his classes early in his career:

> Early on… I was having my A&D meeting and he [unit head] had written on his A&D, "There were a lot of really… negative comments about your class…this past semester. So, we need to talk about that." So, when I met with him, I said okay, here is a good example of the dynamic in that class. And I told him about one particular incident, and he said, "Oh, who's in that class?" And I just started rattling off names and he said, "Say no more. It's not your fault. I completely understand. It was the people, the collection. It was that cohort that's responsible for that. I absolve you of everything."

In Brian's case, the administrator was familiar with the students in question, and recognized what was happening. However, that level of familiarity is not always present, and some participants worried about the implications of a customer service attitude. According to CP,

> I think they see students as a customer and, just like a business, they might not like their customer, but the customer is always right. And I find that I'm becoming more sort of like the cashier…or stocking the shelves.

CP went so far as to state that "I get afraid sometimes now when students approach me about grades."

Summary

Chapter IV introduced the data collected for this study, providing detailed descriptions of the six participants in this study, and a summary of the collected university, college, and departmental documents. Next, the chapter addressed the themes that emerged from the open coding of the field notes, interviews, and applicable documents. The themes included:

1. I think the feeling of psychological safety is probably gone.
2. I'm trying to find value in what I do.
    a. I don't have a passion for the job anymore.
3. What actually I take a lot of my time doing is administrative tasks.
4. I think what we're doing is focusing on the wrong goals.
    a. Acknowledging a superior force is not weakness.
5. There is a nod to teaching…and an emphasis on research.
6. The university is a business, and the students are its customers.

Chapter V will discuss these findings as they relate to the research question, and sub-questions:

How do tenure-track and tenured faculty members at a research university perceive that contemporary administrative oversight influences their research and teaching?

a. In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight has changed the nature of their work during their time as tenured or tenure-track professors?
b. In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight impacts their expected academic freedom?

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

To this point I have discussed the purpose of this study and the literature pertaining to the role of faculty, as well as the introduction to the setting of higher education of managerialism and its inherent business practices. I discussed the methodology, including the collection of data, the selection of participants, analysis, and the resultant themes.

Within this final chapter I will discuss the findings of this study, as well as their place within the existing literature as related to my research question: In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight changed the nature of their work during their time as tenured or tenure-track professors? In latter sections I will address implications for research, practice and theory, concluding with a discussion of the limitations of the study and the potential for future research.

Case Study Findings

Analysis of the data collected for this study resulted in four major findings and multiple sub-findings. My research sub-questions specifically considered participant perceptions of the influence of contemporary administrative oversight on teaching and research as one question and academic freedom as a second question, and this structure provided scaffolding for the design of my data collection; however, I found that trying to utilize the same scaffolding as the means of *presenting and discussing* my findings proved inadequate. Within my data, the concepts of research, teaching, and academic freedom were so interconnected it was necessary to consider them as a whole or risk painting a picture that fails to capture the symbiotic nature of the issues,

leaving a wide berth for misinterpretation of the participants' perceptions of their experiences. Furthermore, these findings were heavily influenced by the societal circumstances as they related to the pandemic, politics, and recent institutional events. I discussed these contextual factors in Chapter IV. Thus, I will discuss my findings, which follow, using only my main research question as a guide.

1. **Faculty participants perceived indirect administrative influence on research, teaching, and academic freedom that changed the focus, nature, and outcomes of higher education and their roles within it.**
    a. Participants perceived administrative focus on research had less to do with the pursuit of knowledge than with the pursuit of funding and reputation.
    b. Faculty felt pressure to meet administrative expectations regarding student enrollment and retention, creating challenges in maintaining program integrity.
2. **Faculty perceived a shift to a business model with related organizational outcomes that changed their positions and roles within the organization.**
    a. Faculty spent much of their time overseeing what amounted to clerical tasks, robbing them of the time and energy they felt should be devoted to research and instruction.
    b. Some faculty perceived a hierarchy in which they were the bottom rung.
    c. Some participants saw themselves as easily replaceable, comparing themselves to low-skilled laborers.
    d. Some participants suggested administrators deliberately avoided working with faculty they believe less likely to support the administrative agenda.
3. **A shift in perception to the student as a *consumer*, and a focus on *customer* service, created environments in which faculty felt pressured to meet specific measurables that cannot account for qualitative assessment of learning.**

a. Participants felt pressure to compromise learning objectives in favor of student preferences to avoid having classes administratively canceled due to low enrollment.

4. **Most participants *spontaneously* expressed unsolicited, negative emotions or perceived losses of power.**
    a. Some participants felt marginalized and neglected.
    b. Some participants existed in a miasma of fear and anxiety related to administrative oversight.
    c. Constant change left faculty feeling anxious, confused, exhausted, and defeated.

Discussion of Case Study Findings

Faculty Participants Perceived Indirect Administrative Influence on Research, Teaching, and Academic Freedom That Changed the Focus, Nature, and Outcomes of Higher Education and Their Roles Within It

In all cases, the participants' initial reactions to specific questions about the role of administration in their teaching, research, and practice of academic freedom were to deny any direct influence. However, upon further conversation, the participants related stories demonstrating that, although they may not perceive direct control over their professional responsibilities, they were dealing with the ramifications of administrative decisions and priorities that were having a substantial impact on their professional lives. Two sub-findings further detail their perceptions and lived experiences.

Participants Perceived Administrative Focus had Less to do With the Pursuit of Knowledge Than With the Pursuit of Funding and Reputation

This is a finding that would be foreseeable if higher education has, indeed, moved to a corporate mindset. However, it stands in contrast to our historical belief that individuals who spent many years developing the expertise that makes them subject matter experts should be the ones to determine and assign levels of importance and priority to their responsibilities (Osakwe et

al., 2015; Sullivan, 2007). Historically, it has been faculty who determine which areas of study need to be pursued, and how to fill the gaps in society's communal knowledge base to pursue the truth necessary for the healthy development of a democracy (Tierney & Lechuga, 2010). However, the participants in this study found that the administrative focus on research seemed more oriented toward funding for the institution than the search for knowledge. This administrative focus affected participants in differing ways.

Within the *humanities*, both Brian and Eric felt virtually ignored by administration when it came to their research, and they speculated that lack of funding in the humanities provided the protection of administrative neglect. It was only the potential of grant money that piqued administrative interest, and it was this potential that lent itself to the pressures associated with administrative scrutiny, whether good or bad.

CP also addressed the lack of administrative interest in his research, but he viewed that ambivalence as *negative*, frequently lamenting the lack of support. As a tenure-track member of faculty, CP felt intense pressure to meet specific research goals prescribed by the university and his disciplinary area, but he did not believe the university felt any responsibility to assist his efforts to meet those goals. He expressed frustration and no small amount of anger at what he perceived as a lack of support that not only failed to aid his efforts, but actively discouraged the intellectual contribution he was expected to accomplish to both solidify his position within the institution and help the university grow in stature and reputation. In their study of the effects of internal and external resource pressures on professionalization, Rosinger et al. (2016) determined that the nature of faculty and administrative relationships was influenced by the amount of revenue the faculty member generated. The perceptions of these three faculty members align with the findings of Rosinger et al. (2016) in that there was less research-oriented attention to faculty in departments with less ability to generate revenue.

