INTER-INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING OF ONLINE PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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(Under the Direction of Ronald M. Cervero)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors in inter-institutional program planning that affect the design of online programs. The questions that guided the study were: 1) Why do educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs? 2) What educational program issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs? 3) What social and political relationship issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

This study employed a qualitative design using interviews and documents as data sources. The data were analyzed using a constant comparison method. Twelve participants were interviewed representing nine inter-institutional online programs in higher education institutions located in the Southeast, Southwest, and Midwest of the United States.

The data revealed findings related to each of the three research questions that guided this study. Educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan and develop online programs because they do not have the resources or expertise to offer the programs alone. Six factors were negotiated in inter-institutional online program planning: 1) program support, 2) funding, 3) operation and administration of the program, 4) admissions and registration, 5) curriculum and course development, and 6) technical considerations. Program planners designing

inter-institutional programs negotiate online program issues across institutional boundaries, within institutional boundaries, and with other planners at the planning tables. This study revealed ways in which the social and political relationships among the program planners strengthened or hindered the planning efforts and negotiation of the educational program issues including: 1) organizational identity, 2) leadership roles, 3) the value of relationship building, and 4) commitment to the goals of the program.

Three conclusions emerged from these findings. First, resource scarcity is the primary motivating factor for forming inter-institutional partnerships to expand access to online programs in higher education. Second, educational planners must negotiate a variety of administrative, pedagogical and technical issues related to the design and delivery of inter-institutional online programs. Finally, social and political relationships, especially those around organizational identity, are central to the planning process in inter-institutional collaborations in higher education.

INDEX WORDS: Program planning, Inter-institutional program planning, Distance
                 education, Online degree program, Online program, Inter-institutional
                 collaboration, Adult education

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B.S. Georgia College and State University, 1992

M.S. Georgia College and State University, 1994

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

2008

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August 2008

DEDICATION

To my husband, Joe and my children, Jodie, Megan, and Jace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been on this journey since I first entered a college classroom as a thirty-four year old mom with three young children at home. There have been detours, successes, and forced time-outs along the way. There were times I wondered if I would get here, but there have always been those who encouraged and supported me along the way. To all of you I am humbled and grateful.

Above all I thank my Heavenly Father without whose guidance and ever present help I would not have attempted this project or finished it.

Special thanks to my husband Joe, and children, Jodie, Megan, and Jace. Without your prayers, patience, encouragement, love, and support this would not have been possible. You are a constant inspiration to me. Thanks to my Mom who always encouraged me to keep going. I'm looking forward to having more time to spend with each one of you.

I am grateful to the twelve participants who shared with me their experiences in working in inter-institutional partnerships to plan and implement online programs. Without their significant input, this study would not have been possible.

Thanks to my major professor, Ron Cervero, whose guidance, patience, and encouragement helped me to see this study through from the beginning to the end. Thank you for so skillfully guiding my efforts along the way and helping me to focus on what matters. Thanks to my committee members - Janette Hill, Laura Bierema, and Lorilee Sandman - who helped me to fine-tune and improve my work. I really appreciate the work all of you do to help improve the lives of your students and those whose lives we will impact as a result.

Thanks to Jessica Somers and Mike Rogers for supporting my efforts in many ways over the years. Your support in arranging my work on special projects was essential in helping me to bring this study to completion.

I will always gratefully remember each one of you for your unique contribution to my life and to this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Online learning offers access to educational opportunities for adults who once found it difficult or impossible to pursue post secondary educational opportunities on college campuses. Studies conducted for the National Center for Educational Statistics (Lewis, Snow, Farris, Levin, & Greene, 1999; Sikora & Caroll, 2002; Waits & Lewis, 2003) report that distance education grew rapidly during the 1990's. During the 12-month 2000-2001 academic year, a total of 55 percent of 2-year and 4-year Title IV degree-granting institutions offered college-level, credit-granting distance education courses at either the undergraduate or graduate/first-professional level (Waits & Lewis, 2003). By the fall term of 2006, the number of students learning online was 3.48 million in the United States alone (Allen & Seaman, 2007).

Access to higher education through the availability of online courses is an important option for students who would not have access through traditional means. A study conducted for the National Center for Educational Statistics (Sikora & Caroll, 2002) reported that many online students report that they take online courses because of work and family related responsibilities. The study suggested a profile of student characteristics related to distance education participation in higher education settings. According to the report,

> Among undergraduate students, those with characteristics related to family and work responsibilities were more likely to participate in distance education. In particular, students who were older, were financially independent, had delayed postsecondary

enrollment, were married, or had dependent children were all more likely to take distance

education classes than their counterparts. (p. 17)

An equally important aspect of online educational opportunities may be the potential to complete

degree and certificate programs completely online. Of the institutions that offered distance

education courses in the academic year 2000-2001, 30 percent offered degree programs and 16

percent offered certificate programs (Waits & Lewis, 2003). In the fall of 2006 the percentage of

institutions offering online programs grew to 35 percent (Allen & Seaman, 2007). This suggests

that the need for online degree and certificate programs is an important and growing trend in

postsecondary educational institutions.

The body of literature related to online education is growing, although the majority of the

literature is anecdotal accounts and how-to articles that describe the experiences of a department

or institution in developing and teaching online courses. However, simply putting courses and

programs online within the framework of existing institutional policies and infrastructure is not

sufficient, although it has provided an opportunity for faculty and institutions to begin to

experiment with online offerings. The increasing demand for online learning opportunities has

created a need for educational organizations to provide courses and programs rapidly in order to

take advantage of opportunities and to compete with other providers for students (Hanna, 2003;

Marles & Stefanick, 2001; Schrum & Benson, 2000; Stick & Ivankova, 2005; Stone, Showalter,

Orig, Grover, 2001).

The Collaborative Approach to Online Program Planning

One strategy that appears to be gaining importance in planning and developing online

courses and programs is the collaborative approach to course and program development

(Balestri, 2000; Benson, 2001; Carnevale, 2000; Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999; Hanna, 2003;

Patton, 2001; Schrum & Benson, 2000; Sharma & Chaudhary, 2003; Stein & Short, 2001; van

Soeren, Andrusyszyn, Laschinger, Goldenberg, & DiCenso, 2000). The complexities of planning

and developing online programs require resources and expertise that may not exist at an

individual institution or organization. Therefore, forming inter-institutional collaborative

relationships and consortia is one way to address resource scarcity, reduce the high costs

associated with infrastructure needs, and avoid redundancy and competition in course and

program offerings. The National Center for Education Statistics (Waits & Lewis, 2003) reports:

> Among the institutions that offered distance education in 2000-2001, 60 percent
>
> participated in some type of distance education consortium (figure 6 and table 13). Of
>
> those institutions that participated in a distance education consortium, 75 percent
>
> indicated that they participated in a state consortium, 50 percent in a system consortium
>
> (a consortium within a single university system or community college district), 27
>
> percent in a regional consortium, 14 percent in a national consortium, and 4 percent in an
>
> international consortium. (p. v)

These data clearly suggest that working together with other institutions is becoming a

desirable program planning strategy in distance education. Joint efforts such as these are

described in the literature in various ways. However, some authors make a distinction between

the nature of these relationships and the degree to which organizations take each other into

account in working toward their goals. Schermerhorn (1979), for example, describes a

continuum of cooperation with collaboration as the highest level of commitment. Cervero (1992)

describes six levels of interdependence, including monopoly, parallelism, competition,

cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. Collaboration is described as a form of

interdependence where organizations consistently take other institutions into account. Donaldson

and Kozoll (1999) suggest a continuum of three different types of relationships, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration with collaboration being described as "the highest form of interdependence" (p.7). In this study, the term inter-institutional collaboration is used to describe a form of interdependent relationships in which educational providers work together toward specific mutual goals.

Planning programs in a collaborative situation is complex and not often addressed in the program planning literature. A literature review of program planning by Donaldson and Kozoll (1999) indicated the following observations regarding collaboration in the program planning literature: (1) collaboration is not explicitly addressed; (2) it may be mentioned but is not focused upon; (3) it may be considered as a preferred action strategy; (4) collaboration may be identified as a particular type of program planning but not regarded as a focal point of research. As a result of their research on collaboration and program planning, Donaldson and Kozoll concluded that collaboration and program planning are parallel but interconnected processes. They state,

> Collaboration and program planning therefore related to each other like the strands of a
> double helix. The program planning literature describes what needs to be accomplished to
> plan and develop programs, and provides insights about how that is done. The literature
> on collaboration, in contrast, concentrates primarily on developing and sustaining
> relationships among people and organizations through unconventional means of
> governance, unique forms of leadership, and attention to balance between a variety of
> tensions. (p. 136)

The notion that aspects of program planning and collaboration are closely related suggests that program planners must be able to understand the processes involved in collaborative relationships and make judgments about the collaborative program planning

process. Some studies in adult and higher education have focused on aspects of collaborative program planning in education. Glowacki-Dudka (1999) focused on the role of inter-organizational collaboration for developing educational programs for adults. The findings of her study suggest that the strength of the relationships within a partnership may influence the success of the collaborative. Understanding strategies for building and maintaining relationships in these partnerships is a critical factor when entering these relationships.

Cervero (1992) in discussing collaborative relationships in continuing education organizations conceptualizes collaboration as a political activity. He states,

> Any astute decision maker recognizes that the formation of inter-organizational relationships is fundamentally a political process in which costs and benefits must be clearly weighed, including those involving organizational agendas other than those connected to the continuing education function. Ignoring this political process in setting up programs would have the same result as walking across a crowed intersection with your eyes closed. (p. 116)

Before a collaborative relationship is entered into the benefits and costs of collaboration must be considered and a commitment to the needs of the collaborative is essential. Intra and inter organizational relations of power must be taken into consideration. According to Cervero (1992),

> Even in the best scenario, where all parties seek collaboration, negotiations about who will give up what to get what are a delicate and difficult endeavor. Thus it is imperative for those seeking to facilitate inter-organizational collaboration to have a clear understanding of the conditions necessary to bring about success. (p. 100)

The collaborative nature of planning inter-institutional online programs suggests social and political issues that have to be addressed when planning these programs in traditional postsecondary educational settings.

With such large numbers of students learning at a distance from courses and programs offered through traditional settings, such as college campuses, it is important to understand how distance education programs in these traditional contexts are developed and managed. The issues related to planning online programs are complex and require careful planning and administration to be successful. The existing literature in distance education suggests that a major problem related to distance education is the lack of attention given to program planning (Berge & Mrozowski, 2001; Bunn, 2001; Downey, 2001; Husmann & Miller, 2001; Levy, 2003; McAlister, Rivera, & Hallam, 2001). According to Palloff and Pratt (1999),

> Computer-mediated courses and programs have been appearing so rapidly that little thought seems to have been given to the possible impact of the delivery method – either educationally or socially. Nor has much thought been given to the need to modify the educational approach; traditional teaching methods are being attempted in a nontraditional environment. (p. 4)

This method of developing and implementing online courses and programs is inefficient and costly and may lead to failure of the programs (Husmann & Miller, 2001; Levy, 2003; Sherry, 1996; Stone, Showalter, Orig, & Grover, 2001). A more systematic approach to program planning must be implemented to meet the growing demand and competition in distance education.

The program planning literature suggests various models of program planning. Cervero and Wilson (1994, 2006), however, suggest that there is a general incompleteness of the models.

They suggest that program planning is a "social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interests in contexts marked by socially structured relations of power (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 24). Cervero and Wilson (1994) state, "An educational program is never constructed by a single planner acting outside an institutional and social context. Rather, programs are constructed by people with multiple interests working in specific institutional contexts that profoundly affect their content and form" (p. 28). To effectively plan programs in this politically charged context planners must not only possess the technical knowledge and skills needed to plan effective programs, they must also understand and analyze the political power that shapes the planning table and be able to negotiate the power and interests at work there. Cervero and Wilson use the concept of "the planning table" to illustrate the practical work of program planners as they negotiate these politically charged contexts. They state, "The planning table metaphor draws attention to the fundamental idea that people make judgments with others in social and organizational contexts that determine the specific features of an educational program, such as its purpose, content, audience, and format" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 80).

Donaldson and Kozoll connect the parallel processes of program planning and collaboration and suggest that, "collaborative program planning is a social activity in which meanings are socially constructed and social relations are key to both progress and results. Different interests and relations of power are also present in collaborative programming, as is their negotiation" (p. 135).

Two studies were found which specifically addressed planning for online programs from the perspective of Cervero and Wilson (Benson, 2001; Patton, 2001). According to Patton, planning online programs in traditional settings requires skill in negotiating the social and

political interests of stakeholders who may not be knowledgeable about the unique needs of the online environment. Developing online learning programs typically requires not only program planning expertise, but skill and knowledge in working in traditional environments to promote the use of available instructional technologies, as well as expertise in online pedagogy (Almeda, 1998; Patton, 2001). Patton states, "How online program planners adapt to the online environment and function in this environment is important because their efforts are what produce educational programs that ultimately impact people's lives" (p. 43).

Among the findings of Benson's (2000) study was the suggestion that even though stakeholders may agree upon shared interests at a high-level, conflict may arise when these interests are taken to the operational level. Online program planners must learn to negotiate the tensions of the evolving distance learning environments in traditional education organizations. These tensions are often the result of different philosophical orientations for the framework with regard to implementing online teaching and learning. Benson suggests that a negotiated process must be considered in planning online programs. The dynamics of online program planning must take into account these tensions and therefore the negotiation of power and interest, and possible conflict that may arise among stakeholders. Unlike traditional models of program planning, which do not adequately address the highly political and evolving nature of the online environment, the Cervero and Wilson theory of program planning offers a lens to view the dynamics of inter-organizational collaborative program planning and provides the theoretical framework for this study.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

There is a growing demand for online distance education programs. College level, credit-granting distance education courses at the undergraduate and graduate level have increased

dramatically over the past decade. To meet this need, postsecondary institutions may decide to share their resources in collaborative arrangements. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (Waits & Lewis, 2003), 60 percent of the institutions that offered distance education in 2000-2001 engaged in some type of distance education consortium. Working in distance education consortiums is often more difficult than working alone because of the need to take a variety of relationships or points of view into consideration.

