

INNOVATION AND ISOMORPHISM: CHALLENGES IN A NEW UNIVERSITY

by

GEORGIA KAY STRANGE

(Under the Direction of Major Professor Sheila Slaughter)

ABSTRACT

Tarpon U is an institution in the “middle” that was established in 1997, and charged with creating innovative education in the 21st century for an area that had lacked four-year higher education. The researcher sought to discover whether a new, rapidly growing institution unburdened by history and tradition could readily innovate. The study covered the years 1993-2013. A president committed to innovation and a small, enthusiastic band of faculty and staff initially led Tarpon U. Characteristic of the innovative program were ecological education, service learning, interdisciplinary liberal arts baccalaureate, teaching with technology, and a “weekend college.” However, over time the isomorphic tendencies at the faculty, institution, and state levels tended to curb innovation, and Tarpon U, while still innovative, came to look more like other similar institutions.

INDEX WORDS: Institutional isomorphism, innovation in higher education

INNOVATION AND ISOMORPHISM: CHALLENGES IN A NEW UNIVERSITY

By

GEORGIA KAY STRANGE

B.A., Indiana University, 1973

M.S., Indiana University, 1977

M.F.A., Indiana University, 1979

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2013

© 2013

Georgia Kay Strange

All Rights Reserved

INNOVATION AND ISOMORPHISM: CHALLENGES IN A NEW UNIVERSITY

by

GEORGIA KAY STRANGE

Major Professor: Sheila Slaughter

Committee: James Hearn
Elizabeth St. Pierre

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2013

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the rudder of my ship, my husband and best friend, John Tyler Goodheart. Thank you for your love, guidance, encouragement, and calm support. Thanks for re-reading drafts, listening when busy or tired, elevating my spirits, and quietly showing me countless gestures of support. I want to thank my children, Claire, Michael and Daniel, who have enriched and transformed my life, each in a unique way. To my mother Jean and my father Allen who would not let me quit college, demanded too much, and gave even more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my great respect and appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Sheila Slaughter, for her high standards and sharp insights that guided me through the research process. It was a special honor to be able to study with such an accomplished and prolific scholar. Without her engaged expertise and constructive prodding, this document would be a flabbier, more limited snapshot of people's lives at one higher education institution in a great nation. I would like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. James Hearn and Dr. Elizabeth St. Pierre, for their clarifying questions and collegial mentoring.

I would also like to thank all the members of my Ed.D. Cohort. Much appreciation goes to Linda Bachman, Makeba Morgan Hill, Jackie Parrill, Laura Meadows, and Kara Robinson for their constant support. Finally, I thank higher education scholars, Doug Toma and Tom Dyer, as well as the current faculty members in the Institute of Higher Education at UGA who have contributed to the most memorable educational experience of my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	4
History of Innovation in Higher Education	6
How This Study Is Original	9
Research Questions	10
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	13
Change and Higher Education	13
Change and the Professoriate	15
Change and Leadership	20
Institutional Isomorphism	21
Higher Education Environment	23
Urgent Need for Innovation	25
3 RESEARCH METHODS	29
Introduction	29
Research Design	31
Data Collection	33

Data Analysis	39
4 FINDINGS AND EMERGENT THEMES	47
Brief History of Tarpon U.....	47
Curriculum Evolution	53
Emergent Theme-Organization.....	73
Emergent Theme-Higher Education Environment	99
Emergent Theme-Constraints	102
5 CONCLUSIONS.....	114
Review of Research Questions and Supporting Scholarship	114
Constrained Innovation	120
Limitations and Drawbacks	130
Recommendations for Future Research	131
Nota Bene.....	133
REFERENCES	136
APPENDICES	
A HIGHER EDUCATION EMPLOYEES BY FUNCTION F2010.....	149
B LETTER OF INVITATION TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS	150
C UGA INFORMED CONSENT FORM	152
D TARPON U INFORMANTS' DESCRIPTORS.....	154
E INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	155
F STUDENT & EMPLOYEE GROWTH - TARPON U F1993-F2013	156
G STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIOS - TARPON U F2002-F2012	157
H EMPLOYEES BY CATEGORY - TARPON U F2002-F2012.....	158

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: International rankings of tertiary education attainment by age group in 2009	45
Figure 2: Higher education employees by function fall 2010.....	149
Figure 3: Tarpon U informants' descriptors	154

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the context of recent global economic decline and the rise of online delivery of information, how are brick-and-mortar institutions adapting to increasing competition from the proprietary post-secondary virtual institutions and educational companies that offer degrees, certificates, badges and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)? Are newer institutions, the publics in particular, able to be more flexible, more innovative in their responses to the changing, increasingly competitive environment than older, more tradition-bound institutions? Are the aspirational goals of new public institutions determined by historical examples, current trends in education, organizational models from business and industry, state government oversight, predictions about the future economy or some combination of these influences? This case study employed qualitative research methods to explore institutional change in the 21st century as it evolved in Tarpon U, a new, fast growing, mid-sized public university in Florida.

Higher education is being squeezed between increasing performance expectations and diminishing resources. What institutions appear to be thriving in the midst of such environmental pressures, and what are they doing? In response, this study explores the nation's fastest growing higher education institution between 2001 and 2011. The institution is under twenty years old and appears to be nimble and adaptable to changing internal and external environments. The study investigates whether a new institution is more likely to behave innovatively compared to more established institutions with different missions and characteristics. If so, how is innovation manifested beyond quantitative measures of efficiencies

such as growth of student enrollment, expanding curricular offerings and degree programs? How is the institution effective not just efficient in its mission to educate its growing student population? Can a new institution's evolution be innovative and break from institutional norms or will change start to mimic more established and more prestigious institutions?

Drucker (1985) employed phrases such as "purposeful search" and "systematic analysis" that connect change with innovation, which is as relevant to education as it is to business. In this case study, innovative behavior at the individual and institutional levels that generated new models for teaching and learning in the 21st century were anticipated given the dramatic growth of the new institution in the case study.

But what is this "innovation"—that most fetishized of terms today—that we've apparently already all decided that we must accept? When I hear "re-examining their physical spaces," I think "debt-fueled construction." When I hear "trying to better track their students," I think "expensive information technology of dubious value." When I hear "ways to improve quality and lower costs," I think "MOOCs and other abominations of computerized instruction that substitute technology for teachers." (Boyer et al., 2013)

Innovation in higher education is a wildly popular and relevant topic. According to Selingo (2013), three significant financial forces have contributed to its recent popularity as a topic: mushrooming federal debt, declining state support for publics, and depressed personal incomes. These financial constraints contribute to the public's declining support for higher education yet institutions are expected to increase capacity while working with weaker inputs in first massification and then universalization of higher education with its increased access for ill-prepared students (Trow, 2010). Concurrent with the focus on a depressed financial environment, the potential impact of online education on traditional brick-and-mortar institutions

is another topic in the dynamic debate focused on innovation in higher education. The current engagement with the topic has its roots in WWII and the exploration of new technologies such as films and filmstrips used in preparing troops (Hannan & Silver, 2000). An observation by Enarson in his essay “Innovation in Higher Education” published in 1960 is eerily similar to the contentious exchanges in the virtual conversations between readers of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Faculty resistance to new teaching methods approaches fever heat when television is considered. With few exceptions, faculty members overwhelmingly prefer the familiar lecture method to a television performance before a battery of blazing lights. Part of their resistance may be charged to misinformation, part to fear of change and of the unknown, and part to a deep conviction that anything which threatens the direct personal contact of a teacher with his student is an invitation to educational disaster. (Enarson, 1960, p. 497)

“Innovative” is a term that has been used to describe people, institutions, policies, and practices. In a business context, “innovative” is likely to be associated with actions that increase profits and efficiencies (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Drucker, 1985; Hoffman & Spanghehl, 2011). Certainly, those measures have entered the context of higher education where “innovation” has traditionally been associated with the evolution and expansion of disciplinary knowledge along with creativity in the shape, content, and delivery of curricular offerings. More recently, the discourse around innovation in higher education continues to debate the centrality of the talking head, the disciplinary expert inhabiting the physical and virtual classrooms; however, additional hallmarks of modern educational practices that were established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are being examined such as college credits and credentials. Seat-time has been the

default measure of academic credit in brick-and-mortar public institutions, but assessments of faculty and student labor, teaching and learning, are now heated topics in higher education.

What is innovation in the context of higher education? The common use of the word has made it overly inclusive and vague in its meaning. Harvard Business School Professor Clayton Christensen (2011) sharpens the meaning with the modifier “disruptive,” but that framework may not be productive for academic administrators who are expected to lead an institution in a manner that is consistent with the institution’s mission and vision. For the case study, aspects of the curriculum and the curriculum process will be identified as “innovative” if they enable the institution to be more efficient and more effective in educating students.

Institutional performance is often examined using indicators that can be measured such as yield, retention, graduation, and alumni job placement. Access for underserved populations is measured by unpacking enrollments and graduation into more defined components of institutional data. This case study will investigate performance indicators such as student enrollment and academic preparedness of students that reflect characteristics of student inputs as well as graduation rate, which indicates institutional efficiency. Certainly, quantitative indicators are much easier to measure than qualitative measures, e.g. curriculum growth in size and scope can be counted more readily than assessment of the portability and adaptability of an undergraduate education over time. The case study will pursue insights into the latter while measuring relevant indicators of institutional innovation that are efficient and effective.

Purpose of the Study

DeMillo (2011) compresses a large group of mid-tier institutions, numbering more than 2000, into a singular monolith with the phrase, the *Middle*. The new institution in this study is typical of DeMillo’s institutions in the Middle, the educational sector that he describes as the most

vulnerable to the social and economic forces driving change in higher education. He describes institutions in the Middle as operating on a subsistence level. The institution in the case study already ranks 10th of the 11 universities in the state system for total expenditures by student credit hour (“Tarpon U BOT,” 2013, p.15). Only one university is spending less on course delivery, which some states might consider this an impressive indicator of institutional efficiency. Is this fiscal efficiency innovative or simply a bared-boned approach to funding the educational mission? Interviews with relevant stakeholders from administrators to students can offer insights.

But for most of the Middle, business is stark and simple. It is the institutional equivalent of living paycheck to paycheck. Expenditures must balance a potentially unstable mix of heavily discounted income. Large increases in enrollment can quickly overwhelm budgets in which money in one spending category cannot be used to handle the increases. On the other hand, large drops in enrollment decrease income, decreasing an institution’s ability to pay for less efficiently used administrators, instructors, classrooms, and laboratories. (DeMillo, 2011, p. 58)

The financial precariousness of most higher education institutions is already evident with the recent rash of furloughs, depressed hiring, rise of part-time faculty positions and delayed renovations to aging infrastructure. Innovative strategies are needed from all sectors of higher education, as the current challenges are likely to escalate.

My case study was comprised of an in-depth exploration of a new educational institution, focusing on curricular innovation. The evolution of its academic curriculum served as the locus of investigation for insights into the changes in the organizational structure, composition of the professoriate, and non-academic programming over time. Document research and interviews

served as the main sources of information in the search for innovative practices. The goal of a case study of a new brick-and-mortar comprehensive institution was to discern whether an organizational structure demonstrates more innovative, entrepreneurial behavior than historical models in academia. The study was designed to find correspondence between the composition and scope of the academic curriculum and the professoriate that was charged to deliver it. Availability of required courses and appropriateness of instructional expertise was explored in interviews and through exploration of the institution's documents. Decision-making practices and institutional procedures for establishing curricular priorities and standards were examined.

History of Innovation in Higher Education

The history of higher education institutions in the Western World is rich with narratives about changing demographics, economic fluctuations, and governmental interventions. In these dynamic contexts, visionary leaders have also played important roles as agents of change. The drivers of change in institutions of higher education in the 21st century may be uniquely dynamic if not destabilizing as the impact of technology not only flattens the world but also shrinks it. Essays, articles, blogs, tweets, and books are being written about disruptive changes to the higher education landscape that may result in significant failure of a large number of institutions in an increasingly competitive higher education economy. Birnbaum and Shushock (1998) downplayed the attention given to threats of impending crisis in education that have been expressed for centuries, but forces in the 21st century may just be different enough to warrant a profound shift in institutional behavior.

Leaders of higher education institutions are awash in efforts to secure the best and the brightest students and faculty, to funnel external funds into service of multiple purposes, to increase prestige, and to leverage political influence in the national, state and local arenas. This

is the contemporary soup of complex demands placed on an institution's priority list that was made highly visible with Clark Kerr's term for the university of the 20th century, the *multiversity*.

Kerr perceived the university in his time as more appropriately named *multiversity* because of its complex mission and diversity of internal and external stakeholders. The chapter, "The Idea of a Multiversity," served as the doorway into his book, *The Uses of the University*, which was published first in 1963 and edited each decade until 2001. A decade after his death in 2003, Kerr continues to be quoted in his role as an effective, articulate spokesperson who learned first-hand about the complex challenges that face higher education. Kerr's straightforward discussion of the evolution of influences, history of leadership in the American academy, and the impact on the eclectic curriculum established by World War I laid the foundation for his explanation of the diverse roles required of a university president. Kerr made a critical point about a university president's role as mediator. He recommended a leader who could distill complex and sometimes conflicting roles unique to the multiversity, a person who could keep peace and make progress during a tsunami of knowledge creation and population growth (Kerr, 2001). Kerr was also astute in predicting the disruptive change that digital technology would unleash on higher education in the last edition of his prescient *The Uses of the University*.

For two millennia, the purpose of an education was the transmission of knowledge from learned scholars to neophytes. In Kerr's multiversity of the second half of the 20th century, the exchange of knowledge had become a resource stream among many diverse sources of funding that were harvested to support the multiversity. As the focus on knowledge transmission was reduced in the multiversity, the status of the learned scholar also changed. The concept of tenure to protect scholars from societal demands and powerful forces outside the university had its origin in Ancient Greece where academic freedom was first debated. Employment security

followed academic freedom as an added benefit for faculty in the late 19th and early 20th century. A newly formed American Association of University Professors established standards in 1915 to guide institutional governance of faculty matters (AAUP, 2012).

Tenure track positions grew rapidly in the middle of the 20th century to keep pace with dramatic increases in enrollments after the Second World War until the economic downturn of the 1980s. Subsequently, the inverse relationship of rising enrollments and decreasing resources has challenged tenure as a viable strategy in an unpredictable academic marketplace destabilized by economic recessions. Tenure has remained the primary mechanism for protection and security for learned scholars in an evolving academic environment since its established prevalence in the 1950s. Like all other goods, the relationship between value and cost of tenure track faculty positions is in flux in the dynamic business of higher education.

In 1963 Burton Clark emphasized the change in focus of the professoriate from transmitter of knowledge to creator of knowledge as the result of the larger social, economic, and political landscape.

We have moved from transmission of knowledge to innovation in knowledge, which has meant specialization in research. Taking the long view, perhaps the great change in the role of academic man is the ascendance of research and scholarship -- the rise of the commitment to create knowledge. This change in the academic role interacts with rapid social change: research causes change as in the case of change in technology and industrial processes; and such changes, in turn, encourage the research attitude, as in the case of competition between industrial firms, competition between nations, competition between universities. In short, the research component of the academic role is intimately related to major modern social trends. (Clark, 1963, p. 42)

Clark's 50-year-old insight about the interplay between an academic institution and its complex, layered context appears visionary in today's dynamic environment characterized by the interplay of resources and decision-makers. Clark's analysis is particularly relevant for public colleges and universities in the United States that are impacted by state policies, governors, and legislatures that are unique to each state. Although the process of decision-making within a college or university, whether hierarchical or shared, may appear to be effective, it is imperative to the credibility of this case study that the investigation include an in-depth exploration of the institution's social, economic, and political context. Higher education institutions interact with national, state and local representatives in government and industry. They are dependent upon support at each level; consequently, the case study will explore interaction between the key external forces impacting the institution's decision-making and planning processes. The goal of expanding the boundaries beyond the confines of the brick-and-mortar institution is to develop a larger, more complete framework to determine the major forces that contribute to dynamic growth strategies in this higher education institution.

How This Study Is Original

This in-depth case study of Tarpon U, a mid-size public higher education institution that is less than 20 years old, examined multiple perspectives culled from a broad range of relevant stakeholders such as current and former administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The institution is a fitting example of the type that is targeted to be the most vulnerable to the imminent changes predicted for higher education (DeMillo, 2011). It currently admits nearly 68% of its applicant (College Navigator, n.d.). It ranked 79th in the Regional Universities-South ("College Compass," 2013). It is neither selective nor robust in research productivity. The institution also lacks adequate endowment funds to power the current evolutionary path toward

more degree programs that require additional human resources and facilities. It is under increasing state pressure to significantly grow full-time and part-time enrollment, as are all institutions of higher education in order to meet the educational requirements of a knowledge-based economy predicted by leading educational advocacy organizations such as the Lumina Foundation.

The case study focused on the actors that have shaped the institution's curriculum and their ongoing roles in the long-term planning practices that have supported rapid enrollment growth at the institution. The study searched for innovative practices associated with efficiencies that maintained effectiveness and sustained viability of the institution, which could be transferrable to other institutions. Interviews explored stakeholders' current perceptions about the relative short history of the institution and inquired about expectations for the future. Interviews sought stakeholders' opinions about current institutional practices and their perceptions about an individual's capacity to impact organizational behavior.

Inquiries focused on curricular decision-making practices in this new higher education institution that reflected organizational structure and academic priorities. The interviews sought information about the evolution and expansion of academic programming, academic support services, and new curricular initiatives from the perspectives of different stakeholders.

Research Questions

The original conceptual framework for this dissertation was based on the assumption that dramatic growth of the institution was an indicator of innovative practices. Research questions queried how stakeholders in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education made innovative curricular decisions and produced effective degree programs (products) using more efficient pedagogy (processes) than elsewhere in the educational industry.

1. In the absence of institutional history, what and who guide curricular decisions in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education?
2. How do actors make innovative decisions about the academic curriculum in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education?
3. How is innovation sustained in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education as it grows in size and complexity?

Expected Findings

I anticipated a rich description of a mid-level public institution that revealed a more integrated organization than the disciplinary enclaves common in research institutions, which tend to be decentralized and uncoupled. Faculty members in larger, more prestigious higher education institutions often identify more closely with the disciplinary colleagues than with colleagues at their home institution (Clark, 1963; Cohen & March, 1974; Hammond, 2004). This young institution had no tenured faculty nor life-long administrators that have served for four decades in one institution as can be found at most institutions across the nation (June, 2012). Faculty members, administrators, and staff at the institution experienced significant changes during the short lifetime of the institution, and all informants were employed at the institution at least three years except for the student informants.

A defining consequence of economic recessions in the late 20th and early 21st centuries is the marketization of higher education that has recast academia as a marketplace, buying and selling intellectual capital, professional credentials, and entertainment (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Academic institutions and their stewards must navigate new, swift resource streams. This case study investigated a public institution's ability to sustain rapid growth and raise performance indicators with only limited access to resource streams that sustain older, more prestigious,

research-oriented institutions. An important question in the case study was whether a new institution of higher education is significantly more innovative than institutions with more history and tradition. The ability for a mid-tier higher education institution to be innovative is critical to its survival, and institutional sustainability offers lessons about organizational success that may help inform the efforts of other institutions as well as play an important role in the evolution of higher education's collective response to perpetual challenges associated with an increasing, more diverse population in the context of declining resources that impact the human ecosystem.

Changes in the professoriate as well as changes in the student population are emerging in the 21st century along with the evolution of higher education institutions. If new models for the student populations, the professoriate, and educational institutions are emerging in the 21st century, then what do they indicate for current practices in each domain? Targeted interaction with diverse stakeholders at a new institution can reveal information about adaptive behaviors in the emerging 21st century professoriate teaching at mid-tier institutions that may inform strategic planning behaviors of institutions across the spectrum of higher education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Change and Higher Education

Two millennia ago, teaching began its evolution as a profession to be venerated and protected in the Ancient period. The formalization of Western education solidified during the Middle Ages with the creation of universities in Europe by the 12th century and the reputations of great teachers such as Abelard of Paris that drew students from far distances (DeMillo, 2011; Norton, 2006).

In his 1973 seminal article on the organizational structure of higher education, E. D. Duryea gives credit to the legacies of Alexandrian and Arabian origins with the more widely acclaimed contributions of the Greek heritage that collectively produced critical moments in the evolution of formal education. Medieval universities are cited in most discussions of the origins of the modern university structure that is common today as the earliest source for the development of concepts such as administrative titles (dean, etc.), content specific courses, a curriculum of study and levels of academic degrees. In addition to the conceptualization of the institutions of higher education during the Middle Ages that was developed collectively by the faculty, Duryea also cited the influence of powerful individuals in the cadre of Europe's royal and religious figures of the 15-17th centuries not unlike political figures today who competed for the U.S. 2012 presidential election. The apparent timeless quality of debates about higher education is derived from education's historical relevance as well as its potential impact on the future. Duryea (1973) chronicles the significance of the rising prominence of disciplinary departments in the 19th

century that shaped the evolution of higher education's organization in America and in Europe. Following the American Civil War, the authority of lay boards and the rising influence of alumni also contributed to the expanding stratification and diversification of the American university that existed by the First World War (Duryea, 1973).

The rise of the German model of research-oriented universities in the 19th century increased the focus on the disciplinary expert. As the institutional prestige prospered in tandem with the growing reputation of experts on the faculty, the value of disciplinary expertise grew. The academic marketplace for the best and brightest minds was fueled by the influx of federal funding during and after the Second World War. The value of the expert prospered in such an environment, elevating the status of the professoriate although privileging experts in science, engineering, and math over experts of comparable acclaim in the humanities and the creative arts. The government's heightened anxiety about nuclear warfare during the Cold War directed federal funds to disciplines that could respond to its defense-oriented research priority. Technology is now included with science, engineering, and math in the family of the federal government's preferred disciplinary funding targets, generating the acronym *STEM*. The emphasis for STEM disciplines on the national level has also influenced educational priorities of state governments (Kiley, 2012; Solochech, 2011).

Burton R. Clark (1997) noted the decentralization of educational institutions in the late 19th century in response to the increase of specialized needs and emphasis on research as the college transitioned to the university. Clark's *Small Worlds* metaphor referenced how the evolution of academic disciplines resulted in each discipline developing a unique disciplinary culture of work, identity, career paths, and professional organizations that fragmented the professoriate. Clark also found that the type of an institution impacted the faculty's influence and intellectual

stimulation. As predicted, he discovered the highest level of faculty authority was attained at leading research universities, and it declined to its lowest level at community colleges (1997). Although the size of the professoriate as a collective body has grown over time, its division across disciplinary boundaries and institutional type has resulted in a loss of authority and influence in institutions of higher education.

Change and the Professoriate

The professoriate expanded after WWII in direct response to two factors: the push to increase access and a momentous influx of new federal funding. Both resulted in rising enrollments that increased the competition for high-powered research faculty. To be competitive, tenure track positions that provided job security became the norm if not the baseline for academic hiring.

Thomas H. Hammond (2004) noted the unique work environment of tenured faculty members who have been empowered to work with a high level of autonomy. Tenure's employment security remains a highly valued feature; consequently, the workplace autonomy that it represents is often prized over higher salaries, contributing to the already significant appeal of tenure track positions for recognized experts.

Hammond acknowledged the intellectual legacy of Michael Cohen and James March in their 1974 article, *Organized Anarchies*, which informed his metaphor of cat herding that he uses for managing tenure track faculty. Hammond (2004) contrasted the loosely coupled university hierarchy with the more bureaucratic hierarchy commonly associated with business corporations and indicated that a community of independent-minded scholars might not be an effective group to be tasked with decision-making, problem solving and planning. Scholarly expertise requires the ability to think critically, to examine, and to debate, attributes in an organization that often makes consensus quite difficult to attain. This inability of permanent faculty to coordinate effort

toward common purposes within an academic unit can generate frustration, lead to inertia, and alienate the administration. The employment security afforded by tenure allows faculty members to become entrenched in the status quo. Stasis or resistance to change in a rapidly evolving environment also has made entrenched faculty members individually and collectively more vulnerable to shifting conditions that outpace their ability and willingness to respond creatively and efficiently (Clark, 1998).

The new institution in the case study offers an important research opportunity because it is a comprehensive, residential university that does not offer tenure with full-time faculty positions. Although tenure track positions no longer comprise the majority of full-time faculty positions and have not since 1975, this institutional environment is relatively uncommon for mid-size public universities (Wilson, 2013). The case study will explore the role played by full-time faculty members in shaping the curriculum and impacting the institution's strategic planning process without the employment security and academic freedom that tenure provides. I anticipate that questions about the evolution of the curriculum, which is traditionally the domain of the faculty, allows exploration of the diverse stakeholders in governance and planning priorities. Does the absence of tenure support more effective partnerships between administrators and faculty members? Does it translate into lowered tensions between junior and senior faculty members? The status and authority for full-time faculty as compared to part-time faculty are likely to be observed during onsite visits, as will interactions between members of the faculty and staff. Attitudes about these working relationships also may surface in onsite interviews.

T. Youn and T. M. Price (2009) employed data gleaned from faculty interviews and personnel policy information that was harvested from several national surveys between 1969 and 2004 in

order to explore perceptions about the relationship between work and rewards. An alarming trend is the increased pressure on junior faculty to perform at an exceptionally high level during the tenure process. Starting in the 1980s, Youn and Price worked with data from a thirty-five year period to examine promotion and tenure practices and found that they had become increasingly competitive and research focused. Data extracted in field interviews confirmed that significant changes in institutional rules occurred across institutional types in response to practices at research institutions and selective liberal arts colleges (Youn & Price, 2009). In other words, all types of institutions were using the same high standards associated with more prestigious and selective institutions without providing support necessary to perform at high levels. The availability of data about institutional rankings and performance is a likely driver of mission creep that is indicated in the research results of Youn and Price.