It is also of note that Brian and Eric were both established, tenured professors but, at the time of this research, CP, who experienced the conditions as more negative, was in the process of

earning tenure. Although tenured faculty are generally afforded some protection against administrative interference or disinterest, those faculty still seeking tenure are working to prove themselves as viable, productive members of a scholarly community.

Psychological ownership posits that when individuals identify objects as theirs, whether tangible or intellectual constructs, those objects are absorbed into the identity, becoming part of the self (Dirks et al., 1996; Furby, 1978). Brown et al. (2014) posited three paths to psychological ownership, intimate knowledge of the object, investment of self in the object, and control of the object. Faculty research requires all three elements discussed by Brown et al. (2014), suggesting that faculty may adopt their research as an aspect of self. An imposed modification of one's identity, such as through a shift to corporatization, is significant, particularly if perceived as unsupported.

The perception that administration specifically valued research resulting in revenue-producing grants was also prevalent in the participants from the *social sciences*. Participants perceived more opportunity for research funding in the social sciences than did participants from the humanities and, correspondingly, these participants felt more pressure to produce income. Academics in areas with potential for grant money often find themselves choosing research topics based on their potential for funding rather than researching those areas faculty deem most important for the advancement of their fields (Rosinger et al., 2016). Madelyn is an example of a faculty member who felt the pressure of being at odds with her institution (see Chapter IV).

The research of faculty, as subject matter experts, is generally viewed as the crux of trustworthy knowledge and societal advancement (Neumann, 2011; Goodchild, 2007). *Thus, the administrative focus on grant money over knowledge has the potential to indirectly shape the very development of society*. If higher education places more value on funding than on the discovery of knowledge, then society is subject to being molded into the image of stakeholder interests as universities exchange their researchers, their work, and their very identity for compensation (Eastman & Boyles, 2015; Edmond & Berry, 2014).

Faculty Felt Pressure to Meet Administrative Expectations Regarding Student Enrollment and Retention, Creating Challenges in Maintaining Program Integrity

Although the participants in this study argued administration places greater weight on research than instruction, they acknowledged a strong administrative push to keep enrollments and retention high, an interest they attributed to a focus on the flow of income rather than any educational priority. This administrative priority is demonstrated in a number of ways, one of which is the use of time. Both Peterjoe and Gwen addressed the many meetings they attended about the importance of recruitment, and both lamented the time lost in both the meetings and the actual recruitment itself, time they believed should have been dedicated to their teaching or research. Per the participants, administration dedicated resources to maintain recruiters, an interesting facet of administrative spending given the continual decrease in state support (Fowles, 2014); however, pressure to recruit students was ultimately on faculty, as recruiters lacked the ability to speak to specialized departments and were proving to be inefficient and lacking new ideas that would energize or revolutionize recruitment efforts.

Participants also indicated they were feeling pressured to recruit students who were not well suited to their programs, which aligns with the literature indicating that higher education has shifted to a position in which students are highly sought commodities that maximize revenue (Ehrenberg et al., 2006; Hossler & Kwon, 2015; Joffey-Walt & Goldstein, 2012; Lavigne, 2019; McDonough, 1994). Universities recruit based on a different set of criteria than may have been employed in the past, focusing on financial profiles rather than interests and academic strengths (Hossler & Kwon, 2015). Gwen addressed a side effect of this strategy when she noted the shift in student attitudes and aptitudes, and the lack of administrative support in counseling students out of programs for which they are not suited.

The pressure to have even ill-matched students in a program presents a set of challenges that affect not only the faculty, but the programs in general. According to studies by Saichaie and Morphew (2014) and Molesworth et al. (2009), the increased focus on student numbers caused

institutions of higher education to change their promotional messages from ones that focused on education for the betterment of society to ones that focused on personal gains, endorsing the concept of education for the pursuit of social mobility and encouraging the idea of the student as a customer. Students learn from one another, taking cues regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and attitudes. Class dynamics matter. The professional roles of faculty, who are feeling pressured to not only accept students poorly suited to the environments they are entering, but also to assure these students pass for the sake of retention metrics, are assuredly and significantly impacted.

Faculty Perceived a Shift to a Business Model With Related Organizational Outcomes That Changed Their Positions and Roles Within the Organization

Participants agreed that administration focused almost exclusively on numbers and income, both measurements common to business models and the presence of managerialism in higher education (Gates et al., 2015; Klikauer, 2015). Several of the participants spoke directly to the influence of business practices in their institution, arguing that the focus on income was compromising the educational experience. This observation is supported by the literature, in which multiple scholars argue it is common for administrators to focus on enrollment, retention, and graduation rates rather than on critical thinking skills or cognitive development (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bok, 2006; Brint, 2011). In Field's study on Australian academics' views of outperformance pay (2015), academics argued that business practices geared toward customer service treated education as a commodity, and administrative surveillance compromised the historical purpose of the university. For example, faculty members may be penalized for failing to achieve administrative benchmarks (Gates et al., 2015; Stone, 1995), which ultimately results in faculty inflating grades to ensure positive evaluations and high enrollment numbers (Brint, 2011; Hassel & Lourey, 2005). The need to keep students enrolling and satisfied enough to stay at the institution has created a focus on the idea of the college lifestyle and the personal benefits of a college degree rather than a focus on a quality education and contributing to the public good.

According to Olssen and Peters (2007), this behavior is directly related to managerialist practices as organizations strive to meet the perceived desires of the customer in an effort to provide the best service and maintain a steady stream of business.

Faculty Spent Much of Their Time Overseeing What Amounted to Clerical Tasks, Robbing Them of the Time and Energy They Felt Should be Devoted to Research and Instruction

It was clear that faculty expectations included teaching, research, and service. All decisions related to reappointment, promotion, and tenure were directly related to expectations of professional-level productivity in these three areas. Yet, there was general consensus among the participants that faculty spend so much of their time attending to clerical tasks that they lose the time, space, and energy needed to meet the expectations of intellectual work. Peterjoe specifically addressed the changes she had witnessed within the structure of higher education, arguing that administrative decisions regarding staffing had increased the workload of the professor and created a situation in which professional productivity was difficult to achieve. This perspective aligns with the literature, which argues that faculty exist in an atmosphere of escalating demands and insufficient support structures (Gappa et al., 2007). Managerialism creates environments wherein faculty are expected to meet consumer expectations rather than their professional goals (Gibbs, 2009), leading to a situation in which professional expectations and actual workloads are at odds (Billot, 2010; Gibbs, 2009). Participants addressed the time dedicated to clerical tasks, arguing that even things that were relatively small or easy added up quickly, eating at the time and energy that should be devoted to professional obligations. Although participants expressed dissatisfaction and pointed to the disparities in staff assigned to members of upper administration versus faculty, none seemed to believe this was an intentional slight as much as it was a result of business ideals.

Academic leaders try to emphasize learning while answering to administrative mandates, and administrators attempt to meet practical needs without interfering with the educational process. However, each group is focused primarily on the immediate goals of that sub-unit. As a

result, objectives are unclear and confused. The impulse to respond to pressures by solving the immediate needs of the institution has created a situation in which administration fails to keep the ultimate goal or vision of the faculty, and ideally the institution itself, at the forefront of its considerations, and the mission of the institution slips. As Gwen argued, it is difficult to be a visionary when one is consumed by the immediate challenges. Unfortunately, administrative solutions regarding staffing created situations for many of the faculty in which the demands of their professional roles and the practical requirements of their days were exhausting and frequently overwhelming, creating a situation in which their professional roles and ultimately their academic freedom were unintentionally compromised.