Negotiating the social and political dynamics of collaborative program planning is complex, and yet it is becoming a widely used strategy for developing and offering distance education programs. The literature in the areas of program planning and collaboration do not adequately address the issues that arise when previously independent and competitive higher and adult educational organizations enter into inter-institutional relationships to plan online programs. Inter-institutional collaboration is complex and requires knowledge of the process and dynamics of the collaborative relationship. Donaldson and Kozoll (1999) suggest that experience with past collaborative relationships is one of the key factors leading to future success. Knowing what works and what does not work is based on reflection on past experience yet, gaining that experience is often based on trial and error without the benefit of prior training or knowledge in managing collaborative relationships.

Program planners involved in technology based inter-institutional program development need to understand how to work within a collaborative to ensure the mutually desired outcomes for the design and implementation of the programs. The existing literature on distance education, collaboration, and program planning does not adequately address these program design and relationship issues. More research in the area of collaborative program planning for distance education programs is needed.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand what factors in inter-institutional program planning affect the design of online programs in higher education. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Why do educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs?

2. What educational program issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

3. What social and political relationship issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

Significance of the Study

The processes and strategies that are effective in planning and developing inter-institutional online programs are learned in practice, but not taught. Reflection on past experience therefore has been the best teacher in learning about effective courses of action. Because of the growing need for collaborative online program planning, this study seeks to make explicit the tacit knowledge gained through the experiences of participants in inter-institutional online program planning situations.

There are several theoretical implications for this study. First, the need for online programs is growing rapidly. Traditional methods of curriculum development and program planning are not designed to take into consideration the needs for designing online programs. Planning online programs requires technical resources and expertise that may not exist at individual institutions. While much has been written about program planning practices, few studies have focused on the unique needs of planning online programs. Second, increasing

demand for online programs and the high cost of developing online courses has brought about a rising interest in inter-institutional collaboration to build online programs that are shared resources for the institutions involved. Few studies have focused on the unique needs of planning inter-institutional online programs. Research in the area of inter-institutional collaboration in planning online programs is needed to determine what factors affect the design of inter-institutional online programs and how these interdependent relationships develop and are sustained.

The practical implications of this study are important to administrators, program planners, and others who must understand the complexities of inter-institutional online program planning, how these programs are developed collaboratively, and how they can be improved. This study identifies educational program issues and social and political relationship factors that affect the efforts of program planners in inter-institutional online program planning situations in higher education.

Planning inter-institutional online programs introduces technical and nontraditional program planning issues that must be addressed across all of the institutions involved. Program planners must be able to cross institutional and departmental boundaries to negotiate nontraditional policies and procedures for the sake of the inter-institutional online program. Understanding the types of program issues that are likely to impact the shared online program will help program planners to address these issues and identify effective strategies in their own planning situations.

Program planners bring a variety of interests to the planning table that affect the social and political relationships represented. This study identifies social and political relationship factors that support or hinder the collaborative program planning process. Program planners will

benefit from understanding the impact of these relationship factors on the major decisions that are made about the online program.

Forming inter-institutional collaboratives and consortiums is one way to address resource scarcity, reduce the high costs associated with course development and infrastructure needs, and avoid redundancy and competition in course and program offerings. The educational program issues and the relationship factors identified in this study will inform program planners who wish to plan and develop inter-institutional online programs.

Definition of Terms

This study uses terms specific to the context of collaborative inter-institutional program planning for online programs, therefore, the following terms are defined as they are used in this study:

Collaboration - A form of interdependence in which educational providers work together toward a specific mutual goal.

Cooperation - A form of interdependence where providers simply assist each other in information exchange.

Coordination - A form of interdependence where providers consistently take other institutions into account.

Distance Education – Educational opportunity in which the learner and the instructor are separated by place.

Online - Activities that occur using the Internet for delivery.

Online Program - Educational program that is offered online through the use of computers, Internet, World Wide Web, email, or other computer mediated means. Students may complete a degree program online. The program provides access to online bookstores, libraries,

electronic classrooms, student services, and a wide variety of educational resources. The course work is completed online although students may be required to attend occasional class meetings face to face.

Online Learning Environment – An online learning environment is the learning space that is provided online through the use of computers, the Internet, and the World Wide Web. The virtual learning space created by program designers, course designers, and instructors, where students engage with online content, other students, and their instructors.

Planning Table – The planning table is a term used to describe activities related to planning programs with others in a social context. According to Cervero and Wilson (2006), "The planning table can be either a physical one where people meet to make decisions or a metaphorical one where people make decisions with others on the telephone, hallways, or privately in offices" (p. 6).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review begins with an overview and background of distance education and a discussion of the issues in the design and delivery of online programs. The issues related to collaborative program planning are addressed. Collaboration will be examined further based on the literature in organizational development, business, and adult and higher education. The implications for collaborative program planning in postsecondary institutions will be addressed providing a context for this study.

Issues in the Design and Delivery of Online Programs

Online learning is one of the fastest growing areas of teaching and learning in adult and higher education and is creating a significant need for change in the way institutions of higher education offer instruction (Allen & Seaman, 2006, 2007; Lewis, Snow, Farris, Levin, & Greene, 1999; Sikora & Caroll, 2002; Waits & Lewis, 2003). Distance education has its roots in adult education and has existed for many years in the form of correspondence study or independent learning. The date of the first publicly announced distance education offering can be traced to March 20, 1728, when an advertisement in the Boston Gazette offered shorthand lessons by mail. The term distance education may have been used first in the 1892 catalogue of the University of Wisconsin (Verduin & Clark, 1991). Distance education has existed, with marginal status, in higher education contexts for decades, primarily to meet the needs of non-traditional students. Until the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, it has had little impact on traditional higher education. As recently as 1991, Verduin and Clark wrote, "Distance education, although a

popular and effective concept in other countries, is still something of an unknown quantity in the United States and, with the possible exception of correspondence courses and telecourses, has until now had little impact here" (p. xi). Since the advent of delivery of instruction through the Internet and the World Wide Web, this has changed dramatically. Schrum (2000) states,

> The growth in the practice of lifelong learning is reflected in large numbers of students who are non traditional in age and responsibilities. These individuals frequently must overcome concerns about time, distance and money that traditional students do not have. Online and independent learning offers one potential solution to these issues and now military, business, and nontraditional educational providers have begun to investigate its potential. (p. 91)

Access to educational opportunities for adult learners is a growing need. Hanna (2003) writes,

> In all countries, continuous learning for adults is becoming essential as jobs change and entire career tracks are eliminated and new ones develop. Access to education from any location, at any time, for any age and in many ways is critical for individual and collective well-being. (p. 68)

Studies over the past decade have shown a steady increase in online learning. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, since the 1990s the demand for online learning increased significantly (Lewis et al., 1999; Sikora & Caroll, 2002; Waits & Lewis, 2003). Allen and Seaman (2007) in a survey of postsecondary degree granting institutions in the United States revealed that the number of students learning online during the fall term of 2006 was 3.48 million in the United States alone. Distance learning has not only become an attractive option for non-traditional students, it has become an alternative to traditional classroom learning (Allen & Seaman, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; Hanna, 2000, 2003; Schrum, 2000). The term online learning

in the context of this study refers to instruction that is offered over the Internet through the World Wide Web.

<center>*Research Trends in Distance Education*</center>

With the growing demand for online learning, much has been written about the effectiveness, development, and implementation of online courses and to a lesser extent, online programs. A study by Berge and Mrozowski (2001) examined the literature in distance education over a ten-year period from 1990 to 1999. In their study, they examined the contents of research and the type of methodology used. The purpose of the review was to reveal problems in the field, which would suggest the need for a research agenda. A categorization system of issues in distance education was used to identify issues for research. The categories used were based on Sherry's approach (Sherry, 1996) and included the following: redefining roles of key participants, technology selection and adoption, design issues, strategies to increase interactivity and active learning, learner characteristics, learner support, operational issues, policy and management issues, equity and accessibility, and cost/benefit trade-offs.

Using this categorization system, Berge and Mrozowski (2001) reviewed articles from four peer-reviewed distance education journals that were published continually from 1990 to 1999. They also searched *Dissertation Abstracts International* for abstracts published using the key words "distance education" and "distance learning." The results of the study revealed that a total of 1,419 articles and distance education dissertations were found for the ten-year period. Of these publications, 890 were research publications. Three-fourths of these research articles used descriptive methods while six percent used experimental methods. An examination of the trends in content revealed that topics such as design issues, interactivity, and learner characteristics

were more commonly discussed than topics related to operational issues, policy and management

issues, equity and accessibility, and cost/benefit tradeoffs. According to Berge and Mrozowski,

> The dearth of research in the area of policy and management issues reflects the field's
>
> focus on issues within the classroom and between the distance learner and the instructor.
>
> Policy areas related to planning, administration, accreditation, and costs, to name a few,
>
> affect the success or failure of a distance learning program. These areas appear to have
>
> been addressed in research later in the decade …, but they still lagged far behind those
>
> concerning pedagogy. (p.14)

The literature related to policy and management in distance education is beginning to

address planning issues, however, many of the publications remain conceptual writings

illustrating the experiences of a particular institution or department in developing online courses

and programs. These reports are valuable references for those who wish to hear what others have

done in the field. For example, publications such as *The Design & Management of Effective*

Distance Learning Programs (Discenza, Howard, & Schenk, 2002) address the major issues,

challenges, and solutions related to distance education. Discenza et al. (2002), devote a section of

their book to issues related to developing and managing distance education programs. The

Handbook of Distance Education (Moore & Anderson, 2003) devotes a section of the book to

"Policies, Administration, and Management" with eleven chapters focusing on these issues. The

book, *An Administrators Guide to Online Education* (Shelton and Saltsman, 2006), addresses

issues related to effective administration of online education programs. Although these issues are

beginning to be addressed there remains a lack of data-based research on the subject of online

program planning.

The literature related to distance education suggests that there is no shortage of anecdotal accounts and how-to articles that describe the experiences of a department or institution in developing and teaching online courses (Berge & Mrozowski, 2001; Bunn, 2001; Downey, 2001; Husmann & Miller, 2001; Levy, 2003; McAlister et al., 2001, Stein & Short, 2001). Yet, simply putting courses and programs online within the framework of existing institutional policies and infrastructure is not sufficient, although it has provided an opportunity for faculty and institutions to begin to experiment with offering online courses. A more systematic approach to program planning must be implemented to meet the growing demand in distance education.

The issues related to planning online programs in postsecondary education are complex and require careful planning and administration to be successful. Emerging technologies and new ways of offering programs required early adopters and program planners to make design and administrative decisions based on trial and error (Stein & Short, 2001). An accumulation of reports and writings related to these efforts has resulted in the identification of a variety of factors to consider when planning and offering online programs. Some authors suggest a strategic planning approach to online program planning which involves a proactive, disciplined effort to produce change in an organization (Downey, 2001; Hanna, 2003; Husmann & Miller, 2001; Pisel Jr., 2001; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005; Stein & Short, 2001; Stone et al., 2001). In strategic planning for online distance education administrators take the leadership role in program planning and implementation. Shelton and Saltsman note: "A leader with institutional authority must champion the online program for it to reach its fullest potential. Upper-level administrative support is necessary to bring about the required organizational change within the institution" (p. 9). Husmann and Miller, however, found that administrators are not aware of the potential impact of their role in affecting positive change in online distance learning. The

findings of the study "suggest that they see their job as one of facilitating program quality rather than owning responsibility for program success" (Discussion section para 2). According to Levy (2003) administrators have the potential to affect programs "…by securing resources, influencing potential participants, supporting the changes, and implementing process that will overcome the barriers that affect instructors and students" (p. 3).

Researchers have begun to identify a variety of factors to consider when offering online courses or programs, however, much of this research is focused on a review of individual factors such as course and curriculum design, student services, or faculty development within specific programs and disciplines (Grandzol & Grandzol, 2006; Popovich & Neel, 2005; Schrum & Benson 2000). Others have focused on a more comprehensive approach to identifying factors to consider when planning an online program. Based on an examination of the experiences of pioneers in the field, McAlister et al. (2001) offer a list of twelve important questions to answer before offering a Web based (online) curriculum. The purpose of the research was to help those offering courses online to avoid major pitfalls that could occur without adequate planning and consideration of the problems not normally addressed by those offering online courses. While the issues addressed by McAlister et al. were related to course development and delivery, these are areas that must also be addressed at the program planning level. The topics include: congruency with existing institutional mission and strategies, administrative support, institutional obstacles to Web curriculum, intellectual property issues, instructor compensation, criteria for selecting classes to offer online, technical support for students and instructors, delivery methods, student assessment, technical skill of the students, course delivery platform, and maintenance of the course materials. Schrum and Benson (2002) identified the following challenges to program planners in online distance learning including: faculty development, technical support, student

services, curriculum design, program technologies, course design, and marketing and pricing. The concerns outlined by McAlister et al (2001) and Schrum and Benson (2002) fall into the categories identified later by Levy (2003). Levy suggests six factors that are important to consider in planning online distance learning programs in higher education: vision and plans, curriculum, staff training and support, student services, student training and support, and copyright and intellectual property. In a thorough and comprehensive review of the six areas and the issues they represent, Levy recommends that equal consideration be given to all six areas.

As the writing has evolved in the area of planning for online programs, the issues are becoming more crystallized and an agenda for research more identifiable. Further research in the areas of how online programs are actually planned, the resources and support required, and an evaluation of the outcomes of the programs will assist in the development of a model for successful planning and implementation of online programs. Accounts of what is being done in online program planning are becoming more available, however, it is important to test assumptions in a systematic fashion, in order to add to the body of literature in this rapidly evolving field which has the potential to impact all aspects of teaching and learning.

Collaborative Program Planning

The need for distance education program offerings is growing rapidly and more institutions are offering online courses and programs. Yet, the complexity of planning and developing online programs requires resources and expertise that may not exist at an individual institution. Forming inter-institutional collaborative relationships and consortiums is one way to address resource scarcity, reduce the high costs associated with infrastructure needs, and avoid redundancy and competition in online course and program offerings (Benson, 2001; Carnevale, 2000; Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999; Marles & Stefanick, 2001; Patton, 2001; Schrum & Benson,

2000; Sharma & Chaudhary, 2003; van Soeren et al., 2000). However, it is important to note that inter-institutional collaboration in higher education is complex in itself and requires knowledge of the process and dynamics of the collaborative relationship. Program planners in distance education as well as other participants in these relationships need to recognize and understand the processes and dynamics of the collaborative relationship. Stein and Short (2001) examined collaborative degree programs in higher education in an effort to understand the complexities of designing and implementing inter-institutional degree programs. They found that state priorities, faculty characteristics, and institutional issues served as both barriers to and facilitators for collaborating to offer online programs. Stein and Short identified four key steps to collaborative degree planning: 1) creating a culture of collaboration, 2) addressing institutional requirements, 3) establishing and meeting high standards, and 4) meeting the needs of educators across organizational types. They recommend that faculty, institutions, or state policy makers who are interested in entering into collaborative online degree program situations should "…consider strategic decisions on three key issues: (a) How quickly should the process move? (b) How should differences be handled? And (c) What role will innovation play?" (p. 431).