Starting with community colleges, mission creep and the raising of performance objectives occur across institutional type. I anticipate similar aspirational behavior will be discovered in the institution in the case study although it is ostensibly a comprehensive liberal arts institution, not a research institution, and tenure is not an option for the instructional staff. Faculty performance expectations will be pursued in the onsite interviews. Considering the record of impressive enrollment growth and program expansion, the institution in the case study may have made smarter decisions about its aspirational goals than many of its peers; however, only further investigation will reveal the mechanisms behind the rapid growth in less than 20 years.

The most protected species in higher education is the high stakes research faculty, comprised of individuals who are the most likely to secure external funding such as large federal grants. Over time, the most outstanding and accomplished research faculty have become even more expensive to hire, contributing to the academic arms race as institutions compete for the best in

their fields and/or raid promising junior scholars from peer institutions. Institutions of higher education have sizable financial needs and limited flexibility in assembling the myriad of resources (human, facilities, energy, etc.) necessary to teach a larger, less prepared student population common to mid-tier and open-access institutions. Upper administration assesses the long-term contractual obligations that are associated with tenure along with tenure's high sticker price and questions whether tenure track faculty positions are still viable in the context of dramatic enrollment increase, program expansion, and rising cost of benefits, etc.

In his 2003 article, "The Morphing of the American Academic," Martin Finkelstein cited the alarming trend of the changing demography of the professoriate. Already by 2001, half of the faculty positions were part-time, and only one fourth of the positions were tenure track. Finkelstein discussed the emergence of tech transfer, proprietary institutions, development of incubation parks, decline of humanities, and distance education degrees that were restructuring higher education. Also in play was the insertion of politicians and businessmen and business methods into executive positions in academia. Finkelstein pointed out that American society has valued the various roles performed by academic institutions such as providing religious leadership, serving as an industry engine and force for democracy, and more recently for its access to the global economy of information and resources. The university system is perceived as a public utility as participation rate has increased dramatically with changes that undermine the role of the faculty (Finkelstein, 2003).

Finkelstein's observations are corroborated by Scott Jaschik in an article Jaschik posted on the *Inside Higher Ed* website in 2008. Jaschik claimed that full-time faculty no longer comprised the majority of full-time employees in higher education by 2006 that were employed by the myriad of institutional types and sizes. Note the unfortunate timing of the decline in full-

time faculty that preceded the 2008 global economic depression, which only added to the destabilization of the professoriate.

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) provided data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to illustrate 21st century trends in postsecondary institutions in the United States. According to IPEDS data from fall 2010 on employees in postsecondary institutions by primary function/occupational activity, less than 40% of employees were involved in instruction, and 30.3% were designated as *primarily instruction*. Another 7% were in the category labeled *instruction, research, and public service functions*, three responsibilities that are traditionally associated with tenure track positions. If only full-time employees in postsecondary institutions were considered, the percentage of instructional staff drops from 30.3% to 19.9% of all employees (see Appendix A).

Tenured and tenure track faculty now make up the minority of instructors who teach in higher education institutions in the United States. The future value, status, and role of tenure are in question as part-time and non-tenure track faculty lines continue to dominate hiring practices in institutions that are exchanging the higher costs of tenure track hires for a larger number of relatively inexpensive part-time instructors to balance instructional budgets while growing enrollment. Tenure track and tenured faculty are increasingly isolated in the academy as their percentage of the instructional faculty shrinks. Clark's *Small Worlds* metaphor refers to the unique culture commonly found in each academic discipline, adding to isolation and stereotyping (Clark, 1997). Consider how movies and television programs contribute to stereotypes of academics as self-involved eccentrics and benign outliers in worlds of their own making such as Michael Douglas in *Wonder Boys* and Jerry Lewis in the classic *The Nutty Professor*, the television program *Boy Meets World*, as well as books such as *Moo* and *Straight Man*. Of

course, examples of defining characteristics that are admirable are equally abundant, proving the assertion that academics are easy to stereotype.

Along with the isolation of tenure track faculty in a workplace where they comprise a decreasing percentage of the people employed by an institution, the irregular work schedules of research faculty often give the appearance that they are working a minimal number of hours while the majority of staff slogs away forty hours each week, tethered to a desk. In addition, the expectations for research faculty to devote the largest proportion of their time on research is questioned by many employed by the institution and most outside institutions of higher education when the research seems frivolous in nature, self-indulgent or impenetrable.

Gaye Tuchman eloquently expresses her concerns about the declining status of tenure. She sums up the climate that surrounds the work of the tenure track faculty:

[Faculty] have been increasingly regulated by an accountability regime, a politics of surveillance, control, and market management disguised as the value-neutral administration of individuals and organizations (Tuchman, 2012, p. 20).

Change and Leadership

A major challenge in institutional leadership is managing faculty conflict around change.

Robert Birnbaum (1988) employs hypothetical stereotypes of academic institutions to explore organizational structure and management strategies in his book, *How Colleges Work*.

Birnbaum's imaginary university president and institution, President Rita Robinson at Regional State University (RSU), presented a managerial style that valued conflict.

But President Robinson sees the campus as a democratic community whose leaders depend on the consent of the governed (Walker, 1979). She believes that persuasion and diplomacy are her most reliable administrative tools. She sees conflict and disagreement

as normal rather than as an indication of organizational pathology, and she recognizes that others may hold different views in good faith. (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 146)

D. E. Walker (as cited in Birnbaum, 1988) wrote a book on effective strategies for administrative leadership that informed Birnbaum's insights about faculty conflict. This example reinforces the importance of collegial debate imbedded in academic freedom where ideas are vetted through critical analysis and open deliberation.

The institution in the case study has had three presidents. Each president served very different institutions because of rapid growth, development of Division I athletics programs, and expansion of the undergraduate and graduate curricula. Through document analysis and interviews, the case study will explore the changes in the internal environment through the lens of the institution's curriculum process and its intersection with institutional planning as shaped by the administration, faculty and professional staff.

Institutional Isomorphism

Organizational theorists DiMaggio and Powell (1983) categorize external forces shaping isometric change in organizations, ironically breeding similarity while seeking change. The authors selectively targeted three types of isomorphism: coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism. This conceptual framework is portable to the higher education environment, particularly for public institutions. Direct oversight by state-level authorities and indirect federal-oversight conducted through regional and disciplinary accrediting organizations serve as agents of coercive isomorphism. The dependency of public institutions on public funding makes the institution vulnerable to coercive forces. Institutional compliance with state-level performance measures impacts funding for operations, academic program development, and facilities. Accrediting organizations often serve as the regulatory (coercive) agents for federal

gatekeeping, which controls access to student financial aid. Accrediting organizations play another role in fostering consistency in organizational behavior in order to secure accreditation credentials. In this second role, accrediting organizations are agents for normative isomorphism because they embody professional standards at the institutional level or within an academic field. Mimetic isomorphism is demonstrated in institutions' efforts to game national and international rankings of higher education institutions. Analyses of measures that contribute to the rankings often become higher priorities in institutional planning. Another reflection of mimetic isomorphism is the pressure for institutions to expand beyond their original missions and evolve into institutional types that are perceived to be more prestigious or at least are more adept at securing outside funding. A third example of mimetic isomorphism that has particular relevance to this case study has to do with the uncertainty and relative instability of a new institution; consequently, mimetic isomorphism would appear to be a smart if only a safe strategy.

Fiscal accountability, government regulation, professional standards, as well as institutional aspirations constrain institutional change. Government, business, higher education administration, disciplinary experts, student consumers, donors, and alumni are today's actors in the ongoing evolution of higher education that contribute to the prevalence of institutional isomorphism.

Growth is an example of change. Growth of an organization can be compared to growth in a living organism; cells multiply and differentiate. Bolman & Deal (2003) discuss the next critical step in the progression with the addition of integration as the components in an organization grow in number and complexity.

At the heart of organizational design are the twin issues of differentiation and integration.

Organizations divide work by creating a variety of specialized roles, functions, and units.

They must then tie many elements together by means of both vertical and horizontal techniques for integration. (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 67)

Higher education institutions exist in a dynamic and challenging environment. A simple, hierarchical organizational structure does not complement a rapidly changing landscape that is greatly impacted by economic and political factors along with a tsunami of technological innovations. Bolman & Deal argue, “Organizations operating in rapidly changing turbulent, and uncertain environments need much more complex and flexible structures” (2003, p. 67).

Higher Education Environment

Over the last three decades, tuition and fees have significantly outpaced the cost of living and medical costs in America (Philips, 2011). The institution in the case study is located in a state in Florida that has significantly reduced state support for postsecondary education over the past five years (Grapevine, 2013). At the same time, the state is pushing its higher education institutions to become more accountable to the state legislators and taxpayers.

A heightened focus on attainment of post secondary credentials is occurring across the nation. *Attainment* joins *affordability* and *access* on a list of buzzwords words that succinctly capture the nation’s concerns about postsecondary education. As budgets have tightened at the state level, state support for postsecondary education has shrunk. The scarcity of state resources has also created higher expectations for state institutions, amplifying the consequences of economic recessions on higher education. As expectations have risen, public institutions are under increasing scrutiny to become more accountable. These competing pressures to be accessible, affordable, and accountable may create the conditions for public higher education’s perfect storm as institutions strive to increase attainment levels projected for the future.

The current governor has charged the state's colleges to develop a baccalaureate degree with a tuition price tag of \$10,000, a task that only a few of the 28 institutions in the state's college system might fiscally achieve. In the context of increased institutional accountability, this gubernatorial policy of a \$10,000 baccalaureate degree is likely to be offered at the expense of other degree programs and certificate offerings given the average tuition in the state's college system is over \$13,000 (Ordway & Weber, 2012).

The governor's proposed performance expectations will require more data about faculty efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, student evaluations are to be incorporated into faculty evaluations while collective bargaining rights are diminished. The governor is also advocating for increased focus on academic fields such as STEM that are considered to be in high demand. The governor noted there will be heightened attention on improvements in graduation rates while future increases in tuition and state appropriations will be limited (Kiley, 2012).

Several components in the governor's recent proposal for increased accountability of state institutions is likely to meet resistance from faculty and administrators alike and yet enjoy support from taxpayers, students and their families. According to Gray (2012), this state is 49th in the country for tax progressivity, which indicates whether a state's residents are likely to support taxes for public good, and historically, education has been considered to be a public good. Gray (2012) employed quantitative policy indicators that reflected differences between liberal and conservative policies. Her policy liberalism index was comprised of five indicators: policy liberalism, gun law index, abortion index, TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) index, and tax progressivity. The policy liberalism index ranked states relative to national peers, using one as most liberal to 50 as most conservative. Florida ranked 46th in policy liberalism, 34th for the gun law index, 29th for the abortion index, 40th for the TANF

index, and 49th in tax progressivity. In addition to the state not having state income tax, the low ranking in tax progressivity may be a major contributor to the significant drop in state support for higher education during the nation's chilly economic climate of the last five years (Grapevine, 2013). Only five states cut funding more than this state. The institution in the case study grappled with declining state resources, as did three-fifths of the states in the United States.

Urgent Need for Innovation

The institutions in the case study resides in a state that is representative of many states in the United States that exhibit rising expectations and declining resources for public higher education institutions. Clark (1998) coined the phrase *thesis of imbalance* to describe the asymmetrical relationship between the university's capacity and the expressed needs of the environment.

So much is now demanded of universities that traditional ways prove inadequate.

Universities require an enlarged capacity to respond to changes in the external worlds of government, business, and civic life but also a better-honed ability to bring demands under control by greater focus in institutional character. Strongly needed is an overall capacity to respond flexibly and selectively to changes taking place within the knowledge domains of the university world itself. (Clark, 1998, p. xvi)

From 1994-96, Clark (1998) visited five higher education institutions in five different European settings that were recognized by European colleagues to be experimenting with organizational change for more than a decade. Clark's goal was to identify pathways to institutional transformation that were also reflections of new organizational culture. His findings were developed through rich narratives for each institution that informed the distillation of five pathways of transformation. He compressed the descriptions of the pathways into "a strengthened steering core; an expanded developmental periphery; a diversified funding base; a

stimulated academic heartland; and an integrated entrepreneurial culture” (Clark, 1998, p. 5).

Clark’s *steering core* was comprised of central managerial groups and academic departments that operated by integrating values taken from both domains. His *developmental periphery* crossed traditional boundaries of academic disciplines and compartmentalized approaches to alumni, development, industrial relations, etc. In their place, Clark advocated for centers organized with an integrated interdisciplinary approach. Diversification of funding created powerful discretionary flexibility, which Clark thought crucial to institutional transformation. He recommended the diversification of resources gleaned from second-stream sources available through governmental research funding agencies and from third-stream sources such as industry, intellectual property income, local government, auxiliary services, etc. Clark recognized the critical role that faculty in the *academic heartland* played in embracing or resisting institutional change. To engage in institutional transformation, individual faculty and faculty in collective, collaborative enterprises must take part in the steering core, resource development and new managerial network that connected the center to the margins, leading to an *integrated entrepreneurial culture* (Clark, 1998).

The need for an institutional transformation in the 21st century is even more relevant fifteen years after Clark’s efforts to analyze entrepreneurial universities in Europe at the close of the 20th century. The institution in my case study is not elite, and it cannot boast of a storied history; however, it does share similarities with the European institutions in Clark’s multiple case study because it also exists in an asymmetrical relationship with “the external worlds of government, business, and civic life” (Clark, 1998, p. xvi).

Burton Clark (2004) continued his multiple case studies of entrepreneurial universities in Europe into the 21st century by exploring pathways used by organizations to sustain change. His

phrase, *bureaucracy of change*, first appears to be an oxymoron, but it captures the two most important components. *Bureaucracy* refers to the organization of people; *change* suggests a process, leading to the theme of institutional transformation in Clark's multiple case studies. Clark, the preeminent organizational scholar, suggested that a collective *institutional will* was necessary for a university to build and reinforce change that leads to sustained transformation. Clark's five pathways for institutional transformation discussed above can provide a relevant conceptual framework for the exploration of organizational culture and behavior of the institution in my case study. If the new institution's collective *institutional will* favors isomorphic behavior, this young, mid-tier university will seek to emulate more elite institutions, perhaps at a cost to innovative aspects of its educational environment.

The imbalance between resources and demand has gotten even tougher for higher educational institutions in the 21st century because of the rapid growth of for-profit online education and rampant proliferation of MOOCs. Increased competition has dramatically changed the availability of resources in the educational environment, amplifying the challenges for institutions in the Middle.

Every institution in the Middle has to face disruption from above and below. Adding new programs and service increases cost. Cost increases make the most attractive students vulnerable, either to a more compelling value proposition from an Elite or a lower-cost alternative. Cutting costs without fundamental change is not the answer, either. For-Profit institutions, online universities, and creative users of new technology have already deconstructed their offerings and put them back together in imaginative ways that increase value to their students. (DeMillo, 2011, p. 120)

The case study searched for creative unpacking and repacking of the institution's curriculum over time. The rollout of curricular priorities revealed internal and external drivers of institutional change in this new, fast growing, mid-size public liberal arts college.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

“Just as a picture can be worth a thousand words, an institutional narrative can be worth a thousand statistics.” (Clark, 2003, p. 100)

Introduction

The main focus in the case study was the ability of a brick-and-mortar institution to develop effective growth strategies that responded to changing conditions. Brick-and-mortar institutions are already being outpaced by for-profit postsecondary educational organizations in the competition for students (Pianko & Jarrett, 2012). Student enrollment in for-profit higher education grew from 766,000 in 2001 to 2.4 million in 2010, and enrollment at for-profit colleges grew between 1998 and 2008 by 225 percent compared to 31 percent in schools awarding an associate or higher degree (Lee, 2012).

Given the importance of tuition dollars to public institutions to cover instructional costs, student enrollments are of utmost significance. As states increase performance expectations for attainment levels, the quality of the students admitted to the institution is also critical. Can a mid-tier brick-and-mortar institution behave proactively or will the dynamic environment constrain behavior into a defensive response?

The case study employed onsite visits, interviews, and document analysis to achieve an in-depth exploration of a new public institution located in Florida. Print documents that included a book about the founding of the institution were gathered onsite and combined with online

research. Also, the founding president provided a compact disk about the history of the institution based on a personal narrative.

The institution was chosen because of its rapid growth in the student population in less than twenty years, indicating success with growth strategies that may be transportable to other institutional types. The new university has continued its rapid growth rate during the transition of the local community college to an open access state college in 2005. The state college, which began as a junior college in 1962, now competes for students with the new university and offers baccalaureate degrees with a much lower price tag, e.g. tuition and fees reported by The College Board website were \$6118 compared to \$3221 (The College Board, 2013). The *2013 Almanac of Higher Education* published by The Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE) reported the new institution topped the list for growth among its peers between 2001 and 2011 (“Fastest-Growing,” 2013). In 16 years the institution grew enrollment to more than 14,000 students. This apparent success with institutional growth is relevant because national graduation rates need to be dramatically increased to meet the growing demands of a knowledge-based economy.

According to the Lumina Foundation website, the state ranks 31st for degree attainment, and the state’s gap for Lumina’s goal of 60% degree attainment by 2025 is 17.4%. The state needs to increase postsecondary enrollments and improve attainment of credentials, raising the performance expectations for all public institutions in this state in order to reach the projected targets for credentials needed for a knowledge economy.

The institution in the case study does not support tenure but participation in a union, United Faculty of Florida, is an option. Does the absence of tenure enable an institution to be more nimble as indicated by the reported preferences of higher education administrators?

Less than a quarter of college leaders who responded to a Pew Research Center survey, done in association with *The Chronicle*, said they would prefer full-time, tenured professors to make up most of the faculty at their institutions. (Stripling, 2011)

According to Stripling (2011), flexibility is the major benefit of hiring faculty with long-term or annual contracts instead of hiring faculty into tenure track positions. Flexibility allows administrators to respond quickly to economic fluctuations and changing demands for expertise needed by industry and desired by students. Higher education administrators cited complacency bordering on incompetence as a significant downside of tenure (Stripling, 2011).

Onsite interviews focused on the decision-making process surrounding the academic curriculum, revealing information about the organizational culture and interaction between the administration, staff, and faculty. A secondary focus of the study as gleaned from interviewees was the interaction between administrators, staff, faculty, and students, all key actors in a constantly changing higher education organization. The study also included exploration of the linkage between quality and quantity goals for academic excellence and enrollment growth.

Research Design

Beamer (2002) emphasizes the critical relationship of research design to validity and reliability. In a concise summary of a research design for elite interviews, Beamer offers a four-step methodology that includes the expected references to sampling procedures, interviews, corroborative data, data analysis, validity, etc., but his first step is the most important. It directs the researcher to clarify what is being studied and how it can be measured. This can be compared to looking through a camera viewfinder in a verdant greenhouse before deciding what merits the close observation and time-consuming process of a detailed drawing or painting.

Beamer (2002) simplifies the complexity of research design into straightforward queries. Who? What? How much? Yin (2009) builds on Beamer's framework by clarifying the difference between *logic* and *logistics*.

Note that a research design is much more than a work plan. The main purpose of the design is to help avoid the situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions. In this sense, the research deals with a *logical* problem, not a *logistical* problem. (p. 27)

Yin (2009) emphasizes the need to distinguish the case from the context. Setting boundaries, defining and clarifying the unit of analysis, and setting time limits must be established before proceeding with the study. This is not to preclude flexibility, but to provide the study with a logical framework that can produce valid findings.

Site Selection

The institution in the case study is a relatively young institution, less than 20 years old. It is a mid-size institution located near an urban center. It has demonstrated remarkable growth over a short period of time in spite of a serious economic recession. The institution supports 15 athletic programs, including a recent high-profile appearance in a national collegiate competition. As stated above, tenure is not an option for instructional staff at the institution. The state supports 40 public colleges and universities and has cut education funding by a fourth since 2008.

The institution proposed for the case study was selected because of its rapid and dramatic enrollment growth and curricular expansion. It was the nation's fastest growing university of its type from 2001-2011, and a long-standing junior college that fed its students started competing for "customers" when it transitioned into a state college in 2005. The absence of academic tenure at this comprehensive liberal arts university presented opportunities for the administration

to create new models for securing the appropriate expertise for an educational institution that was exhibiting dramatic growth in size and complexity. Without a tenure system, a new institution can experiment more and take more risks with its curricular offerings because the institution makes no long-term commitments to its disciplinary experts.

Exploration and analysis of the institution's growth strategies and academic policies are relevant given the national need for an expanded and more efficient educational enterprise. The institution may be on the leading edge of significant transition in the working conditions of the professoriate that may offer insights for other institutions. Successful models for institutional change are needed to achieve the rapid growth that can support our nation's educational goals.

Data Collection

Data Sources

I employed independent sources for information gathering: online documents, print materials, multimedia, and interviews. Information that was collected via independent streams was compared and analyzed. Published materials about the institutional mission, administrative structure, organization of academic curriculum, and featured highlights of the institution that are made available online, in social media outlets, and in print were studied along with standard institutional data pertaining to student applications, selectivity, enrollment, retention, graduation rates, and student-faculty ratios.

Identification of Informants

In order to strive for maximum information in an efficient, targeted gathering process, the researcher identified key stakeholders per the research design that impacted or intersected with curricular decisions such as representative administrators, faculty and staff before the onsite interviews. Students were selected based on their role as peer advisors. One of the faculty

members interviewed served in the faculty senate, and another was an elected official in the local chapter of the state's faculty union. Interviewees ranged from actors who had been with the institution before the doors opened for students, founding faculty and staff, former students who were now professional staff members, and current students. Two professional staff members had graduated from the institution, and three more staff members were currently in degree programs at the institution. The hybrid experience of being a current or former student of the university and a current staff member was not known before the onsite visit. All informants had been at the institution for three years or longer except for one interviewee.

The former president discussed the history of the institution, its context in the state's higher education environment, and the principles that guided decisions about the institution's original curriculum. One of the informants had taken a new position at another institution and agreed to a second interview, which permitted review and clarification of points made in the first interview about shared governance and communication between the faculty and the administration. It also permitted exploration of the factors pertinent to the informant's departure for another mid-size public institution.

Pseudonyms borrowed from the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) phonetic alphabet were used to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the study's participants ("Radio," 2012). The new names of the informants indicated time with the institution, e.g. the founding president is named "Dr. Alpha." "Alpha," "Bravo," "Charlie," "Delta" are names for members of the founding group of faculty, staff and administrators. Current undergraduate students were interviewed as a group and were cited as "Quebec One, Quebec Two and Quebec Three."

Names of common fishes were employed as pseudonyms for higher education institutions in Florida when referenced by informants. The pseudonym for the new university in the case study

was “Tarpon U.” The names of institutions outside of Florida were changed to pseudonyms only when identification of the informant was possible.

Interview Protocol

Beamer (2002) recommended snowball sampling as a means to find convergence of information and to identify contrarians in order to avoid bias.

As the researcher progresses through this process with multiple respondents, a convergence of recommendations indicates that the sample is complete. Snowball sampling allows a researcher to garner a rich fund of information, often while conserving resources. (Beamer 2002, p. 91)

Informants did make recommendations about former and current employees that significantly enriched data gathering and greatly increased the historical information available about the institution’s planning and founding.

Beamer emphasized the importance of resolving issues prior to the interview that pertain to the interview protocol such as recording and transcribing, confidentiality, preparation, and interview development. In order to reduce the risk of compromising fieldwork, he wisely recommended practice.

Pre-testing the interview instrument is critically important to identify potential problems such as unclear questions, questions with multiple interpretations, and key words that may serve as a basis for coding in subsequent analysis. (Beamer, 2002, p. 89)

Prior to onsite interviews, preliminary discussions with administrators in the president and provost’s offices were conducted by phone, and IRB materials were reviewed at the campus level as well. Interviewees were asked via a letter of introduction that described the project and the researcher (see Appendix B). The letter requested participation in an interview session that

lasted as few as 45 minutes and as long as two hours. Although in-person interviews were preferred, telephone interviews and e-mail were also employed. Descriptions of the purpose of the study and confidentiality options were provided in writing, and each interviewee signed a written consent waiver (see Appendix C). Fourteen interviews with 16 informants were conducted initially over two days in March of 2013, and one with the 17th informant was conducted in May by phone. Interviews with two new informants and two second interviews were conducted in July. In total, interviews with 19 informants were recorded and transcribed. Informants included four administrators, six faculty members, five professional staff, three students, and one support staff member enrolled in a grad program. Eleven informants were male, and eight were female (see Appendix D). The opportunity to reflect on the interview data over a longer time period and to interview informants again or seek additional information from informants helped themes to emerge that led to clarification and saturation in the data.

The grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2004) can combine fact-oriented, descriptive research methodology with a more conceptual, theoretical approach. In order to clarify meaning via inductive reasoning, extensive data must be gathered to tease out a conceptual framework and make it more explicit. Grounded theory was utilized to allow for flexibility in analysis and objectivity in the data collection. The research had to be open to developing patterns in the interviews instead of searching for confirmation of initial suppositions and expectations.

Charmaz (2004) advocated the use of fuller reporting of interview discourse in order to illustrate the humanity in the story and to make research more accessible to a wider audience; consequently, extensive quotes were employed. Grounded theory methodology called for an immersion into the conversation in order to clarify meanings of commonly used phrasing and to ensure accuracy. Although professional transcribers were used in the research, important phrases

were often missed or mistaken. Inflection and intonation in an interview was lost in the translation to text. Audio recordings were listened to again and again in order to ensure a richer analysis.