Some Faculty Perceived a Hierarchy in Which They are the Bottom Rung

Some of the faculty specifically referred to the power structure of the university as a hierarchy, of which they were the lowest rung, an indication of a changed higher education landscape. Other participants felt more equality, arguing they are the element that holds the institution together and makes it work, but even these participants described situations in which they needed to compromise their positions on academic issues to appease administrators so they were allowed to move forward with various objectives. For example, Madelyn spoke to administration's insistence that they remove statements about collegiality from their RPT documents. Despite the faculty's desire to include those statements, administration would not sign off on the documents until they were removed. In another case, Gwen described a situation in which administration forced faculty to remove an element from their assessment documents despite the faculty argument that it was needed to appropriately tell their story. These scenarios could be analyzed using Morgan's (2006) theory that organizations are systems of political activity, given the power of formal authority, or the control of decision processes could both be issues at play. In both cases, administration denied the faculty the opportunity to move forward with their preferred processes until administrative mandates were met, an exercise of power in

which administration was able to influence and manipulate processes while avoiding the impression of direct interference.

Some Participants saw Themselves as Easily Replaceable, Comparing Themselves to Low-Skilled Laborers

As professionals, faculty are highly valuable subject matter experts who have spent years honing their skills and knowledge to attain the level of mastery that should allow them to not only dictate the means by which their careers progress, but should also separate them from the masses who lack a comparable level of expertise (Osakwe et al., 2015). Yet, some participants compared themselves to laborers who complete assigned tasks rather than having the power and authority to practice their discipline as they saw fit. They reported feeling replaceable and of little value to administration, comparing themselves to cogs in a machine. The idea that faculty are easily replaceable and of little value harkens back to early organizational models that lent themselves to manufacturing and assembly lines. This kind of mechanistic thinking is directly tied to scientific management, or classical management theory, and bureaucratic organizations (Morgan, 2006), in which the goal was to increase productivity by shifting responsibility for thought and design to the managers while using low-skilled or unskilled workers who were trained to implement specific tasks (Klikauer, 2015). The workers were then monitored to assure the tasks were being properly executed (Morgan, 2006). I would argue future studies could look at scientific management as a potential theory, as it was designed in part to establish control over the workplace (Morgan, 2006). Within scientific management, power is concentrated in what amounts to supervisory roles in an effort to remove subjectivity from the system. However, rather than removing subjectivity, it could be argued that the subjectivity is simply moved up the chain, affecting the system at a much higher level as supervisors make subjective decisions that establish what are meant to be objective processes (Morgan, 2006). If faculty are laborers who are merely disseminators of information at the behest of administrators, then it may be that the very fabric of higher education has been quietly and significantly altered.

Some Participants Suggested Administrators Deliberately Avoided Working With Faculty They Believe Less Likely to Support the Administrative Agenda

Two participants discussed situations in which they felt they were either clearly ostracized by administration as a result of their beliefs, or perceived they were excluded from decision making processes because administration found it more expedient to work with faculty members who were known allies. This study did not provide enough data for a thorough analysis of these kinds of behaviors, but their presence certainly may indicate additional evidence of political systems at work, specifically formal authority; the use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations; and the control of decision processes. These participants believed they were being prevented from effecting change within their organization because those in positions of "power" anticipated the participants would offer ideas at odds with administrative initiatives. As a result, the participants perceived that administrators deliberately chose faculty collaborators who would either agree with the administrative agenda or who would be easy to influence, essentially "stacking the deck."

A Shift in Perception to the Student as a Consumer, and a Focus on Customer Service, Created Environments in Which Faculty Felt Pressured to Meet Specific Measurables That Cannot Account for Qualitative Assessment of Learning

As the message to prospective students has changed from prior years, moving to a platform that emphasizes social interactions, personal good, and the college experience (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014), institutions have come to view the students as customers purchasing a product rather than students entering an educational experience that is essentially contractual in nature (Molesworth et al., 2009). Many of the participants spoke to the development of this dynamic. As an aggregate, these participants made the argument that students view themselves as customers exchanging capital for a good or service. Students assume little to no agency for their development and tend to believe they should be rewarded for doing little. This shift in student perspective is supported in the literature, which shows that students want easy classes and high

grades, and that they value credentials over knowledge (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Molesworth et al., 2009; Rolfe, 2002; Stone, 1995). Administrative monitoring of grades and the constant use of student evaluations shows that professors are held responsible for grades and customer satisfaction, perhaps over learning.

Interestingly, although the participants agreed that student evaluations ultimately held no weight unless overwhelmingly negative, there were also concessions that student evaluations had likely affected class content and grading practices, aligning with the literature which shows faculty will sacrifice aspects of their professional authority to secure high enrollments and positive evaluations (Brint, 2011; Hassel & Lourey, 2005). CP admitted to feeling like a cashier or an employee who stocks shelves rather than a trusted and respected professional, a perception supported in the literature which argues the customer service concept both depreciates the value of the bachelor's degree for students and reduces the professor's role from that of a valued professional to a customer service representative (Gates et al., 2015).

Participants argued that quantitative feedback provides information but not the whole story, as it gives no insight into whether the student actually understands. At the same time there is a connection between the grades students receive and the numeric grades they in turn give the professors (Isely & Singh, 2005; Tripp et al., 2019) which participants admitted exerts, at least subconsciously, pressure to grade more leniently than they otherwise would. This perspective aligns with the literature, which indicates faculty believe quantitative assessment is contributing to the idea of a student as a customer, placing the focus on customer satisfaction rather than education, and ultimately resulting in a compromised educational system as faculty seek to keep increasingly less vested students/customers happy (Gates et al., 2015). According to Ott and Cisneros (2015), academics react favorably to positive feedback and rewards, so assessment tools can be highly influential, causing some faculty, perhaps particularly those pursing promotion and/or tenure, to seek higher ratings at the expense of their professional pursuits.

Participants Felt Pressure to Compromise Learning Objectives in Favor of Student Preferences to Avoid Having Classes Administratively Canceled Due to Low Enrollment

One of the effects of treating students like customers is the pressure to meet demand to avoid cancellation, developing classes students want rather than what faculty believe students need. Per the participants, administration focused on the financial viability of courses, canceling those with what they determine to be too few students. As a result, participants indicated they felt pressured to offer content the students want rather than what the professors determine vital to their field, and faculty felt they cannot grade as they see fit because students will avoid classes if they think the professor grades too harshly, leading to low enrollments and canceled classes. Participants agreed administration never exerted any direct control over the content of their courses, but they saw these connections as indirect means of control.

All the participants in this study made the case that education was meant to help develop students as humans. This is substantiated in the literature. Specifically, education in the United States was intended to develop a population that could think critically and understand and defend civil liberties (Benson & Boyd, 2015). However, some participants perceived a type of mission slippage as they believed higher education has shifted to an almost exclusively vocational pursuit. Both Brian and Eric expressed strong opinions about the importance of higher education as a vehicle for self-discovery and the development of the person, a sort of enlightenment that has been one historical way of viewing higher education (Benson & Boyd, 2015), but both expressed their opinions that upper administration placed little to no value on that kind of intellectual growth. Rather, there was a desire to satisfy customer demand focused on lucrative employment, which makes sense for universities attracting students with the message they are customers and higher education is the primary vehicle for social mobility (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Molesworth et al., 2009; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). CP spoke to the pressure from both administration and students to focus on content that could be directly linked to employable

skills. As a result, CP worked to attract students to his courses by focusing on what the students view as pragmatic skills and requiring less content in response to his student evaluations.