Collaborating to plan and offer degree programs in higher education settings is complicated and challenging yet, collaborating to plan online programs presents even more complexity. Sharma and Chaudhary (2003) offer guidelines for success in inter-institutional collaboration for online program in eight areas: 1) confirm institutional commitment, 2) acknowledge and reward stakeholders, 3) adapt materials for local use, 4) create a quality control agency, 5) streamline course material and procedures, 6) ensure program content is current, 7) keep administration in-house, 8) conduct joint marketing strategies. Marles and Stefanick (2001) categorized the challenges to inter-institutional online programs as, 1) administrative concerns,

2) pedagogical and curriculum concerns, and 3) technical concerns. More research is needed to determine how collaborative relationships contribute to the design and implementation of online programs.

Education is facing a paradigm shift in approaches to delivery of teaching and learning, fueled by technological change and growing needs for online education. New models are needed to provide understanding and guidance to the administrators who initiate and manage inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs and the practitioners who develop and implement the programs. The next section examines the literature in collaboration and program planning to highlight the issues related to inter-institutional planning of online educational programs.

<div align="center">Inter-institutional Collaboration</div>

In lean economic times, budget cuts lead to concerns about mission critical objectives for all segments of business and education and collaboration becomes a more desirable and practical option (Balestri, 2000; Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999, Stein & Short, 2001). Before a collaborative relationship is entered into the benefits and costs of collaboration must be considered and a commitment to the needs of the collaborative partnership is essential. Intra and inter organizational relations of power must be taken into consideration. According to Cervero (1992), "Even in the best scenario, where all parties seek collaboration, negotiations about who will give up what to get what are a delicate and difficult endeavor. Thus, it is imperative for those seeking to facilitate inter-organizational collaboration to have a clear understanding of the conditions necessary to bring about success" (p. 100). This section will examine the theoretical foundations of collaboration based on a review of the literature in organizational development, business, and

adult and higher education. The terms inter-organizational and inter-institutional are used interchangeably.

<center>*Defining Collaboration*</center>

The terms collaboration and cooperation are both used to describe working together jointly to achieve a common aim. But there are fundamental differences in the two as they are used to describe inter-organizational cooperation or collaboration. According to Schermerhorn (1975), "Inter-organizational cooperation is defined as an activity in which two or more organizations combine their efforts in deliberate relationships for the purpose of jointly accomplishing individual operating goals" (p. 21). Schermerhorn (1979) later went on to say that cooperation may be described as a continuum of inter-organizational commitment and action varying from low to high levels of commitment of time and resources. On one end of the continuum is a low commitment of time and resources referred to as information exchange. This type of commitment is relatively easy to enter into and withdraw from. As the continuum moves to the right, the level of commitment increases and the relationship is increasingly more demanding. A type of commitment identified as shared resources indicates the center of the continuum. To the far right are joint programs where cooperation becomes more resource intensive. Joint program are more difficult to establish and require a greater commitment for time and resources.

The notion of a continuum of cooperation is related to the idea of organizational interdependence. Interdependence is described by Donaldson and Kozoll (1999) to mean "…the degree to which (a) organizations take each other into account in pursuing their goals and (b) the organizations' growth and survival within the external environment are linked." (p. 5). Cervero (1992) identified six orientations toward interdependence that describe ways organizations may

relate to one another: monopoly, parallelism, competition, cooperation, coordination, and

collaboration. Monopolies occur when there is no competition in a service area and providers do

not have to take any other provider into account in pursuing their goals. An example of a

monopoly is when a university is the only public educational institution serving a regional

market. Parallelism occurs when more than one provider is operating in the same service area but

they are not concerned with other providers. This may be the case when a for-profit and a public

university serve the same large metropolitan area, each with individual missions and goals as

well as different target populations. Competition is an orientation where two or more providers

offer programs or services to the same market. For example, the same online degree programs

from accredited universities targeting the same students in a state where the resources and

student markets are limited. Cooperation is a strategy where providers simply assist each other in

information exchange. Coordination is a type of interdependence where organizations

consistently take other institutions into account. For example, a university will focus on offering

only graduate degree programs in an area already served by a four-year school. Collaboration is a

form of interdependence that falls on the far right of Schermerhorn continuum. In this form of

interdependence providers work closely together taking into account the missions and goals of

each organization to work toward a specific mutual goal.

Developmental Stages of Collaboration

Donaldson and Kozoll (1999) describe four developmental stages of collaborative

relationships: 1) emergence; 2) evolution; 3) implementation; 4) transformation. Relationships

move through the first three stages in order with varying lengths of time. Implementation is the

act of offering the program. The successful negotiation of the developmental stages of the

collaboration results in the implementation of the program. Implementation may signal the end

of the collaborative efforts or simply be one point in the continuing efforts to offer and maintain the program. Emergence, evolution, and transformation are discussed further in relation to the motivations and relationship factors for inter-organizational collaboration.

In the emergence stage three major activities take place (Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999). Participants analyze their motives for collaboration, identify and select partners, and engage in the process of problem setting. The first of the activities of emergence is described as motivating factors for inter-organizational collaboration, which has been addressed in the literature in organizational development, business, and adult education as determinants of collaboration (Cervero, 1992; Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999; Oliver, 1990; Schermerhorn, 1975; Schermerhorn 1979). The most often cited reason for collaboration is resource scarcity, however, the motivation for deciding to collaborate is much more complex and involves many deciding factors.

The form a collaboration will take will vary depending upon the type of relationship formation and the contingencies for entering into the collaboration (Oliver, 1990). In a review of the literature on inter-organizational relationships, Oliver developed a typology of six motivating factors and reasons for collaboration. These critical contingencies of relationship formation are: necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability, and legitimacy. Necessity refers to whether the relationship is mandated or required. Asymmetry is when one organization enters a relationship to gain power or control over another organization or its resources. Reciprocity addresses resource security, that is, whether the benefits of the collaboration outweigh the costs. Efficiency addresses the reason to collaborate to improve input/output ratio. Stability (predictability) is a motivating factor for collaboration when organizations seek to control environmental uncertainty. Legitimacy is a motivating factor when an organization wishes to

improve its reputation or prestige. Oliver suggests that each of the contingencies is sufficient reason to motivate a collaborative relationship with another organization. However, the decision to form a relationship is more commonly based on more than one contingency. Oliver (1990) also examined the conditions of relationship formation based on "the environmental and inter-organizational factors that increase the likelihood that different contingencies will cause inter-organizational relationships to occur" (p. 241). She proposed the conditions under which one or more of the critical contingencies would most likely lead to inter-organizational relationships.

Based upon the work of Schermerhorn (1975), Cervero's (1992) model of motivations and incentives to collaborate is based on a cost-benefit dynamic. Cervero's model has been tested in adult and continuing education settings and found useful in understanding the conditions that lead to relationship formation. Cervero conceptualizes collaboration as a political activity. He states,

> Any astute decision maker recognizes that the formation of inter-organizational
> relationships is fundamentally a political process in which costs and benefits must be
> clearly weighed, including those involving organizational agendas other than those
> connected to the continuing education function. Ignoring this political process in setting
> up programs would have the same result as walking across a crowded intersection with
> your eyes closed. (p. 116)

Others have supported Cervero's assertion that collaborative relationships are based in a socio-political framework and will be discussed later.

Once a decision has been made to enter into a collaborative relationship the evolution stage of the relationship begins (Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999). In this stage direction setting and maintenance and growth are key efforts. In direction setting the stakeholders begin to discuss and

articulate their vision and goals for the collaborative relationship. In maintenance and growth the developmental process of the relationship begins and the focus is on personal and role relationships.

The developmental process itself will have important implications for the performance of the collaborative. The process will affect the degree to which members of the collaborative find it to be equitable and efficient, how interaction among members influences the settlement of disputes, and may influence whether the relationship will continue or be terminated. In successful collaborations the relationship is everything. It is the people work that makes or breaks the collaboration (Cervero, 1992; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999; Glowacki-Dudka, 1999; Kanter, 1994; Ring & Van de Ven, 1994). Understanding how to manage and support the collaborative relationship is critical and inter-organizational relationships are strongly affected by the interpersonal and role relationships among the participants in the collaborative.

Ring and Van de Ven (1994) suggest that role relationships differ from interpersonal relationships in that persons in a collaborative relationship will demonstrate both role behavior and personal behavior. Role behavior may vary significantly from the "qua persona" role. This is an important concept in a relationship where trust is a key issue. In a role context the person will do what is expected of him or her from an organizational perspective. Regarding role behavior and institutional identity Stein and Short (2001) suggest that organizational identity may be a barrier to effective collaboration. They state, "An interesting concern in starting a collaborative arrangement is whether collaborating partners will acknowledge, celebrate, and emphasize differences, or whether they will minimize (or even deny) these differences" (p. 432). Stein and Short go on to say that entering into a collaborative relationship "requires participants to leave

institutional identities behind, thereby increasing the likelihood that individuals may be more willing to explore their differences" (p. 432).

Ring and Van de Ven (1994) suggest that matters of trust, uncertainties of the relationship, and other governance matters must be continually shaped and restructured. A process framework of the development of the cooperative inter-organizational relationship "…consists of a repetitive sequence of negotiation, commitment, and execution stages, each of which is assessed in terms of efficiency and equity" (p. 97). In short, the way the parties involved in a relationship behave and interact will determine whether the relationship is successful or is terminated. The underlying social-psychological and political dynamics of the relationship explain how and why the relationship evolves through the sequence of negotiation, commitment and execution stages of the collaborative process. Kanter's (1994) research supports the view that successful inter-organizational relationships depend upon political, cultural, organizational, and human aspects of the partnerships. She compares inter-organizational relationships to courtship and marriage. Haire and Dodson-Pennington (2002) state "Meaningful collaborative partnerships take extraordinary time and energy to develop, grow, and mature. They require constant commitment, care, and feeding of the members" (p. 74). Others have also addressed the importance of attending to the socio-psychological relationship dynamics of collaborative teams (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Davidson, Schofield, & Stocks, 2001; Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999; van Soeren et al., 2000).

Transformation (change) can occur at any stage of a collaborative relationship and relates to and impacts each stage. According to Donaldson and Kozoll (1999) "change is constant in collaborative efforts" and "entails constant definition and redefinition of the relationship,

constant re-creation, as opposed to stability…and constant attention to the development of the scope and capabilities of the partnership" (p. 21).

Donaldson and Kozoll suggest that experience with past collaborative relationships is one of the key factors leading to future success. Knowing what works and what does not work is based on reflection on past experience, yet, gaining that experience is often based on trial and error without the benefit of prior training or knowledge in managing collaborative relationships. Ring and Van de Ven state,

> As the uncertainty, complexity, and duration of economic transactions within and between firms increase, it becomes increasingly important for scholars and managers to understand developmental process of how equity, trust, conflict-resolution procedures, and internal governance structures emerge, evolve, and dissolve over time. (p. 113)

It seems clear from the literature on inter-organizational relationships that the socio-political aspects of collaboration will affect the process and should be taken into consideration when planning to enter into joint relationships.

Inter-organizational Collaboration in Higher Education Contexts

It is not uncommon to find inter-institutional and inter-organizational collaboration in higher education contexts. Following Schermerhorn's (1979) continuum of cooperation, these interdependent relationships range from cooperative models where institutions simply share information to the joint programs relationship where institutions partner with other organizations to produce continuing education programs, certificate programs, or degree programs. Higher education institutions technology initiatives, including Internet based education courses and programs, provide fertile ground for collaborative inter-organizational and inter-institutional partnerships (Baer, 2000; Walshok, 1999). However, the level of commitment required for

successful collaboration across isolated disciplinary boundaries of higher education may be a challenge for traditional institutional processes. While institutions may be used to working with outside organizations and institutions they often remain competitive with other educational institutions for students and resources. There are often isolated disciplinary boundaries, brand or turf issues, and traditional forms of institutional governance that pose challenges to inter-institutional collaboration (Stein & Short, 2001). Van de Ven and Walker (1984) suggest

> … as domain similarity increases, the potential for territorial disputes and competition also increases. If organizations have highly similar domains, they are also likely to need the same kinds of resources, which reduce the potential benefits of making exchanges. Thus, having highly similar domains hinders the potential for an IR (Oliver) to emerge between organizations. (p. 601)

However, there is growing interest in collaboration as postsecondary institutions face tight budget cuts and a need to include information and instructional technology expenses into their already strained budgets (Patterson, 2001; Stein & Short, 2001).

The growing demand for online distance learning programs is creating a need to provide learning resources to students that require extensive planning, development, and implementation. The skills, expertise, and resources to produce these programs are diverse and often are not available at one institutional setting. As innovative technology based educational initiatives increase and postsecondary institutions venture into collaborative relationships to produce distance learning programs and other technology based infrastructure, it will become more important to understand the nature of collaborative inter-organizational relationships. Collaboration is one strategy for moving forward with costly and risky technological change in order to meet the growing needs of rapidly changing higher educations environments. The

literature in distance education is beginning to address collaboration in higher education setting as a means to meet these challenges, although the dynamics of inter-organizational collaboration have not been studied in any systematic fashion in terms of what makes these collaborations successful or how they overcome the challenges they face. More research is needed to determine the critical factors to be considered in these partnerships.

Collaboration and Program Development in Adult and Continuing Education

There are many examples of collaboration in adult education. Among the most common are those in which adult and continuing education providers partner with business and industry, higher education, and community economic development programs (Ament, 1987; Cervero, 1992, 1994, 2006; Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999; Glowacki-Dudka, 1999). It would seem that program planning and development in adult education is inherently collaborative since it exists to provide educational opportunities and services in conjunction with other entities. However, a literature review of program planning by Donaldson and Kozoll indicated the following observations regarding collaboration in the program planning literature: collaboration is not explicitly addressed; it may be mentioned but is not focused upon; it may be considered as a preferred action strategy; collaboration may be identified as a particular type of program planning, but not regarded as a focal point of research.