The interview process employed a basic strategy of general questions about strengths and weaknesses of the institutional environment that transition into questions pertaining to more specific topics such as perceptions about quality of academic programs, curricular decisions, innovative practices, and academic priorities (see Appendix E). The interview process allowed for deviation from topics when conversational tangents appeared informative. Snowball sampling did serve as another mechanism to ensure flexibility in the interview process and to identify actors that were perceived by informants to have additional information, insights and/or possessed opposite viewpoints. The scope of the interview process supported snowball sampling, which allowed three key informants to be identified but only two could be interviewed.

The interviews developed a rich description of the relationship of the academic culture to the management culture of the institution. Interviews provided individual narratives to accompany information published by the institution online and in documents. Interviews also provided personal perceptions about the decision-making and planning processes, the institutional climate, and academic rigor for comparison with the official narratives.

In querying faculty, students, and administrators about the curricular decision-making process, general and personal information was volunteered by informants about institutional planning, performance assessment, hiring decisions, research autonomy, and governance as well as perceptions about academic freedom in the classroom. Student to faculty ratios, the size,

composition, and credentials of the faculty were discussed in regard to the scope of the curriculum.

Professional transcribers were employed to transcribe the audiotaped interviews to ensure objectivity in the transcription. Two audio recorders were used for each interview. This was critical due to technical problems with one recorder. Field notes were written onsite to corroborate and/or add details about the interviewee and context.

Observations

The original research design included observations of meetings between administration, faculty, and staff; however, the majority of the interviews that were held onsite were conducted in the administrative office suite. Although campus visits were conducted in March and July of 2013, onsite observations of interactions between diverse stakeholders and observations of offices, classrooms, etc. were limited; consequently, interviews served as the primary source of information, including perceptions about the effectiveness of communication channels.

Archival Materials and Documents

In seeking corroboration of evidence, institutional policies and procedures in print and online were examined to establish a separate stream of information that would be compared to information gleaned from the interview process. In addition, a book that chronicled the founding of the institution authored by the first president contributed information that was not available in interviews or in current university documents. A dissertation that investigated rhetoric and practice surrounding service learning at the institution was another important source of historical information. The provost office directed my inquiries about institutional data to quarterly briefings that were produced for the institution's board of trustees and were available online. Historical data started in 1993 and went forward toward projected growth in 2017-18. The

university's annual accountability reports and work plans required by the state university system and the state's board of governors were also available online. The availability of this amount of institutional data may be the result of broad open government laws in Florida.

Data Analysis

The combination of interviews and document study was designed to reveal a credible and consistent portrait of the institution. The data analysis involved multiple reviews of each recorded interview to ascertain repetitions, patterns, and appearance or disappearance of themes over time. Employing snowball sampling, information that was volunteered by informants, which indicated minority viewpoints or previously undisclosed materials, was investigated. Consequently, new informants were identified to interview and documents were added for review. (Time prevented pursuit of some issues raised in the case study such as job vulnerability of faculty without tenure.) After establishing familiarity with the audio recordings, examination of interview transcripts allowed searches for specific phrases to ascertain their frequencies in individual interviews and prevalence across categories of interviewee (faculty, staff, etc.). Commonly used phrases cited by interviewees described first-hand experiences and perceptions of the institution relative to other universities in the state system. As the number of interviewees expanded so did the narratives about change and innovation, necessitating an expansion of the original conceptual framework to include institutional theory. Institutional theory suggests that organizations in the same field are likely to become more similar over time. The passionate narratives about curricular innovation by informants who had served Tarpon for many years were juxtaposed with the abstract data represented in numbers and charts comparing institutional performance over time that were available from the state's department of education website. This allowed the researcher to evaluate Tarpon interviewees' claims about innovation,

comparing their accounts with data on Tarpon and similar institutions in the state, to see whether Tarpon remained distinctly innovative or was becoming more similar to other institutions.

The information gleaned from multiple sources was coherent and appeared credible. The case study allowed exploration of the relationship between the institution's organizational structure and its ability to innovate; however, it also discovered others significant factors in the environment that shaped the institution. In keeping with Charmaz's grounded theory methods (2004), efforts to gather rich data required separate trips for interviews on campus over five months in order to make emergent themes more explicit.

Beamer (2002) discussed the need to corroborate information gleaned in interviews by comparing with print and online documents that are available publically as well as internal to the case study such as meeting minutes and reports.

Again, these interviews may verify or refute elite perceptions and accounts, allowing the researcher a more balanced understanding of the phenomenon being studied. (Beamer, 2002, p. 93)

Merriam (2009) supported integration of theory with data collection similar to Charmaz. Merriam employed a succinct description of data analysis, *making meaning*, which invokes creativity in comprehension.

Data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of a study. (Merriam, 2009. p. 176)

Merriam goes on to describe how themes discovered in research findings can cut across the disparate information sources. She recommends construction of categories to facilitate *making meaning*. This starts with a process he terms *coding*.

Think of yourself as having a conversation with the data, asking questions of it, making comments to it, and so on. This process of making notations next to bits of data that strike you as potentially relevant for answering research questions is also called *coding*. (Merriam, 2009, p. 178)

Early in the analysis, openness and receptivity to the data was appropriate. Merriam used *open coding* to describe her initial approach to analyzing data. She describes the next stage, *axial* or *analytical coding*, as a grouping process to create additional intellectual scaffolding. Grouping generated perceptions of patterns that can be aggregated into themes. Merriam substituted the word *category* for *theme* to illustrate how connections are made between copious and disparate data.

Validity and Reliability

Beamer (2002) offered a straightforward research design that utilized the snowball approach to interviewing. The relevant advantage of the snowball approach was for the interviewer to avoid bypassing critical respondents in the information gathering process. The snowball approach broadened the range of informed viewpoints, enriching the descriptions about the institution. Beamer cited the possibility of being directed toward irrelevant informants when using the snowball strategy for interviewing respondents, but the snowball strategy identified the founding president and another key informant with 15 years of institutional history.

1. Identify sources of contamination for individual interviews (e.g., respondent motives, possibilities for censored responses, interviewer effects, interruptions).

2. Define keywords and phrases and establish how they reflect a respondent's position relative to the constructs of interest.
3. Code interviews and measure the frequency of keywords and phrases. Note individual deviations from the general coding and measurement scheme.
4. Corroborate respondents' information using external sources (e.g., press accounts, policy reports, opposition scenarios).
5. Aggregate interview data for inferences about politics and policy and/or for use in a larger empirical analysis. (Beamer 2002, p. 94)

Rubin and Rubin (1995) also cautioned an interviewer not to be drawn into detailed descriptions and specifics particularly with highly charged and/or emotional topics. The authors asserted the critical importance of trust in effective and informative interviews. Validity of the research depended upon the interviewee's trust in the objectivity and fairness of the research; therefore, confidentiality was offered to the interviewees. Research participants were more likely to be engaged, reflective and responsive if they also perceived merit in the research. Rubin and Rubin employed the phrase *emotional understanding* to emphasize the importance of the cerebral and affective components of human dialogue.

Once you have established that you can understand your conversational partner both cognitively and emotionally, in the next stage of the interview you concentrate on obtaining the basic information about the topical or cultural arena. You encourage the conversational partner to talk at length on the subject at hand, initially covering a broad territory then focusing in on more specific matters. (Rubin & Rubin, page 134)

All interviewees agreed to voice recording, which ensured accuracy of information. Even with audio recording, field notes permitted recording of ideas, observations and impressions of

the interviewees and their comments and/or facial expressions. Interviewees were asked for permission for audiotaping beforehand, and all agreed. One hesitated and asked several questions, but then agreed to be recorded. All signed consent agreements. Again, professional transcription of audiotapes was employed to ensure accuracy and objectivity.

Triangulation of data in qualitative research is the most common mechanism to demonstrate credibility of assertions derived from a study (Merriam, 2009). Corroboration of information gleaned from diverse and unique sources is a strategy that is comparable to the correlation of data in quantitative research where observed variables change in consistent and predictable directions. Interviews and document analyses served to establish diverse vantage points from which to explore the institution in the case study. The documents included a book about the founding of the institution by the first president and a doctoral dissertation by a high-ranking administrator.

Merriam (2009) credited philosopher Gilbert Ryle with coining the term, *thick description*, now used to signify a granular description of the results of a study in order to make them more portable to another setting. Employing thick description in the case study was critical to informed analysis of the results.

Yin (2009) also discussed corroboration of information from multiple sources, repetition across cases, and pattern matching as strategies that he recommended to establish internal and external validity and to facilitate reliable findings. He stressed repeatedly the need to address rival theories as a tactic in research design, the earlier the better.

Relevance of the Study

The motivation for this case study is derived from the necessity to strategically educate more people with fewer resources. Creative, innovative strategies must be developed to reach

ambitious benchmarks for increased enrollment capacity that can be coupled with academic integrity. A recent gathering in Paris of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) served as yet another reflection of tensions between world leaders who imagine education cast in its familiar role as the economic engine that can solve current global economic woes and, more recently, a purveyor of cross cultural enlightenment to calm political and class tensions.

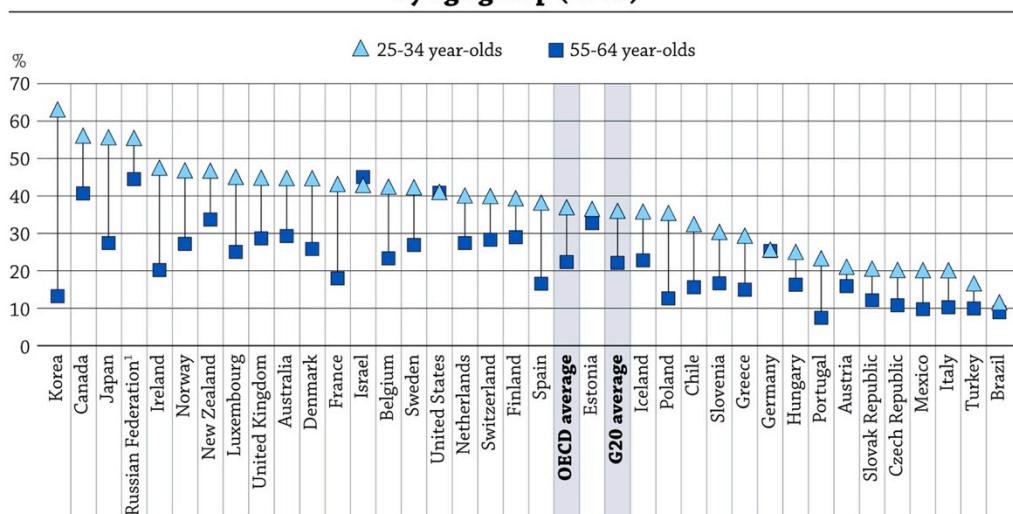
Much of the first day of the biennial higher education conference of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development here explored the tension unfolding in many nations and regions over their relative emphasis on providing high-quality research and training aimed at their would-be future leaders and idea creators vs. continuing to expand a meaningful post-high school education to the much larger numbers of citizens who may populate the work force, fill the voting booths, and parent the children. (Lederman, 2012)

Pressures to increase access to education on a planet that is already struggling to support the current level of population growth may become desperate in the not too distant future.

According to OECD brochure, *Education at a Glance* © OECD 2011, the United States has dropped to 16th globally in achievement of education. *Figure 1 (Chart A1.1)* compares tertiary education in United States to other industrialized nations on two data points, 25-34 year-olds and 55-64 year olds. The chart indicates overall global ranking and growth in percentage of educational attainment over a 30-year time period. The chart also demonstrates that the United States has lost ground relative to growth in degree attainment between the 25-34 year-olds and the 55-64 year-olds. This compression of degree attainment rates across generations is similar in other developed countries such as Israel, Estonia and Germany (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, n.d., p. 30). Many countries can be congratulated for progress in

tertiary education attainment; however, the United States has appeared to stall in its progress with that important measure of public good.

Chart A1.1. Percentage of population that has attained tertiary education, by age group (2009)



1. Year of reference 2002.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 25-34 year-olds who have attained tertiary education.

Source: OECD, Table A1.3a. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2011).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932459831>

Figure 1. International rankings of tertiary education attainment by age group.

Indianapolis-based Lumina Foundation for Education is providing significant resources to facilitate 60% of the United States population to achieve post-secondary credentials by 2025 (“Lumina,” n.d.). In addition to Lumina Foundation’s focus on higher education, national educational attainment rates are being discussed in the political arena. At the 2012 Democratic National Convention former President Bill Clinton noted the same OECD post-secondary attainment rates by highlighting that the United States has slipped from 1st place to 16th globally.

Birnbaum and Shushok (1998) argued for the enduring adaptability of institutions and organizations in their essay, “The Crisis Crisis in Higher Education.” As academic institutions continue to adapt in a marketized higher education environment, will academic freedom be considered a valuable commodity? Keeping Birnbaum and Shushok’s perspective in mind, my

case study explored the evolution of a brick-and-mortar institution, its professoriate, and the students they serve as each domain adapted within the larger context of change affecting decision-makers in higher education. Adaptation of institutions, particularly those in DeMillo's vulnerable *Middle*, is critical. The survival of higher education institutions is strategic to providing access to diverse educational opportunities for a densely populated planet. The preservation of academic freedom with its vital, historical role in the preservation of democracy is of equal significance. The current level of the globe's political discord and violence may make these goals even more urgent.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND EMERGENT THEMES

Brief History of Tarpon U

The new university, Tarpon U, opened its doors in 1997, but its foundation was laid much earlier on the imprints of two institutions, one a junior college, Ballyhoo State College (a pseudonym), that had offered courses since 1962, and the other, a state university, Dolphin U (a pseudonym), more than 150 miles away that opened in 1956. The junior college offered courses that could lead to an associate degree, and the state university offered upper level courses needed for the baccalaureate degree, starting in 1974 in facilities located next door to the junior college (Partington, 1997). Two challenges led to dissatisfaction with this joint institutional venture between the local junior college and the distant university: lack of enrollment growth and limited, out-of-sequence course offerings. Still, the imprints of the two established institutions were registered in the new institution's identity.

At the time of the planning for a new university, the Board of Regents oversaw higher education in Florida and had done so since 1965. In advance of the formation of the Board of Regents, the Florida Board of Control served as the governing body from 1905 ("Board of Regents," 2013). In short, Florida utilized centralized oversight of higher education for almost 100 years before a dramatic change in 2001 took place under Governor Jeb Bush's administration. The Florida State Legislature dissolved the Board of Regents, and replaced it with the Florida Board of Education staffed with seven gubernatorial appointees that lasted only one year until Florida voters amended the state constitution, re-establishing statewide oversight

with a new Board of Governors (“State archives,” 2013). Still, the office of the governor had gained more influence over the state’s higher education institutions through increased appointment authority to the Board of Governors and individual university boards of trustees.

An important policy that was a vital strategy in the coordination of higher education institutions in Florida was the policy on articulation, which coordinated transfer between the state’s junior colleges and universities beginning in 1971.

Rapid expansion of the university and community college systems in the 1960s and 70s made articulation between the two public systems essential. Initially, four universities were opened without lower divisions and the other five universities had severe restrictions on enrollments of freshman and sophomores. This resulted in the majority of baccalaureate degree students entering the system through community colleges. Even with the recent increases in lower division students attending state universities, community college transfer students account for approximately half of baccalaureate degree recipients within the state university system. (“Articulation Manual,” 2007)

The partnership that began in 1974 between the junior college, Ballyhoo State College, and the distant state university, Dolphin U, benefitted both institutions. By 1997, the joint partnership served “2,000 students each semester, with an estimated 350 students per year earning diplomas” from Dolphin U (Partington, 1997).

This new institution, Tarpon U, which opened in 1997, was a product of the convergence of actions associated with legitimate regional educational needs, local economic interests, and state officials. Planning and coordination of higher education at the state level mapped the course of the new institution.

State-level planners and administrators created both the Founding Mission Statement and the Ten Year Development Plan. The group included eight senior administrators from around the state: two from public universities, one from a public community college, and two from the state higher education governing board. One of the representatives from the state higher education board was appointed president of the new institution in 1993.

(Bravo, 2006, p. 80)

As an indication of the strong local interest, support, and investment, the site for the campus of this new university was selected from more than 20 potential land gifts. One of the founders described the actors invested in the decision.

The Board of Regents had determined that they were not going to spend any money for a site. They would ask for people to donate sites. There were 23 sites . . . and then when we got down to five final sites we asked a regional planning group that had environmental skilled people and looked at transportation routes and water resources and so forth . . . because of the uniqueness of the state and sensitivity of environmental and land use planning that we would have an environmental focus that would be built in from the front end wherever the site was . . . It was intriguing and very political. (Dr. Alpha)

A founding president and initial staff members were selected soon after and academic and campus planning began. The governing body of the state university system charged the institution to respond to 21st century higher education challenges in new and innovative ways, including teaching with technology. In search of a professoriate that drew from professional practitioners in health and business, the governing body of the state university system also approved a contract system for faculty in lieu of tenure, a radical departure from all the other universities in the state.

Construction started in 1995 and the doors opened in 1997. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)¹ awarded the institution accreditation candidacy, which set in motion a comprehensive self-study. In record time the new university received official notification in only its second year of operation that it was awarded accreditation.

According to one of the earliest stakeholders, the university was a logical response to conditions in the state. State officials had done the necessary analysis of the quantity and quality of curricular offerings in the state.

It was in the 1988 master plan that a very clear need existed in this region of the state for public university access. One of the criteria clearly demonstrated that this area of the state had the lowest college participation rate among 18 to 24 year olds. One of the causal factors was that it was 150 miles to the nearest four-year public college. If you look then at the demographics and the projected growth over the next 20 years, one could see that a new institution in this area could be sustained both from a population standpoint generally and particularly the inaccessibility of any nearby public institution and coupled with the lower than average college-going rate, it seem like the right thing.

(Dr. Alpha)

One of the founders who had extensive state-level expertise and experience discussed how Florida's Board of Regents oversaw higher education as an integrated system, not some competition for resources by feudal warlords running universities.

There was a body of knowledge that was being accumulated about where are our best programs, what are some of the needs and specialized needs in the state. Where are some of the disciplines going? What are the changes? How did deans and department chairs

¹ The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. <http://www.sacscoc.org/>

² Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, (LEED), is national rating system of environmentally responsible and

evaluate the effectiveness, the efficiency about a particular institution? Also looking at the balances between and among teaching, research, and public service. Are we investing in certain areas and underinvesting in others because of who makes the request locally versus what is the need? (Dr. Alpha)

Early accreditation was an indicator that state representatives and founding administrators, faculty and staff had shown due diligence in their oversight of the complexities inherent in the creation of a new university. Collectively, they had performed well in developing a plan, reaching goals, and developing solutions to unexpected challenges. The speed and effectiveness of decision-making surrounding the place, physical plant, people, policies, and much more were unprecedented.

The people who were in the pipeline who are entering their senior year would be the first class so that we could have our evaluation in year two. All of that was done in advance with SACS approval, and we were accredited on record time. We had 20,000 applicants for our first 150 faculty positions, raised \$38 million in private funds before we took our first student. (Dr. Alpha)

Unique Mission & Academic Strengths

According to the future lead administrator and former vice-chancellor at the state level, the original vision for this new university was to have an appropriately new and different mission that was unlike the mission statements adopted by other public institutions in the state, “We were trying to break a logjam to have people more responsive to the adult, to the senior citizen, more teaching with technology, more public service, more online education (Dr. Alpha).” This was a very different concept for a university, one that would operate with more efficiency by using shared resources, “to see if we can promote the idea of joint sharing of staff and facilities and to

use other people's staff" (Dr. Alpha). This founder who was charged to implement the new concept in a new institution anticipated resistance from the United Faculty of Florida. Instead of hiring a full complement of full-time faculty, the new university would build partnerships with public schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, and social service agencies.

The initial vision for this new institution also included increased accessibility to a more diverse, non-traditional student population by offering courses seven days a week and by developing competency assessments.

We were going to have a culture that was going to have a weekend college program. A culture in which all faculty were also going to participate in distance education even though they were involved in face to face instruction . . . A culture that was focused a little bit on competency assessment and students moving at their own pace. (Dr. Alpha)

The current administrators, faculty, and staff describe a very different institution today yet they still perceive it as innovative compared to other institutions where they have worked. A current lead administrator stated, "people would actually pick us out because of the environmentalism piece, the service learning piece, the dedication to undergraduate learning outcomes is at a very, very high level" (Dr. Mike). According to another administrator, there was much success to celebrate in a young institution although the focus was on more traditional academic values that included facilities and workforce readiness.

We have a state-of-the-art campus. It's sixteen years old. There's little deferred maintenance. There's a strong technology turnover . . . Emphases of the institution on the environmental side are appropriate to the geographic location of the institution and the programs that we have . . . marine science, environmental science, civil and environmental engineering, there are a number of things that complement one another

and provide some critical mass of faculty . . . we have a very good health professions area as well, which meets regional needs . . . Virtually all those programs are accredited and have very strong licensing pass rates for the students. (Dr. India)

Another faculty member was a little less sanguine in discussing the collective energy surrounding innovative pedagogy and admitted that rapid growth over 15 years was challenging to the ideals on which the institution was founded (Dr. Kilo).

One undergraduate student informant who was a peer advisor offered a much broader description of the undergraduate experience because of the focus on service and leadership opportunities. Educational experiences attained outside of the classroom at the institution were as valued by students as much as those achieved through formal instruction. This current student like all the current and former students perceived the university to be innovative.

I've had many experiences here that I don't think would have been able to attain at a bigger university, like, I'm an orientation leader for two years, and I'm an RA, and I'm in a fraternity, and I'm part of student government. And I just don't think that I would have had all these opportunities at another school. (Quebec One)

Not one of the nineteen informants was aware of any other institution in the state that offered a similar learning environment. The students based their assessment on communications with former high school friends and visits to other institutions. The faculty and administrators based their assessments on prior employment, state level meetings, first-hand observations and personal education.

Curriculum Evolution

The curriculum not only expanded over time, it underwent reorganization and diversification. Some components of the original curriculum persisted, some flourished, and some were

abandoned. New courses, new programs, and new degrees continue to be added. According to the 2011-12 Accountability Report, the number of undergraduate degree programs quadrupled to over 50 programs, and graduate degree programs had almost tripled to more than 30 programs.

As an institution that evolved from a branch campus, most of the original curriculum was inherited from a flagship institution. In addition to the curricular ancestry inherited from an established state university, the founding president brought experience as a faculty member, dean, college president and state higher education officer. The institutional history, leadership expertise, the governing body of the state university system and the state legislature were important actors in the formulation of this new institution's academic offerings.

A current lead administrator described the curriculum as belonging to the faculty, “. . . you know, the faculty owns the curriculum” (Dr. Mike). A second administrator concurred, “the vast majority of the programs are the inception of the faculty” (Dr. India). Dr. Lima, a faculty member who previously had taught at several prestigious institutions, confirmed their assertions, “Well, one of the strengths that I’ve noticed here is that we actually do shape the curriculum.” This theme of faculty ownership of the curriculum was pervasive in the interviews independent of the informant's role as faculty, staff or administrator at the institution. The absence of tenure did not appear to affect the traditional model of faculty oversight of the curriculum.

Faculty shapes the curriculum, and the school consciously shapes the curriculum . . . I arrived at Elite University (a pseudonym) they just said, “You can teach anything you want, you know, what do you want to teach?” . . . We never had a conversation about curriculum . . . one of the strengths of Tarpon U is that we really talk about curriculum all the time, and faculty have an opportunity to help shape it. (Dr. Lima)

Based on decades of experience at other institutions, one administrator described the curriculum process, “I don’t know if it’s more layered than anywhere else” (Dr. Mike). A common response to interview questions about the curriculum process described faculty and staff working together to discuss a layered yet inclusive process (see Appendix E). A professional staff member (Oscar) described how a curriculum team was assembled with representatives from diverse units such as athletics, New Student Programs, Student Life and Undergraduate Studies to discuss ideas and needs before engaging with the faculty senate and provost office.

Without any prompting, the topic of academic freedom was raised by faculty during interviews. Faculty were drawn to the institution because it appeared to be a blank slate “The lack of history has given us the freedom, as faculty, to create the courses as we see in the best interest of the student learning outcomes.” (Dr. Golf)

We have the ability, in our classroom, to be innovative . . . our academic freedom, to me, is beyond academic freedom in some other places in that we can be very innovative in our classrooms. We can try new best practices. We can use a lot of technology-oriented aspects in the classroom . . . I think that was what attracted me to come here was that ability to be innovative in the classroom—to integrate field experience with the class and not so bound by “This is the way we used to do it.” (Dr. Golf)

A founding faculty member was passionate about the institution’s engagement with ecology, sustainability, and service, moving facilely through examples of personal research, course development, and service to the institution and community. The faculty member reflected the institutional mission in daily practice.

Two ways that our mission is unique is our relationship to ecological perspective, environmental issues, and service learning, our civic engagement. We have crafted

elements of our curriculum such that we have real depth in those areas. So, every student has to take this course, the Colloquium and Sustainable Future. (Dr. Charlie)

Another founding faculty member considered the institution to be true to its original vision in the way it continued to interact with the curriculum even in the context of state requirements.

We are still the new kid on the block . . . we've become more innovative than some of the sister institutions that are the same size and maybe just a little bit older than us. But when I go to state meetings for reading education . . . they're following more what the state says to do course-by-course, and we kind of integrate more. (Dr. Delta)

One faculty informant who had been at the institution since the beginning described activities supported by the administration that were designed to ensure that faculty engaged with curricular innovation and academic excellence.