Most Participants Spontaneously Expressed Unsolicited, Negative Emotions or Perceived Losses of Power

This finding is especially interesting because it was completely unsolicited and not directly related to my research questions on issues of roles and responsibilities. However, participants' emotions were direct responses to questions about their perceptions of administrative priorities, research, teaching, and assessment and I believe that we ignore them at our peril. I have no idea what depth of data I could have found had I specifically intended to elicit emotional responses. In that case, perhaps the Kubler-Ross grief theory, or Bridges' change theory, or even psychological ownership may have been more applicable as a lens for analysis.

Faculty at a research university are trained researchers. Although some work in methodological approaches where human emotion is an accepted part of the inquiry, many are trained to separate themselves and emotions from the "data." Many researchers, including those within my participant group, were carefully trained to interact with research in specific and controlled ways, and that training is deep in their blood; thus, emotions are "naturally" set aside and can be difficult to elicit. I do not know what the participants' epistemological stances are, or the depth of that influence on what they shared, but certainly it would have influenced their perceptions on the role of emotions in discussion of organizational/data items. Given their backgrounds as trained researchers, I believe this level of unsolicited emotion within the data is certainly noteworthy and a topic for further study.

Some Participants Felt Marginalized and Neglected

One participant described his relationship with administration as "benign neglect." This was a thread that seemed to permeate many of the discussions. Whether it was a discussion about a focus on numbers and money at the exclusion of attention to the quality of work produced, or an expression of fear that their life's work was being trivialized and disregarded, some participants

felt unvalued. Brian and Eric both made very strong arguments that their lives' work is helping individuals grow and develop into self-actualized humans, guiding people in the growth and development of wisdom, and bettering society through an educated populace. Brian now finds himself in an environment he sees as having no place for the kind of education to which he has devoted his career and his life. From his perspective, all the focus is on practical, vocational skills, leaving no room for the intellectual pursuits Brian sees as crucial to not only higher education, but his very identity. CP told me that he was "trying to find value" in what he did, sharing that he had once found joy and pride in helping students grow, but he had lost that.

My data did not suggest any participant saw this "benign neglect" and mission slippage as malicious, but rather a result of an administrative focus on priorities aligned with a business model. This shift in focus is supported by the literature that argues that the historical purpose, or the "old-fashioned" idea, of higher education is crumbling, and the role of faculty is changing from that of a professional educator to an information disseminator (Brint, 1996; Shaker, 2015). From the perspective of psychological ownership, faculty work qualifies as a target of ownership that ties into their very identities (Dirks et al., 1996; Furby, 1978). Therefore, if what they see as their purpose is deemed unimportant, it follows that faculty will begin to feel as though they, themselves, are unimportant. Olckers and du Plessis (2012) argued that organizations could utilize the tenets of psychological ownership as managerial tools to retain talent and increase effectiveness by engaging in practices that encouraged autonomy, a sense of belonging, and self-identity. However, logically, the opposite is also true. If an organization is engaging in practices that damage a feeling of belonging or a sense of self-identity, encouraging a feeling of marginalization and neglect, the inevitable result is a disengaged workforce and professional ineffectiveness.

This feeling of marginalization could also be viewed utilizing sensemaking. When organizations are undergoing change, leaders must share a message with the organization that helps the individuals within find meaning and a sense of coherence (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991;

Kezar, 2013), and make decisions that result in actions aligned with that message. This synthesis of message and action helps the individuals either construct or maintain their identity within the face of change, crucial elements of sensemaking (Degn, 2018; Kezar, 2013). If the individuals are unable to make sense of the change or are unable to find how their identity fits into the change, the individuals may exhibit resistance resulting from existential discord (Bridges, 1986; Chreim, 2002; Degn, 2018; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Based on my discussions with the participants, and their perceptions that they either no longer fit, or they must find ways to change to fit, it seems that at least some of these participants have not heard a message from administration that helps them understand how they are a valuable part of the "new normal."

Some Participants Existed in a Miasma of Fear and Anxiety Related to Administrative Oversight

Some participants reported a conscious withdrawal from the workings of the university because of constant anxiety and fear. They indicated they were afraid to grade students as they felt appropriate because of the anticipated backlash. One participant spoke to his fear of administrative punishment, and the potential to have his duties rearranged in such a way that the only thing he valued or felt he had any control over would be removed. Another participant indicated her administration was abusive to the point she sought a position with another academic unit. The participants reported sleepless nights and depression, all related to their concerns about their professional roles and the ways they were changing. Of all the things I learned during this study, this might be the thing I found most disturbing—that there are members of faculty living in a constant state of fear makes a strong statement about the health of the institution where this study was performed, and perhaps about the state of higher education in general.

McIntyre et al. (2009) determined that psychological ownership is directly related to an owner's locus of control, focusing on self-identity, self-efficacy, and establishing a home. Faculty feelings of marginalization and being ignored and taken for granted may be a logical result of disruptions in their identity and the sense that their home is under attack. Participants' fears may

be a direct result of their perceived loss of control and threats to their professional status. CP stated specifically that he was afraid administration would punish him by taking away the one course of study over which he had some control; this fear would reflect a loss of a piece of his identity. Other participants spoke to student assessment and the development of classes, and their perception that administration is indirectly taking that control away from them. It seems relatively minor if one is simply looking at numbers and ways to improve the financial situation or reputation of an institution. However, it is not just a course of study or a program to a professor; it is a piece of their identity. Should the roles of faculty and administration fully shift to that of supervisor and laborer, the potential ramifications to the world of higher education are staggering.

Constant Change Left Faculty Feeling Anxious, Confused, Exhausted, and Defeated

Most of the participants of this study reported they had experienced massive change and administrative upheavals during their time as faculty members. As a result, many of the participants were exhausted, anxious about their place in the university, and burned out. They described their experiences with physical changes of their space, changes in administration, and changes to the infrastructure of their colleges, changes that these participants felt powerless to influence despite the ways in which the adjustments would affect their positions and the nature of their work. They spoke of their need to constantly re-learn how to operate within these changing circumstances and the toll it had taken on them emotionally as well as professionally.

This is another line of inquiry that should be studied further. According to Bridges (2009), organizational change involves three stages. The first stage of transition begins with an ending, a loss. At the onset of change people lose familiar ways of doing things, and sometimes even their sense of identity. Then, as the change continues to progress, the organization moves through a time of instability Bridges (2009) refers to as the neutral zone. During this period individuals within the organization are likely to feel somewhat lost, and "critical psychological realignments and repatternings take place" (p. 5). The third stage sees the organization move out of transition, and into its new identity and new beginning. Although these three stages seem

straightforward, change is inevitably complicated and difficult. It must be carefully managed if the organization hopes to achieve its desired results. Good leaders must acknowledge the losses people are facing, help them process their emotions, and support and encourage them as they work to build their new processes and identities. According to Collyer (2015), the very power structure of higher education is changing, which will continue to exert stress on academics as they choose whether to stand against the changes or alter their identities and roles to fit within the new scheme. If, as Collyer (2015) argues, and as this study would seem to suggest, the world of higher education is undergoing change to its deepest structure and philosophies, then Bridges' (2009) change theory may be an excellent lens through which to view how these changes are impacting faculty roles, identities, and work.

What Comes Next?