As a result of their research on collaboration and program planning, Donaldson and Kozoll (1999) concluded that, "Collaboration and program planning are parallel but interconnected processes that are informed by both the program planning and collaboration literature" (p. 134). Their work illustrates that "collaborative program planning is a social activity, in which meanings are socially constructed and social relations are key to both progress and results. Different interests and relations of power are also present in collaborative

programming, as is their negotiation" (p. 135). Donaldson and Kozoll further state that collaboration and program planning "relate to each other like the strands of a double helix" (p. 135).

Cervero and Wilson Theory of Program Planning

As mentioned previously, Cervero and Wilson (1994, 2006) provide a theory of program planning that takes the socio-political dynamics of program planning into consideration. They have attempted to examine what adult education program planners actually do in practice and the theoretical frameworks that underlie their actions. Cervero and Wilson (1994) state, "An educational program is never constructed by a single planner acting outside an institutional and social context. Rather, programs are constructed by people with multiple interests working in specific institutional contexts that profoundly affect their content and form" (p. 28). Planning programs is people work. Cervero and Wilson (2006) address four important concepts related to program planning: power, interests, negotiation and ethical commitment. Each of these concepts shapes the social and political relationships at the planning table and the educational outcomes of the program.

Power

Cervero and Wilson (2006) suggest that power is rooted in ongoing social and political relationships and is a factor in determining who gets to the planning table and who makes decisions about educational programs. They identify three characteristics related to power. First, power is relational, not an individual attribute. It is the capacity to act which is derived from one's position and participation in ongoing social and organizational relationships. The capacity to act is determined by socially organized roles and relationships. Second, power must be exercised, which is always a form of negotiation among the people involved. According to

Cervero and Wilson, power both enables and constrains action. Power is not limited to the common view of power as that which is found in coercive relationships rather the capacity to act may be distributed evenly to all people involved. People may choose to use their power in a variety of ways to negotiate their interests at the planning table. Third, power itself is always being negotiated in an effort to maintain or change the balance of power. This aspect of power has to do with the strengthening or weakening of the political relationships and interests of those who are included at the planning table as well as those who are not. Cervero and Wilson state, "The effect that efforts at planning tables have on social and political relationships themselves which are crucial for enabling planners to act, is an often overlooked outcome of the planning process" (p. 88).

Interests

People come to the planning table with specific interests in mind. Exercising power at the planning table is for the purpose of obtaining those interests. The complex interests represented at the planning table are about educational outcomes, or learning agendas, as well as interests in the social and political agendas. The interests of those in a planning situation will affect which programs are developed and the nature of those programs as well as the social and political relationships that are represented at the planning table. According to Cervero and Wilson (2006),

> Interests are the motivations and purposes that lead people to act in certain ways when
> confronted with situations in which they must make a judgment about what to do or say.
> Those involved in planning educational programs exercise their power in accordance
> with their own specific interests and the interests of others they represent at the table. (p.
> 88)

According to Cervero and Wilson (2006), the social and political interests that people bring to the planning table may be defined as "hidden agendas" that should not have any affect upon decisions that are made about the program. However, these so called, "hidden agendas" may indeed have a direct effect on the decisions made about a program. It is naïve not to recognize these social and political interests that exists in planning educational programs. As Cervero and Wilson state, "Indeed, this is one of the fundamental blind spots of almost all planning theories, which assume that programs are only about educational outcomes" (p.90). Thus, in order to act effectively to plan educational programs it is important for planners to understand whose interests are represented at the planning table and what those interests are.

Negotiation

The third concept in Cervero and Wilson's theory of program planning is that negotiation is the central activity of program planning. Many program planning theories focus on the practical forms of action that planners must undertake such as techniques and decision points that guide the planning and development of a program. These procedural tasks involve components such as establishing program needs, defining objectives, developing budgets, and program evaluation. How these tasks are carried out is shaped by how planners bring their power and interests to the table.

> The form of practical action that really matters is undertaken at the planning tables where people confer, discuss, and argue in making judgments about what to do to produce the important features of the educational program. Negotiation is the overall concept describing these interactions, not because there is always conflict involved, but rather because all human interactions are, in part, political. Thus, negotiation is the social

activity in which people interact at the planning table in order to reach agreement about

what to do in relation to the educational program. (Cervero and Wilson, 2006, p.94)

Planners not only negotiate with their own interests to develop programs, they must also

negotiate between the interests of others in the planning process. Negotiation is always acting

upon the power relationships of those involved in the planning process. Planners negotiate with

their own interests, between and among interests of others, and about the interests and political

relationships themselves (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). Negotiation occurs in situations where

people must exercise power to obtain their interests in situations where others interests and

power are represented. It is commonly assumed that educational program planning activities take

place among participants who have mutual interests and goals to develop educational programs.

Most theories do not take into consideration that not only are educational programs being

produced, but political and social relationships are at stake as well. According to Cervero and

Wilson, limiting the vision to planning about educational outcomes handicaps the program

planner, who must always take into consideration the social and political relationships involved.

Based upon the work of Newman (1994), Cervero and Wilson (2006) identify three types

of negotiation situations that program planners must recognize and understand: consultation,

bargaining, and dispute. Each situation involves different levels of agreement and conflict and

different approached to negotiation. Cervero and Wilson state "As people negotiate at the

planning table, then, they need to be able to anticipate and read situations so that they can use an

approach that matches the situation" (p. 94). Program planners must understand these situations

and match them to the interests and power of those at the planning table.

Consultation is described as a situation in which "two or more parties whose common

interests outweigh any conflicting ones come together to talk with a view to sharing information

and solving problems to their mutual advantage (Newman, 1994, p. 153)" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 94) . In consultation situations people work together with common interests to reach mutual goals in supportive ways. Conflicting concerns are outweighed by common interests for the good of the program. People at the planning table are essentially in agreement and work toward achieving common goals. Power is present and operating but it is not the deciding factor in these negotiations (Cervero & Wilson, 2006).

Bargaining is defined as a situation "where two or more parties with both common and conflicting interests come together to talk with a view to reaching an agreement (Newman, 1994. p. 153)" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 95). In bargaining situations conflicting interests are represented at the planning table but people will try to find common ground and are willing to compromise about important issues in order to reach their goals. Some parties will lose in the negotiation and others will gain in an effort to obtain a solution that will allow them to continue to work together. Power matters in bargaining situations, although it is not the deciding factor.

Disputes represent situations where the level of conflict is high and there is no interest in reaching agreement. Cervero and Wilson (2006) define a dispute situation as, "a process in which parties whose conflicting interests outweigh any common ones engage with one another, each with a view to winning – that is, furthering its own interests or gaining ascendancy for its own viewpoint" (p. 96). In these situations there is little common ground. Power matters in dispute situations. Cervero and Wilson state, "In these situations, the amount of power that people bring to the table is vital to both the strategy that needs to be used and the likelihood that a person will achieve her objective" (p. 96). When there is a dispute, the interests of those with power will prevail over those with little or no power. The social and political relationships of those involved will determine what decisions are made.

Ethical Responsibility

Ethical responsibility is the fourth concept in Cervero and Wilson's theory of program planning. Responsibility is being ethical about whose interests matter. Cervero and Wilson (1996) state, "In our view, being politically answerable–that is, responsible–as planners requires an active alignment of substantive democratic action with our political skills for negotiating interests and power" (p. 11). Just as people bring their interests to the planning table, they also bring their ethical commitments to the planning table. Ethical commitments are intricately associated with issues revolving around who should benefit from the programs and whose interests should be represented at the planning table. Ethical commitments are principles of decision making or beliefs that influence the interests and negotiations that occur at the planning table. In the absence of ethical commitments those with the most power will likely exercise that power to determine the features of the programs to serve their own interests and political agendas (Cervero &Wilson, 2006).

The dynamics of the process of collaborative program planning must take into account the negotiation of power and interest, and the ethical commitments, among stakeholders. The Cervero and Wilson theory of program planning offers a lens from which to view these dynamics and provides a theoretical framework for collaborative program planning in any setting in which a decision has been made to collaborate with another organization to meet joint organizational goals.

<div align="center">Implications for Research</div>

This section has examined the determinants of inter-institutional collaboration, the development process of the relationships in these collaborations and the implications for adult and higher education. Collaboration is becoming increasingly important to organizations that

provide online educational programs. Collaboration is seen as a form of interdependence between providers who work closely together, taking into account the missions and goals of each organization towards specific combined goals. The determinants of inter-institutional collaboration are based on multiple factors, although resource scarcity is the most widely cited reason to collaborate. The relationships involved in collaborations are central to whether the collaboration succeeds, fails, or dissolves. The relationships among participants are socio-political in nature and should be carefully considered and managed. Collaboration and program planning are separate but parallel activities that are closely intertwined. The Cervero and Wilson theory of program planning provides a theoretical framework for further research about the socio-political relationships involved in collaborative program planning.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature related to distance education, collaboration, and program planning. Distance education has reached the mainstream in higher education and institutions are increasingly offering online courses and programs. Collaboration in educational program development is becoming a desirable strategy for higher and adult education organizations, particularly in distance education and technology enhanced program and course development. However, the literature in the areas of program planning and collaboration do not adequately address the issues that arise when previously independent and competitive educational organizations enter into interdependent relationships to accomplish mutual goals. Program planners involved in technology based inter-institutional program development need to recognize the processes of interdependent relationships and how to work within a collaborative to ensure the desired mutual outcomes of the parties involved. The complexity of the issues related to collaboration and program planning suggest that more research is needed to better

understand the determinants and the processes by which collaborations evolve, grow and are maintained over the course of the partnerships. The Cervero and Wilson theory of program planning offers a model for examining what planners do in inter-institutional online programming contexts in higher education settings.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to understand what factors in inter-institutional program planning affect the design of online programs in higher education. The study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. Why do educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs?

2. What educational program issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

3. What social and political relationship issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

This chapter presents the rationale and framework of the qualitative methodology proposed for this study. The following sections address the design of the study, sampling and selection criteria, data collection methods, data analysis, validity and reliability, and researcher subjectivity and limitations of the study.

Design of the Study

As noted in earlier chapters, collaboration is often more difficult than working alone because of the need to take a variety of relationships or points of view into consideration. Yet, it is a program planning and implementation strategy that is being entered into by a growing number of postsecondary education entities for the purpose of planning and offering distance education programs. An assumption of this study is that the relationships involved in

collaborative program planning affect the design of the programs. And yet, the processes and strategies that are effective in building and maintaining effective relationships in a collaborative partnership are learned in practice, but not necessarily taught. Reflection on past experience has been the best teacher in learning about effective courses of action.

To reach the goals of this study, that is, to understand what factors in inter-institutional program planning affect the design of online programs, a qualitative research design was used. Broadly speaking, the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the meaning of the experiences of those involved in a study. It is inductive and interpretative in nature and assumes that reality is subjective and constructed by individuals in their social worlds. Therefore, there are many realities in the world rather than one objective reality, as suggested by experimental research (Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) states,

> Qualitative designs are naturalistic to the extent that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest (e.g., a group, event, program, community, relationship, or interaction). The phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally in that it has no predetermined course established by and for the researcher such as would occur in a laboratory or other controlled setting. Observations take place in real-world settings and people are interviewed with open-ended questions in places and under conditions that are comfortable for and familiar to them. (p. 39)

According to Merriam (1998), characteristics of qualitative research include the following:

1. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.

2. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.

3. Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork. The researcher must physically go to the people, setting, site, institution (the field) in order to observe behavior in its natural setting

4. Qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy. That is, this type of research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than tests existing theory.

5. The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon (pp. 6-8).

Because this study seeks to make explicit the tacit knowledge gained through the experiences of participants in collaborative program planning for online programs a qualitative approach to the design of the study seemed particularly appropriate.

Sample Selection

Qualitative researchers usually work with purposeful samples and study them in-depth (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002),

Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations. (p. 230)

Merriam (1998) states, "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61).

There are several types of purposeful sampling available to the qualitative researcher (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). In typical sampling participants are selected because they represent the average person, event, or situation that is being studied. I used a typical sampling strategy to select participants for my study because it was important to gain a frame of reference for what normally happens in the interdependent collaborative relationships.

Criteria for Selecting the Sample

Three criteria guided the sample selection for this study. The purpose of the study required investigating the factors in inter-institutional program planning that affect the design of programs. Therefore I wished to interview program planners – those responsible for initiating the collaborative and/or those responsible for planning and implementing the program, administrators from organizations involved in the collaborative, and other stakeholders involved in the decision making process of the collaborative. The participants in the study needed to (a) have participated in program planning for online programs in postsecondary education settings, (b) have participated in inter-organizational/inter-institutional program planning collaborations, and (c) have experienced a critical incident of significance related to collaborative program planning for online programs.

I located participants in several ways. First, I knew several people who had been involved in inter-institutional program planning for online programs who matched my criteria. I used a combination of email and phone calls to contact these people to invite them to participate in my study. Second, I searched online resources to find information about existing inter-institutional online programs. When I located inter-institutional online programs I studied websites and information provided to locate potential contacts who would match my criteria to participate in

the study. I contacted these people by email. If they responded that they were interested and available to participate I followed up with a telephone call to provide further information and further determine whether they met my criteria. Third, I sent an invitation to participate to the mailing list, DEOS-L, a moderated listserv that facilitates discussion of current issues in distance education with over 3000 subscribers. Fourth, I asked colleagues and participants that I interviewed to suggest others who might meet the criteria to participate in the study.

Programs and Participants

Nine programs located in the Southeast, Southwest, and Midwest of the United States were identified that met the criteria for inter-institutional online programs. Twelve participants were selected and interviewed who were involved in the planning for these programs. According to Patton, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (p. 244). The nature of qualitative research is to sample until the researcher has reached saturation and redundancy (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). This sample yielded rich descriptive data from the perspective of these twelve participants about the program planning for nine inter-institutional online programs. An overview of the programs and participants is provided in the next chapter.