A faculty learning community on SoTL [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning], and about 20 people participate . . . We brainstormed ideas, and it's broken down into about four projects. One is looking at how our students, faculty and staff define ethics on this campus. Another one looks at peer evaluation of written work, another one on student learning . . . eBooks . . . those are the four big ones . . . I believe is so innovative and creative about this is . . . these go across discipline. (Dr. Delta)

In the early formation of the institution, interdisciplinarity was highly regarded. The first degree was a baccalaureate in liberal arts, which was divided eventually into smaller, more traditional disciplinary majors. More examples of professional support for faculty were cited such as a designated time and place for faculty to write, and a teaching-focused book club. A recent initiative was the New Faculty Academy, which was a course required of new instructors with less than two years of teaching experience.

Most informants were quick to state that curricular initiatives and revisions originated at the faculty level. The curriculum process required several layers of review as is common in most institutions of higher education. Current and former administrators also described the impact on the evolution of the curriculum played by the institution's presidents, upper administration, external funding sources, and the state government. When asked about the role of students in the curricular process, informants described a relatively passive role played by representatives from the student government on the institution's governing committees. Student participation on these committees was perceived as minimal at best although informants never criticized the lack of student engagement. A founding faculty member cited aspects of student lifestyles, which included time constraints due to work responsibilities as well as advantages that comes with students' familiarity with technology, "You have some very engaged students and some that aren't, but I believe they're given the opportunity to voice their opinions." (Dr. Delta)

When queried, current and former students were animated about the quality of the instruction. They also cited many aspects of the curriculum that they perceived to be innovative. Each student informant was able to cite a degree program at the institution that offered enough flexibility to accommodate personal focus and career goals. Quebec One (a pseudonym) described the communication major as an example, which allowed another student to put together courses that served as preparation to be a standup comic whereas the student informant was focused on a career in law. Students like faculty, administrators and staff did not question the passive role of students in the curriculum process.

Service Learning and Civic Engagement

Service learning is integral to the educational mission at this institution. Undergraduate students are required to perform 80 hours of service before graduation, and 40 hours are required

of upper level transfer students. A student's service learning requirement is viewed as offering benefits to the community and the university while enriching learning and enhancing career preparation of students. From the administration's vantage point "the university serves the community as much as the community supports the university" (Dr. Mike). A founding faculty member, Dr. Charlie, asserted that service included everyone at the university by stating, "We have a culture of service."

Very service oriented, and that produces a culture that actually makes for a stronger school . . . At Elite University (a pseudonym) we were never asked to do service. In fact, we were discouraged from doing service . . . I started out sort of doing, like, Peer Review and Support Committee and then the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee . . . and now the Undergraduate General Education Council . . . It gives you much more of an overview as to what the general goal is. Plus, you then end up making really strong bonds with people outside your own department. (Dr. Lima)

Faculty, staff, and students consistently cited the commitment to service learning as one of the most innovative characteristics of the institution. Diverse informants indicated that faculty members were demonstrating more engagement with the service learning requirement by integrating service learning in coursework.

More and more faculty are involved in creating some sense of opportunity in their classes—five hours here, eight hours, ten hours as a part of the course—and you have to go out . . . or "We've got this experience we are all going to do as a class and then talk about it, and write about it, and think about it." . . . the first thing I would think of that's innovative is service learning. (Papa)

The founders thought that service learning would be easily integrated in the curriculum; however, the traditional training of faculty during their graduate program usually included designing coursework according to disciplinary content. This orthodoxy of graduate preparation generates an allegiance to the disciplinary field over the home institution (Clark, 1963).

The founding vice president for academic affairs balanced the expectation that the university would have a service learning program with the expectation that the faculty member would have autonomy in the classroom. So, this balancing tactic resulted in implementation of service learning as a co-curricular graduation requirement rather than service learning as a component of the academic curriculum, and that still stands today.

(Dr. Bravo)

Independent of the faculty's mixed reactions to integrating service learning into coursework, students are encouraged to be entrepreneurial in designing service learning projects and activities. Entrepreneurial behavior is built into the curriculum by requiring students to participate and by giving students authority over the content. One professional staff member described the flexibility of the requirement for students.

The students may either come up with their own project or there may be a project built into the class that the students go out, and they do a service project in our community. Or students can go out on their own as well to find their own projects. (Oscar)

Founding faculty members have led innovative programming initiatives that incorporate service learning and leadership. The faculty's buy-in of an original tenet of the institution may have contributed to their longevity and level of commitment. The service learning and leadership model that the founding faculty personified can provide important modeling for newer

hires, integrate innovative leadership into the curriculum, and contribute to an innovative education for the students.

We have just created a Live/Learn Community . . . “Leadership through Service,” . . .

Those courses focus on the environment . . . one from the humanities perspective, one from the science perspective, so there you have the leadership, service and an environmental component . . . there were so many people so excited about it . . . these students are going to have the most amazing experience, and they will become the leaders or the senators and presidents. (Dr. Charlie)

The graduate curriculum grew in response to workforce needs of the community. A founding faculty member, Dr. Delta, discussed new graduate programs that started recently and those under consideration:

This school very much responds to the local community, and when programs are added, it’s because there’s a need in the community . . . This school doesn’t have people moving from somewhere else to go to graduate school here. Most of those students are local.

The undergraduate students who were required to perform 80 hours of service spoke highly of the requirement. They corroborated other reports that completing the requirement was self-directed and flexible. The options on and off campus allowed students to pursue personal interests and goals. A peer advisor, Quebec One, described personal experiences with service:

It is a program where I work with a small group of freshmen every Friday for two and a half to three hours, and we work on developing their personal leadership skills in whatever area they’re interested in, whether it be they want to become an officer in student government or they’re interested in Greek Life or housing or any sort of aspects

of leadership that they're interested in. We help to grow them . . . to become that leader that they want to be.

Two of the three peer advisors had options to attend larger schools, and they chose Tarpon U because of its size and welcoming community. Quebec One adds his perspective:

We have alternative spring breaks. Our students go to New Orleans and Washington, DC and Alabama to participate in service learning trips, and I just think that all the opportunities that are offered to us are just opportunities that students at bigger schools can't get because they are just a number.

Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity surfaced in a number of interviews. Opportunities for team-teaching were highly valued by faculty and were supported by administrators who provided funding for innovative courses. Educational benefits to students were cited as the primary rationale for team teaching; however, team-teaching served as a pedagogical strategy to deal with limited faculty lines and associated faculty expertise in small academic departments. Team teaching ensured that the disciplinary content in an undergraduate major did not have significant gaps. The institution offered a degree in liberal arts, but transitioned to more traditional academic majors over time. Dr. Kilo, a faculty member, discussed how the founders' vision of interdisciplinarity had evolved into more traditional degree structures, but interdisciplinarity remained valued by the contemporary faculty:

A student could essentially craft the degree program for him or herself . . . It became almost impossible for students to figure that out and to navigate that as we grew. Again, I think the growth is a major . . . reason why some of these core values have been harder to hold onto than others. So, there's still a lot of interdisciplinary work. There's an inter-

disciplinary studies minor. There's a lot of team teaching that occurs across disciplines.

(Dr. Kilo)

One faculty informant used the phrase “productive failure” to describe faculty’s efforts to experiment and innovate with a more interdisciplinary curriculum. This strategy included resistance to traditional departmental structures that resulted in “most of the departments still have an ampersand” (Dr. Juliet).

Its newness was a factor in supporting innovation . . . the lack of a burden of history standing behind institutional practices, whether they be bureaucratic, administrative or academic and disciplinary. The university started with an organizational structure on the academic side that really attempted to foreground and model the idea of interdisciplinarity. (Dr. Juliet)

Weekend College

The Weekend College was an innovative concept that offered campus access to non-traditional students, but it was short-lived due to a change in leadership and a shifting of priorities to more traditional full-time students in a residential university.

How are we dealing with the single parent, the physically handicapped, the shift worker, and the people who travel? Part of the distance education and the weekend college together was intended to address the real needs . . . we want to show that there are thousands or hundreds of thousands of citizens in our state who need courses at their schedule time. (Dr. Alpha)

An informant who had arrived as a student in the early years and stayed presented a different perspective on the dissolution of the Weekend College, linking it to state funding formulas.

My interpretation of our original mission was very much a weekend, Internet-based . . . not totally Internet-based, but heavy use of Internet . . . online classes, weekend college, commuter college, non-traditional . . . After Dr. [Alpha] retired, the new president came in, and because of the funding formula in the state of Florida, he understood right away that that formula was not going to work, that there was a demand here for a comprehensive traditional four-year institution, fully comprehensive, and that included housing, on-campus housing. It included athletics and everything that goes along with that. (Echo)

One informant who was balancing studies and work was supportive of more flexible course offerings that were offered in the evenings and on the weekends.

There are a lot of students who work their way through undergrad now because they're putting themselves through college . . . I think night classes and weekend classes offer that flexibility for them. So, I think just not even looking at just non-traditional students but your traditional students who want to work during the week also. I think that would benefit them as well. (November)

Given the recent increase in focus on utilization of facilities on brick-and mortar campuses, it is likely that there will be more pressure on higher education institutions to operate year-round and to expand the time schedule and type of course offerings. (It is also likely that states will fund fewer campus construction projects.)

Teaching with Technology

The founding president created an advisory council comprised of international experts on distance education to serve as an advisory board and to help the inaugural faculty develop online

courses and grant proposals. Faculty members were encouraged to work with the acclaimed technology experts to help move the institution forward.

When the Southern Regional Education Board . . . went into the online education and created the academic common market for online education . . . the very first complete degree program that was approved through SREB was a [Tarpon U] program, BS in Criminal Justice. (Dr. Alpha)

The original plan to increase technology in teaching that was developed more than twenty years ago offered a framework of shared resources that anticipated current institutional efforts to aggressively negotiate and implement online instruction. Using technology was a visionary approach to expanding curricular breadth in the context of the state's brick-and-mortar universities; however, a number of colleges and universities in other states were exploring distance education, institutional partnerships, and flexible, hybrid course delivery (Casey, 2008).

If you can invest money by offering a course so that if our students here want Arabic, which we don't teach, they could get it at the Mackerel University (a pseudonym). If they wanted polymer chemistry, if the advisors knew that it was available across state lines at in state rates, they could advise their students to take at University of Texas or Virginia Tech. A lot of the ideas about interstate sharing were the same as how we can share within our own state. How can we use technology to share scarce resources and scarce faculty talent to moderate the cost, to provide the access to knowledge without having to personally own all of this stuff ourselves? We can be the vehicle through which sharing can occur. (Dr. Alpha)

The current administrators, faculty, and staff take pride in the integration of technology into teaching. The value of technology in teaching was cited often in interviews across the spectrum

of informants. A lead administrator highlighted state-of-art technology in a constant stream of new buildings on campus, which were all LEED-certified.²

There's sort of the methodology for innovation, and then there's the innovative things we have done. The environmental university, it's clearly not just the environmental university for the state of Florida . . . The service learning is a very innovative piece, the degree to which we've attempted to embed IT into the infrastructure of the place is leading edge . . . maybe it may not be as innovative anymore, but I've never been in a university where every individual instructional space—each room effectively—has the complete high-end digital install. (Dr. Mike)

Not every informant was enthusiastic about teaching with technology. One faculty member was concerned about how some students were marginalized due to lower socioeconomic status that limited access to computer hardware and relevant software. A contrasting opinion surfaced not just about familiarity with technology and access, but learning styles of students also generated pushback from students:

They want to learn face-to-face. Over and over again they say that . . . you know, "I hate learning this material, you know, not face-to-face." . . . It's harder to create a sense of presence for the students . . . a sense of the teacher being engaged . . . students come to my office all the time and say, "I didn't realize you were a real person. This was a virtual class. I thought you were a virtual teacher." You know, so they're shocked that I have an actual physical existence . . . and the technology is a huge obstacle . . . for students.

² Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, (LEED), is national rating system of environmentally responsible and resource-efficient buildings. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership_in_Energy_and_Environmental_Design

We call them digital natives. Forget it! They're writing their papers on their cellphones because they don't know how to use *Word*. You know, it's like, it's a huge gap between what actually happens on the ground and what administrators think . . . I've had students who wrote their papers on their cell phones because they didn't actually have a computer and know how to use one. (Dr. Lima)

Students are required to take an online humanities course that is delivered to more than a 1400 students each term to ensure that all students are exposed to the visual and performing arts. A Pew Grant initially funded the course in 2001 in support of using technology to redesign large, introductory humanities courses. The goal of the Pew Grant was to facilitate innovation and to enable institutions to serve as models of efficiency and to better instruct contemporary learners ("Understanding Visual," 2008). According to diverse informants, the course was recently redesigned although it has been revised several times since the first offering in 2002. Hacker & Dreifus (2010) cited the institution in their recent book for an innovative approach to teaching the arts and humanities with technology. Overall, their book was quite critical of most institutions of higher education.

In many ways, the course is an apt test for gauging technology's potential role in the liberal arts. After all, Othello isn't algebra, and Starry Night has no statistical solution. An exploration of the effectiveness of HUM 2510 addresses important questions about what we expect colleges to be teaching and students to be learning. (Hacker & Dreifus, 2010)

One faculty member was taken aback by the difference in student to faculty ratios in online courses compared to more traditional course offerings in spite of the additional support for online instruction "one person teaching a section, and they have proctors, and they have all kinds of

help. It may have 450 students in a section, but the average class size in the College of Arts and Sciences is 35, 36” (Dr. Kilo).

A staff member alluded to the state government’s emphasis on STEM education and its impact on the institution’s planning and priorities for the curriculum and its delivery. The STEM focus is of course a national trend.

And so we’re looking at growing our STEM programs. We’re looking at having a Woman and STEM living/learning community over in South Village . . . Due to our space issues, and due to our type of growth, we are looking at increasing our distance education. We have a new director in that area as well . . . They usually come from above—from the government and then trickle down. (Oscar)

From a student’s standpoint, the online offerings at the institution are ideal for working students, which represented a rapidly increasing percentage of the students on campus as it does in the general population at the national level. The informant went further in advocating for hybrid instruction that was already supported by the new brick-and-mortar institution.

I like the hybrid . . . I enjoy the hybrid courses because, yes, it’s online. So, I can do it most mostly at home on my own time, but there’s something about being in that classroom and meeting your peers who are in your class. I think that really benefits . . . I think it benefits the online discussions. (November)

The current administration also indicated that efforts were underway to build on successes surrounding teaching with technology. Diverse stakeholders demonstrated commitment to teaching with technology, and they expressed their motivation to improve how technology is used in teaching and with support services for students. One administrator appreciated the

advantages of online courses, but acknowledged that incorporating more online technology also posed resource challenges.

We either have to totally increase, rapidly increase our online offerings. Then, that only solves the physical space issue. That doesn't solve the faculty issue, and section size, and that sort of thing. Loading 400 students in an online class is not the answer. That's not the way to go. Capacity, section size, whether it's online or in the classroom, it's still the same. The work is still there. You just can't keep loading up faculty. (Echo)

Ecological Focus

From the beginning, the principle of environmental sustainability guided the formation of the university's identity, policies and academic mission. The environmental sciences have also benefitted from their position within the STEM fields, which is one of the state's areas of strategic emphasis and a national focus. According to the institution's most recent Annual Accountability Report from the 2011-12 academic year, baccalaureate degrees awarded in STEM fields have more than tripled from 85 in 2007-08 to 282 in 2011-12. Baccalaureate degrees totaled at 1214 in 2007-08 compared to 1744 in 2011-12, an increase of 44 percent; therefore, STEM degrees rose from seven percent to 16 percent during that time period ("Tarpon U BOT," 2013).

The upward growth trajectory of majors in environmental fields was confirmed in an email in October of 2013 from founding faculty member Dr. Charlie. The following breakdown of eco-focused majors for Fall 2013 undergraduate majors and graduate students in the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Engineering was reported as follows:

Environmental Science MS – 51

Environmental Studies BA – 224

Environmental Studies MA – 7

Marine Science BA – 215

Environmental Engineering BS – 84 (plus 60 in pre-Environmental Engineering)

Collectively, there are 583 undergraduate students in eco-focused majors. That is almost six percent of the undergraduate population (est. 10,018). This represents a critical mass of students who are enrolled in five separate degree programs in two very different colleges.

Faculty, staff, students and administrators cited several examples of the institution's ecological foundation and contemporary focus that was integrated into research, teaching and service missions such as a solar field, service learning, community and professional partnerships, LEED buildings, etc.

Most of our faculty, both in the College of Arts and Sciences that work in those fields of resource management, watershed sustainability kinds of concerns . . . They're almost all of them connected very closely through an institute or through collaborations with the public sector and really embedding their research, including their students, into the local community to really create a lifecycle of the creation, dissemination and then application.
(Dr. Juliet)

Engineering is looking at a renewable energy-oriented major . . . it's a really contemporary offering, and I think it fits perfectly within the university's environmental mission, and, all the LEED buildings that we have on campus, and our solar array and just how it folds into the overall mission of the institution . . . the millennial generation is attuned to environmental stewardship, and we have our earth charter. (Foxtrot)

We're the number one institution that gets the most power from our solar field. We were one of the first institutions to do that. So, that's pretty innovative right there. We're very much into environmental sustainability here . . . We also have a food forest here . . . we have a food pantry on campus for our students and our faculty and staff. (Oscar)

A graduate student animatedly described the sophisticated classroom technology on campus that was unlike anything observed at the informant's undergraduate institution, which was a university that was much larger and more established and boasted a medical school.

They have dummies that are, like computer programmed to have a certain symptom, and that's how the students learn on them . . . they breath . . . it's really kind of creepy, but . . . our whole College of Health Professions is simulation-based, and just the technology in that building is crazy. I've never seen anything like it. Even at Dolphin U (a pseudonym) through the med school—I haven't seen the simulations that they've used. (November)

According to the 2011-12 Annual Accountability Report, the institution was recognized with a 2012 Second Nature Climate Leadership Award from Second Nature and the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. It was one of only ten institutions in the country to earn it. Among the state public universities, the institution operated with one of the lowest energy costs per square foot, and the utilization rates for instructional space remained among the highest in the system ("Tarpon U BOT," 2013).

Colloquium

The student informants enthusiastically embraced the Colloquium course that is a long-standing university requirement for undergraduates. The course was perceived as making a transformative contribution to students' education. It focused on environmental education and sustainability from diverse perspectives, including socio-economic, ethical, scientific, etc.

There are lots of institutions that have a sustainability component to their curriculum where students get to pick a course that has sustainability. We have one course that every student has to take, thirty-seven sections in the fall. Twenty-five students. It's a writing intensive course and a service learning course . . . We have an advisory council for that course with members from each of the colleges, and they are the ones to decide the curriculum. (Dr. Charlie)

That course that students take . . . colloquium . . . it's required. It's all about sustainability, and professors from every single college have the opportunity to teach in it . . . Plus, our campus . . . it's all about sustainability. You'll see professors out there slogging in all the ponds with their students . . . It really does a very good job of sense of place and responsibility for the world we live in . . . I don't think you find that in other places. (Dr. Delta)

In addition to the unique environmental course, Colloquium, student informants also expressed high praise for the university's requirements of service learning.

I've actually currently taking the Colloquium course . . . they don't just say, you know, "We should recycle more," or "We should encourage this." They actually show you multiple ways that you can live sustainably in your everyday lifestyle . . . there are multiple field trips during the course to local areas as well . . . They show you all different kinds of environments that exist here. (Quebec Two)

Peer Advisors

Three student informants were peer advisors, which is a program that was created in response to rapid enrollment growth during a time of constrained resources. Peer advisors are first

selected as assistants in new student and family orientation. The highest performing students are chosen to be peer advisors who are considered paraprofessionals that support the professional advising staff. They are compensated for their work, and they must enroll in a training course that focuses on leadership skills as well as course and degree information.

Our Peer Advisors in New Student Programs are hand-selected from the group of students who served . . . in our Orientation Program during the previous summer . . . To prepare for their role as Orientation Leaders, our student staff attend a credit-bearing training course . . . with learning outcomes that are measured and a very, very tightly controlled model of building the skills of leadership that are necessary to take a group of students through an orientation program. (Papa)

The three peer advisors were interviewed as a group. Their demeanor was as professional as the members of the faculty, staff and administration. They conveyed enthusiasm about advising responsibilities as they did about opportunities for students at the institution.

We advise first-year students on different classes to take, different tutoring opportunities available to them. If they have any questions regarding course information or major tracks or changing their major—basic general information to getting acquainted to the university is what we help them with. (Quebec Three)

You start as an orientation leader . . . from orientation into semester-long training that starts in January. It goes all the way until April, and then we have a one-month, 40-hour a week intense training . . . for the whole month of May. And then starting in June . . . the orientation starts. They are two-day programs, and we have groups of students and basically what we do for the whole two days is peer advising . . . And then through

orientation, they select a few of the orientation leaders that will be here to continue working through the Office of the Peer Advisor. (Nation)

Professional staff members who oversaw the peer advisors were very clear about the close oversight and mentorship of undergraduate students who were selected. The emphasis on student leadership in this context reflects the institution's commitment to service, leadership, and community.

Emergent Theme - Organization

Founding Stakeholders

As people began to be hired for positions at the new institution, they identified with their hiring number as much as a job titles or descriptions. For example, the second person hired, "employee No. 2," started as an assistant to the founding president four years before the institution opened to students (Sterwald, 2011). Informants who were hired in the beginning as well as by more recent hires brought up employees' numbers several times during the interviews in a manner that suggested history of the institution was easily translated into a number line, and the employee's position on that line was a source of identity and pride.

The institution's founding administrators, faculty and staff included people who wanted to look to the past and others who wanted something different, "Some of them refer to the founding faculty as the "pigs and twigs" faculty because they were here when there were pigs running across this campus." (Dr. Mike) The "pigs and twigs" phrasing may seem pejorative, but its raw exuberance captured the quasi-pioneer spirit that was displayed by the people who cobbled together a university in record time.

When we opened, there were no policies or procedures. They all had to be developed.

And the faculty that came in . . . there was a lot of, "Well we did it like this." That did

happen at the start, but then there were a lot of folks who came here because they didn't want that kind of life. (Dr. Delta)

In addition to many testimonies about the innovative mindset of the founders, one faculty member also described the university's movement toward more traditional higher education institutions over time.

They came to [Tarpon U] for that, its newness . . . A lot of them were interviewed when it was just wetlands and scrub pine. They walked around with a hard hat on and talked to president and the provost about what was going to be built here. A lot of them left stable careers or were fleeing the challenges and what they saw as the failure of the traditional university model. I think if you look at it 17, 18 years on we look much more like . . . a lot more like the public university of 75 to 100 years old than it does one that is less than two decades old. (Dr. Juliet)

Informants described the institution as having changed a great deal in 17 years of its existence. The rapid increase in the number of students and employees during that time changed the work environment dramatically as Duryea (1973) would have predicted. The mercurial behavior of the economy also created a different resource environment that was flush in the beginning but much leaner in the present where educating the most students using the least funds became highly valued in response to state oversight. Students came and went except for the ones that were hired into the institution's workforce and became administrators and professional staff members who retained a memory of a smaller, more connected institution.

The political climate changed in 2001 when the legislature overseen by Governor Jeb Bush abolished The Board of Regents ("Board of Regents," 2013). Selingo (2013) reported the action was in response to the Board's resistance to proposals for new medical schools based on the cost

for new medical schools compared to expanding established medical schools. Wikipedia cited a battle over affirmative action as the cause (“Board of Regents,” 2013). The oversight of the higher education institutions in the state defaulted to the actors appointed by Governor Jeb Bush in more fragmented, decentralized individual boards of trustees although Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment in 2002 to re-establish a statewide higher education governing body, the Board of Governors (“State archives,” 2013). Several informants in the case study asserted that the Board of Governors was staffed with political appointees. The new institution had to adapt in response to internal changes in the size of the institution as well as changes in the external economic and political environments.

Innovative Stakeholders

Florida’s Board of Regents oversaw the creation of seven new institutions in total between 1965 and 2001 (“Board of Regents,” 2013). At the time of the creation of the new university in this case study, which was the tenth in Florida, the former administrator of the State University System who became the founding president had first-hand experience with hiring at three new universities. These prior experiences helped determine criteria for selection of the individuals who would be able to deliver quality performances from the start.

Our other 9 hungry institutions were waiting for us to fail so that they could be in line to gobble up our money. I had all these things happening from a management standpoint, a business standpoint . . . lawsuits and stuff and still keep going. I had to hire people that could do three or four or five different jobs at once, people with a lot of experience . . . What I found in the other searches that we had done when our other state institutions were formed, they may have one or two top people with a lot of experience but too many junior people without experience.

I felt I needed a lot of people that were 50 and over who had lots of experience and weren't worried about their career. They wanted to make a new commitment. If they were 30 and it was their first chance to be in an important job, they would make different decisions than if they were 50 and had already shown that they hit the targets . . . Have some of these people done something unusual in their background? Have they been a little off the beaten track? Have they been renegades? Have they tried new things? (Dr. Alpha)

There may have been differences in the individual visions held at the founding of the institution, which would have evolved over time as the employees developed a more complementary vision for the institution. Faculty who were associated with the flagship university had tenure and kept it although that was not an option for new faculty hires, generating some tension. The *Weekend College*, which received some pushback from the founding faculty interested in a more traditional residential brick-and-mortar campus, lasted only a few years and was dissolved by the second president early in the presidency. There is no mention of it on the institution's website. At most institutions, faculty members whose educational value systems are significantly different from the institution's mission and vision make appropriate efforts to seek positions at other institutions. According to an email from the provost office, the institution in the case study currently loses full-time faculty at a standard rate.

Half the faculty has been at Tarpon U for less than five years. We've been adding faculty at rates unheard of at older universities although this is now slowing down as we slow our annual growth (over 14,200 this fall!). We probably "lose" about five percent of the existing faculty each year. Many of the original faculty are now retiring and some faculty move on to new opportunities as faculty do everywhere. (Dr. India)

An indicator of the evolution of a collective vision was the high regard for colleagues and their commitment to the educational mission. Recently hired faculty and staff representatives were as complimentary and supportive of colleagues as their representatives from the founding cohorts. In general, the esprit de corps of junior and senior hires appeared quite positive and collegial.