Given the prior discussion of my findings, I now find myself attempting to understand their significance as they relate to the future of U.S. higher education. The task of relating my data to the future does not occur in a vacuum. How we came to be in this place exists on a continuum with how we proceed into the future.

Within the U.S., higher education has historically focused on the missions of teaching, research, and service, seeing these as means by which we drive societal growth and development (Gutierrez de Blume & Candela, 2018). The heart of these efforts is the professoriate, a collection of academics dedicated to the educational mission. Society has trusted these individuals to discover, create, and share the knowledge they deemed most important to the development of their fields and civilization in general (Osakwe et al., 2015; Tierney & Lechuga, 2010). However, as society has evolved and developed, so have societal expectations, and as priorities have shifted, so have economics. The search for and dissemination of knowledge by the professoriate has become ever more costly and, as government funding has decreased, universities have been forced to look elsewhere for capital. Simultaneously, there is public access to far more information than has ever been possible in the past, and with this access comes a demand for

accountability (Staller, 2022). We, the general public, can easily see the growth around us; we can see how funds are spent, and we want to know how that benefits us. What are we getting for our money? Governments, industries, and individuals want a measurable return on their investment, and institutions of higher education must try to find ways to provide tangible measurements to what has historically been understood as an intangible value (Dumay & Guthrie, 2012; Secundo et al., 2018). It is an entirely new way to assess the value of higher education and, as is typical with things new, early efforts to provide these measurements have proved problematic. Under external pressures for accountability from sources not attuned to the inner workings of the higher education system, we in higher education defaulted to measurables used in other areas of our society rather than determining best accountability processes for the unique endeavor called higher education. However, individuals will respond to assessment systems by altering what they do to align with what is being measured. This can change the inherent nature of the work if the PM system is improperly calibrated. For example, if faculty believe they need to compromise learning objectives to keep student enrollment high enough to discourage administration from canceling classes important to both discipline and student development, then the wrong things are being measured and valued.

This is a new era of management practices and philosophies associated primarily (but not exclusively, e.g., military) with corporate endeavors. To further emphasize the misfit in cultures and missions between higher education and much of corporate America, as we entered the nascent stages of managerialism within higher education, we seemed to draw from some of the managerial practices associated with the earliest recognized stages of organizational structure, mechanistic organizations (Morgan, 2006). Mechanistic thinking and practices originally occurred during the American and European Industrial Revolutions of the 19th century as organizations adapted their processes and structures to allow for the introduction of machines to the workforce (Morgan, 2006). Abandoning the autonomy of self-regulated work within their homes, individuals moved into factory settings where they were employed in low-skilled labor.

Processes were streamlined, and workers were trained to serve the needs of the machine (i.e., the organization), typically focusing on a highly specific task that allowed for efficient repetition of a piece of the process (Morgan, 2006; Au, 2011). The need for independent thought was eliminated for the majority of employees, and the power of knowledge and decision was concentrated in management. This design created a productive and efficient environment, but it was also an environment that was ultimately dehumanizing, reducing human behavior to the robotic repetition that mimicked machines rather than building on the unique strengths of individual talents and gifts (Morgan, 2006). Over time, organizational development recognized the toll mechanistic thinking was taking on the humans making up these entities, and ultimately upon the attainment of organizational mission, and evolved from the simplistic to philosophies recognizing people as the key component to successful organizations. This led to organizational spaces that recognized the need to acknowledge psychological responses, issues of power, cultural concerns, and the endless variables that inevitably come into play (Morgan, 2006). However, in the beginning, before organizational understanding matured, organizations relied on the most basic means of accountability measures, levels of production and efficiency (Morgan, 2006).

Although it would be too strong a statement to argue that all independent thought has been removed from a professor's role, it is interesting that at least one participant in this study compared himself to a cog in a machine, and others spoke to feeling marginalized, scared, anxious, exhausted, and defeated. Most of the participants in this study expressed what could be considered negative emotions and some indicated they had given up the fight to maintain their role in an effort to protect their emotional health. These thoughts and feelings are not those one would expect of a professor who controls his or her own teaching and research. The participants perceived a switch to a business model within their organization, and some believed that as a result they had been made subordinate to administration, being treated as low-skilled laborers who were unvalued and easily replaceable. Although not all the participants shared this perspective regarding labor, there is enough evidence to suggest that practices associated with

mechanistic thinking are being introduced within higher education, and those practices are taking their toll.

Repeating the beginnings of organizational development perspectives does not seem to have been a conscious decision. In fact, in some ways it makes a strange sort of sense that universities, now under financial and metrics-based pressures, might start assessing "success" in the same manner as for-profit organizations. None of the participants in this study were of the impression that any of the negative consequences they were experiencing were intentional, but nearly all of the consequences seem to be a result of attempts to streamline processes, improve efficiency, create transparency, and centralize power in such a way as to create a systematic machine that produces an uninterrupted flow of ever increasing product that ultimately results in a sustainable, growing, and perhaps even profitable organization. As a result, although it is not publicly acknowledged, it seems the mission of higher education within the U.S. may have slipped from one of societal growth and development to one of self-sustenance, which is more in line with a corporatized mindset. As higher education attempts to convert to more businesslike practices, it seems to be starting at the very beginning of scientific and bureaucratic management. That is, indeed, where organizational theory begins, with factories and assembly lines. So, an interesting question to ponder is whether higher education will travel the same road that business did? If so, what does this mean for the viability of higher education as it functions in ways that so many businesses left behind decades ago?

International Perspectives

As I sought understanding of my data and the implications for the future of U.S. higher education, I found myself bereft of applicable U.S. literature on professors' perspectives of this phenomenon and its effects. However, some international institutions appear to have incorporated and accepted the accountability demands of society as part of their missions. As a result, and acknowledging the sometimes significant contextual differences among educational systems, I

found it necessary to look to international sources for transferrable knowledge and learning that would help me understand my data.

Rather than adhering to the ideas of teaching, research, and service, many international (i.e., non-U.S.) universities espouse teaching and research as their first and second missions (Laredo, 2007; Secundo et al., 2018) and the third mission as contribution to economic and societal development. It is the specificity of this third mission that I believe may be a factor in the ways the educational systems have instituted systems of measurement. True, U.S. institutions are meant to contribute to societal growth, however, that intention is implicit in the foci on teaching, research, and service. The "third mission" of international institutions speaks directly to the need for universities to be central to the economic and social development of society (Bercovitz & Feldman, 2006; Secundo et al., 2018), requiring universities to adopt more strategic means of administration (Secundo et al., 2018). This specificity of mission means that, rather than looking exclusively inward to the management of the organization, a managerial idea focusing on the immediacy of the efficiency and financial health of the organization, institutions must develop an outward focus that examines the means by which the institution adds value to both the economic and social growth of their environments (Borin & Donato, 2015; Secundo et al., 2017). Given the value of higher education is primarily encompassed in intellectual capital, thus is intangible in nature (Ramírez Corcóles et al., 2011; Sánchez et al., 2009; Secundo et al., 2010; Secundo et al., 2017), it follows that institutions must meet societal demand for transparency by developing means of measuring social value (Castellano & Rodriguez, 2004). Should U.S. higher education follow the trajectory that seems to be emerging in other countries, a shift to fully recognizing and valuing this third mission (see full discussion of the third mission in Chapter II) may well bring us full circle to our original overarching mission—that of benefiting society and the economy. But to do so, our performance management systems, our metrics, our strategies, and our values must echo a concern for what is our competitive advantage and our asset held most dear—that of our intellectual capital and how it may be leveraged for the greater good. Indeed, it may be that in

the current efforts to manage, measure, and control, we are only traversing an uncontrolled state of confusion and identity crisis, a type of liminality that connects past with future. As academic managers whip the horses (faculty researchers) to run faster while pulling greater loads, all while they measure their speed and endurance, we may soon find that not much has changed since the early days of settling this nation—if the horses die or collapse exhausted on the ground, the carriage doesn't move forward at all.