Data Collection

The most commonly used research methods used in qualitative research designs are interviews, observation, and documents (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). For this study I conducted interviews and used documents. I conducted in-depth interviews with participants about his or her experiences in collaborative program planning for online programs. Interviews started in 2004 and were concluded at the end of 2006. I used documents related to the programs and the

institutions involved in the program planning efforts to gain better understanding of the program planning processes and the current status of the programs. The documents and related websites helped me to validate what the participants told me during the interviews.

The Interview Process

According to Kvale (1996) "An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter-change of views between two persons having conversation about a theme of mutual interest" (p.14). It is a kind of conversation in which the interviewer seeks to obtain an understanding of the meaning the interviewee gives to his or her world. Patton (2002) writes, "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. We interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories" (p. 341). There are many ways interviews can be conducted. I used a semi-structured interview format for this study that included an interview guide and open-ended questions to elicit information about the program planning situations participants were preparing to discuss. According to Patton (2002),

> The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus, the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. (p. 343)

The interview guide served as a framework for guiding the interviews through the use of an outline of the questions to ask during the interviews while at the same time allowing me the flexibility to explore further details within a particular topic area.

Prior to the interviews participants were provided with a Pre-Interview Packet (Appendix A) which contained a Brief Description of the Study, Overview of the Critical Incidents Method, and Overview of the Interview Process. I also gave them a copy of the consent form (Appendix B). I either emailed these documents to the participants ahead of time or sent them via postal mail.

Five of the participants were interviewed in a face-to-face setting. At the time this study was conducted inter-institutional online programs were not common and participants who could provide insight into this topic were located in geographically dispersed locations around the United States. Because it was not possible for me to travel to all of their locations to interview them I conducted seven of the interviews by telephone. Each interview lasted from one and a half to two hours. With the permission of the participants I audio taped each interview.

First I went over the consent form and reviewed the documents I had provided to them prior to our meeting. During this time I called their attention to the list of design considerations that were included in the Brief Description of the Study (Appendix A). I asked them whether these were issues that were addressed in the inter-institutional online program planning teams they had worked on. I also asked them to include anything they felt was missing from the list.

Next, I reviewed the information about the Critical Incidents Method (Appendix A). I told them that for the purposes of this study, a critical incident is an experience that stands out vividly in their memory because it was particularly encouraging or particularly difficult. I told them that during our conversation I would ask them to recall two critical incidents that occurred in the collaborative program experiences they would tell me about that affected the design of the program.

Then I began to ask questions specified in the Interview Guide (Appendix C). I began by asking participants to describe the background and context of the programs they were planning to discuss. This part of the interview helped me to understand more about the program planning situations and experiences of the participants. It also served to remind participants about the issues that they may have dealt with in their own program planning situations and help them recall critical incidents around those issues during our conversation. After eliciting this background information I asked the participant to tell me about two critical incidents that occurred in their collaborative online program planning experience. I asked them to recall from memory one incident that represented a time when their efforts associated with collaborative online program planning were 1) threatened, challenged, or otherwise obstructed from within the group or by stakeholders in your organization, or 2) their efforts were really going well and supported by the group or the stakeholders in their organization. I reminded them that the incidents may have occurred at any time during the collaborative process.

Documents

As a secondary data collection technique I reviewed online documents and artifacts that related to the planning and implementation of the inter-institutional programs discussed by the participants in this study. Regarding using data found in documents Merriam (1998) states, "The data can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development, and so on" (p. 126). In this study I examined program websites to gain insight into the current status and design of the programs, accessed institutional websites to review official mission statements, minutes of meetings, memorandums of agreement, papers written in relation to the inter-institutional partnership, and to review media releases related to the programs. I used these documents to gain

insight into the programs before interviews in some cases and to validate and expand upon information obtained during interviews. The documents helped me to check the consistency of what the participants told me with the program development processes and outcomes as represented in these documents and websites.

Critical Incident Technique

The critical incident technique (CIT) was used in this study as a qualitative method to gain an understanding of participants' experiences in inter-institutional program planning for online programs. This technique was developed in the 1940's by Colonel John Flanagan, director of the Division of the Aviation Psychology Program of the United States Army Air Forces. According to Flanagan (1954) "The critical incident technique outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance and meeting systematically defined criteria" (p. 327). It was used to collect reports of behaviors that contributed to the success or failure of individuals engaged in specific activities. One of the earliest studies using the technique involved a survey of disorientation while flying. Pilots returning from combat were asked to think of a time when they felt disorientation and to describe in detail what brought on the experience. The study led to changes in cockpit and in instrument panel design, as well as training procedures for pilots to overcome vertigo while flying. Since that time the use of the CIT use has been documented in several thousand studies in a variety of research fields (Fivars & Fitzpatrick, 2001). According to Fivars and Fitzpatrick, (2001)

> An incident may be defined as "critical" when the action taken contributed to an effective outcome (helped to solve a problem or resolve a situation). An incident may also be considered "critical "when the action resulted in an ineffective outcome (it partially resolved a problem, but created new problems or need for further action). A critical

incident report should describe a situation, and an action that was important significant,

"critical" in determining whether the outcome was effective or ineffective. (p.1)

The CIT as designed by Flanagan was a quantitative procedure involving a set of five steps to

gather specific facts about behavior in defined situations. However, according to Flanagan,

It should be emphasized that the critical incident technique does not consist of a single

rigid set of rules governing such data collection. Rather it should be thought of as a

flexible set of principles, which must be modified and adapted to meet the specific

situation at hand. (p. 335)

Since it's inception, the CIT has been adapted and widely documented as a qualitative

research technique (Brookfield, 1990; Chell, 1998; Ellinger & Watkins, 1998). It has been

updated to include a constructivist approach that can be used to explore in rich detail the

meaning individuals give to their significant experiences. A strength of the CIT is that the

approach generates rich descriptive data from the perspective of the interviewee. Bogdan and

Biklen (1992) state:

Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes of

products. How do people negotiate meaning? How do certain terms and labels come to be

applied? How do certain notions come to be taken as part of what we know as "common

sense"? What is the natural history of the activity or events under study? (p. 32)

Through the use of semi structured interviews it is possible to capture the thoughts,

feelings, and frame of reference for a specific incident or set of incidents, which are meaningful

to the interviewee. Critical incidents "…seek to highlight particular, concrete, and contextually

specific aspects of people's experiences" (Brookfield, 1990). They are primary source data that

represent reality from the perspective of the individual who experienced the incident. According

to Brookfield critical incidents are less threatening to talk about than asking participants to respond to more general questions. Participants are often asked to talk about one incident that lead to a successful or positive outcome and one incident that lead to an unsuccessful or negative outcome. The data collected can provide a basis for making inferences about the critical requirements of an activity and therefore, provide useful data for making recommendations for training and best practices.

Fivars & Fitzpatrick, (2001) state, "The Critical Incident Technique has been used to study what people do" in a variety of professions, which provided data used to identify factors important in defining criteria for "acceptable performance" in many fields (p. 1). This defining characteristic makes the CIT an appropriate tool for studying behavior that cannot be observed directly. The goal of this study was to understand what factors in inter-institutional program planning affect the design of the online programs. I used the CIT method because it was not possible for me to be present at the planning situations to observe what the planners did at time they were planning the programs. In most cases the programs had been planned and were being implemented at the time of the interview. The CIT was a way to focus their attention on those past events and help them to think about things that either hindered or helped them as they engaged in the planning processes. It is important to note that the critical incidents discussed by participants were only part of the data collected in the interviews. There were many inter-related factors that were discussed throughout the interviews. Participants were asked to recall from memory an incident that occurred that helped or hindered the program planning process. Asking them to think back to the time when they were in the situation generated further recall of other experiences that they did not identify as critical incidents. This helped me to understand what was important to them and stood out in their memory as significant.

The resulting data are primary source data obtained from the perspective of the participants. The data collected (a) contribute to a holistic interpretation of critical events surrounding the decisions made in collaborative program planning for online courses, (b) provide a basis for making inferences about the critical requirements of collaborative program planning for online programs, and (c) provide useful data for making recommendations for those who choose to participate in collaborative program planning.

Data Analysis

Patton said, "Raw field notes and verbatim transcripts constitute the undigested complexity of reality. Simplifying and making sense out of that complexity constitutes the challenge of content analysis" (p. 463). For this study I used multiple approaches to make sense of the data. I began the data analysis process with the first interview. I transcribed ten of the interviews myself which allowed me to immerse in the data from the beginning of the process. I hired someone to transcribe the final two interviews while I focused on the ongoing analysis process.

For the first seven interviews I used Microsoft Office Word for organizing, coding, and sorting the transcribed interviews following a method developed by Ruona (2005). Each interview was formatted into a table that was organized into six columns designed to organize the data into meaningful segments and included for a column for notes. As I read the participant's responses I identified meaningful segments of data that were then sectioned out into a separate row in the table. I continued this process for the first two interviews and began to see recurring topics and themes in the data. I added memos and notes as I went through the interviews. I compiled a list of the emerging themes and categories and assigned a numeric code

to each category. Each segment of data was then coded with the appropriate code number for each segment of data.

I continued this process of analysis by segmenting the data and coding it thematically, comparing data segments from each interview with previous ones. This method of constantly comparing one section of data with another, the constant comparative method, is used widely in qualitative research. According to Merriam (1998), "…at the heart of this method is the continuous comparison of incidents, respondents' remarks, and so on, with each other: Units of data-bits of information-are literally sorted into groupings that have something in common" (p.179). As I moved through the interviews I merged the data into one master table for the purposes of identifying connections and themes across the data. As I analyzed the data I continually refined the coding system and re-coded the data.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) state, "Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others" (p. 153). I was familiar with Microsoft Word and found it useful for the initial process of familiarizing myself with the data, identifying themes, and generating a set of codes. However, as Merriam (1998) notes, "Analysis becomes more intensive as the study progresses, and once all the data are in" (p. 155).

After I worked through the first seven interviews with this process I found that I needed a more robust way of exploring and understanding the data and thematic connections that were occurring between interviews. I decided to move the data to Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software product. Using Atlas.ti I was able to code the data using my original themes derived from the work in Word and further refine my codes and themes into families that allowed me to

formulate queries based on combinations of families and codes. I was able to search for and retrieve segments of data, link data segments, add memos and descriptive data for codes and theme families, easily organize quotations across all of the data for specific codes, and more clearly see the findings of the data emerge as I worked through the analysis for each of the interviews. I found the use of this qualitative data analysis software a valuable tool in helping me to immerse in the data and interact with it to compare the data segments and generate meaning throughout the data analysis process.

As I analyzed the data I coded the critical incidents separately from the rest of the data. I also coded the critical incidents line by line along with the rest of the data collected. Seeing them in isolation from everything else and then connecting them back to other things participants said helped me to see a more complete picture of the experiences participants recalled during the interviews. A comprehensive list of codes and categories emerged from this process that were organized into three major categories. A decision was made that if at least eight of the twelve participants discussed an issue it was considered a meaningful pattern and was included as a factor in determining the findings of the study. The major categories produced from this process led to the factors related to the findings in this study.

<div align="center">Validity and Reliability</div>

Validity and reliability in qualitative research have to do with issues of trustworthiness. Internal validity asks how congruent one's findings are with reality (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Realties are multiple and constructed, therefore, it is important for qualitative researchers to interpret and understand reality as experienced and reported by the individual. External validity is concerned with how the findings can be generalized or transferred to another situation. In qualitative research, "The general lies in the particular; what we learn in a particular situation

we can transfer to similar situations subsequently encountered" (Merriam, 2002, p. 28). The generalizability of the findings is largely left to the reader because the goal is to gain an in depth understanding of the few rather than what is true of the many. Reliability is related to consistency or dependability of the results. Merriam (1998) states, "Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated" (p. 205).

I employed five methods used by qualitative researchers to help ensure the validity and reliability of this study. First, I used a multi-site, multi-participant design to ensure maximum variation in my sample to help ensure that readers can apply the results to a variety of settings and contexts. I interviewed twelve program planners from nine different inter-institutional online educational programs located in the Southeast, Southwest, and Midwest of the United States. For two of these programs I interviewed two program planners who were involved on the same program planning teams. For one of the programs I interviewed three program planners who were part of the same planning team. Second, rather than relying on interviews alone I cross-checked the data obtained in interviews against relevant documents and artifacts. Because of the nature of the online program I had access to online resources related to the program such as program websites, marketing materials, media releases, organizational missions and goals, minutes of meetings, and other publicly available related resources. Third, I included detailed descriptions and interview data which allows readers to determine whether what was found matches their own experiences. Fourth, I provide a written account of how I collected and analyzed the data that will serve to explain how I arrived at my results. This information serves as an audit trail, which is seen as a way to authenticate the findings of the study (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Fifth, I asked members of my dissertation committee and colleagues at work

who are actively engaged in inter-institutional program planning for feedback on my emerging findings.

Researcher Bias and Assumptions

The methods described above provide a means to produce a high-quality study that is credible, trustworthy, authentic, and balanced. However, in qualitative research methods, the investigator is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Merriam (1998) states, "…the investigator as human instrument is limited by being human—that is, mistakes are made, opportunities are missed, personal biases interfere." (p.20). The researcher's position involves "Critical self-reflection by the researcher regarding assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation" (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Therefore it is important for me to identify and provide details of my assumptions and personal biases toward the study. First, I approached this study from an insider's perspective. When I began this study I had worked with instructional technologies in one form or another for more than ten years. I had a strong background and interest in various aspects of using technology and technology related faculty development at both the K-12 and higher education levels. During the time I conducted interviews for this study I worked for a university system office that sponsored some of the inter-institutional online programs that were the subject of this study and I had worked with some of the people that I interviewed. My work that related to those programs involved serving as an instructional designer and project coordinator with inter-institutional teams of faculty and administrators to develop online courses for shared online programs. My work was on the periphery of the program planning activities described by the participants I interviewed but I did have awareness of the workings of the program planning teams. Partly because of my work with these inter-institutional teams of faculty and staff to

develop courses I was interested in the social and political relationships and the dynamics of working with inter-institutional teams to develop online educational programs. Because of these experiences I reflected upon and identified my assumptions and biases before I began this study and along the way as I interviewed the participants and analyzed the data. On the one hand, this prior experience and knowledge allowed me to have greater understanding and insight into the workings of collaborative inter-institutional program planning for online programs. On the other hand, because my experiences in collaborative course development and program planning are similar to the experiences described by the participants I interviewed, I needed to recognize and interpret the reality of the experiences from the perspective of the interviewee rather than from my own sense of reality. Second, I needed to be aware of my own assumptions toward collaborative inter-institutional program planning for online programs. I began this study with a belief that inter-institutional collaboration is a beneficial strategy for developing online programs. I had to examine and be aware of that belief to be sure that I did not impose that idea on the conversations I had with the participants I interviewed and as I analyzed the data.