People come here because we are still relatively new, and they believe that you can try new things. There is that sense that we are not steeped in hundreds of years of tradition, although we're starting to get steeped into bureaucracy—no doubt about that—but there is this ability to try different things. Across the university, I've enjoyed going to discussions about the core curriculum . . . Gen Ed . . . and lots of people show up to talk about these kinds of things. (Dr. Delta)

Students are always invited on committees that are looking at innovation . . . I chaired finding the QEP topic, and we had a student rep. We put out the call to everybody—staff, students—everyone—to come up with creative ideas, and they did. It's . . . creativity is encouraged here. You don't hear, "Oh, we can't possibly do that." It's, "Show me a plan that might work." (Dr. Delta)

I think that we have a level of faculty engagement in the everyday life of student experience at all levels of the faculty—particularly at the senior levels of faculty—that I don't see as consistently at many of the other institutions from what I know of them . . . the personal touch of our faculty, I think, is one of the things I see as strongest. I think I see it in how our faculty understands their roles and how the students interact with

faculty, and how it compares when I look at other institutions. It's one of our core strengths. (Dr. Juliet)

The absence of tradition and history made the institutional practices appear to be more malleable and less bound by the past. As a result, risks were taken and opportunities to create precedents were explored. This embrace of experimentation in faculty and staff was communicated to students, "I tell them that we're so young . . . the university you leave will be different than the university you go to right now, so make your mark." (Papa)

We don't take ourselves too seriously. We don't have this sort of hallway of all the dead presidents from the last couple of thousand years . . . Sixty percent-plus of our faculty have been here five years or less. (Dr. Mike)

This place has no tenure. It has . . . you know, it has . . . it's kind of making it up as it goes along and because it's not a very long-established place, there's a lot more opportunity to do stuff. So, it attracts people who are not afraid to innovate and not afraid to experiment. (Dr. Lima)

They're very idealistic people, who are not necessarily only thinking about their own career. And the level of people who come to work here . . . a lot of them are refugees, like me, who've had life experiences. (Dr. Lima)

We have three groups of faculty here. You'd think that at a new institution, there would be a sort of general openness and flexibility. We've gotten entrenched so quickly. We have the founding faculty—the inaugural faculty—and then everybody else. (Dr. Mike)

In response to inquiries about what was innovative about the institution, informants often talked about the people who were there from the beginning. The sensibility of the founders has persisted and continues to be mentored in more recent hires.

They want to try new ideas, which can be wonderful but can challenge because everybody wants their own new idea but . . . with a new institution, you need a blend of people who are grounded in the reality of the environment that you're working in, but who have those new ideas and say, "Well, you know, I was at so-and-so, and this is what frustrated me, and I've got this new idea." (Dr. Bravo)

We don't have a lot of people on campus that have a mentality that we have always done it this way, and I think everyone is always open to kind of reexamine and improve on what we have done. There have been innovative things that have happened here. I think our biggest challenge is that we have a lot of people that want to innovate, but we don't always have the personnel to actualize the aspirations of innovation. (Foxtrot)

The support of innovation has been the newness, has been the infusion of faculty who come to [Tarpon U] because of that newness . . . the degree that there are innovative things happening here is because the newness of the institution has attracted people who want to be part of something exciting, and that hasn't become something sort of sclerotic institutionally and laid down by the burden of history. (Dr. Juliet)

Junior faculty often don't have the opportunity to play really formative roles in stuff that matters in more traditional academic departments that have this sort of journeymen-

system, where you put your head down, you get tenure, you prove yourself and then you get to sort of have a voice. It matters. (Dr. Juliet)

Undergraduate Focus

The university's original mission statement explicitly affirmed undergraduate education as its primary mission although graduate programs were projected to bring in 15 percent of the student enrollment by the end of the first decade (Alpha, 2003). According to the institution's current website, undergraduate students comprise around 90 percent of the full-time enrollment, but graduate degree programs do make up about a third of the degree programs. The faculty informants did confirm the institution's emphasis on the educational mission while they also alluded to their keen interest in research activity, including scholarship of teaching and learning.

The institution's current mission statement references faculty research as a component in the familiar balancing act of teaching, research, and service responsibilities whereas the original mission statement referenced research activity only in the context of support for teaching and service. Given that graduate students comprise only ten percent of the student population, it would appear that the new institution has maintained an undergraduate focus.

We're an undergraduate teaching-focused institution. A large percentage of our faculty that are actually instructing have terminal degrees. It's not doctoral students; it's not grad assistants, not teaching assistants that are instructing those classes. I mean, we do have adjuncts that instruct, you know, quite a few lower level offerings, but, for the most part, the lion's share of our courses are taught by those people that are terminally degreed and have that expertise. (Foxtrot)

We shoot for roughly 70/30 split between full-time and part-time faculty here in instruction. We're pretty close to that. We're above the system average—for the system as a whole. But I think that reflects our emphasis on teaching rather than being a research-intensive institution. (Dr. India)

Staff members also demonstrated a tremendous commitment to the students. They appeared invested in student success and shared their reflections about how they might improve it.

And one of the first populations that I focused on when I first came here in an advising role was students that were undecided and on academic probation. There is definitely a correlation there in terms of them not having a vision for where their education's going to take them and then they can kind of slip into the states of apathy and not really knowing why they are here and how their education is going to produce an outcome and opportunities downstream. (Foxtrot)

Some of the informants had been students or were currently enrolled in degree programs while employed by the institution. This experience seemed to increase their identification with students and contributed to their efforts to facilitate students' academic success.

I had a really enriched and engaged experience here as a graduate student. I very much enjoyed the experience, so it's really . . . a lot of my motivation to stay here was to kind of give back and to make sure that students coming in had as good of an experience as what I did. (Foxtrot)

When discussing academic strengths, one faculty member alluded to high impact educational practices that had been utilized at the institution from the beginning and much in advance of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). The fact that these academic practices were in advance of formal recognition by the academic establishment indicated the

institution's emphasis on undergraduate education and their willingness to experiment with new approaches to instruction prior to practices reaching the national stage. Dr. Charlie, a founding faculty member, distilled the institution's commitment to academic quality by saying, "We were born with a focus on student learning."

"What are you doing for a first-year experience?" we would list those things. They would say, "Wow—that's amazing." And I'm thinking, "Well, it's not amazing enough." I want to do it at a higher level . . . Every single program has a capstone course where students have to do some kind of creative, scholarly project to finish out before they launch into the next thing . . . We've been doing them from the start. So, that's how we're different and unique, and I think that that's our academic strength. (Dr. Charlie)

Faculty and staff informants recognized support staff members and the faculty individually and collectively for their contributions to the academic mission. Comments suggested a sense of collaboration around student learning in contrast to perceptions of hierarchy in matters of authority such as the curriculum process and planning priorities.

Current and former students described the institutional environment as much more personal than other educational institutions that they had considered, "I do think it's an awesome school. A great way for students to grow, kind of get that one-on-one attention and just grow ultimately from the experience rather than being a number at a bigger institution" (Quebec Three).

And the biggest class I've ever taken is 180 students, which pales in comparison to some of the class sizes at other schools. And I really do get that one-on-one attention . . . this is a very new school and a lot of programs that they offer are new, and they're open to change, and I'm able to help with that change and start traditions. So, when I graduate,

there will be a part of me that I left at this university and say that I helped to build this part of [Tarpon U], and I really enjoy and appreciate that. (Quebec One)

Perhaps a statewide requirement, but teaching appears to be more accountable at this institution because student evaluations are made available to the public, “you can access those at any time from the library,” according to one student informant (Quebec One). A faculty informant reported that faculty members are observed in the classroom each year by the department’s administrative head, and teaching performance accounts for 75 percent of the annual evaluation process. The remaining 25 percent is in research productivity and primarily institutional and community service. Somehow faculty members carve out time to write books as indicated by two of the six faculty informants who also referenced colleagues who were productive in their research activity.

Employment Conditions

The first employees were asked to sign an explicit mission statement to indicate their willingness to accept a new mission of the new institution. The founding president assembled the employees who worked for the branch campus on a Saturday morning in December, showed them the mission statement, and invited them to join the new university. If unwilling, the only option was to return to the flagship campus or relocate to another branch campus.

I just want to hand to you the document that was approved last week by the Board. This is the mission of the new institution and I'm here to invite you to read it, study it, and discuss it with me today. I have all day if you want to stay all day Saturday. This is what's going to be. It's going to be ratified by the legislature. If you want to join the new university, you're going to have to sign a document that said you have read and

understand and subscribed to this. If you do not, you will be re-assigned by Dolphin University (a pseudonym) to one of the other campuses. (Dr. Alpha)

Informants commented on contracts, tenure, faculty unions, performance reviews, and the promotion process. The case study indicated a high level of commitment to teaching and to research in spite of the absence of tenure. Attitudes were similar to the one expressed by “Well, if I do my job, I shouldn’t have any trouble.” One faculty informant had described a colleague at the institution who had negative experiences with the tenure system who was even more anxious about the review process in a university that did not have tenure. This proved unfounded.

He was really nervous about it, and I said, “You know, I can’t guarantee it, obviously, but I think you’ve got a good case, and he did. And I was really happy for him, because . . . you’re right. It really left some scars on him, and I don’t blame him. I don’t know how I would feel . . . I went up here assistant, associate to full, you know, each time with no problem. (Dr. Golf)

One of the strengths . . . is an ability and a real enthusiasm for supporting a meaningful framework for faculty self- determination . . . for faculty to find their voices as teachers and researchers. Most tenure models say, “Put your head down and establish an expertise in a very traditional established field or sub-field or sub-genre. Then, your second book after tenure is the one where you get to sort of explore . . . But what I’ve found here is a real willingness to say for me from the first what is, you know, “What’s important to you? What can you connect to the university’s institution and mission, and we’ll give you the support and the space to find that voice.” (Dr. Juliet)

One faculty informant described faculty behaviors similar to observations made by Duryea (1973), Hammond (2004) and others. Diversification and specialization of the faculty are more common to research institutions that cultivate graduate students and faculty to perform deep dives in their research activity. According to Dr. Juliet, similar faculty behavior persisted to create a disciplinary culture in a more teaching-oriented institution:

There's kind of a Wild West quality to a new university. We have a lot of metaphors for it. You've probably heard some of them already: building the plane while you're flying it, riding the bike while you blow the tires up. You've got to have a lot of high tolerance for ambiguity. The good side of that is that each department . . . and units have largely created cultures that reflect the character of what they think they're trying to do . . . On the other hand, what it's created is a very decentralized federalist system in terms of practice.

An interesting question was raised about annual review processes in the absence of tenure relative to senior hires. The issues of age and seniority have not reached prominent attention in a national forum perhaps because the concern has been focused on the imbalance of part-time faculty to full-time faculty and the dramatic disparities with compensation. In business and industry, it is not uncommon for senior employees to be terminated because of the cost savings in what are termed "reorganizations." If more higher education institutions move in this direction, it could make older faculty members vulnerable to being replaced with younger, more prolific disciplinary experts.

We support junior faculty a lot more effectively through a non-tenure model . . . I don't think we know yet, what the long-term implications of a non-tenured system on a continual multi-year contract is . . . once you've reached a certain senior level—let's say

a full professor. Can a non-tenure model create and protect the spaces for inquiry and discovery that don't always generate deliverable product, because that's the coin of the realm in an annual review process—what have you produced for me lately? (Dr. Juliet)

An administrator and a faculty informant described how the institution acted as an advocate relative to poor teaching, which resulted in targeted mentoring and professional support rather than adversarial judgment and termination. New faculty members were often hired with broad disciplinary expertise in order to teach a broad range of courses, a characteristic that allowed them to be flexible in teaching assignments and remain viable when programs changed and new organizational alignments were made. It could be argued that the new institution expended less resources by mentoring and shaping hires rather than firing then conducting more searches and training new hires to achieve the desired faculty traits and abilities.

Decision-Making

Decision-making about the curriculum included considerations of mission, resources and demands such as faculty, facilities, regional focus, donors, workforce needs, alignment with institutional mission and state guidelines, and accrediting organizations.

It becomes a huge kind of a matching exercise. If you have a proposal that's plausible, does it have need and demand support from the community and the mission, the goals? Do you have the resources to get it launched, because you have to be able to demonstrate that you can launch this program and sustain it for five years? And if it's something that you're going to need to have four new faculty in year two, then the administration has to be able to commit to providing those resources. (Dr. Bravo)

The future growth of the curriculum was discussed in an interview with a current lead administrator who anticipated that 20 new degree programs were still needed in order for the

institution to be fully comprehensive. That comment generated several questions about which programs, when, why, and how would they be implemented. Who would make the decisions and which new degree programs seemed to be the most critical. Would they develop from a faculty conversation? Dr. Mike, an able administrator, distilled the complex, layered process with this reply.

It's going to be from three sources actually. The faculty will drive some new ideas. The administration will drive some new ideas. And because we're still young, and still have programs to add . . . wealthy philanthropists can potentially drive some ideas.

Several informants referenced a Planning and Budget Council (PBC), which was created by the current president. It is a broadly representative group that includes nine permanent members including the provost who serves as chair. Ten representatives are appointed annually and four positions are revolving, a total of 23 members. Six of the permanent members of the PBC are vice presidents. It appears that only six of the 23 are faculty members, and their appointments are for only one year.

The PBC is a fairly flat architecture because everything moves up through to the president's level, and I'd say 90 to 95 percent of all the things that came up through the PBC for the President's consideration, meaning the president's cabinet and the president, were adopted. So, we have the ability . . . well, people have likened us to more of a speedboat than an aircraft carrier . . . we can turn quickly. Doesn't mean we turn rashly or without thought. (Dr. Mike)

The rapid expansion of the curriculum is an indicator of the maneuverability of the institution. The 2011-12 Annual Accountability Report stated there were 12 undergraduate and 12 graduate

degree programs just 17 years ago, and the current number is over 50 undergraduate programs and 30 graduate degree programs (“Tarpon U BOT,” 2013).

Another administrator provided more details about the evolutionary pathway and review process that governs the institution’s curriculum. Along the approval pathway, faculty and administrators must answer questions about course and program needs, demands, and resources; however, the “curriculum development process begins with the faculty” (Dr. India). Course and program proposals enter a defined process that involves the Faculty Senate and its standing curricular teams for graduate and undergraduate programs, but like most institutions, curriculum committees are in place in each of the colleges for prior review.

In addition to the review layers within an institution, any course and program development must be coordinated with the state’s course numbering system. The state’s public universities and private institutions subscribe to the state course numbering system, which facilitates transfer of students from relatively inexpensive state colleges to more expensive public universities and private institutions since 1971. The institution’s board of trustees must approve new bachelors and master’s degrees, but state oversight is also required to ensure conformity with states guidelines before offering new degree programs.

One faculty member cited the rapid growth of the university as a challenge to engaged, collaborative decision-making, which reduced faculty input into institutional priorities.

The centrality of the faculty involvement in the planning and budgeting process really diminished . . . you had to keep your head right down in front of you because things were moving in front of you so fast you couldn’t stop and look up around at questions of planning and budgeting. I think that’s one of the pressures. But for whatever reason, the centrality of faculty involvement . . . the privileged, delineated space for faculty to be . . .

their input to be sought out in planning and budgeting ceased to be the operative mode.

(Dr. Juliet)

In contrast, staff members often perceived the faculty as possessing a great deal of authority in regard to decisions about the curriculum:

Curriculum decisions go through the faculty here, and go through Faculty Senate, and that's the culture here. They might come out of committees, but they have to go through the faculty. You have to have faculty buy-in. . . . And so, you know, we have to identify some key faculty members who can be kind of champions for that. (Oscar)

Another staff informant talked about the separation between faculty, staff, and students relative to communication and decision-making about the curriculum. Since committees are used a great deal to facilitate communication between relevant stakeholders, committee structures play an important role in curricular decision-making. There appeared to be some tension across roles surrounding the curriculum process. It is interesting to note that the absence of tenure is not a leveling mechanism relative to faculty and staff relationships, and perceptions persist of differential advantage or leverage that preferences faculty.

Only recently have advisors been included in Faculty Senate . . . We don't have faculty contracts. So, we don't necessarily have a seat at the table there, whereas the college advisors now do, but that only recently came into being about two weeks ago . . . representatives are tapped from student government to kind of gauge the pulse of what they would like to see that way, to the extent that they're looking at student assessment of instruction results and trying to kind of glean thematically what students are enjoying and what they feel enriched by versus what they don't. (Foxtrot)

Staff members, faculty and administrators described a layered vetting process for the curriculum that culled input from diverse stakeholders. An administrator cited contributions from faculty, chairs, review committees, and administrators not unlike most higher education institutions. Except for students, all informants were knowledgeable about the process and the hierarchy of decision-making.

When queried about recent efforts to dissolve a college that was comprised of diverse professional fields and realign the academic programs into three existing colleges (business, health, and arts & sciences), an informant described the process as anxiety-inducing but ultimately successful.

“Oh, no. They’re all going to hate it. They’re all going to, you know, they’re going to revolt, and they’re going to . . .” Well, it didn’t happen. You know, we did a memorandum of understanding of what would happen with them. We’ve got letters saying, “Thank you for doing this.” . . . it can be done when you work together. Now, we did work very closely together to achieve that. So, now our next thing—knock on wood—is our contract. (Dr. Golf)

Committees are employed in determining course scheduling and space use. They are used to resolve many other issues that require collective input in making tough decisions that affect faculty, staff, and students. The size of the institution as well as the leanness of the current fiscal environment constrains hiring, reducing the number of positions, distributing extra responsibilities, and facilitating shared decision-making.

Communication

As the institution has grown, the complexity of the organization has increased, resulting in fragmented communication within and between faculty, staff, and administrators. In a survey of

historical stratification and diversification of the academy, Duryea (1973) argued that the size of an organization has a powerful effect on an institution. More students necessitate more service roles and facility needs outside the classroom, giving rise to a growing administrative bureaucracy. The size of the curriculum and its expanding intellectual scope and diverse professional practices separated the faculty into increasingly autonomous departments to oversee curricular niches (Duryea, 1973). The tension between two major components of the American academic organization, the faculty and administrative bodies, is now eclipsed by the tension between the external environment and higher education institutions.

Decision-making processes at the new institution appeared to be layered and hierarchical. The diverse vantage points of relevant stakeholders offered rich descriptions of the decision-making processes, which demonstrated inclusiveness and hierarchy. Informants discussed direction and effectiveness of communication across constituencies that contributed to an organization's strategic planning process.

Committees, teams, academic departments, staff councils, faculty senate, and faculty union are some of the organizational mechanisms employed by the institution in the case study to assemble diverse stakeholders in a working group. Student representation from the student government is pro forma on many of the formal committees. Students are reportedly absent or preoccupied when attending.

Last semester I conducted a campus survey of students, and one that was faculty/staff oriented, and administrators. And I think that I got something like 500 or 700 students to respond to the campus one . . . And the feedback was incredibly thoughtful. I was fearful that students would be complaining about the math class that they took . . . there was

really very little of that. It was really thoughtful commentary. And then I held town halls and invited students and none came. (Dr. Kilo)

Most of our students, I believe, work part-time if not full-time, so they're pulled in a lot of different directions . . . student government is a sort of go-to place to get a student representative on that committee. And I don't know how student government makes those decisions about which students in which positions get appointed . . . I'm on several committees where there are student reps and they either don't show up, or if they show up, they have nothing to say, and they're checking their email the whole time. (Dr. Kilo)

You do your best to include individuals from the different silos of the institution and different layers of administration and faculty and students and whatnot and staff in the discussion of the decision making process where it's relevant. Issues of curricular development . . . faculty are very quick to point out they have academic freedom, and it isn't something necessarily something that they would involve students or staff in. We tried in turn to say, "But when decisions get made we need to know about them." (Papa)

Staff members may seek public discourse for planning purposes and coordination of efforts more so than faculty who are invested in their disciplinary identity as much or more than their institutional identity.

There should be some kind of forum to discuss what's being worked on, what's being prioritized, and what opportunities there are to work on other things that may could be equally important if, in some instances, not more important . . . even meetings that happen you three or four times a year to bring stakeholders together. (Foxtrot)

Several informants perceived that communication was facilitated by the heavy reliance on committees comprised of diverse stakeholders. This allowed instructional priorities such as career readiness and employability of students to surface as institutional priorities from different vantage points.

I think that because they have the undergraduate curriculum teams and the graduate curriculum teams . . . they favor innovation . . . I wouldn't think that a university that has all of those communication channels in place and those committees in place would be one that is satisfied with the current state of academic programs and is not interested in moving forward and being more competitive. (Hotel)

When asked more directly about communication between faculty and academic support, a staff member was positive about perceived changes in communication, resulting in a more collaborative partnership.

I don't know if it's because we're getting younger faculty in or just because we're growing and they see the need, but I think that even in the four and a half years that I've been here, that kind of divide is not as big as it was when I first got here . . . advisors in the colleges are on faculty lines. I think that helps as well . . . they're not staff lines—they're faculty lines, and so they're very connected with the faculty as well in their colleges. (Oscar)

A faculty member in a leadership position predicted that a newly formed committee with intentionally broad representation would make a student's first year experience more coherent. Again, the institutional mindset is to utilize the potential synergy of a committee while getting buy-in from diverse stakeholders.

If we can build a community among the faculty and staff to work with students, then our success and engagement with students, retention of students improves. I just pulled together a large group . . . It's about 15 to 18 people right now and every time somebody else hears about they say I need to be on that committee . . . All the areas of the university are on it. So, we have people from athletics on it, student affairs on it, not just academic affairs. It's the whole spectrum of the university. (Dr. Charlie)

Rapid Institutional Growth

The new institution was authorized based on the state's assessment of the need for public higher education in the region. The rapid growth of the institution in less than twenty years bears this out (see Appendix F). According to an administrator, the state also provided operating funds primarily based on full-time enrollment (FTE). The criteria for state funding of higher education institutions has continued to change and evolve in response to the flux in state government and the economic health of the state. The housing bust and the decline in tourism during the recession may have hit Florida harder than any other state in the nation. Florida's fiscal support for higher education between fiscal year 2007 and fiscal year 2012 dropped 18 percent. Only five states cut more during that time period (Grapevine, 2013). As the state's funding has declined since the economic recession of 2008, the operating budget of a public institution in Florida is directly connected to tuition dollars.

You have to have growth in the state of Florida, especially in the last few years, to get the budget to operate . . . When you look at the cost-per-student support from the state, we were always trailing the other institutions. That's just because of where we were and what happened in the intervening years after our budget system changed . . . started to grow at a period of time when there were no state funds and they were drying up . . . We

ended up trailing the other universities in support-per-student, so it's tough for us to get the funds. We either have to raise tuition or grow the university . . . they used to fund by FTE. They don't do that anymore. In other words, we keep all of our tuition dollars. A way for us to get more money each year is to get more students. (Echo)

One of the standard questions in the interview process pertained to enrollment growth. Many of the informants were not directly involved in making decisions about enrollment growth, but they often had reactions to the ongoing changes in the institution because of its rapid enrollment growth, increase in employees, and expansion of the physical plant. One informant was able to summarize key stakeholders that came together to make decisions about enrollment growth.

Most universities have an enrollment manager or someone in charge of enrollment projections. And here, it's really a collaborative effort between the Office of the Provost and Admissions and the finance people just how much we can afford . . . Admissions is the one that really works with finance on that side to do enrollment management of what we need and how much we can afford. To where the provost's office comes in is how much space we have available, what . . . how many sections we can offer throughout the university . . . it's really a collaborative effort between those three. (November)

In regard to the future breadth in the curriculum, an administrator projected an increase in the current degree programs by a third of the present offerings, "We have 55, 56 undergrad degrees now. I think we probably need another 20 to call ourselves that comprehensive university" (Dr. Mike).

In the seven years I've been here, I've been to three different Tarpon Universities. The student population was just around 7,000 when I arrived, and it's now . . . pushing 14. The years when I was hired . . . that was the boom years where we were often in double

digit percentage growth every year, and we were hiring cohorts of faculty that were dozens in the number. And so, every cohort of faculty that got brought on in those boom years also brought with them a very different culture and attitude. I was part of a much more traditional style of hiring faculty who were on a research track. A lot of the earlier faculty members came down here to reinvent higher education . . . they were, either by choice or by necessity, fleeing the more traditional model of higher education and going to remake it. Now, you've got a whole different set of faculty members . . . 60 percent of our faculty have been here fewer than five years. (Dr. Juliet)

The simultaneous pressures of enrollment growth and economic decline have challenged the institution's efforts to improve performance measures. Admission standards and enrollment growth are controlled by the dynamic combination of classroom space, faculty lines, and academic support services. These pressures are occurring while the institutional culture appears to be changing due to its rapid growth. Also of note, the student population grew at a faster rate than the faculty, which grew faster than the staff (see Appendix H).

We're growing, but the resources aren't coming in, and the infrastructure has to be there. Again, I think that's kind of a growing pain of a younger institution. I think that also getting out of the mentality that we're not a young institution any more. We're over 15 years old now, and I think moving into that mentality of that kind of institution . . . we're not 5,000 students anymore . . . and we want to get to 25. (Oscar)

When asked about admissions standards, a faculty member revealed that the institution's standards were the state minimum, and that the current standard was connected to a regional focus and reasonable access.

So, what we're doing right now is our admissions standards are not changing, but we're doing all sorts of things . . . to change our success rate with those students, so those students are more engaged. And at some point, though, that won't be enough. (Dr. Charlie)

A staff member reported improvement in the performance measures for student enrollment but also indicated need for more.