Implications

The findings in this case study of faculty perceptions of their roles have important implications for research, theory, and practice. All three areas are significant, but as a foundational study, I believe the implications for research and practice are of particular importance.

Research

Higher education exists in a world of shifting priorities, creating an environment in constant motion as administrators and faculty work to build and maintain educational structures that best serve the needs of society while securing the health of individual institutions. As a result, higher education is constantly changing. This study was intended to determine whether faculty perceived administrative interference in their research, teaching, or academic freedom. Although the participants denied any direct interference in any of those areas, they shared the indirect *negative* ramifications of administrative policies. Based on this study, those indirect influences on research, teaching, and academic freedom itself are significant, and may be contributing to the degradation of our educational system. These influences need to be studied closely, and with a more honed sense of direction. Specifically, future studies could look at the influences of administrative oversight on teaching, research, and academic freedom separately. In my attempt to cast a wide net, I was able to gather breadth of information about the way the three aspects of education were affected, but future studies should look for more depth of information. I conducted a small case study with only six participants at a single institution. Many more studies

need to be conducted before we speak with any assuredness about the state of the changing nature of higher education. How have faculty adjusted their teaching to meet administrative requirements? What has happened to their lines of research, and how exactly were they influenced in their selection? Exactly how do faculty members define academic success, and how does that compare to their perceptions of administrative ideas of success? Specifically, how do faculty feel affected by the change in the role of students from scholars to customers? How are the roles of faculty and administration perceived at private schools versus public schools, or research institutions versus teaching colleges? Faculty perception of all these issues need to be investigated and examined from a wide array of perspectives.

Additionally, in this study the research participants spontaneously revealed depths of emotional distress I did not foresee. Had I anticipated this level of emotion, I would have adapted my research questions. As it is, I believe this study revealed a need for additional deeper inquiries into the way changes in higher education are affecting our faculty members' efficacy, identities, ability to adequately do their work, and emotional well-being. Based on this study, the emotional effects on faculty seem to be a result of the introduction of managerialist policies into the academic world, policies that value quantitative metrics over qualitative results, and a focus on the student as a customer that is changing the educational landscape of colleges and universities. However, given the lack of literature available on faculty perspectives of this phenomenon, further study is needed.

Theory

This is a first-level study of a research line that needs to be ongoing, providing more insight and depth of thought into the problem through time and effort. The study was meant to explore an area in which little work has been done and provide a basis from which other studies can be generated. In designing this study, it was my thought that psychological ownership or sensemaking might be effective lenses through which to review the data, however, upon analysis I realized that, although both can be employed at various points, neither theory was adequate for

the breadth of the data gathered. In fact, although there were certainly elements of theory that could be applied to strands of the data, I could find no theory that would encompass all aspects of the findings.

Sensemaking

The participants in this study worked in a highly fluid academic environment that was sending them mixed messages. They were receiving explicit messages from administration that we value knowledge, its discovery, instruction, and application. It is a traditional academic message with faculty at the forefront of the academic institution. At the same time, faculty were receiving implicit messages that student performance is the responsibility of the faculty member rather than the student, research is a fundraising tool, and the institution is more interested in keeping students satisfied than demanding they adhere to faculty expectations. As a result, faculty were forced to make sense of their roles in relation to their context, and the conflicting messages they were receiving from administration. The literature shows that, when undergoing change, leaders must deliver a message that helps their people find meaning in the change (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Kezar, 2013) and that helps them either construct or maintain their identity within the new context (Degn, 2018; Kezar, 2013); otherwise the result is existential dissonance (Bridges, 1986; Chreim, 2002; Degn, 2018; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Sensemaking can be used to help administration synthesize their messages and their practice into something that allows for an honest representation of change as well as a means of helping faculty to define and accept their role in a new context.

Psychological Ownership

As the terrain of higher education changes, so do the roles of those who work in higher education. For laborers this may not be a profound adjustment, however faculty embrace their work as a facet of their identity. This is important for administrators to keep in mind as they lead their institutions, and psychological ownership (Furby, 1978) can provide useful guidance. Given the integral relationship between a faculty member's work and their identity, administration and

faculty must work together to protect the integrity of academic endeavors. An individual's locus of control directly affects their level of psychological ownership, which is directly related to their level of commitment to the object (McIntyre et al., 2009). Faculty directly associate their work with their identities, meaning a perceived loss of control over their work can be damaging to their psyche, and they may feel their identity is under attack. Administrators must recognize this connection, and conduct their actions accordingly, keeping in mind that it is the perception of the faculty member, not the administrator, that affects their level of commitment.

Alternate Theories

Once I gathered the data and began my analysis, I realized that neither Sensemaking nor Psychological Ownership theory was sufficient. From a theoretical standpoint, reports made suggest that faculty participants were making changes in "how they do business" because of perceived shifts occurring in the unit or organization. This stance suggests that a number of organizational change theories may be applicable to their experiences. I then turned to the Kubler-Ross grief construct (Kubler-Ross, 1969), and Bridges' (2009) change theory; each dealt with the spectrum of emotions associated with change. The Kubler-Ross grief construct has been used in the analysis of organizational change (Kearney, 2013; Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Schoolfield & Orduña, 1994; Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Through this lens, higher education researchers could explore faculty reactions to the ways in which they perceive their changing roles. Are they actually experiencing grief and, if so, how should institutions respond? Do faculty perceive a loss and, if so, a loss of what? Along similar veins, future studies could employ Bridges' change model (2009).

According to Bridges (2009), the grief that people feel during the upheaval associated with change should not be underestimated. As he points out, "…changes cause transitions, which cause losses, and it is the losses, not the changes, that they're reacting to; and second, that it's a piece of their world that is being lost…" (p. 27). Some of the feelings that manifest during change are anger, anxiety, sadness, disorientation, and depression (Bridges, 2009). These feelings align

with those of the Kubler-Ross grief model and the two theories (Bridges and Kubler-Ross) could be useful in concert. These are only some of the theories that could be applied to future studies generated by this research.

Once I had determined neither Kubler-Ross nor Bridges would work, I began researching the literature at length, looking at theories regarding bureaucratic theory, classical management, scientific management, contingency theory, organizations as brains, organizations as cultures, organizations as political systems, etc. (Morgan, 2006). Ultimately, I determined there was no single theory that spanned the gamut of data I had collected, but theories could be applied to various aspects of the research.

In addition to the discussion above, this study revealed undercurrents of issues and perceptions that I did not initially think to investigate, particularly in the area of emotion. As with all studies, realities beyond what could have been known to pursue were revealed. The participants began to answer questions that I had not asked, and the final findings and sub-findings include realizations beyond the boundaries of my research questions. However, these unprovoked findings represent data that also speaks to the participants' perceptions of their faculty roles as they relate to current administrative practices, and as such warrant further discussion and exploration.