There are two limitations of this study as well. First, my experiences as an interviewer and researcher are limited. Second, I was not be able to observe the participants as they went about their work in collaborative program planning and relied on their ability to recall events from memory. While the CIT method is shown to be effective in generating effective recall, it is inevitable that some details will be forgotten.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I presented the qualitative design of the study including and the data collection and data analysis procedures used. I discussed issues related to validity and reliability and discussed my own bias and assumptions that shape my perspectives related to this study. A

brief overview of programs and participants interviewed in the study was presented. A more

detailed discussion of the programs and participants is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAMS

This section describes the inter-institutional online programs represented in this study and

the participants I interviewed that helped to plan and implement them. Nine programs in higher

education institutions located in the Southeast, Southwest, and Midwest of the United States

were identified that met the criteria for inter-institutional online programs as defined in this

study. Twelve participants were selected and interviewed who were involved in the planning for

these programs. Table 1 provides summary information about each program, participant, and the

contexts of the planning situations represented in this study. Pseudonyms were assigned and used

to protect the identity of the participants.

Program: Collaborative RN to BSN Program

The Collaborative RN to BSN Program is an online nursing program planned and

developed by five institutions in a state university system. The planning of the program was a

collaborative effort among the five institutions and the university system extension service in the

state. The program was designed to meet the emerging needs of registered nurses who wanted to

pursue a baccalaureate degree through an online program. The potential students were nurses

who often could not travel to a campus to take classes. Although the institutions in the state that

offered the degree had outreach programs for these students, resources were limited and the

students and institutions in the state were geographically dispersed. It was not uncommon for

faculty members to travel to a distant destination and meet with a group of students. Students

were sometimes unable to take a course at the time it was offered in their area and the course

Program	Consortium Type	Program Type	Offered Online at Time of Interview	Participant/s Interviewed	Title	Appointment
TABLE 1 Programs, Participants, and Contexts						
Collaborative RN to BSN	In-state System-wide Multi-institution Collaboration	Online Bachelor's Degree	Four years	Gloria	Assistant Dean	Institution
Online Core Curriculum (OCC)	In-state System-wide Multi-institution Collaboration	Online Core Curriculum	Four years	Ann	Director	System
Online Master in Business Administration	In-state System-wide Multi-institution Virtual Campus	Online Master's Degree	Eight years	Thomas	Director	System
Returning Professional Pharm. D.	Public and Private Multi-institutional Collaboration	Online Doctoral Degree	Five years	Jody	Project Coordinator	Institution
Certificate in African Studies	In-state System-wide Multi-institution Collaboration	Online Certificate Program	In development	Rebecca	Project Coordinator	Institution
Online Bachelor of Applied Science (OBAS)	In-state System-wide Multi-institution Collaboration	Online Bachelor's Degree	In development	Denny	Project Manager	System
Human Development and Family Studies	Multi-state Multi-System Alliance	Online Master's Degree	Five years	Bob	Associate Dean, Board Chair	Alliance, System
				Barbara	Professor, Associate Dean	Institution

TABLE 1
Programs, Participants, and Contexts

Program	Consortium Type	Program Type	Offered Online at Time of Interview	Participant/s Interviewed	Title	Appointment
Online Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (OBSIT)	In-state System-wide Multi-institution Collaboration	Online Bachelor's Degree	Two years	Denny	Project Manager	System
				Carol	Associate Professor, Program Coordinator	Institution
				Jan	Professor, Dean	Institution
Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online	In-state Multi-system Multi-institutional Collaboration	Online Doctoral Degree	Six years	Damon	Professor, Department Chair	System, Institution
				John	Professor, Department Chair	System, Institution

might not be offered again due to lack of resources. The deans from the five institutions had explored ways to partner to deliver the degree at a distance. The university system extension service in the state met with the deans and suggested a non-degree professional outreach program to support the registered nurses in the field. The extension service forms partnerships with campus groups to help to meet the needs of the communities of the state. Providing online educational opportunities to adults is one of the projects the extension supports. The deans responded that what they really needed was an online degree program. The deans of the institutions and the extension service agreed to work together to plan and develop a professional degree program. The extension office was a facilitator at the system level in the program development assisting the deans in the planning and development of the program. At the time of the interview the program had been offered online for four years. I interviewed Gloria about her experiences in the planning, development, and implementation of the program.

Participant: Gloria

Gloria is an associate dean at one of the major universities participating in the planning and delivery of the Collaborative RN to BSN program. She had been involved with the program planning of the program at all stages of the process. I met with Gloria by telephone. She discussed the planning, development, and implementation of the program and how the institutions worked together to resolve the challenges they encountered along the way and she described issues that arose in the planning of the program and the relationships among the partners in the project. She described a spin off partnership with the technical schools in the state to offer online courses that helped to prepare students to enter the Collaborative RN to BSN program. She shared her thoughts about the future and sustainability of the program. I found

Gloria to be thoughtful and reflective with her comments. At the time of the interview she was

getting ready to retire and was interested in sharing her experiences in online program planning

for the benefit of others who would attempt similar endeavors.

Program: Online Core Curriculum (OCC)

The planning and development of the Online Core Curriculum (OCC) was a joint effort

by several institutions in a large university system and support units from the university system

offices. While not technically a program, the OCC project was conceived as an online core

curriculum for the first two years of an undergraduate degree program. A major goal of the OCC

project was to expand access to educational opportunities for non-traditional students throughout

the state. The project provided an opportunity for the university system to leverage resources and

minimize the high costs of developing online courses by providing an online core curriculum

which could be used throughout the system. No one entity in the system had the financial

resources or expertise to complete the project alone. System institutions that could not afford the

expense of developing their own online courses could take advantage of the collaborative effort

to gain access to online courses that they could use and thereby avoid lagging behind in a rapidly

growing area in demand by students at their institutions.

The OCC was planned by the OCC sub-committee consisting of administrators from

institutions participating in the project and representatives from the system office. Units of the

system office worked with the OCC sub-committee and faculty and staff in the system to

develop and offer the courses system-wide and to manage the administration and delivery of the

courses through a centralized process. All of the products developed were system resources and

were used beyond the initial project. At the time of the interview the OCC had been in existence

for four years. I interviewed Ann who was involved in the planning, administration, and marketing of the OCC in its first year of operation.

Participant: Ann

At the time of the interview Ann had worked with the system office of the university system for approximately eight years. She was a director of services for a unit responsible for coordinating online student services for the initial roll out of the project. The unit was charged with working with the institutions that were participating in the OCC to provide streamlined enrollment services. I met with Ann at an office on her campus for the interview. She had a strong commitment to student needs and had worked closely with establishing student services for online students in the OCC. She discussed her experiences in working with the participating institutions to establish policies and procedures that would be meet the needs of the students enrolling in the online courses that were offered collaboratively while still supporting institutional requirements.

Program: Online Masters in Business Administration

System Virtual Campus Center (SVCC), a unit of a state university system office, is responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of system-wide online degree and certificate programs. It is recognized for the student support services provided to distance students enrolled in the online programs offered through the system and is a recognized model for inter-institutional collaboration. The center provides an array of training and support services for both faculty and students including funds for program development, release time for faculty to develop courses, instructional design support, and course and program development support. The Online Masters in Business Administration was the first online program developed and offered through the SVCC. The program was designed for students who could not attend classes

on a campus because of distance or time constraints. Nine institutions in the university system worked with the SVCC to plan and offer the program. At the time of the interview it had been offered for eight years. I interviewed Thomas about his experiences working with the SVCC and the Online Masters in Business Administration.

Participant: Thomas

Thomas is director of the SVCC and a recognized expert in the area of distance education and inter-institutional online program development. He had worked with the SVCC for nine years. I interviewed Thomas by telephone. He was very busy and scheduling a time to meet proved challenging. During our conversation I found him friendly and straight forward with his comments. He discussed distance education in general and the evolvement of the SVCC and its role in distance education in his state. He specifically addressed a critical incident related to the roll out of the Online MBA program. During the planning of the program it was discovered that each institution had a separate student information system that could not share information across institutions. The lack of a centralized registration system almost prevented the launch of the first program offered through the center.

Program: Returning Professional Pharm. D.

The Returning Professional Pharm. D. Program is a professional degree program designed to meet the needs of practicing professionals to obtain the Pharm. D. degree online. A change in the accreditation standards for the colleges of pharmacy in the state led to a phasing out of the bachelor of pharmacy degrees and a requirement for all new graduates to obtain a Pharm. D. degree. The two colleges of pharmacy in the state had not always offered the doctorate and many practicing pharmacists had only a bachelor's degree. These pharmacists were now competing with new pharmacists who had earned the doctorate and many positions

were beginning to prefer pharmacists with the degree. Returning to campus for an advanced degree was not an option for most practicing pharmacists who work long hours and who were widely dispersed in communities around the state. Two institutions in the state offered the degree on campus, one at a large research university and the other at a smaller private university. Each institution had a number of alumni who needed to obtain the degree yet neither institution had the resources to offer the online program alone. The institutions decided to collaborate to jointly offer a doctoral program to meet the needs of working professionals in the field who wish to obtain the doctoral degree online. The plan was to phase out the program after all practicing pharmacists in the state had an opportunity to obtain the degree online. The program was in operation for five years and was phased out after meeting this need. I interviewed Jody about his experiences in working to develop and implement the program.

Participant: Jody

Jody was a project coordinator at a large research university in a state university system. He served an integral role in the development and implementation of Returning Professional Pharm. D. Program. He worked closely with the faculty and staff from both institutions during the planning and development of the program. I met with Jody at his office on campus. He had worked with Continuing Education and Outreach in the college of pharmacy for several years. He was knowledgeable about issues related to teaching and learning online and program planning. He gained considerable experience in developing and offering inter-institutional online programs through his work with the Returning Professional Pharm. D. Program. Planning a joint program between a public and private institution provided unique situations that had to be resolved for the program to be implemented. At the time the program was planned none of the participants from either institution had extensive experience in planning online programs.

Program: Certificate in African Studies

The Certificate in African Studies is a grant funded system-wide certificate program designed to increase undergraduate awareness and participation in the study of Africa and its languages and to increase expertise of faculty members in the system who teach African studies. Three institutions in a large university system initially collaborated to plan, develop, and implement the certificate. The program planners for the project were faculty members representing each of the three institutions. The institutions vary in their size and mission in the university system and were dispersed geographically across the state. The principal investigator who initially proposed the project and was responsible for facilitating the planning and implementation of the program was from a large research university. She was well known for her work in African Studies and was highly esteemed by her peers. The two co-principal investigators were invited to participant in the project because they had existing African Studies courses on their campuses and had expressed a commitment to support and expand African Studies. One was from a regional university and the other from a state university. The planning team worked with faculty members from institutions in the System to implement the goals of the program. At the time of the interview the program was still in development. I interviewed Rebecca, a member of the planning team who worked closely with the principal investigator.

Participant: Rebecca

Rebecca was a project coordinator who was completing a doctoral degree in education at the time of the interview. She had years of experience working on other grant projects on campus which included working with various stakeholders and program planners. This was her first experience working on a project to plan and develop an inter-institutional online program. Rebecca worked closely with the principal investigator and helped to plan and manage the

ongoing activities of the project. She was hired to work on the project after it was funded and just as the plan was beginning to be implemented. She was responsible for many aspects of the project including: working with stakeholders to plan the program, planning faculty development workshops for course development activities, planning and implementation for faculty development fellowship awards, and in general carrying out plans as directed by the principal investigator. Her close working relationship with the principal investigator empowered her efforts on the planning team. She was reflective with her comments and had rich, detailed experiences to share. During our conversation she expressed her commitment to the project and to the process. She discussed her experiences in working with the planning team and other faculty and staff in the System who were involved in the project. In particular she discussed roles and responsibility of team members and the issues related to working across institutional boundaries to implement a grant funded online program.

<div align="center">Program: Human Development and Family Studies</div>

The Human Development and Family Studies program was developed as part of a large multi-state alliance that was created by academic deans in Colleges of Human Sciences from partner universities located in multiple states. The alliance works with member institutions to sponsor inter-institutional online graduate programs and certificate programs in human sciences, share distance education programming tasks, and develop and disseminate models for distance education policies and practices. The purpose of the alliance was to meet the needs of human sciences professionals in the workforce seeking career advancement or professionals seeking career change. In the beginning the partner institutions developed and offered online courses collaboratively. Over time the needs of the target audience led to a need for full programs, not just courses.

Seven of the alliance partner institutions participated in the development of the Human Development and Family Studies Program. The need for the first online program offered through the alliance, a master's degree in Human Development and Family Studies, was clear but no institutions could offer the degree alone. The states involved are very rural in nature and students had to travel long distances to go to an institution to participate in an on campus program. The development and implementation of this first program presented challenges and issues that required a high level of collaboration among the partner institutions in order move forward as an alliance and offer degree programs that would meet the needs of the students and the member institutions. At the time of the interview the Human Development and Family Studies Program was in its fifth year. I interviewed Bob and Barbara about their experiences in program planning with the multi-state alliance.

Participant: Bob

Bob is an associate dean for academic affairs at a large state university participating in the multi-state inter-institutional alliance. He is a founding member and board chair of the alliance and oversees centralized services for alliance programs. I interviewed Bob by telephone. During the interview he discussed issues and challenges in the development and implementation of the multi-state inter-institutional alliance and his efforts to organize a project designed to assist institutions that are considering inter-institutional partnerships to offer educational programs. He specifically discussed the development and launch of the first alliance online program, the master's degree in Human Development and Family Studies.

Participant: Barbara

Barbara is a professor and associate dean at a large state university participating in the multi-state inter-institutional alliance. She has taught online and has also been involved in the

development of several online degree programs offered by the alliance. I interviewed Barbara by telephone. Because of weather problems in the Midwest we rescheduled the interview several times before we were finally able to meet. The region in the Midwest where she lives was in a blizzard during the time we were scheduled to talk and she was unable to get to her office. In addition, the phone lines were down for several days. I began to understand the need for online programs for students in that region of the country where students often need to travel long distances to get to a campus. She described aspects of program operation of the multi-state alliance and her thoughts about distance education in general. It was clear in talking with her that she is committed to the inter-institutional alliance and the goal of offering programs to students who could not otherwise come to campus.