The standards have increased, which I think is great because the bar is rising as far as the type of student we are admitting. But I also do know . . . comparing our institution to others, ours still are a little lower than some of the other state institutions. (November)

The pressure to grow meant increased enrollment and tuition, which was directly connected to the operating budget of the institution. The mandate to grow interfered with efforts to improve the quality of the student population. Members of the staff and faculty questioned the elastic academic standards that were excessively forgiving of poor academic performance to the point of asking if it were ethical given issues of student debt and behavior problems.

The charge within our executive leadership as well as with the state has been to grow, grow, grow . . . the more at-risk students you bring in, the more of a resource drain they can be . . . is it ethical to continue to take this student's money and have them take the resources of their family or go into debt, pay to live on campus, continue to be a fledgling student who may not be probable to graduate . . . there is a correlation there too that when students have lack of a propensity to be academically engaged . . . they get into more trouble . . . you see more student judicial cases and you see more student code of conduct issues. (Foxtrot)

Informants who had been at the institution from the beginning as well as those who arrived a few years later described movement through a number of positions and roles at the institution. One professional staff member listed eight different jobs, “That's what happens when you join a young, growing university. You get shuffled around quite a bit” (Echo). As this informant described, faculty and staff responded to challenges facing the institution. Since decision-making and planning for the future often relied on committees to ensure coordination across sectors, it was beneficial that senior staff members had changed positions, gaining new institutional expertise each time. Growth meant change, and change became familiar. Change defined the institution as it continued its fast-paced growth and diversification. Changing roles and responsibilities contributed to a more holistic understanding of the organization and increased the sense of community. More senior employees, regardless of role, still conveyed excitement about institutional growth and curricular diversification. In particular, institutional growth continued to lead to new leadership opportunities for two of the founding faculty members who appeared as excited about the institution as the student informants.

We have a committee structure, and then a working group. There are some informal meetings that go on, too, obviously. It really helps that I have a breadth of experience, because I've worked in academic affairs. I've worked in student affairs, and now administrative services. (Echo)

Of the nineteen informants, four were among the founding group of faculty, staff and administrators, and two more were among the first graduate students who later joined the professional staff. All of these early stakeholders had performed a broad range of responsibilities over time and continued to do so as the institution evolved. The student population growth increased at a faster rate than growth of full-time employees, likely

contributing to employee workload. According to data reported by the institution, the student to faculty ratio grew from 15 in 2002 to 23 in 2012 (see Appendix G). The increase in the instructional load represents more than a 50 percent change over a decade, indicating an institution that is more efficient but may face challenges in improving performance measures in graduation rates and retention of faculty and staff as well as students (see Appendix H).

Emergent Theme - Higher Education Environment

Innovative Mission

According to the founding president, one of the main goals of the institution in addition to providing university-level instruction in an underserved region was to be more innovative than other public universities in the state. Its academic offerings, the delivery of course material, and the population that it served were quite different from other universities in the state.

A current administrator emphasized the prevailing sense of youthfulness within the institution by saying “ . . . we’re essentially born in this century, so to speak, this millennium” (Dr. Mike). The informant went on to describe the uniqueness of the mission that ensured its integrity:

But there are schools that are 30 years old . . . 40 years old . . . that either never distinguished themselves as having unique core values . . . or who have already kind of lost them . . . which they have sold their institutional soul in some way for enrollment sake or politics or you know whatever. (Dr. Mike)

Dr. Mike went on to allude to the institution’s strong performance relative to its peers without elaborating on specifics. The 2011-12 Annual Accountability Report offered some possible examples, e.g. fulltime faculty taught 75 percent of undergraduate credits in spite of receiving the lowest actual state appropriation per FTE student in the university system. Highlighting this in the Accountability Report indicates that these state-level indicators of efficiency and

effectiveness were a point of pride at the institutional level. Information about institutional economy included increasing building temperature and the use of the largest solar field on a university campus in the Southeast for conservation of energy. Although the US News “College Compass” ranked the institution 79th among regional universities in the South, the institution’s Accountability Report listed it as 34th among public regional universities in the South. A 34th ranking among publics is a significant metric given that the institution was only 15 years old at the time. To cite one metric with few compromises, students performed 150,000 service hours the previous year (“Tarpon U BOT,” 2013).

Institutional Isomorphism

There are many forces at play that cause institutions to become similar. It can be the result of state oversight, federal guidelines, regional and national accrediting organizations. For public higher education institutions, state funding is critical; consequently, elected officials, appointed officials, and state guidelines are influential.

One of the interesting facts about [Tarpon U] is, when we first opened our doors in 1997, we were not accredited. You have to have a graduating class before you can be accredited. What happened was, we opened our doors in 1997, and we started an executive MBA program. That program lasted two years, so in 1998, we achieved candidacy for SACS accreditation. We got our full accreditation the following year, which was in record time, mainly because we had an MBA class that was graduating. We were very lucky with regards to that. (Echo)

Now we were way avant-garde when we started, and some of the pigs and twigs faculty liked that avant-gardeness. And so, now we’re less avant-garde because you can’t be an

accredited major institution and be avant-garde because we work within a public system . . . you can't be that avant-garde if you're in a public institution with the state Board of Governors or Board of Regents when we were formed, state legislature, governor, all that kind of stuff. You can't be that avant-garde if you're going to have regional accreditation and SACS . . . And then part of our mission is to be accredited by every specialized accrediting agency . . . for which we have those disciplines. And so, I think we're up to 13 specialized accreditations. (Dr. Mike)

The institution is one of many in a state that is debating a common general educational core. Faculty expressed serious concerns about impact on the curriculum and the faculty charged to teach it although a state-wide common core is more efficient and facilitates articulation across institutional sectors, including high school students enrolled in dual credit programs. At this time, thirty credits out of 120 required for a standard baccalaureate degree are being evaluated for inclusion in the state's common core.

We're going to end up having to . . . lose people who are teaching in areas not on the list in order to add lines of people to teach multiple sections of things that are on the list. Or you're going to end up having to farm those out to adjuncts . . . finding enough qualified adjuncts to do a decent job on these courses is really difficult. (Dr. Lima)

One member of the founding group described changing the institution's interdisciplinary undergraduate degree to be more aligned with degree offerings at other public institutions to ensure the competitiveness of the degree. This mimetic response of the institution facilitated acceptance in the hiring environment but sacrificed a more innovative curricular structure.

We had . . . one degree with multiple concentrations . . . We offered a BA in liberal studies . . . But, over time, students and employers just couldn't get their head around . . .

a BA in liberal studies instead of . . . a BA in math or biology . . . now, we offer degree programs that are very similar to degree programs offered elsewhere. That was an innovative idea that didn't work out so well . . . we had to morph those into . . . more traditional types of degrees. (Dr. Bravo)

Emergent Theme - Constraints

Internal Constraints

Internal constraints began with the shift in the mindset of the people within the university. The faculty actively participated in the definition of disciplinary boundaries that followed more traditional organizational units. According to the institution's website, the degree offerings followed a similar path as the original liberal arts degree diversified and multiplied, climbing to more than 50 undergraduate degree programs from the original 12.

The very act of creating departments is to imitate a more conventional academic organizational structure in higher education that would lead to disabling and the boundary building that is often an impediment to new practices or experimental, innovative practices in higher education. (Dr. Juliet)

As the top institution for institutional growth of its type since the beginning of the 21st century, the institution's success relative to enrollment growth confirmed the assessment that higher education options were needed in the region because of the growing population. The institution has struggled with matching qualitative growth with its quantitative growth because of the demographics of the student population, including the ones that had participated in dual enrollment during high school.

They come in with two years of college credit, but it's like one class here, one class there . . . it's an online class . . . and if you look at some of the online classes that are being

taught through the community college system, the level is so low that they're coming in with very little . . . you can do so much more so much faster in a face-to-face class than you can online . . . And yet we persevere. (Dr. Lima)

We currently have around 2,500 first-year students . . . approximately 15 percent of them have a GPA of under a 2.0. So, we're looking at around 480 students or so. Out of that, 480 students, approximately . . . approximately 150–160 of them are in effective learning for the spring semester. We have 11 sections a semester. (Oscar)

This new university like most public higher education institutions is dealing with lean operating budgets that constrains hiring, and tough choices get made. The student-advisor ratio is one such indicator. It's likely that the peer advisor program was developed in response to the high student-advisor ratios and the overall slow rate of growth in the support staff compared to the student population.

Our advising ratios are very big . . . NACADA [National Academic Advising Association] says it should be around 340. I think we're double . . . some colleges are even triple that. So, we're looking at 6, 7, 800 to one. But despite that, again, students can still get access to their academic advisor. (Oscar)

Constraints in faculty hires require broadly trained candidates who possess the capacity to teach a range of students and courses. Dr. India, an administrator, wanted to hire more faculty:

You can have some cognate-related fields that, because of their relationships, have large number of faculty that cover a diversity of different aspects of disciplines that . . . very strong kind of thing, and we have a lot of programs of faculty that are thin . . . they may

have one person in a particular area or there may be parts of disciplines that aren't covered by a faculty member.

Up until now, we had a lot of freedom here to do what we wanted to do. We were adding programs left and right, but I think we've spread ourselves too wide, but not deep enough . . . All I know is that some of these programs that are very small are having to struggle.

Our college tends to hire people that can teach in one or more programs. (Dr. Golf)

Transfer rates were raised in a number of interviews. Concerns were expressed about losing students who transferred to larger universities with more degree program options. On the other hand, a surprisingly large number of students transferred from the state colleges after earning an associate's degree; however, quality of preparation was a concern as cited in the quote above.

It is wasted effort if somebody does not get the degree . . . [retention rate] might be good compared nationally, but within the state university system, it's looked at as being not so good . . . because of the young reputation of the institution, a lot of our students come here for a couple of years, and then try to get into Snook or Swordfish or Grouper U (pseudonyms)—places that have greater name recognition. (Dr. India)

A founding administrator discussed the lower selectivity of regional institutions compared to older, more established state universities. The academic preparedness of the student populations tends to present challenges in retention and graduation.

We pretty much have to make accommodations for those students that we do admit and then help sort them out into which programs we go. So, that's always a balancing act . . . are we going to retain them . . . that was a real challenge because students would come here and then they might decide that they want a major that we don't have. So, until we

get a full complement of majors, it's really, really hard to admit and retain and graduate students. (Dr. Bravo)

In response to a question about decision-making and enrollment growth, admissions standards and student recruitment, one faculty informant admitted to learning more about institutional constraints as a result of new responsibilities.

Enrollment growth, I believe, is the combination of budgetary pressures and responding to our retention rate and just how stretched we are in classrooms . . . this is the second time now that I'm looking at spreadsheets of general education courses and just how many seats we have available versus how many are being offered, and sometimes we're just completely maxed. Like every single seat is filled. (Dr. Kilo)

It was 2001 when I first started. So, we were really bringing in anything. And we had some trouble with our students not . . . you know, being up to snuff. And we were just continuing to enroll, and we were exploding with students. When I came here, we had 1,880 students my first semester. Our class sizes were like 23, 24. My average class now is about . . . 40-50 students. So, our class sizes have really exploded, but we are getting a better . . . a better level of student coming in. We've been able to slow down our freshman enrollment and have them have better SATs, better preparation. (Dr. Golf)

Junior faculty colleagues expressed concern about the loss of an administrator who funded innovative pedagogy. It is possible that the institution will lose its connection with founding principles as founding faculty members retire or relocate to other institutions; however, this young faculty member appeared to be committed to the educational values epitomized by the departed mentor. Commitment to the educational mission was evident across interviews.

Changes in leadership did result in changed priorities. Athletic programs grew with new locally funding sources to a number that almost equaled the number of years the institution has been in operation. Staff and faculty representatives cited the move to Division I athletics as being very costly for the institution to support. The institution's leadership and board of trustees along with the community were strong advocates for the higher profile that thriving athletic programs can bring to an institution (Toma, 2003).

You go to your students and get them to sign off on an athletic fee and you have a lot of private donors who come forward. New institutions like this don't have that kind of history. What was happening here was that, hey if we put up a lot of dorms and there's a lot of demand for undergraduate education and we generate a lot of money for our dorms, we can siphon off some of the money for dorm fees and the moneys we make on bookstore and food service. Because it's all locally controlled money and help funding athletic programs. (Dr. Alpha)

Resource limits may have been a factor in the shift to a more compressed workweek, cutting back on weekend and evening scheduling of classes and dissolving the institution's innovative Weekend College.

We have become essentially a Monday through Thursday institution here. While a lot of people are doing a lot of wonderful things and are committed to helping students more than most institutions. It troubles me that we've got more academic space than we need. Therefore, we got compression toward the mean. Each of these little pieces may not by themselves be the answer but I think of the choices that were made, the people who were not interested in a Weekend College program saw this almost like a separate degree program for separate people with a separate staff. (Dr. Alpha)

A current administrator illustrated how efforts to offer continuing education courses might stretch the institution's limited faculty and staff, which echoed the assessment of factors contributing to the loss of the Weekend College.

The continuing ed initiative . . . obviously using part-time faculty or adjunct faculty is one way to go. We want our full-time faculty to be involved in that as well because it is a requirement to have . . . Basically, if you're going to offer degree programs in that format, that those programs be of equal rigor—quality—as the regular programs. So, we have to have an appropriate number of full-time faculty involved. (Dr. India)

Space limitations surfaced often as a theme in interviews. Opinions were mixed but most informants thought space was constrained for any new construction and for class scheduling. On the other hand, expanding the course scheduling and distributing courses over more days and time slots was the obvious solution to a minority of informants.

We have been in a growth mode ever since we opened our doors, and we're straining right now because of that. We're a very efficient campus in terms of space utilization, classroom utilization. However, our average class size is creeping up, and with the PICO funding, which is public capital outlay funding for new academic buildings, drying up in the state, we're not sure what our prospects are for new academic buildings. (Echo)

We came to some conclusions on actually how big we can grow, given our current physical plant. There are hard decisions to be made. Do we keep increasing average section size? We have to look at how we're scheduling classes in terms of, not just Monday, Wednesday. We're very traditional in that perspective, so we've got to make changes there. We've got to look at more hybrid classes, evening use of conference

rooms instead of classrooms . . . we think we can handle about 18,000 students, given our current physical size, but it's going to take some tough decisions to do that. (Echo)

A common characteristic of the student population at the graduate level and undergraduate level was managing a job at least part-time while being enrolled full-time. Several full-time staff members who were interviewed were also enrolled in graduate programs at the institution. This is evidence of the individuals' motivation, ambition and work ethic; however, the educational value inherent in exposure and experience gained in disparate institutions cannot be understated. It is common for higher education institutions to hire the people they have educated. In doing so, the institution usually hires a talented and devoted employee; however, the institution might be constraining the range of knowledge and expertise, creating internal isomorphism.

External Constraints

The Morrill Act in the 19th century, the GI Bill of 1944 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 fueled the growth of public higher education institutions and expanded enrollments. Federal funds for student financial aid and faculty research along with state contributions to operating budgets and scholarships include performance expectations that are not only dynamic but are growing. The impact of governmental expectations on institutional behavior is reaching into sacred territory, the faculty's oversight of the curriculum. According to one faculty member charged with reshaping the curriculum, "We're undergoing massive changes to general education because of the legislature" (Dr. Kilo).

The legislature and the Governor are simultaneously saying, "You need to be more efficient." And efficiency might mean localizing your vision and mission to focus on a smaller coterie of boutique programs that each institution would make their own. On the other hand, they're saying, "You need to give students these sort of . . . menu of common

options across the system.” And those are very different . . . those pull the institution from a curricular and an administrative position and a resource position very differently. And I don’t think we know where that’s sorting out. (Dr. Juliet)

I consider myself to be an innovator in terms of pedagogy. I’m very involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning . . . There are things that we do at this university phenomenally well and on the cutting edge—and gen ed is not one of them by a long shot. Assessment of gen ed and just the structure of gen ed is very archaic with these disciplinary silos. And contrary, actually, to the spirit of the founding vision of this university, and so I’m taking this as an opportunity . . . to think big about gen ed and to have some . . . conversations about our curriculum and our structure, and we’re constrained by the law. (Dr. Kilo)

The reorganization of authority over public higher education institutions in the state has complicated curricular processes by decentralizing authority, adding layers to gatekeeping and fragmenting communication and coordination between institutions and stakeholders. According to one administrator, recent developments in oversight mechanisms at the state level are designed to reduce redundancy, increase the system’s efficiency, and improve coordination across the state university system. Although based on logical decisions relative to resource economy, the pre-approval process probably slows the review process and possibly stifles innovative ideas.

Today, we have a different situation with the Board of Governors changing its policies as a state coordinating board. And they are requiring us now to have a pre-approval process that goes to a committee that’s made up of designees from all of the provosts, and they vet program proposals a couple of times a year. And there’s a pre-requirement that the

proposal be part of the university's work plans that have to be submitted annually in June to the Board of Governors including plans to do programs over the next three to five years. (Dr. India)

New layers of review at the central system office add to the onion-like review process within the institution. Many boxes need to be checked and tasks marked through before a new program can be launched.

There are a number of proposals that are in the development stage. And it takes a long time to go through this whole process because the faculty looks very carefully at what's being proposed. There's usually an issue of common prerequisites for the undergraduate programs, and once it comes out of the curriculum committees, the provost reviews it, and then we prepare it for our Board of Trustees. If they approve it . . . It goes to the Board of Governors. (Dr. India)

For some time now, some push and pull among the legislature, the Board of Governors and the universities about where the primary power for program and degree creation and approval should happen. We are still . . . figuring out how the devolution of the old Board of Regents to local Boards of Trustees interacts with the Boards of Governors. We used to have the old Board of Regents model with a single body that hired and fired presidents and, with the new Board of Trustees model, there's a lot of decision-making about the local institution that has been devolved down to those trustees under the ethos of local control that . . . and a lot of power and authority has migrated up to the legislature. (Dr. Juliet)

Another aspect of state oversight is the relationship between the state's universities and colleges. Florida's 28 state colleges were primarily two-year junior colleges that offered vocational education, adult education, and associates degrees, and they prepared students for transfer to four-year universities. The difference in missions of the state's universities and colleges got much smaller as early as 2001 when six junior colleges were authorized to develop into four-year state colleges ("FLDOE," n.d.). Cooperation became competition when junior colleges grew into four-year state colleges, compromising the coordination of higher education in the state.

One of the junior colleges that were authorized to become four-year state colleges served the same region as the new university. Just four years after the opening of the new university in 1997, its junior college partner would become a major competitor for students and resources in the region. Lower tuition and fees were offered by the newly anointed Ballyhoo State College, fueling the competition for students.

Regional institutions are more likely to offer access to students with a broader range of academic preparedness. In a higher education environment that rewards graduation rates and retention, open access institutions face greater difficulty in competing on these performance standards.

State funding can be unpredictable because of economic factors and because of changing criteria in a state's funding policies. The external funding environment is more stressful for an institution that is experiencing rapid growth because the institution risks outpacing its resources. One administrator's comments included "the state is cracking down" and "they've changed the rules three years in a row." This instability in state policies can pose challenges to institutional priorities and decision-making.

Some years, we were growing 14% a year, which is very hard to sustain. Five or six percent seems reasonable. That allows us to incrementally increase faculty, staff to support that. Based on that, this year there's no tuition increase and the state improved our financial position. I think we got several million dollars more than we got last year, so it's a good year for us this year. Next year, who knows what's going to happen?

(Echo)

Sometimes the environmental pressures are not only statewide or national in scope, but the global economic environment can also impact private donations, "We got a lot of money donated, and then the money dried up because the economy dried up" (Dr. Golf). On the other hand, private donations can have a major impact on the academic profile of an institution. Several informants alluded to major donations that were large enough that they served as tipping points for the institution, generating resource-intensive commitments to costly academic programs that required specialized facilities and upkeep.

That was another example of there being money and a small but vocal and powerful club, a clutch of people in the community, who wanted an engineering school and who saw an opportunity and a resource-strapped new university to have a disproportionate influence on its direction and their own private legacy. The University took the money. (Dr.

Juliet)

Academic programs often carry along hidden costs associated with maintaining accreditation, which means maintaining standards in student-teacher ratios, equipment and facilities among other professional guidelines, "That requires that you hire "x" number of faculty when you admit "x" number of students" (Dr. Juliet).

The state's board of governors identified performance measures (academic quality, operational efficiency, and return on investment) in concert with accountability metrics from the state legislature to serve as the university system's strategic plan. The reporting procedures required by the institution's board of regents, the board of governors for the university system level, and the state's department of education is daunting. If one considers the three performance measures cited above (academic quality, operational efficiency, and return on investment), two of them are focused on a business model ("Tarpon U BOT," 2013).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

A single case study offers a rich and complex story that is sometimes contradictory and open-ended; however, revelations of the complexities in a system, an organization, and in this case, a new higher education institution can offer insights to inform academic planners. Whether these findings are portable to other institutional types is not yet known; however, the analytical reflections offered in this chapter can expand the frame of reference, the scope of the field and more awareness of the actors involved. Ideally, academic leaders engaged in institutional planning will be able to establish synergistic interactions between the actors and forces within the institutional and external environments as well as anticipate conflicts in order to avoid them or diminish their negative impact.

Starting with a review of the initial research questions, this chapter offers interpretations of research results based on reflective analyses with support from the literature. Chapter five addresses innovative ideas and actors that supported innovation as well as the internal and external constraints to the institution's innovative behavior that caused it to exhibit more isomorphic behavior over time. The chapter closes with personal reflections derived from close encounters with highly committed stakeholders at a new university.

Review of Research Questions and Supporting Scholarship

The research questions that provided a conceptual framework for this dissertation queried whether actors were able to behave more innovatively in creating a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education than apparent in its more established peer institutions. To review:

1. In the absence of institutional history, what and who guide curricular decisions in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education?
2. How do actors make innovative decisions about the academic curriculum in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education?
3. How is innovation sustained in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education as it grows in size and complexity?

The literature review for the dissertation explored best practices in qualitative research. It also provided an overview of the history of higher education in the Western World in regard to the rapid increase in institutions and their diversification. External players such as the federal government, which first provided critical support of higher education with the Morrill Act, are still key players among others that support institutional research, student financial aid, facilities, and programming with public, corporate and personal funds. The nature of the professoriate continues to evolve as it adapts to an ever-changing higher education environment. In short, the history of higher education is a history of innovation. As the case study progressed and the frame of reference expanded to include political and economic forces, it was clear that the literature review needed to expand to include additional writings about institutionalism, organizational behavior, and field theory.

Relying on recommendations from experts in higher education, authors such as Bolman, Deal, Fligstein, McAdam and Scott were added to the literature review. Bolman & Deal discussed how efforts to restructure an organization often require alignment with “its environment, task, and technology” (2003, p. 92).

A given resolution of structural tensions may be right for a particular time and circumstance, but changes in the organization and its environment eventually require some form of structural adaptation. (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 92)

Informants who were part of the new institution's founding cohort described several iterations of the university. A faculty informant and an administrator independently reported three different institutions during their time. Informants who had been there half that amount of time agreed that the institution had changed a great deal over the time of their appointments. Clearly, the institution was changing, evolving, and adapting to dynamic internal and external environments just as Bolman & Deal indicated (2003).

Incumbents and Challengers

Fligstein & McAdam (2012) use *incumbents* and *challengers*, language from social movement theory, to categorize actors who hold power in a virtual field of play, "incumbents," and those with less power, "challengers." The scope of the playing field changes with the frame of reference.

Actors who are both more and less powerful are constantly making adjustments to the conditions in the field given their position and actions of others. This leaves substantial latitude for routine jockeying and piecemeal change in the positions that actors occupy. Even in "settled times," less powerful actors can learn how to take what the system will give them and are always looking to marginally improve their positions in the field.

(Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p, 12)

To apply this conceptual model to the context of higher education, the incumbents and challengers are the public higher education institutions, and the virtual field is the state where the institutions reside. Along with the categories of incumbents and challengers is the concept of

governance units that serve as mediators for the rules of play, which ensure preservation of the field's hierarchy of power and influence. Using these three categories, the new university in this case study is a challenger in a field dominated by established, more prestigious higher education institutions. As a challenger, the new institution competes for state resources, and those resources are distributed according to rules that are likely to privilege the incumbent institutions that dominate the field. For example, performance measures defined by a state's educational oversight body serve to govern the disbursement of resources within the field. The evolution of the state's performance measures from enrollment growth to retention and graduation is a relevant example. An emphasis on graduations rates will reward the incumbent institutions that are able to recruit and secure the best prepared, highest achieving students that are more likely to be retained and graduated in a timely manner. A challenger institution such as a new university with a more regional mission is likely to enroll students from a broader range of socioeconomic status and include a higher percentage of working students. According to the majority of the informants, most full-time students at the new university also held jobs.

Even the best students who were selected to be peer advisors almost did not enroll in the institution they had grown to love. The peer advisors originally had higher aspirations than attendance at their regional public institution (challenger). More prestigious institutions (dominant incumbents) were their first choice, but financial and personal factors intervened.

As the new institution adapts to the changes in the state's funding policy and new performance measures, the institution's priorities change from rapid enrollment growth to funding academic support programs that increase retention and promote completion. Diverse stakeholders echoed the institution's new emphases on retention and graduation. The discussion

surrounding a slowdown in enrollment growth due to space limitations in the physical plant did not appear to be as much of a concern as the changes in the state's funding formula.

Governance units for higher education can be the state regulatory bodies, federal government guidelines, and regional and disciplinary accrediting organizations. Regional higher education accrediting organizations serve as the federal government's gatekeepers for the federal government's generous student financial aid programs. Accrediting organizations are normalizing forces that contribute to institutional isomorphism.