Practice

As I previously stated, I believe administration and faculty both ultimately want the same thing, a healthy, thriving university that drives academic discovery and societal change. However, I think there is disparity in the ways the two groups define success. While it would be wholly inaccurate to suggest that all higher education administrators or all faculty are in concert in their views, in general, contemporary administration has shifted focus to quantitative metrics—graduation rates, enrollment, retention, budgetary concerns, resource management, and overall finances. This is the administrative measure of institutional health.

Faculty, on the other hand, are on the front lines, working directly with the students and research topics, and employing an entirely different set of standards. They want to assure the students engage with the material and learn, growing both in their chosen fields and as human beings. Faculty want to do research that contributes to the body of human knowledge with less concern for the possible funding opportunities. At the same time, faculty are humans with the need for positive recognition, professional advancement, and feelings of security. When faculty believe they need to compromise their ideals to meet the criteria of administrators, it creates a situation in which there is the potential for compromised educational standards, less-innovative research, and a faculty body that feel unappreciated, unvalued, and burned out.

I do not have an immediate solution. But I believe this study shows that we need to open honest lines of communication between faculty and administration. Based on this study, faculty seem to recognize that any perceived administrative interference is indirect, and some fervently argued, unintentional. The perception of the faculty appears to be that we are dealing with the ramifications of unintended consequences. This is normal, and should even be expected when undergoing change. Consequences must be identified before they can be resolved. However, now that we have begun to identify these problems, administration and faculty must begin a healthy and honest dialogue to work together to determine possible solutions.

Future Research

I would recommend qualitative studies focusing on the faculty identity and the specific emotional impact they may be experiencing as a result of perceived changes to the nature and practices of modern higher education. I would also recommend studies incorporating voices of both faculty and administration. This would provide a more complete picture and would enrich our knowledge of the situation. If possible, small focus groups might be employed. With precautions in place to protect the participants, focus groups that consist of a mixture of administration and faculty could lead to depths of knowledge we have never attempted to plumb.

Additionally, I believe further research into the "third mission" and faculty response to this mission could be extremely beneficial, as would further study into the utilization of intellectual capital in the assessment of academic value. Research along this vein may offer a new, and possibly healthier path for forward motion. Would a more specific "mission" provide our institutions with the vision or guidance they need, and would the exercise of intellectual capital provide our faculty with the means to maintain control of their environment while satisfying the organization's and stakeholder's need for data?

Although this research did not produce the data required for its utilization, it would be interesting to conduct future studies through the lens of organizations as systems of political activity (Morgan, 2006). Per Morgan (2006), the analysis of organizational politics should be focused on issues of power, conflict, and interests, all of which are issues at play in institutions of higher education. Specifically, researchers could look at faculty and administrative relationships as they interact regarding sources of power such as formal authority, control of scarce resources, control of decision processes, control of boundaries, the ability to cope with uncertainty, etc. (Morgan, 2006). These issues present themselves frequently in the data collected in this study, and I believe that research of faculty and administrative relations designed with this lens in mind could be enlightening, potentially lending itself to real growth and change within higher education.

Limitations

Given this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted via Zoom. This situation may affect the data in a number of ways. Faculty may have felt particularly isolated or pessimistic in an age of quarantining and socially distant exchanges, which could have contributed to the nature of the feelings and perceptions they expressed. Additionally, although the Zoom platform afforded the ability to see one another as we communicated, we were limited to the confines of the screen. I could not see as much of the body language or the participants' environments as would be available in a normal face-to-face

meeting. In all cases the participants were speaking with me from environments of their choosing, which may have given them a sense of comfort. However, it was my impression the rapport we seek in qualitative interviews may have been compromised. From my perspective there is an inherent sense of separateness when speaking with someone via telecommunication. The communication lacks the sense of immediacy and presence that we find in communing with one another in person.

This research was conducted over a period of years during which U. S. citizens were witnessing radical shifts in their perceived realities. Political opinions were rapidly becoming more polarized as calls for extremist actions gained popularity; the authenticity of news sources was being questioned and challenged as the term "fake news" entered the popular lexicon; social media, a relatively new platform of communication, was being inundated with chatbots designed to sow dissension; and historically accepted values and definitions were changing at unprecedented speeds. It was a time of intense upheaval which either resulted from or contributed to the adversarial atmosphere of the gestalt. I cannot know exactly how the context of the research affected the results, but these factors must be considered when reviewing the data. Results may have been different in a less charged climate. However, the reality at the time of data collection cannot be erased and will certainly influence the futures of these participants and their institution.

My study represented the population of the institution in which it was conducted, so although there was an equal mix of male and female participants, I was unable to represent any voices from underrepresented populations. It is almost inevitable that a different set of voices would have provided a wider data set than available to me in the current study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore professors' perceptions of their roles within contemporary administrative oversight. I conducted this qualitative study at a large land-grant university in the south-central United States using a single study approach. Through open coding

I analyzed semi-structured qualitative interviews, participant drawings of their perceptions of themselves in relation to higher education and their specific administration, and institutional documents. This analysis of the data resulted in six themes and two sub-themes, including:

1. The feeling of psychological safety is probably gone.
2. I'm trying to find value in what I do.
    a. I don't have a passion for the job anymore.
3. What actually I take a lot of my time doing is administrative tasks.
4. I think what we're doing is focusing on the wrong goals.
    a. Acknowledging a superior force is not weakness.
5. There is a nod to teaching…and an emphasis on research.
6. The university is a business and students are customers.

These themes resulted in four finding relevant to professors' perceptions of their roles.

The findings consisted of perceptions that although there is no direct administrative influence on teaching, research, or academic freedom, the ramifications of administrative policies and prioritizations result in indirect influence on teaching, research, and academic freedom that the participants perceived as negative. I discussed these findings in relationship to the available literature and addressed implications for research, theory, and practice. In conclusion, I addressed both the limitations of the study and the opportunities for future research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT RECRUITING EMAILS

Invitation Email

Sending Email Address: megan.pitt@okstate.edu

Subject Line: Invitation to Participate in Research

Hello [TITLE/NAME]:

I am a Ph.D. student researching faculty members' perceptions of their professional roles within administrative policy and oversight, and I'm reaching out because you have been identified as someone with an interesting perspective. Would you be willing to meet with me to discuss your views? I believe that your insights into the faculty role would prove invaluable for this research.

The interview would run about 60-90 minutes. I'm available [OPTIONS]. Would one of these times work for you? If not, please suggest another day/time. In general, I'm available [DETAILS]. I would like to complete all the interviews within this stage of my research by [DATE].

I look forward to hearing from, and visiting with, you!

Sincerely,
Megan Pitt
Ph.D. Candidate

Accepted Invitation Email

Sending Email Address: megan.pitt@okstate.edu

Subject Line: Interview Confirmation

Hello [TITLE/NAME]:

Thank you for agreeing to a 60-90 minute interview with me to talk about your perceptions of the faculty role within contemporary administrative policy and oversight. I look forward to visiting with you [DATE/TIME] at [LOCATION].

See you soon!

Sincerely,
Megan Pitt
Ph.D. Candidate

Declined Invitation Email

Sending Email Address: megan.pitt@okstate.edu

Subject Line: Thank You for Your Consideration

Hello [TITLE/NAME]:

Thank you for responding to my email. I appreciate your time and consideration. If you should find that some time becomes available in your schedule in the coming weeks, please let me know. Your perspective is an important one, and I would like to include your thoughts and perceptions in this study.