Program: Online Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (OBSIT*)*

The Online Bachelor of Science in Information Technology Program is collaboratively developed and offered by five colleges and universities that are part of a large university system. The program is designed to meet the needs of students who have work and family commitments that prevent them from attending classes on a campus or who may prefer online learning over traditional campus settings. The program is a completion degree. Students acquire the core curriculum requirements before applying for admission to the program. This program was initiated by a senior vice chancellor in charge of academic affairs at the system office level of a state university system. Five institutions in the system were identified and invited by the vice chancellor to participate in the collaborative including one regional university, three state universities, and one state college.

The vice president for academic affairs on each campus selected academic deans to participate in the planning of the program. Each dean selected faculty members from his or her

institution to participate on the team. A governing board was formed comprised of deans who were able to interface with the rest of the administration and could speak on behalf of the campus or get answers when needed. They were responsible for co-developing administrative structures, overall curriculum, course descriptions and high level objectives for the program. The deans formed an operating board of faculty members who were responsible for curriculum and course development issues. Learning Support Group (LSG), a unit of the system office, was responsible for supporting and facilitating the work of the collaborative to develop the program. I interviewed three participants who worked with the OBSIT: Denny, Jan, and Carol. Denny also shared his experiences in working with the Online BAS in Technology, a similar inter-institutional program in the system. At the time of the interview the OBSIT Program was in its second year and continuing to develop and expand its course offerings.

Participant: Denny

Denny was a consultant and project manager for the Learning Support Group (LSG), who was hired to help manage and facilitate the work of newly emerging inter-institutional programs in the university system. The mission of LSG is to lead the university system and its institutions in the strategic uses of instructional technology. LSG had assisted other groups in the System to develop collaborative online programs and projects in the past and had gained considerable experience and skill in working with teams to design and develop online programs. They provided support and assistance to the program planning team by managing budgets and funding for the first phases of the program planning, assisting in the development of processes and procedures for program development, providing teams of instructional designers and course developers.

I met with Denny at an office on campus for the interview. He was very knowledgeable about the development and management of inter-institutional collaborative projects for online programs. Before beginning his work with LSG, he had prior experience working with inter-departmental collaboratives but had not worked with inter-institutional collaborative projects. He worked closely with other staff members from LSG and deans and faculty members from the participating institutions. At the time of the interview he had worked with two inter-institutional programs and had helped to developed models of collaborative program development that would guide the processes and identify the factors that would lead to successful collaborative online program development. He discussed his experiences in the development of two online programs, the OBSIT and the Online Bachelor of Applied Science (OBAS) program.

Participant: Carol

Carol is an associate professor at a School of Computing and Software Engineering at a university in the system. I interviewed Carol by telephone. He shared his experiences in both planning and implementing the program. He was a member of the planning team operating board and actively involved in the planning of the program. After the program was implemented Carol taught courses for the program and was also the OBSIT program coordinator on his campus.

Participant: Jan

Jan is a dean and professor of a School of Computing and Software Engineering at a university in the System. At the time of the interview he continued to serve as a member of the governing board for the OBSIT program. I interviewed Jan at his campus. He was getting ready to retire at the time of the interview and seemed glad to have an opportunity to recall his experiences in planning the program. He felt it was important to collect the work of these early planners so that others could benefit from that experience.

Online Bachelor of Applied Science (OBAS)

The OBAS program was an inter-institutional collaboration that arose from a grassroots movement among three institutions in a state university system. This group recognized a need for the program and approached the university system office for support in developing, managing, and delivering the program. The target students for this program were non-traditional students who would not be able to pursue the degree in a traditional campus setting because of limited or no access to a campus location where the program could be offered. The program planning efforts were facilitated and managed by staff from the system office level. The OBAS program was planned and offered through the collaborative partnership but due to challenges in the planning stages and ongoing program management problems it struggled to maintain its existence as a jointly developed and offered program in the university system. At the time of the interview the program was in the final planning stages and accepting students for the first offering. After one year the program was deactivated as a system-wide inter-institutional offering and one of the original collaborating institutions was granted permission to offer the degree as the sole institution in the university system offering the online degree.

Participant: Denny

I interviewed Denny about his work with this program. Denny, also worked for the OBSIT program (see OBSIT program above) was a consultant and project manager for the Learning Support Group (LSG), who was hired to help manage and facilitate the work of newly emerging inter-institutional programs in the university system.

Program: Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online

The Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online Program is designed to meet the needs of mid-career professionals who would need to obtain the doctoral degree to replace the

anticipated retirement growth in the field. An online program seemed to be the best option for offering the degree because the target audience was mid-career professionals who were unlikely to be able to take time from their work and families and attend classes on campus.

Representatives from a research university in the state with a history and reputation for offering the doctoral degree proposed options for how a program could be designed to meet the emerging need. They initiated a conversation with the State Coordinating Board for Higher Education and learned that an online doctoral program would be approved only if it was offered as a joint program or a collaborative effort with another institution. A potential partner institution was identified and meetings held to determine the possibility for working together to develop and offer a joint online program. Both universities recognized the mutual need for the program and agreed to work together to plan and implement the program. Neither of the institutions involved could provide the resources that were needed alone, including the technology infrastructure, faculty expertise, and funding. The joint program option was seen as a full partnership requiring the commitment of both institutions and appeared to offer the resource sharing and benefits needed to initiate the development and implementation of the program.

The two institutions varied in their missions and size. One was a large research institution that offered the doctoral degree on campus and the other was a state university that offered only a master's degree before becoming a part of the project. There was a history of intra-state rivalry and competition between the two institutions, however, both institutions recognized the need to work together because of the importance of the field and the need for the program. I interviewed Damon and John who each represented the lead position on their campuses in the planning of the program. They had an existing professional relationship and friendship, a fact that helped in the

complex work of planning the inter-institutional program. At the time of the interviews the program had been offered for six years.

Participant: Damon

Damon was a department chair and professor for a large research university in the state that initiated the concept of the online program. I interviewed him by telephone. He was direct and candid with his comments and knowledgeable about inter-institutional online program development. During the interview he likened the complexity of the program planning process to nailing Jell-O to a wall. He was involved in the planning of the program from the conceptualization and was instrumental in its successful development and implementation. Because the program was a success he had explored distance education programs in several countries to determine whether to pursue the development of an international Agricultural Operations and Related Sciences Online Program.

Participant: John

John was a department chair and professor for a state university involved in the planning and development of the Agricultural Operations and Related Sciences Online Program. I interviewed John by telephone. Through his work on the program he had become expert in the work of planning inter-institutional online programs and was currently working on a distance education program at an institution in another state. When he began his work on the Agricultural Operations and Related Sciences Online program there were few distance education programs on his campus and less in his college. Planning an online program required laying the groundwork for a new way of teaching and learning as well as initiating a partnership with a competing institution. John spoke fondly of his experiences in planning the online program and noted that

he had left the institution at the time it was just being implemented. He recognized the work and effort of those who came after him to implement the program.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

This chapter presented the profiles of the nine programs and the twelve participants interviewed in this study. Nine programs in higher education institutions located in the Southeast, Southwest, and Midwest of the United States were included in the study that met the study criteria for inter-institutional online programs. Twelve participants were interviewed for this study who were involved in the planning for these programs. The information included for each participant included program name, consortium type, program type, whether it had been offered online at the time of interview, participant interviewed, participant's title, and participant's institutional appointment.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand what factors in inter-institutional program planning affect the design of online programs in higher education. The questions that guided the study were:

1. Why do educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs?

2. What educational program issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

3. What social and political relationship issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

The findings for each of these questions are summarized in Table 2.

Forming Partnerships to Plan Online Programs

Why do educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs? The programs in this study were online programs that were offered through inter-institutional partnerships. The planning tables consisted of system level support staff and project facilitators, deans, department heads, faculty members, and project coordinators responsible for program planning at institutional levels. Based on the responses of the participants in this study I found that the decision to collaborate to offer online programs began with a program need that could not be met in a traditional campus setting. Once the online program need is established the institutions realized that they could not offer the programs online without partnering with other

TABLE 2
Findings Summary

Why do educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan and develop online programs?

       Changing educational needs and expanding access
       Reasons to form partnerships
             Resource scarcity
             Opportunity to be a part of an innovative program

What educational program issues were negotiated when designing inter-institutional online programs?

       Program support
       Funding
       Operation and administration of the program
       Admissions and registration
       Curriculum and course development
       Technical considerations

What social and political relationship issues were negotiated when designing inter-institutional online programs?

       Organizational identity
       Leadership
       Relationship building
       Commitment

institutions. This section discusses the need for online programs and the factors around the decision to form inter-institutional partnerships to plan and develop the programs.

Changing Educational Needs and Expanding Access

Two themes emerged from this study that suggested a need for online programs. The first is related to changing educational needs in specific fields. There is a growing need for programs that address the changing educational needs of professionals who are already working in their fields as well as an emerging need for skilled workers in specific fields. The second is related to

expanding access to targeted students who may not be able to attend campus locations. These two themes, changing educational needs and expanding access, are tied together when thinking about offering online programs. The targeted students for the programs in this study were unlikely to attend a campus for classes because of long work hours, family responsibilities, or distance to the institutions that offered the programs. An online program was determined to be the best option for reaching the students who needed the degree the program offered. Five of the programs in this study were designed to meet the needs of professionals already working in their fields. Two of the programs were intended to meet the needs for graduates in specific fields. Two of the programs were planned specifically to expand access to a college degree to students who could not attend campus for classes.

The changing educational needs of professionals already working in their fields was cited as a reason for developing five of the programs in this study. The Returning Professional Pharm. D. program was designed to meet the needs of practicing professionals to obtain the Pharm. D. degree online. A change in the accreditation standards for the colleges of pharmacy in the state led to a phasing out of the bachelor of pharmacy degrees and a requirement that all new graduates were to obtain a Pharm. D. degree. The two institutions that offered this degree option were not accessible for many of the working pharmacists in geographically dispersed areas of the state. The pharmacists who needed this degree worked long hours in their jobs and were professionals with job, community, and family responsibilities. Traveling to a campus location to obtain the degree was not an option for them. Jody stated,

> And because of that there was a real need for our prior graduates that did not have an
> opportunity to get the doctorate, because we did not always offer it, to come back and get
> that because they were in competition with pharmacist who were coming out that had the

doctor of pharmacy degree and a lot of the jobs were now requiring the doctor of

pharmacy. So, the original reason for the program was for the pharmacist in the state and

our alumni to get that.

The Collaborative RN to BSN program was designed to meet the emerging needs of

registered nurses who wanted to pursue a baccalaureate degree through an online program. The

institutions that offered the degree had a history of outreach programs to the areas of the state

where students could not obtain the degree on a local campus. Faculty members would travel to

the remote sites to deliver instruction. However, the course offerings were not always provided

in a timely manner because of a lack of resources to meet the needs. The nurses who needed the

degree had jobs and families and could not travel long distances to the campus locations where

the degree was offered. Gloria recalled in the interview,

> They found by taking a survey that a large number of registered nurses who held either
>
> diploma's or associate degrees, and we were really gearing this to associate degrees,
>
> would go on for the baccalaureate if they had a program offered via distance education.

The Human Development and Family Studies program was designed to meet the needs of

students seeking career advancement or professionals seeking career change. The states involved

have large rural areas where students had to travel long distances to go to an institution to

participate in program on campus. Barbara told me,

> Well, the purpose is being able to I guess the purpose of the program is to be able to offer
>
> education in Human Development and Family Studies to people who are place bound and
>
> at a distance. The states that are involved are very rural in nature and so there are quite
>
> huge distances to go to an institution to do an on campus program. So we were interested
>
> in being able to offer education and training to individuals who for various reasons were

not able to come to a campus. So, that's really our purpose for doing this, to provide a different kind of educational experience where it wouldn't be available otherwise.

The Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program was designed to meet the needs of mid-career professionals who would need to obtain the doctoral degree to replace the anticipated retirement growth in the field. An online program seemed to be the best option for offering the degree because the target audience was unlikely to be able to attend classes on campus. Damon notes, "…mid career professionals, with ten to fifteen years of experience are not likely to relocate to a campus location to do a doctoral program." The Online Masters in Business Administration was targeted to busy professionals who were already working in their fields and who could not attend a campus where the degree was offered because of distance and time involved.

Two of the programs in this study were developed to provide graduates with bachelor's degrees to fill areas of critical need for professionals in specific fields. The OBSIT and OBAS programs were needed to produce skilled graduates in emerging technology fields in the state identified through market research and employment projections. Offering the programs online provided expanded access to a bachelor's degree in these fields for students who would otherwise be unable to pursue the degree because of limited or no access to a campus location where the program could be offered.

Two of the programs in this study were developed specifically to expand access to students who would not otherwise have access to college level courses on a campus. The goal of the Online Core Curriculum (OCC) project was to provide online courses for nontraditional students who were either starting their college career or returning to school to restart their college career. It provided an opportunity for the university system to leverage resources and

minimize the high costs of developing online courses by providing an online core curriculum that could be used throughout the system. This expanded access to the core curriculum, the first two years of a bachelor's degree, met the needs of nontraditional students who could not travel to campus because of work or family responsibilities. It also provided an alternative course scheduling opportunity for students on campuses who wanted to take a class that was not offered at a time they needed it at a campus location. Credits for OCC courses could be transferred to any institution in the university system for pursuing a bachelor's degree.

The Certificate in African Studies program was designed to increase undergraduate awareness and participation in the study of Africa and its languages and to increase expertise of faculty members in the system who teach African studies. This program was designed to expand access to students in undergraduate programs throughout the state who would not have access to African studies content on their campus. A statewide certificate program would ensure that students at any campus in the system would have access to this content by taking online courses.

Career advancement needs for professionals, emerging needs for skilled workers in specific fields and extending learning opportunities not otherwise available on campuses were reasons the participants in this study identified for planning an online program.

Reasons to Form Partnerships

Participants in this study were clear about the needs for online programs but none of the institutions in this study were able to offer the program alone. Two factors were identified related to the decision to partner with other institutions to offer online programs: 1) resource scarcity and 2) the opportunity to be a part of an exciting new educational opportunity.