The current accreditation system has taken plenty of hits lately. President Obama, Congressional Republicans, think tanks and Bill Gates are among many critics who say accreditors -- who are outsourced gatekeepers for the federal government -- need to do more to encourage innovation and competition. (Fain, 2013)

The federal government does not contract regional higher education accreditors such as SACS in the South to serve as gatekeepers for access to federal dollars; however, accreditation is a requirement for access to educational loans, research grants, etc. that are funded by the federal government. States governments also require higher education institutions to be accredited to be eligible for state funds as well as some state licensure examinations (CHEA, 2013).

Research Question One

In the absence of institutional history, what and who guide curricular decisions in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education? The answer to this research question may be unique to this institution. Florida affirmed the need for a baccalaureate granting institution in the region in the 1970s and cobbled together a partnership between a distant state university, Dolphin U, and a local junior college, now Ballyhoo State College, but the partnership proved ineffectual. According to the founding president, the state's higher education governing body in

the early 1990s, the Board of Regents, determined the academic priorities of the new university based on 90 reviews of academic programs in the state university system. As the state moved forward on establishing the tenth state university, assessment of regional workforce needs played a critical role in the decisions that created the initial curriculum. This orientation toward preparing a workforce for the region was embraced by local business leaders and politicians. Members of the faculty and staff from the partnering institutions were asked to comply with the new academic mission or be relocated to another branch campus of Dolphin U.

The assessment of workforce needs may have been the most important factor in the rapid growth of the new institution more so than whether its organizational behavior was innovative or isomorphic or both. According to CHE's "2013 Almanac of Higher Education," the institution has grown faster than any of its peers between 2001 and 2011 ("Fastest-Growing," 2013). The growth in quality is much less tangible. Qualitative measures as indicated by inputs such as SAT and ACT scores and GPAs of incoming students have declined somewhat as the institution has grown. For example, average math and verbal SAT scores were 1038 in in 2003 and 1028 in 2013 ("Tarpon U BOT," 2013, p. 6). According to the US Department of Educations' *College Navigator* website, the institution is not selective, admitting slightly over two thirds of its applicants. In 2010, it graduated less than half or 46.5 percent in six years, which is almost ten percentage points lower than the national average for four-year publics although representative of a ten-point improvement for the institution between 2002 and 2010 ("College Completion," n.d.). The institution was almost 20 percentage points below the national average for the four-year graduation rate.

The academic domain was the most important focus of the institutional decision-making and planning. The quality of teaching and the currency of the curriculum contributed to the academic

quality of the institution, lending credibility to the diplomas that are earned upon meeting the institution's educational benchmarks. Arum and Roksa (2011) claim that effectiveness of teaching is in question today due to lack of rigor in instruction and reduced effort by students. Interactions with all the stakeholders indicated that the institution was concerned with growth in qualitative measures as well as growth in quantitative measures.

Constrained Innovation

The hurried pace of life in the 21st century is obvious in the overload of instant information; however, Enarson described the rate of change in American life as “unparalleled” half a century ago. His insights into the complicated behaviors of actors in higher education in the 1960s are relevant today, “Though the university community is a major force of innovation in our society, it is curiously resistant-even hostile-to innovations attempted within the university” (Enarson, 1960, p. 495). While higher education may serve as an economic engine, an incubator for ideas, and a social escalator, internal and external forces continue to constrain innovation.

Research Question Two

How do actors make innovative decisions about the academic curriculum in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education? This research question addressed capacity for innovative decision-making in a new institution. The growing size of the institution became a significant determinant among other factors. As the new institution tripled its undergraduate enrollment, the numbers of administrators, faculty and staff also grew, but at a much slower rate (see Appendix H). The expansion and diversification of the physical facilities over time made the growing fragmentation of the stakeholders more apparent. The relatively recent creation of a Planning and Budget Council (PBC) likely improved coordination of diverse operations in this growing mid-sized university; however, faculty members serve for only one year and comprise a fourth of

the PBC membership. State officials, university administrators, wealthy donors, and accrediting bodies continue to play key roles in decisions about curricular innovations for this new university. Ironically, the faculty may play a greater role today than they did during the founding of the university. Curricular decisions at this public institution like others in the state university system must traverse a multi-layered internal review process and sometimes a state level review process, which slows down any institution's ability to innovate.

The institution in the case study was innovative initially in its approach to higher education. It was founded at the time of the nation's growing emphasis on teaching with technology, ecological focus, service learning, and education of non-traditional students. In contrast to the more unique and innovative aspects of the curriculum, it borrowed a great deal of curricular history by virtue of being a hybrid of academic programs from a pre-existing state university, an established junior college, and a politicized higher education agenda. The mimetic behavior of the new university combined aspirational goals on one hand and normalizing targets on the other to achieve both a unique niche within the state while attaining stability in the familiar pathways of other universities in the state. Ironically, the symbiotic relationship between the new institution and the junior college was damaged when the state authorized the junior college to become a four-year state college. The junior college had been aligned with the new university until 2001 when the junior college became its challenger in the region they both served. The net tuition price of the junior college, now the four-year Ballyhoo State College, is about half (for income above \$110,000), and the room and board costs are 65 percent of Tarpon U ("College Board," 2013). Since Ballyhoo State College is open admission, local and regional students would save a significant amount by attending Ballyhoo State College. Students can also cut costs simply by taking courses from Ballyhoo State College and transferring in time to graduate

with a degree from Tarpon U. From a fiscal standpoint and access point, Ballyhoo State College has challenged Tarpon U for a decade, yet Tarpon exhibited record growth.

A faculty informant described a complex struggle between actors at the state, community, and institutional levels over the future direction of the institution. A highly political environment made up of powerful stakeholders in the region surrounded the state's chief academic officer and the first president of the institution.

He [first president] was very much empowered by [former chancellor]; it gave him kind of free hand in creating the institution . . . there was always some tension between what [former chancellor] and Dr. Alpha wanted to do and what others within higher education bureaucracy . . . wanted to do . . . and what the local power brokers . . . and some of the other money and politics . . . The local community [leaders] were long-clamoring for a state university in the region, and what they wanted . . . is probably what it's actually become, which is primarily an institution that both talks and works hard to be an economic driver in the region. (Dr. Juliet)

The initial emphasis on teaching with technology in the form of distance education is one example of how the institution's leaders were at odds with the vision of the local power brokers who lobbied for a more traditional brick-and-mortar institution.

A faculty informant repeated the use of the phrase “devolve” in conjunction with the shift from informed oversight of higher education at the state level to an institutional board of trustees married to local interests. The shift in authority from a state governing board to a university board of trustees fueled a partnership between the university leadership and the local board. Working together, the institution “has really shifted resources consistently toward the professional and technical dimension of the University and to business-friendly, economic-driver

aspects of what we're doing.” According to faculty informant Dr. Juliet, the institution appeared now to be more in sync with local and state politics, which invokes the phrase “settled times” from Fligstein and McAdam’s *Theory of Fields*.

The expansion of the curriculum over time moved academic priorities in the direction of applied disciplines with direct connections to the workforce and the economy. The curricular expansion “required an enormous amount of resources in a time of economic contraction at the state,” (Dr. Juliet), which constrained implementation of new initiatives.

There are interesting ideas going on all over the campus, as there is anywhere you get a lot of smart people together. But there hasn't been the resources . . . So that resource shift to build out the professional and technical sides of the shop, which are what are most often seen as the economic driver portion of the University . . . that has created a lot of resistance internally and a lot of inertia internally, militating against innovative, bringing innovative ideas actually into sustained practice. Either they don't have the resources or the critical mass of support they need to get off the ground or they sort of wither for lack of sufficient infrastructure to support it. (Dr. Juliet)

The institution’s resources shifted in response to shifts in institutional priorities. New programs in music and engineering are costly programs. Decisions to reduce or eliminate programs are difficult to make; they are not made lightly. The institutional leaders chose a new pathway. No doubt, much will be gained; however, the informant’s use of the verb “wither” in the context of smart people with innovative ideas is evocative if not unsettling.

Powerful actors at the state level built the organizational scaffolding of the new institution. The first president, a former state higher education officer, was endowed with tremendous authority in hiring decisions, mission development, and curricular oversight. Birnbaum (1988)

offers relevant insights into the institution's early organizational environment with his four categories of higher education institutions: bureaucratic, collegial, political, and organized anarchy. The leadership at Tarpon U was given a strong hand to play right from the start, and the lines of authority were clear. The initial faculty and staff members at Tarpon U were inherited from the parent university, Dolphin U, which already provided its collective identity and significant job security for tenured faculty. Collegiality of the founders was critical to success of the new university, and top-down authority provided a clear mission, producing a pragmatic partnership between bureaucracy and collegiality. Increasing size and complexity of the new institution and the absence of tenure have contributed to the persistence of the hierarchical organization over time independent of leadership changes.

The institution has changed from the original detailed, two-page mission statement that served as its guide; however, some of the original characteristics appear to persist in the institutional identity. Its commitment to public service is evident in its inclusion in the baccalaureate degree requirements, and the presence of a solar field and food forest on campus are two of many examples of the institution's environmental stewardship.

The course, "Colloquium and Sustainable Future," is on a higher level of institutional commitment. Recall that 37 sections of the "Colloquium" are taught in the fall with 25 students in each section. The course is required of every undergraduate student. There are no other options for this course. Other common prerequisites in higher education such as English Composition or math almost always have alternate courses as options. "Colloquium" is the required interdisciplinary course about environmental sustainability. This one course is taught at significant expense given the large number of sections and small section size. It's that important to the institution.

All the informants perceived the institution to be innovative as well as traditional. They perceived constraints as primarily external. The state's mercurial politics and the economic environment were cited the most often. Senior employees who had been with the institution for a long time or actors in administrative posts or positions of authority cited the impact of changes in presidential leadership as instrumental in moving the institution away from its innovative foundations towards more traditional institutional behavior. Administrators interacted the most with regional and disciplinary accrediting organizations, and they were very aware of the normalizing forces of accreditation. One administrator stated that accreditation in one discipline was driving degree program development; therefore, it would be included in the institution's 2014-16 Work Plan. Administrators and faculty informants had first-hand experience with other institutions at the national level so they appeared to have a broader context for comparison of their institution relative to innovation and isomorphism.

A single initiator or cadre of entrepreneurial academics interested in curriculum development would quickly discover the daunting number of steps in the approval process within the institution that must be coordinated with a layered approval process at the state level. This administrative journey may be comparable to seasoned hikers mounting the Appalachian Trail. In contrast, many if not most faculty members would find it preferable to attend to more immediate needs of students, the intellectual engagement of research, or obligatory service responsibilities. Although logical and necessary, a multi-layered curriculum approval process is an obstacle to curriculum innovations.

Faculty informants and administrators reported that 60 percent of the faculty members have been there less than five years. The institution's rapid growth allowed the human capital to increase rapidly, which refreshed the institutional environment with the energy of new hires.

Annual hiring brought in new disciplinary experts with diverse expertise. The parade of new hires changed the academic, academic support staff, and administrative cultures. The political environment changed as incumbents or challengers moved on, new alignments formed or opportunities surfaced, shifting power in the field. These are the processes that stimulate change in the institution that have the potential to generate new innovative practices. The influx of new people year after year is a major reason why the informants described their institution as innovative, and it still seemed new in spite of the institution behaving very much like other universities in the state. It had not yet become, as one informant described, “a sclerotic institution.”

This may not be the singular innovative institution to serve as a model for other institutions, but it was innovative within the state of Florida in 1997 as told by the founding president who had served as Vice Chancellor of the State University System’s Board of Regents. The other founders who have remained at the institution echoed this claim. The actors at the state level who were charged to oversee higher education in Florida were likely aware of institutions at the national level, perhaps similar to the institution in this case study, which were engaged in innovative initiatives in response to the economic, political, and social environments. Innovative ideas that may have been imported by the Board of Regents contributed to the founding of the institution’s identity. Although the institution has changed and become more traditional much like other mid-tier brick and mortar institutions, an innovative spirit persists among the institution’s stakeholders.

Research Question Three

How is innovation sustained in a new brick-and-mortar institution of higher education as it grows in size and complexity? A better question is how much innovation can be sustained in a

highly regulated and resource constrained higher education environment? Internal and external constraints contributed to Tarpon U's rising isomorphic behavior. Internally, leadership changes, mission revision, faculty resistance, curricular expansion without resource expansion, shifting academic priorities, increased emphasis on athletics and tripling in size became a tsunami of forces that challenged the institution's internal homeostasis. Externally, political actors, donors with agendas, intense state oversight, accreditation norms, and depressed economic conditions created a challenging and sometimes inhospitable environment for an institution aspiring to being an innovative outlier. Elected and appointed state officials along with regional and national accrediting bodies acted as powerful forces (coercive and normative) that played significant roles in the founding of the institution. They continue to influence its reconfiguration and reinforce its growing isomorphism.

Tarpon U is an institution that aspired to be like incumbents in the field in order to secure necessary resources to fuel its growth during intense political and economic storms. Nonetheless, it has preserved important pillars of its innovative core identity with sustained commitments to service learning as a graduation requirement and an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability. The institution has become more isomorphic over time, but the founders have mentored new faculty leaders with innovative goals for the curriculum.

Service and Leadership

The topic of leadership surfaced in interviews again and again. It appeared that leadership was integrated into the institution's emphasis on public service via the implementation of service learning programs and the integration of service learning across the curriculum. Public service was an overt characteristic of the institutional culture and the academic curriculum, and leadership appeared to be part of a hidden, embedded curriculum. The peer advisors reflect the

value place on service and leadership by the institution. With the creation of a service and leadership residential dorm, leadership will become more visible as an integral component of the curriculum.

The institution did morph from its founding principles for reasons such as change in leadership, accreditation norms, political environment, but also because of resistance from the faculty to those founding principles. The retreat from the Weekend College is the most obvious. Soon after the first transition in leadership, the Weekend College was dismantled, and the commitment to adult education was abandoned. Course offerings were compressed into the traditional workweek as it is on many college campuses followed by complaints about crowded classrooms and constrained facilities. Service learning became a separate, parallel obligation for students, but not for the faculty as it was originally intended.

Bravo (2006) described service learning at Tarpon U as pedagogical method and educational programming, each with diverse goals that benefitted, but also obscured the role of service learning at the institution. According to the 2011-12 Annual Accountability Report, the institution's recent community engagement efforts were recognized by "the Carnegie Foundation, Florida Campus Compact, the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service and the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars" ("Tarpon U BOT," 2013). The 2011-12 Annual Accountability Report also touted a \$3 million private gift "to promote civic engagement and expand its student leadership development programs." The university was one of six selected from 140 nominees to receive the Washington Center's Higher Education Civic Engagement Award in 2011. These recognitions add evidence to the institutional narrative about a multifaceted commitment to public service.

Half of the 1,120 member institutions in Campus Compact responded to a survey about service learning. Of those, only 15 percent of institutions reporting a service learning graduation requirement, a figure that has doubled the percentage reported in 2002 (“Campus Compact,” 2013). Sill Tarpon U is in a minority of higher education institutions that are leading a growing commitment to service learning in the US, which it has done since 1997.

Academic Freedom

Although not the primary focus, innovation in higher education, nor the emerging secondary focus, institutional isomorphism, academic freedom remained an underlying current. The interviews were not structured to query the presence or absence of academic freedom in a university without tenure; however, the informants often cited academic freedom and asserted its importance in traditional contexts such as curricular oversight and classroom autonomy. In fact, academic freedom was listed under the heading, “Guiding Principles,” on the institution’s website. Faculty informants did not express any reservation about the absence of tenure.

You know, in the early days, there was a big issue here. There were a few of us—maybe 25 of us . . . we transferred from Dolphin University (a pseudonym) with tenure. Well, when people were hired here and found out we had tenure; it was this big storm over it. But, at this place, you’re on three-year rolling contract. You do your job—you do well, it keeps going. And now, it’s not talked about. It’s a non-issue now. (Dr. Delta)

An institutional environment that allows tradition to be questioned is a work environment that can generate ideas and foster collaboration. In order for faculty to fully engage with innovation in higher education, they must be able to speak freely about their institution and not fear that their employment status is in jeopardy (Boyer et al., 2013).

This single case study indicated that the culture of academic freedom is so established in America's public higher education institutions that academic freedom is being preserved independent of tenure's decline. Perhaps the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment's protection of freedom of speech is a critical surrogate for the crumbling system of tenure. Tenure as a condition of employment is in some ways merely a reflection of the larger human discourse about freedom of speech. Obviously, more research at institutions that utilize contracts rather than a tenure system in the hiring of disciplinary experts is needed.

Limitations and Drawbacks

The research design would benefit greatly from a multi-case study that includes investigations of similar institutions. Within this case study, the time frame for the data gathering interfered with the pursuit of recommendations made by informants about additional contacts; consequently, the opportunity to utilize snowball sampling to a greater degree was constrained.

The more that was discovered about external forces that helped shape the new institution, the more clear it became that additional stories needed to be told by the actors offstage. Members of the university's board of trustees, key economic leaders in the community, government officials at the state and local levels, and members of the higher education governing board would provide unique perspectives about the complex interactions between and institution and its external environment. The case study revealed the importance and critical impact of political actors, wealthy private citizens, and accrediting organizations in the institution's origins and evolution. At this institution like many others, those cohorts can overlap. Future research efforts will concentrate on the multifaceted external relationships that an institution has with business, government, and accrediting bodies but also with private foundations, donors, and alumni as external drivers of institutional change.

Does an institution seek resources the way a plant can change its shape as it moves toward a light source or is the behavior more appropriately described as genetically reengineered when an institution changes at its core and abandons its founding vision? Perhaps institutional change is no different than organismal change where species thrive and fail. In the natural environment where the weak are not supported by social safety nets, the genetic program that is the most prolific is the one that survives and then dominates the field.

Recommendations for Future Research

Four major research questions are indicated by this case study. The first question has to do with reproducing the case study's findings at other new institutions. If brick-and-mortar institutions are able to sustain an innovative posture over time within the context of environmental constraints, future institutional adaptability is more likely to be preserved. The capacity to be innovative is critical to an institution in a world in flux that faces ever-increasing competition for resources. Knowledge preservation and generation are critical to the future.

A second research question that emerged would address whether graduate education is meeting the current and future needs of higher education. The trend in higher education indicates that institutions of all types are reverting to hiring a professoriate that transmits knowledge in contrast with a professoriate that creates knowledge in addition to transmitting it. Since the rise of the research institution in the 19th century, the emphasis in graduate education is to educate researchers and scholars but not to prepare future teachers. If research institutions comprise a small minority of the more than forty-five hundred degree-granting institutions in America, this does make sense. If the trend for higher education is to emphasize knowledge preservation and dissemination over knowledge generation, then graduate education needs to adjust accordingly. In the interim, full-time faculty members at teaching institutions are

pursuing research and creative activity because this is exactly what graduate education trains students to do. It is not surprising that faculty with high teaching loads as in this study still engage in scholarship and research regardless of the level of institutional support. The rise of performance expectations for faculty is connected to the competitiveness for full-time faculty positions in a higher education environment that increasingly relies on part-time employees. Whether junior or senior or adjunct faculty member, the increase in pressure on faculty productivity is not sustainable.

A third research direction to pursue that deals with the higher education environment has to do with the relationship between higher education and industry. Is the corporate world as beneficial as it was in the 19th century when industrialists gave significant financial contributions and exported industry's best practices to education? Will the likes of Bill and Melinda Gates have the same profound impact as Carnegie and Rockefeller? DeMillo (2011) emphasized that Carnegie and Rockefeller's business expertise may have been more important than their generous monetary gifts, which totaled more than 180 million. Their industry standards for admission, credits, and degrees were taken over by regional and disciplinary accrediting organizations. Issues of quality control, personnel, accounting, and administrative practices are now common in the nation's diverse higher education institutions (DeMillo, 2011). What is comparable today?

The fourth and last research opportunity concerns the future ownership of the curriculum in a field that includes government officials, business and industry partners, and higher education administrators, faculty and staff. Standardization as an industrial practice helped to address the demand to scale education higher, a pressure that continues to increase with population growth. In addition to population growth and diversification, the economy in America is undergoing a

transformation from manufacturing to a knowledge-based economy. This growing emphasis on knowledge acquisition is also raising expectations of the education sector, which translates into performance expectations that can be measured and categorized, adding to the field's governance. In addition to expectations about the volume of production from the education sector, the expectations are becoming increasingly more specific about what expertise is preferable. Will the state and federal government represent the marketplace and take charge of the curriculum instead of the disciplinary experts?

Nota Bene

My original research questions focused on discovering innovative practices that could support scaling up to higher education institutions in the Middle without sacrificing academic quality. During the first day of onsite interviews, it became obvious that the institutional environment had changed dramatically over 16 years; consequently, the research framework had to change. Some of the stakeholders that played significant roles in the founding of the institution and continued to do so were beyond the scope of the research. It was disconcerting to have made naïve assumptions about a new higher education institution after having embraced the concept of the *multiversity*, Clark Kerr's phrase for the multifaceted university needed for demanding times. Ultimately, investigations into literature about institutional and organizational behavior proved relevant and informative. These additions to the research framework allowed me to better understand the complexity of the interactions between the internal and external environments, enriching the case study.

In my efforts to generate knowledge that would benefit higher education, I found myself engaged more with human stories independent of the ebb and flow of the investigation of this new institution. My conversations with informants and explorations to uncover the truth about

whether this new institution was truly innovative and able to sustain it lasted over a year.

Perhaps I occasionally lost my objectivity as a qualitative researcher, but I was disarmed by the people who had made major contributions to the founding of the university and demonstrated their commitment to its evolution on a daily basis. The institution's first leader, someone who was ahead of his time and place, remained true to centrality of the student in higher education.

When there is a conflict between administration and faculty, one starts by asking the first question. What is the right thing to do for the students? There is usually a very clear answer that neither side is willing to admit because it's my dog against your dog. I don't think we have at the state level and in most of the campus levels enough of the decision-making that says, "What's the right thing for our students policy-wise, access-wise, flexibility-wise, competency based-wise." (Dr. Alpha)

A charismatic faculty member talked passionately about the institution and its faculty but was also passionate about an expanded vision for the ideal academic institution that is devoted to higher learning and to scholarship.

The faculty are really the core of, because they're the custodians of the curriculum, they're the core of the enterprise in terms of how it maintains an identity. Students are the core of what we do, but the faculty are the means by which we accomplish the education of students.

Higher education will continue to reinvent itself as it has over time. This shape shifting is evident in the successful exploitation of online technologies by the newest for-profit educational organizations as well as the historical elite universities. If thousands of brick-and-mortar institutions in the Middle are to survive the rising momentum of the institutions in the clouds, they should consider experimenting and taking risks to transform their institutions. Institutional

mimicry has limits whether looking to history for solutions or to new ideas in recent success stories; therefore, each institution should take inventory of its unique demand-response imbalance. To be able to adapt to an amorphous and dynamic future, it appears logical that each higher education institution should strive to cultivate a more agile, flexible, innovative organization.

The behavior associated with searching for resources is primal whether it is gathering combustible materials to build fires or collectively gathering assets to build educational fortresses. This instinctual behavior has played out over time by different actors on different stages, but the defining human proclivities to learn, to teach, and to discover new knowledge has changed the course of history and enabled the human species to dominate all other living creatures on the planet. Grounding this observation in the 21st century higher education environment, the actors are different; the environmental dangers are different, but the complex interaction between the actors and the environment continues. Some actors may be building fires while others want to build fortresses, but there will be those who are creating something totally different. One simple, obvious conclusion to countless hours of work on this case study would be, “Never forget the environment, and always nurture the uniquely human capacity to innovate.”

REFERENCES

- Abrutyn, S., & Turner, J. H. (2011). The old institutionalism meets the new institutionalism. *Sociological Perspectives*, 54(3), 283-306.
- Alpha. (2003). *On task, on time*. Author.
- Altbach, P. G., Gumport, P. J., & Berdahl, R. O. (Eds.). (2011). *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges* (3rd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- American Association of University Professors (AAUP). 1915 declaration of principles on academic freedom and academic tenure. Retrieved September 13, 2012, from <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1915.htm#b3>
- American Association of University Professors (AAUP). (n.d.). Background facts on contingent faculty. Retrieved September 13, 2012, from <http://www.aaup.org/issues/contingency/background-facts>
- Arum, R., & Roksa, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bastedo, M. N. (2007). Bringing the state back in: Promoting and sustaining innovation in public higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 61(2), 155-170.

- Bastedo, M. N. (Ed.). (2012). *The organization of higher education: Managing colleges for a new era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Beamer, G. (2002). Elite interviews and state politics research. *State Politics Policy Quarterly*, 2(1), 86. DOI: 10.1177/153244000200200106
- Birnbaum, R. (1988). *How colleges work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Birnbaum, R., & Shushok, F. (1998). The crisis crisis in higher education: Is that a wolf or a pussycat at the academy's door? *23rd Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education*, Miami.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2003). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Boyer, R. K., Burke, T., Cruz, J. L., Deresiewicz, W., Herbst, S., Nunez, A. M., & Samuels, R. (2013, September, 30). NEXT: The future of higher education. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/What-Are-the-Barriers-to/141869/>
- Burgan, M. (2006). *What ever happened to the faculty? Drift and decision in higher education*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Campus Compact: Statistics. (2013). Retrieved October 23, 2013, from <http://www.compact.org/about/statistics/>
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2013, from <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/>

- Casey, D. M. (2008). A journey to legitimacy: The historical development of distance education through technology. *Techtrends*, 52(2), 45-51.
- Charmaz, K. (2004). Grounded theory. In S. N. Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 496-521). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chait, R., & Trower, C. A. (1997). *Where tenure does not reign: Colleges with contract systems* (Working paper series, inquiry #3 ed.). Washington, DC: Forum on Faculty Roles & Rewards, American Association for Higher Education.
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). (2013). Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://www.chea.org/>
- Chism, N. V. (2008). Faculty at the margins. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 143, 1-112.
- Christensen, C. M., & Eyring, H. J. (2011). *The innovative university: Changing the DNA of higher education from the inside out*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, B. R. (1963). Faculty organization and authority. In T. F. Lunsford (Ed.), *The study of academic administration* (pp. 37-51). Boulder: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).
- Clark, B. R. (1998). *Creating entrepreneurial universities: Organizational pathways of transformation*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Clark, B. R. (2003). Sustaining change in universities: Continuities in case studies and concepts. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 9(2), 99-116.