Sincerely,
Megan Pitt
Ph.D. Candidate

Post Interview Email

Sending Email Address: megan.pitt@okstate.edu

Subject Line: Thank You for Your Time

Hello [TITLE/NAME]:

Thank you for your time on [DAY/DATE]. Your perspective on the faculty role is a valuable addition to this study.

If you have any questions at any point, please feel free to contact me. For questions about your rights as a participant in this research, please contact:

Michael Criss, Chair
Institutional Review Board
218 Scott Hall
405-744-3377

I will transcribe our conversation, and send that along for your review by [DATE]. Thank you in advance for making the time to review and return the transcription by [DATE]. I look forward to your contribution to this part of the process.

Sincerely,
Megan Pitt
Ph.D. Candidate

Transcription Email

Sending Email Address: megan.pitt@okstate.edu

Subject Line: Interview Transcription

Hello [TITLE/NAME]:

I enjoyed our conversation a couple of weeks ago about your perspective of faculty roles. Thank you again for making the time to talk to me. I have attached the interview transcription here for your review.

Please feel free to make any comments you deem necessary to capture your thoughts on the various topics we discussed. Please contact me with any questions you may have while reading the transcription. I look forward to hearing from you by [DAY/DATE].

I appreciate your time and expertise!

Sincerely,
Megan Pitt
Ph.D. Candidate

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Pseudonym (please use pseudonym entered on consent form): _____

While demographic information is appreciated, it is not required for participating in this research. Please skip any questions you prefer not to answer.

My year of birth is: _____

My gender/sex is (check one):

- Male
- Female
- Other: _____

I am the following race:

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Mixed race of: _____
- Other _____

What is your current faculty title(s)?

How many years have you been a faculty member in higher education?

Please mark your field of study:

- Social Sciences
- Humanities

Are you currently tenured?

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

How do tenure-track and tenured faculty members at a research university perceive that contemporary administrative oversight influences their research and teaching?

1. In what ways to tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight has changed the nature of their work during their time as tenured or tenure-track professors?
2. In what ways do tenure-track/tenured faculty members perceive that administrative oversight impacts their expected academic freedom?

Interview Questions

1. How would you define the purpose of higher education?
2. What is the nature of your higher education experience?
    a. How do you think your experience in education affects your attitude?
3. In what ways have you experienced administration seeing the purpose of higher education as the same or different from you? Examples?
4. What do you see as your most important responsibilities as a faculty member? Examples?
5. In what ways do you see administration demonstrating that they may prioritize different responsibilities? Examples?
6. Tell me about the role that administrators have in influencing your choices about research agenda.

(Drawing 1: Please draw yourself in relation to your role in higher education.)

7. Tell me about the role that administrative ***processes*** (e.g., tenure and promotion) have in influencing your research agenda.
8. What kind of support do you get from administration for your research?
9. What, if any, role does administration take in determining your curriculum?
10. What guidance does administration give for assessing your students' performance?
11. How does your administration prioritize your instruction as a part of annual evaluation or promotion decisions?
12. Within the context of your position, what does academic freedom mean to you? The freedom to do what?
13. As you consider recent administrative policy or decision making, how has this supported or detracted from your academic freedom?

14. How do administrative initiatives or policies affect your ability to fully develop as a professional in your field?

15. What is your perception of administration's current role in higher education? How do you believe that role has changed over time?

16. Tell me about your faculty evaluation process.

    - How are student evaluations used?
    - How is research evaluated?
    - How is peer review evaluated?

17. Who do you think of as "your" administration?

(Drawing 2: Please draw yourself in relation to your administration.)

18. Are there any questions you think I should have asked, or anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX D

DRAWING EXERCISE I

Please draw yourself in relation to higher education. Your drawing may be as simple or as complex as you like. This is not a test of your artistic skills and the colors you choose don't matter. You may utilize any or all of the provided materials. You will have ten minutes to complete the drawing. If you complete your drawing prior to the ten-minute period, please feel free to notify me. Upon completion, we will discuss what you have drawn and how it relates to your perceptions of your role in relation to higher education at large.

APPENDIX E

DRAWING EXERCISE II

Please draw yourself in relation to your administration. Your drawing may be as simple or as complex as you like. This is not a test of your artistic skills and the colors you choose don't matter. You may utilize any or all of the provided materials. You will have ten minutes to complete the drawing. If you complete your drawing prior to the ten-minute period, please feel free to notify me. Upon completion, we will discuss what you have drawn and how it relates to your perceptions of your role in relation to administrative policy and oversight.

APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	03/24/2020
Application Number:	IRB-20-166
Proposal Title:	Faculty as Autonomous Professionals: A View of Faculty Perspectives of their Professional Roles within Contemporary Administrative Policy and Oversight
Principal Investigator:	Megan Pitt
Co-Investigator(s):	
Faculty Adviser:	Kerri Kearney
Project Coordinator:	
Research Assistant(s):	
Processed as:	Exempt
Exempt Category:	

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

APPENDIX G

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

PROJECT TITLE:

Faculty as Autonomous Professionals: A View of Faculty Perspectives of their Professional Roles within Contemporary Administrative Policy and Oversight

INVESTIGATOR:

Megan Pitt Oklahoma State University

PURPOSE:

This study will explore faculty members' perceptions of their professional roles in contemporary higher education. To further this exploration, I will be reaching out to OSU tenured and tenure-track faculty working with undergraduates in the humanities and social sciences. I will be looking for information regarding the perceived influence of administrative oversight on research and teaching, including perceived changes to the nature of faculty work and academic freedom. Upon completion of the research, this information will be presented in the researcher's dissertation in pursuit of the Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership and Policy Study. Additionally, research may be submitted for publication.

PROCEDURES:

You will participate in an interview that will last approximately 60-90 minutes, during which you will be asked to speak about your experiences as a faculty member, and draw two pictures representing your perceptions of your role in higher education. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. I will provide you with a copy of the transcription to verify that the interview was transcribed accurately, and that it accurately captures your meanings and intent. Upon your approval, your insights will be incorporated into the study.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:

There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

There are no known direct benefits to the participants, however there is potential that this research will contribute to an environment in which there is better communication between higher education faculty and administration.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access.

Data will be destroyed one year after the study has been completed.

Audio tapes will be transcribed and destroyed one year after the study has been created.

You will not be identified individually. I will be looking at the group as a whole.

COMPENSATION:

Participants will receive no compensation.

CONTACTS:

You may contact the researcher at the following address and phone number should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results: Megan Pitt, 134 Seretean Center for the Performing Arts, 405-837-9019. If you have questions about your rights as a volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation at any time, without penalty.

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:

I have been fully informed of the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:

I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. By participating in the interview I understand that I am giving consent for my data to be used in this study.

VITA

Megan Shelly Pitt

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: LIVING IN THE GRAY: FACULTY PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL ROLES UNDER CONTEMPORARY MANAGERIALISM

Major Field: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2022.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Music in Music at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma in 1999.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Vocal Performance at William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri in 1996.

Experience:

Manager of Recruitment, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa; Sr. Academic Advisor II, Oklahoma State University; Enrollment Operations Coordinator, Columbia University-School of Continuing Education; Assistant to Sr. Outreach Coordinator, The American Musical and Dramatic Academy; Project Training Specialist, American Century Investments; Graduate Assistant, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Professional Memberships:

National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), Oklahoma Academic Advising Association (OACADA)