Clark, B. R. (2004). Sustaining change in universities (SRHE). Bodmin, Cornwall, UK: MPG Books Group Limited.

Clark, B. R. (2008). *On higher education: Selected writings 1956-2006*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

College Board Advocacy & Policy Center. (2011). The college completion agenda. Retrieved November 21, 2012, 2012, from <http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/>

DeMillo, R. A. (2011). *Abelard to Apple: The fate of American colleges and universities*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147-160.

Drucker, P. (1985). *Innovation and entrepreneurship: Practice and principles*. New York: Harper & Row.

Bravo. (2006). *An examination of the service-learning program at a comprehensive university through the lenses of program theory and institutional theory*. (Unpublished Ed.D.). University of Central Florida, Orlando. (CFE0000978)

Duryea, E. D. (1973). Evolution of university organization. In J. A. Perkins (Ed.), *University as an Organization* (pp. 15-37). New York: McGraw Hill.

Enarson, H. (1960). Innovation in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 31(9), 495-501.

European Higher Education Area (EHEA). (2010). About the Bologna process. Retrieved September 24, 2012, from <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/>

Fain, P. (2013, October 2). Course-size accreditation. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/10/02/accrator-emerging-models-higher-education>

Fastest-growing campuses, 2001-11. (2013, August 21). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Fastest-Growing-Campuses/140741/>

Finkelstein, M. J. (2003). The morphing of the American academic. *Liberal Education*, 6-15.

Fligstein, N. (2001). *The architecture of markets: An economic sociology of twenty-first-century capitalist societies*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Fligstein, N., & McAdam, D. (2012). *A theory of fields*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Florida Board of Regents. (2013). Retrieved November 11, 2013, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_Board_of_Regents

Florida Department of Education. Retrieved October 13, 2013, from <http://www.fldoe.org/>

Florida Department of Education: Statewide postsecondary articulation manual. (2007). Retrieved October 11, 2013, from <http://www.acad.usf.edu/Office/IE/SACS%202010/submission/documents/465.pdf>

Grapevine. (2013). An annual compilation of data on state fiscal support for higher education.

Retrieved August 11, 2013, from <http://grapevine.illinoisstate.edu/tables/index.htm>

Hacker, A., & Dreifus, C. (2010). *Higher education?: How colleges are wasting our money and failing our kids---and what we can do about it*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Hammond, T. H. (2004). Herding cats in university hierarchies: Formal structure and policy choice in American research universities. In R. G. Ehrenberg (Ed.), *Governing academia* (pp. 91-138). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hannan, A., & Silver, H. (2000). *Innovating in higher education: Teaching, learning and institutional cultures*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Hoffman, A. M., & Spangehl, S. D. (Eds.). (2011). *Innovations in higher education: Igniting the spark for success. The ACE series on higher education*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS trend generator. Retrieved September 3, 2012, from <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trendgenerator/>

Jaschik, S. (2008). The shrinking professoriate. Retrieved September 5, 2012, from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/03/12/jobs>

Jaschik, S. (2012). Pay for performance. Retrieved September 5, 2012, from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/09/04/faculty-union-large-community-college-system-agrees-performance-pay>

Jaschik, S. (2006). 'What ever happened to the faculty?' Retrieved December 28, 2012, from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/11/20/burgan>

June, A. W. (2012). Aging professors create a faculty bottleneck. Retrieved December 23, 2012, from <https://chronicle.com/article/Professors-Are-Graying-and/131226/>

Kamenetz, A. (2010).

DIY U: Edupunks, edupreneurs, and the coming transformation of higher education. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company.

Kerr, C. (2001). *The Uses of the University* (5th ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kiley, K. (2012). A \$10,000 platform. Retrieved November 30, 2012, from www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/11/30/texas-florida-and-wisconsin-governors-see-large-overlap-higher-education-platforms

Lechuga, V. M. (2006). *The changing landscape of the academic profession: The culture of faculty at for-profit colleges and universities*. New York: Routledge.

Lederman, D. (2012). Mass vs. elite, encore. Retrieved September 21, 2012, from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/09/18/international-educators-debate-mass-vs-elite-higher-education#ixzz26vR8vlq6%20Inside%20Higher%20Ed>

Lee, S. (2012, August 9). For-profit higher education: The industry, by the numbers. *Propublica*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/09/for-profit-higher-education_n_1761369.html

Lumina Foundation. The big goal: To increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. Retrieved September 9, 2012, from <http://www.luminafoundation.org/state/florida/>

Lumina foundation: Compare states. Retrieved December 24, 2012, from <http://www.luminafoundation.org/state/compare>

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). College Navigator. Retrieved November 23, 2012, from <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Table 263. Number of instructional faculty in degree-granting institutions, by employment status, sex, control, and level of institution: Selected years, fall 1970 through fall 2009. Retrieved September 3, 2012, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_263.asp

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Table 278. Percentage of full-time instructional faculty with tenure for degree-granting institutions with a tenure system, by academic rank, sex, and control and level of institution: Selected years, 1993-94 through 2009-10. Retrieved September 3, 2012, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_278.asp

Norton, A. O. (1909). *Readings in the history of education: Medieval universities*. Cambridge: Harvard University.

Ordway, D., & Weber, D. (2012). Scott: Colleges should offer \$10,000 bachelor's degrees.

Retrieved November 27, 2012, from <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/features/education/os-rick-scott-10000-bachelors-degree-20121127,0,7626102.story>

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Education at a glance 2011:

OECD indicators. Retrieved September 13, 2012, from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf>

Organization theory (social science). Retrieved September 13, 2012, from [http://what-when-](http://what-when-how.com/social-sciences/organization-theory-social-science/)

[how.com/social-sciences/organization-theory-social-science/](http://what-when-how.com/social-sciences/organization-theory-social-science/)

Partington, K. (1997, July 7). Tarpon U past: Era ends as Dolphin U closes the doors to its Fort

Myers branch. Naplesnews.Com. Retrieved from

http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2007/aug/20/fgcu_past_era_ends_usf_closes_doors_its_fort_myers/

Philips, M. (2011). Cost of college on the rise (again). Retrieved November 30, 2012, from

<http://www.freakonomics.com/2011/10/27/cost-of-college-on-the-rise-again/>

Pianko, D., & Jarrett, J. (2012). Early days of a growing trend: Nonprofit/For-profit academic

partnerships in higher education. Retrieved December 24, 2012, from

<http://www.educause.edu/library/resources/chapter-7-early-days-growing-trend-nonprofitfor-profit-academic-partnerships-higher-education>

Powell, W. W. (2007). The new institutionalism. Retrieved September 13, 2012, from

www.stanford.edu/group/song/papers/NewInstitutionalism.pdf

- Reed, C. B. (2011, November 11). Florida lacks strong central plan for higher ed. *Tampa Bay Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/florida-lacks-strong-central-plan-for-higher-ed/1201266>
- Rhoades, G. (1998). *Managed professionals: Unionized faculty and restructuring academic labor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Rockman, B. (1994). The new institutionalism and the old institutions. In L. C. Dodd, & C. C. Jillson (Eds.), *New perspectives on American politics* (pp. 143-161). Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schuster, J. H., & Finkelstein, M. J.,. (2006). *The American faculty: The restructuring of academic work and careers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. (1999). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies, and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state, and higher education*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Solochek, J. (2011, October 12, 2011). Rick Scott's economic development priorities include focus on STEM education. *Tampa Bay Times*

- State archives of Florida online catalog. (2013). Retrieved November 11, 2013, from <http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/barm/rediscovery/default.asp?IDCFile=/fsa/DETAILSG.IDC,SPECIFIC=1062,DATABASE=GROUP>,
- Sterwald, D. (2011). Florida Gulf Coast University's magazine: Pinnacle. Retrieved August 14, 2013, from <http://www.fgcupinnacle.com/pinnacle-articles/faces/barbara-krell>
- Stripling, J. (2011). Most presidents prefer no tenure for majority of faculty. Retrieved 2012, December 24, from <http://chronicle.com/article/Most-Presidents-Favor-No/127526/>
- The College Board. (2013). BigFuture: Compare colleges. Retrieved October 9, 2013, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/compare-colleges>
- This American Life. Retrieved September 13, 2012, from <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/474/back-to-school?act=2#play>
- Tarpon U BOT: Meeting agendas and materials. (2013). Retrieved September 30, 2013, from <http://www.fgcu.edu/trustees/Agenda.asp>
- Toma, J. D. (2003). *Football U.: Spectator sports in the life of the American university*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Trow, M. (2010). Reflections on the transition from elite to mass to universal access: Forms and phases of higher education in modern societies since World War II. In M. Burrage (Ed.), *Twentieth-century higher education: Elite to mass to universal* (pp. 554-610). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Trower, C. A. (2009). Rethinking tenure for the next generation. *The Chronicle of Higher Education: The Chronicle Review*, August 15, 2012-4. DOI:
<http://chronicle.com/article/Rethinking-Tenure-for-the-Next/48262/>
- Tuchman, G. (2012). Pressured and measured: Professors at Wannabe U. *The Hedgehog Review*, 14(1), 17-28.
- UFF: United Faculty of Florida. (2010). Retrieved August 12, 2013, from
<http://www.unitedfacultyofflorida.org/>
- Understanding visual and performing arts. (2008). Retrieved October 13, 2013, from
<http://www.fgcu.edu/Catalog/search.asp>
- U.S. Department of Transportation. (2012). Radio and interphone communications. Retrieved October 9, 2013, from
http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/atpubs/ATC/atc0204.html#kp82a8atc
- U.S. News & World Report: College Compass. (2013). Retrieved October 8, 2013, from
<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>
- Wilson, R. (2013). The new faculty minority. Retrieved August 12, 2013, from
<http://chronicle.com/article/The-New-Faculty-Minority/137945/>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Youn, T., & Price, T. M. (2009). Learning from the experience of others: The evolution of faculty tenure and promotion rules in comprehensive institutions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(2), 204-237.

APPENDIX A

Higher Education Employees by Function F2010

National Center for Education Statistics

Number of people employed by postsecondary institutions by primary function/occupational activity, employment status for fall 2010

	Full-time	Percentage
Primarily Instruction	491,377	19.9
Instruction / research / public service	207,109	8.4
Primarily research	54,103	2.2
Primarily public service	16,655	0.7
Executive / administrative / managerial	236,802	9.6
Other professional (support/service)	702,553	28.4
Technical and paraprofessionals	159,712	6.5
Clerical and secretarial	346,371	14
Skilled crafts	58,640	2.4
Service / maintenance	196,491	8
Total	2,469,813	

This table presents data items collected from Title IV primarily postsecondary institutions in the United States.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS), Human Resources component.

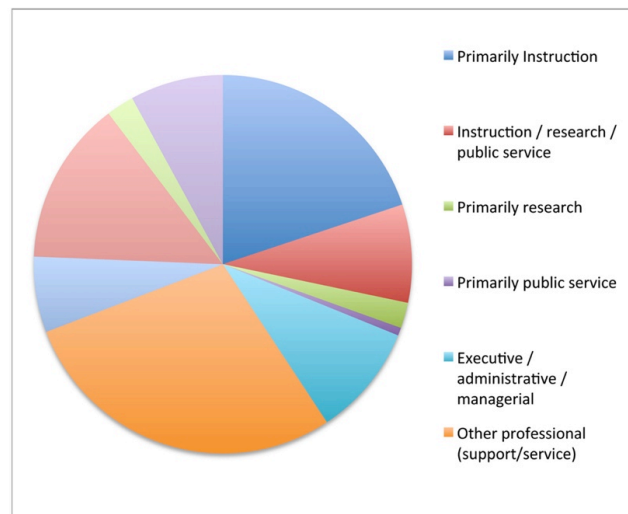


Figure 2. Higher education employees by function fall 2010. The pie chart depicts the percentages calculated by the author using IPEDS data.

APPENDIX B

Letter of Invitation to Study Participants

I am a doctoral student in Higher Education Administration at the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia. I am also a professor in the Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia. The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research study that will explore innovation in new universities. More specifically, this study will examine how new public universities that are less than 20 years old engage in strategic planning. Furthermore, this study will explore the various mechanisms, organizational structures, practices, and policies that inform decisions about the curriculum, hiring, and facilities.

Your participation is voluntary. An interview session would last approximately 45 minutes. The session would be audiotaped with your permission. You may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The results of the research study may be published, but your name and your institution would remain confidential. Also, I will share results with you after the write-up upon request.

My aim in this study will be to explore the following research question: What organizational structures and decision-making practices allow new universities to innovate? Although this study focuses on innovation in new public universities in America, the research, recommendations, and principles developed in the study ideally will be scalable and can be applicable to other types of higher education institutions. This research will be relevant to administrators who are involved in institutional and unit-level planning and management. Exploration of the institution via onsite observation, interviews of relevant stakeholders, and review of institutional documents will shed light on decision-making practices and organizational structures that can provide insights into how universities can be more innovative, make better decisions, plan more effectively, and ensure goal congruency across the organization.

If you have questions about this research project, please contact me by email (strange@uga.edu) or by phone (706-206-0596). My dissertation chair is Louise McBee Professor of Higher Education Sheila Slaughter, who can be reached by email (sheila.slaughter@gmail.com) or by phone (706-542-0571). Questions or concerns about your rights to participate as a research participant should be directed to the Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB), 612 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706-542-3199); email (irb@uga.edu).

I am including a consent form for your review and further information. Please indicate if you wish to be a part of this study by email or phone. Thank you for your consideration, and please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Georgia Strange, Ed.D. Candidate
Institute of Higher Education
University of Georgia

APPENDIX C

UGA Informed Consent Form

Innovation in New Universities: A Study on How New Public Universities Approach Strategic Planning.

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to ascertain what new universities are doing to be more innovative than tradition-bound institutions of higher education.

Information

My aim in this study will be to explore the following research question: What organizational structures and decision-making practices allow new universities to innovate? Although this study focuses on innovation in new public universities in America, the research, recommendations, and principles developed in the study ideally will be scalable and can be applicable to other types of higher education institutions. This research will be relevant to administrators who are involved in institutional and unit-level planning and management. A thorough examination of decision-making practices and organizational structures can provide insights into how universities can be more innovative, make better decisions, plan more effectively, and ensure goal congruency across the organization. The research design includes interviews of key stakeholders such as current administrators, faculty, staff, and students. It also includes onsite observation and review of institutional documents.

The interviews, which might be audiotaped with your consent, will consist of one 45-minute session per participant over the next four months. Participants may also be asked to complete a 30-minute follow up interview to clarify information provided in the initial interview. I will take notes during the interview and digitally record with your consent. You will be given the opportunity to review and amend any statements you made during the interview. Also, I will share results with you after the write-up upon request.

Benefits

Although this study focuses on innovation in new public universities in America, the research, recommendations, and principles developed in the study ideally will be scalable and can be applicable to other types of higher education institutions. This research will be relevant to administrators who are involved in institutional and unit-level planning and management. A thorough examination of decision-making practices and organizational structures can provide insights into how universities can be more innovative, make better decisions, plan more effectively, and ensure goal congruency across the organization.

Confidentiality

The data collected during the study will be kept confidential and stored securely. The data will only be made available to the persons conducting the study. The recordings will be destroyed within one year once the study is complete. Your name will not be used in oral or written reports that could link you to the study. Due to the relatively small number of participants and their responsibilities at the university, it is possible that your comments could be linked to you. To help mitigate this risk, the study will also not identify the names of the public universities involved in the study. Instead, each university in the study will be assigned a random name throughout the study.

_____ Subject Initials

Contact

If you have questions about this research project, please contact me by email (strange@uga.edu) or by phone (706-206-0596). My dissertation chair is Louise McBee Professor of Higher Education Sheila Slaughter, who can be reached by email (sheila.slaughter@gmail.com) or by phone (706-542-0571). Questions or concerns about your rights to participate as a research participant should be directed to the Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB), 612 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706-542-3199); email (irb@uga.edu).

Participation

Your involvement with this study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Consent

I have read this form and have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

Tarpon U Informants' Descriptors

Pseudonym	Role	Tarpon U Yrs.	Gender	Audio File No.
Dr. Lima	Faculty	5	F	801_0022
Papa	Pro Staff	3	M	WS310016
Dr. Kilo	Faculty	6	F	WS310013
Dr. Bravo	Admin	20+	F	WS310026
Dr. Golf	Faculty	12	F	WS310014
Dr. Juliet	Faculty	7	M	801_0019
Hotel	Pro Staff	11	M	WS310008
Echo	Pro Staff	15	M	801_0029
Dr. Alpha	Admin	20+	M	801_0028
Foxtrot	Pro Staff	14	M	WS310018
November	Staff/Student	4	F	WS310007
Oscar	Pro Staff	4	F	WS310006
Quebec 1	Student	2	M	WS310015
Quebec 2	Student	2	M	WS310015
Quebec 3	Student	3	F	WS310015
Dr. Delta	Faculty	18	F	WS310021
Dr. India	Admin	10	M	WS310010
Dr. Mike	Admin	6	M	WS310012
Dr. Charlie	Faculty	19	M	WS310019

Figure 3. Tarpon U informants' descriptors. Pseudonyms were assigned to informants.

APPENDIX E

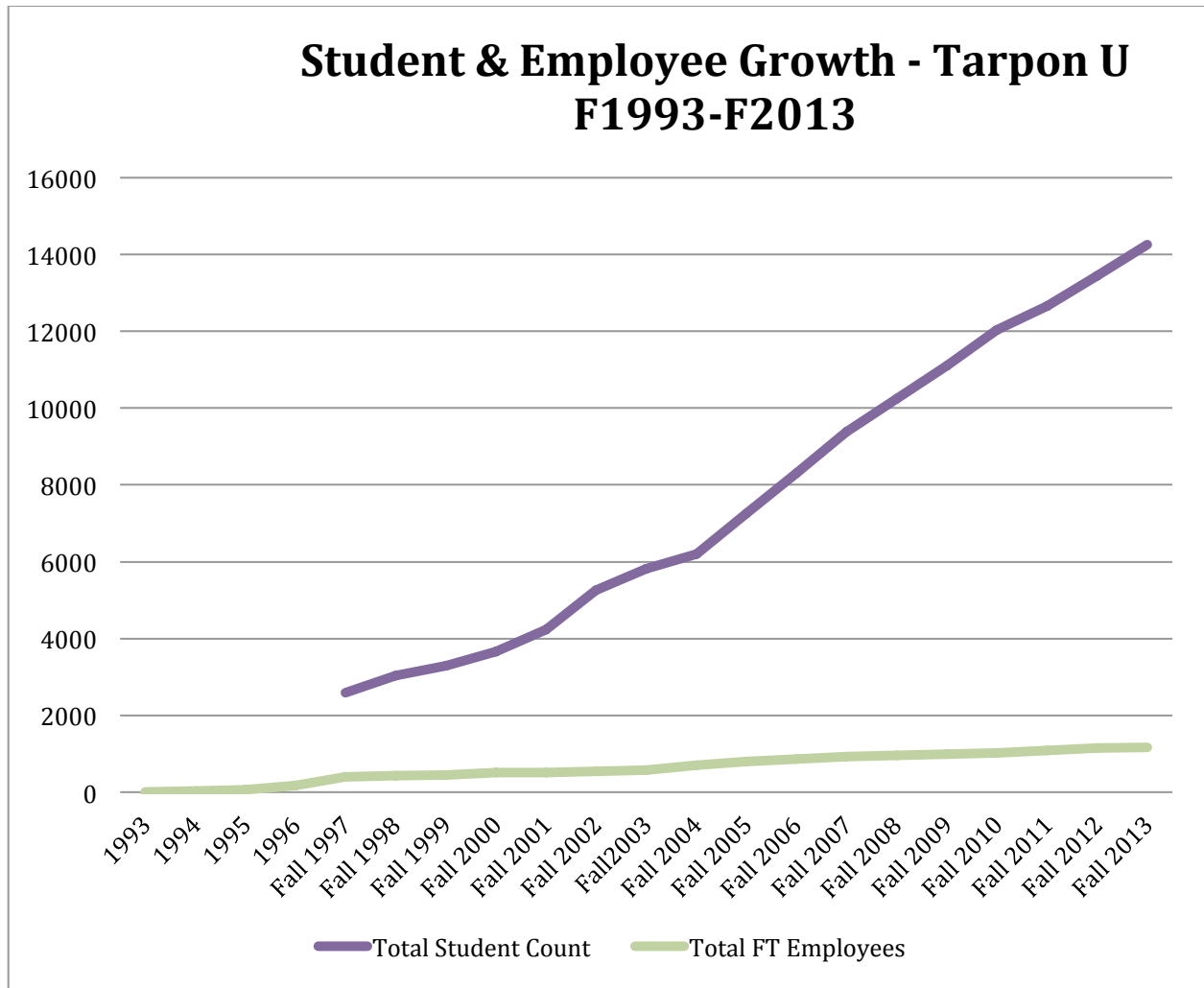
Initial Interview Questions

Each organization's decision-making process can reinforce current practices or introduce changes that may lead to innovation, which opens up organizations to new and better practices. In alignment with the study's research plan, this study will explore a variety of questions during the interview process related to the decision-making processes in new universities that impact the flexibility of degree requirements, scope of the curricular offerings, and the portability of its learning goals.

- What are the academic strengths of this university compared to others in the state?
- What academic programs are being considered and why?
- How are decisions made about curricular changes?
- How do students impact decisions about the curriculum?
- How are decisions made about starting new academic programs?
- Describe the process for developing a new course?
- Describe an innovative aspect of your institution and how it was developed.
- How are decisions made about enrollment growth, admission standards, and student recruitment? What impacts do increases and decreases in enrollment have on academic offerings?
- What other information do you believe would be helpful to know about how the institution's academic priorities are determined?

These initial questions focus on how a university might include administrators, faculty, staff, and students in decision-making processes that pertain to the ongoing evolution of the academic curriculum. Information gleaned from interviews may illuminate adaptive responses to changes in economic conditions and student demand.

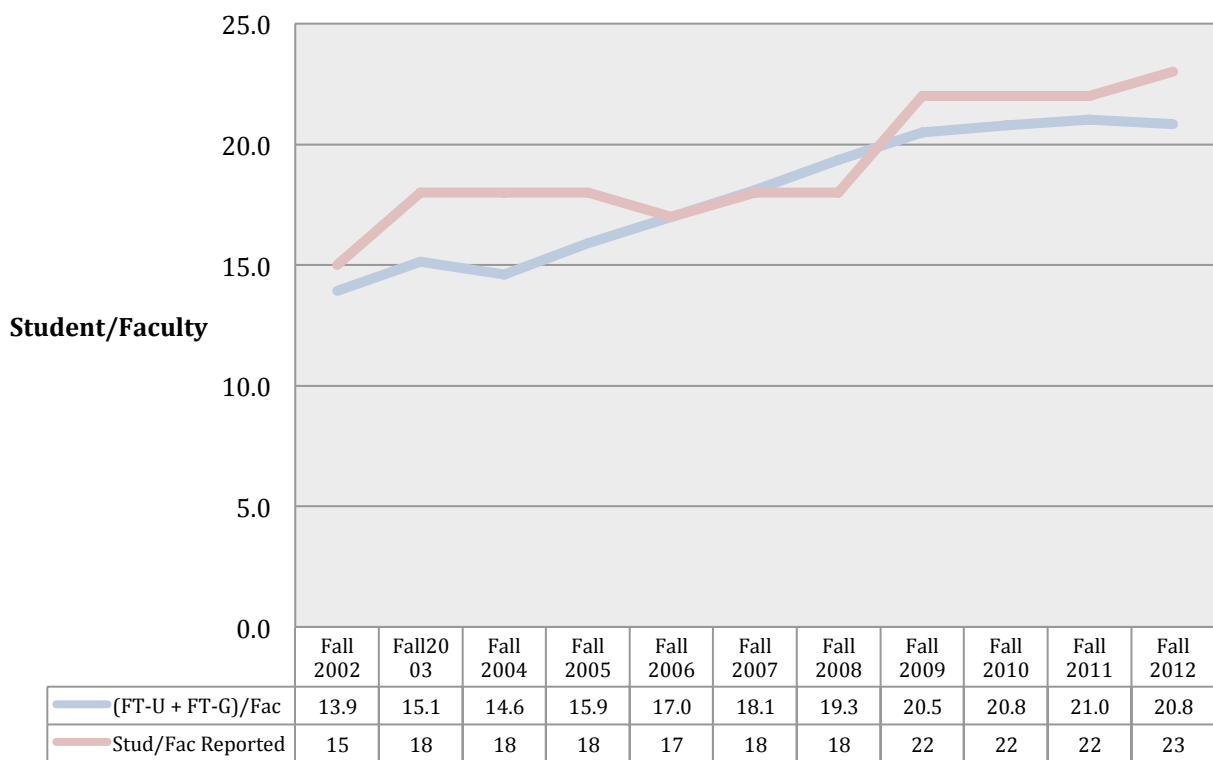
APPENDIX F



APPENDIX G

Student to Faculty Ratios at Tarpon U F2002-F2012

Reported by Tarpon U & Calculated by Author



APPENDIX H

Employees by Category - Tarpon U F2002 - F2012