Resource Scarcity

The major factor identified in the decision to collaborate was resource scarcity. None of the institutions in this study had adequate finances, technical infrastructure, enough skilled faculty who could teach the content online, or enough students to justify offering the program alone. Jody talked about the need for combining the resources of two institutions to offer an online program for the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program. Neither institution could provide the resources to meet the needs of their target student population alone. Barbara told me that the Human Development and Family Studies program came about because of the need to combine resources to meet the needs of students scattered across several states.

> The reason we're doing it inter-institutional is because none of us really have the resources to offer this type of program on our own but by collaborating we can do that. And also we think some of the best faculty nationally from different campuses and experts in different areas no one institution could offer because of lack of resources.

Damon describes a need for more faculty to meet the needs of the Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program. He stated,

> We also determined fairly quickly that this was going to be a job that was larger than our existing faculty. So we were going to try to grow faculty, but in order to expedite that we saw that the joint program was probably our best option.

Rebecca talked about the lack of funding for offering individual programs at individual campuses.

> Well of course that was the whole reasoning for funding of the grant because the smaller institutions can't provide all the courses individually to be able to do a whole certificate.

So collaborating together for online development will allow people at the smaller

institutions to do that.

Jan described a lack of resources as a decision to collaborate for the OBSIT program,

Something I felt and I think others may have felt this too, was that we were sharing the

load and it wasn't falling on any one of us to do everything, and that we wouldn't want it

to be that way. That this was too big to take on, that none of us had the resources to do it

the way it needed to be done without working together.

By collaborating they were able to expand opportunities to offer the program and

increase enrollments yet share the administrative functions and reduce resource needs. Ann said,

I think the Online Core Curriculum has largely grown to the success that it has grown to

because the institutions that are participating in it see a value to it. In other words it opens

up additional seats for them yet some of the administrative functions are not on their

shoulders.

Thomas told me that increasing enrollments was originally a factor in forming inter-institutional

partnerships for the Online MBA program.

They think that working together they could get it to market faster if they work in a

collaborative. And it's usually because, they think it's a good program but they only have

ten to twelve students per class as a program on campus. And by opening it up system

wide they're hoping to increase those numbers.

Increasing enrollments was also a factor for the Collaborative RN to BSN program. Gloria noted,

"And the other thing you have to keep in mind, and I'm sure deans see this, is that the deans are

getting a whole program but only teaching one course."

A related factor mentioned for the OBSIT program regarding the decision to collaborate was to create a program that would have adequate numbers of students and limit the competition with other similar programs. Denny stated,

> The real benefit is that by agreeing to do this online program what they're holding the regents responsible for, (what they think they are) is to not create any more residential programs that are BS degrees in IT. They think they are going to limit the competition. That's what they think is going to happen. That's the promise they think they have.

Jan noted that the issue was managing the competition rather than limiting it. He notes, "It was a sort of knowing that we don't want to invest in all of this and have five more programs across the state that would take potential audience away."

Opportunity to Be a Part of Innovative Program

Another issue around the decision to collaborate that emerged in the study was the interest in being a part of an innovative program project. Barbara said, "There was a feeling that someone was going to come out and being better off and so on. But it was very much a team effort that was going to benefit everyone and especially the students." When discussing a meeting of the graduate school deans to determine whether the development of the Human Development and Family Studies program would move forward Bob remarked, "I think part of it was that he saw that higher education was changing and somebody needed to experiment with a different model." Thomas felt that in addition to wanting to be a part of offering an innovative program a related issue for the Online MBA was that the institutions did not want to be left out of the benefits it might offer, "So, it kind of just came together that eight of them decided they'd all work together because quite frankly they were terrified that they weren't going to get a piece of some pie if they didn't participate." In discussing the OBSIT program Jan noted, "Part of the

incentive is not to be left out and another part could be the great opportunity that this represents to do something different." He goes on to say, "So, it is as much a fact that you don't have the resources and the ability to do it by yourself as it is you want to be part of this thing that's an exciting new way to offer a program."

Program Design Issues in Inter-institutional Online Program Planning

The second research question for this study asked: What educational program issues exist when designing collaborative online programs? This study identified six program design issues that were factors that had to be negotiated in the inter-institutional planning of online programs for the majority of the participants interviewed. They are 1) program support, 2) funding 3) operation and administration of the program, 4) admissions and registration, 5) curriculum and course development, and 6) technical infrastructure considerations. These six factors are traditionally addressed by institutional policies and procedures. Individual institutions represented at the planning table have organizational missions and policies and procedures, (ways of doing business) which are unique to each institution. However, these policies need to be adapted to address the needs of online programs and the inter-institutional planning and offering of online programs.

Program Support

Program support involves the support of the administration, faculty, or other stakeholders of the participating institutions and is a key factor in successful planning of online programs. The support structures differ for each of the programs in this study but included several levels of organizational structure such as coordinating board governance (responsible for program approval at a state level), board of regents governance (system level administration overseeing multiple institutions), upper administrative governance at the institution level (including

provosts, vice presidents, deans, department heads, and directors of departments), and faculty support. Eleven of the twelve participants interviewed discussed issues that had to be negotiated related to program support. Seven of them described critical incidents related to program support that threatened to stop the progress of the program planning or prevent the launch of the program. In some cases the program was ready to roll out when it was discovered that the program could not go forward because a policy or procedure in place at the institutional level had been overlooked that could not be changed or altered by the planning team alone. Successful negotiation of these issues allowed program planning to continue. However, several participants noted cases where lack of adequate support adversely affected the planning and implementation of the program.

Administrative Support

Participants in this study indicated it is critical to have the support of the administrators at the system or at the institution who are responsible for policies and procedures that are designed to meet the needs of traditional programs on campus. Jody, Bob, Thomas and John described situations where gaining support to alter these policies and procedures to meet the needs of inter-institutional online programs was essential for the programs to move forward. Jody reported that the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program needed support at the institutional level for changing admissions processes and procedures that were designed for a traditional university setting. Bypassing or modifying these traditional processes needed the approval and support of the provost and staff from the admissions office, the bursar's office, and from the registrar's office. The program already had the support of the associate dean who was in charge of planning the program at NNU. The associate dean requested a meeting for the purpose of explaining to

key administrators at the institution level what the program planners needed to do. Jody recalled what happened.

> He explained how our admissions were accepting students; we don't want them to have to take exams again. We want to handle the admissions process internally, but we're going to need to turn them around really fast. And we're going to need someone from the admissions office to understand what we're doing and to work one on one with us. With our money we were self supporting so we needed to be able to get return of our fees. We needed to be able to collect student fees ourselves and then register the students in the system. There were just a multitude of things that we were trying to navigate that needed people to understand what we were doing. And I can't imagine that we could have gotten anything done if we had not done that. Everybody came on board. They were trying to help us because he's so good at making them understand how important this is for the college and for the university, and that we would do whatever we needed to do on our end if we just understood what that was instead of coming and asking for forgiveness later. And the people at the table, I think they were aware that this type of program was going to start coming about more often. They started talking about what they could do to set up systems for other programs that would come along in the future.

Bob related a critical incident with the Human Development and Family Studies program when the planning team had to negotiate with graduate school deans from each institution about policies and procedures for graduate schools that the planning team could not change. He said,

> We had faculty ready to launch an online inter-institutional program but they could not implement the plan because the graduate colleges had a series of rules that made it impossible. And so, one of the deans in our group said, "These are not our rules. We

cannot override graduate schools policy. Only the graduate deans can take the leadership

in changing that. It's not ours to lead. So we got these graduate deans together. We had

this program almost ready to go and realized we couldn't without their support.

Thomas discussed a critical incident with the Masters in Business Administration program that

required negotiating with registrars about multiple registration systems at each of the seven

institutions involved in the program:

A critical incident that happened early on for that collaborative to work was the discovery

of multiple student information systems within the nine academic institutions in the

system and the sort of ah-ha moment that we weren't going to be able to do what we were

going to do unless we did something quickly. So we brought all the registrars together for

a one-day meeting, not having any idea what was going to happen but knowing that if

they couldn't get together and decide how we might work together for these collaborative

programs we were building we were sunk.

John related a similar issue with the Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online

program:

Well we were working with relationships with our upper administration. We had to have

our dean, our immediate supervisors had to be supportive and then beyond them we had

to have our upper administration at the provost level begin to make some decisions

because the things that we were doing were things that required approval beyond the

college level. The joint degrees, the adjunct faculty, the money that we needed, those

were things that we had to have approval from at the graduate level and upper

administration level.

Jody told me that with the full support of the dean, his institution assumed the program administration role to implement the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program for both institutions involved in the partnership. They were able to hire staff and provide resources to help with the administration and implementation of the program, which the partner institution was unable to provide. Thomas discussed how the support of the Board of Regents made possible the efforts of the System Virtual Campus Center office in helping to establish and support online programs at the System level. He notes, "Something like this without the top down, I mean the very top, the Board of Regents. Without that kind of support we'd never, never, been able to do it."

Faculty Support

In addition to administrative support several participants mentioned the importance of having faculty support and approval for the online program. Denny, Jody, Thomas, Barbara, Rebecca, and Gloria, Damon, Jan, and John, all mentioned faculty support and buy in to the program goals as a supporting factor in moving forward with the planning and implementation of the program. Rebecca explained how the support at the system and institution level ensures faculty support. She notes,

> We've got the system support but we're having to build that and then from there we're going to have to garnish support of all the institutions. That's how you get support at the faculty levels because if there is no incentive or accountability to the institution then the faculty aren't willing to give their time because they don't get any credit towards promotion and tenure.

John told me that upper administration support was important but faculty support was essential:

We ran into other problems as we went along because we had differences in tuition. We

had differences in fees that were charged and so finally our provost who became

informed of the program and made the decision that was important on our part because he

said, we'll just match ours exactly to what they do. Once that happened that just opened

up all kinds of doors and things began to fall into place. And it made it so much easier.

Again that would not have happened if we had not had the support of upper

administration, but it never would have taken place if we'd not had the collegiality

between the two faculties at both institutions. That was just absolutely essential. And I

suppose that if the story of any program that works if you try to implement it from the top

down it won't work, if you try to implement it from the bottom up it won't work and it

has to be both groups working together.

Lack of Support

In each of the situations just mentioned, support was sought out and obtained by

members of the planning team or other stakeholders. In other situations adequate program

support was not provided to the planning teams with varying consequences. Lack of support

from upper administration leads to lack of commitment from participating institutions, lack of

common vision and goals, and lack of funding and resources (including staff) necessary to

support the planning and implementation of a successful inter-institutional online program.

Several participants related incidents about a lack of program support that affected the

planning and design of the programs. Ann talked about how the implementation of an online

bookstore for Online Core Curriculum students failed because administrators and staff at

individual institutions did not support the online bookstore or students who sought help in

accessing a bookstore off campus. Jody discussed how lack of support and commitment from the

upper administration at the partnering institution led to uninformed program planners and high turn over of staff who were assigned to work on the project. As a result, the partnership between the institutions weakened and NNU eventually took on the majority of the program planning and development and the program administration role. As noted earlier, NNU did have the support of upper administration to move the program forward. Had this not been the case the program may have failed.

Denny related how failure on the part of the leadership team from the System office to follow established procedures for inter-institutional online program planning derailed the collaborative planning process for the OBAS program. Upper administration assigned a project facilitator who did not support a fully collaborative process and made decisions about the program without input from planners representing the individual institutions. Although the program was launched it was decommissioned as an inter-institutional system offering after only one year. Gloria recalled how lack of support from the system facilitator who had so effectively led the formation and support of the Collaborative RN to BSN program decided to launch a national program with one of the institutions involved in the original statewide program without consulting the other program planners. The sense of betrayal and perceived lack of support for the original program was a devastating blow to the program planners. Carol expressed concerns that a lack of adequate support at the implementation stage from the system office threatened the sustainability of the OBSIT program. In his view without adequate support at all levels the inter-institutional online programs would not have been possible. Clearly, lack of support in any form affects the design of the program and potentially affects relationships of program planners.

Funding

Planning inter-institutional online programs requires working with partner institutions to determine the kind of financial model that is viable for the program. The reality of budgets forces choices that ultimately affect the design of the program and potentially the partnerships of the program planners. The costs for inter-institutional online programs are related to program planning and start up as well as ongoing costs for implementation and maintenance. Program planners interviewed in this study addressed funding in relation to online course development, release time for faculty, how faculty will be paid, how tuition is set and paid, how funds get dispersed to individual institutions, and program sustainability. Funding or other budgetary issues were mentioned in relation to seven of the twelve programs in the study.

In some cases start up money was provided by sponsoring university systems. Denny told me that the OBSIT program was planned at a time when the state university system sponsoring the development of the program was undergoing significant budget cuts. The system had invited the participating institutions to be a part of the collaborative program and provided support personnel and resources to assist in program planning when funding sources were scarce. The system was committed to the program and provided initial startup funds for the program. Denny said:

> At the very last minute Ellen has managed to pull together funding. And so she has
>
> managed to come up with start up funding but really they planned the whole thing
>
> without any sense that they were going to get any support, financial support for doing it.

The Collaborative RN to BSN program also received start up money from the university system to develop online courses for the program. Additional funding was needed for course revisions and managing the courses in the course management system, as well as support for a

program director's salary. For the Online MBA the university system provided start up money to buy out faculty time for course development, faculty development, and provide course developers to produce the online courses. Inter-institutional program funding and course development for the Online MBA was provided to institutions through the System Virtual Campus Center which is funded by the university system.

The Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program received start up funds from both of the university systems involved in the program. Both participating institution had funds to put toward the program. However, the funding at each institution was challenging in different ways. John told me,

> It was a half of million that I had for the project, which was the largest project at that time that I had ever supervised and even with that amount of money I was trying to do it on a shoestring because of some of the things that we were set up and trying to do.

John's budget included funds for a distance education laboratory and additional faculty to teach in the program. Even though a much larger budget was set aside for the program at the partner institution there were problems getting the money diverted back into the department where it could be used for the program.

The program planners for the OBSIT program addressed budget issues early in the planning process for the development and for the long term implementation of the program. Jan told me,

> The deans group played a role also in trying to decide what kind of financial model was viable and that was again a compromise. Because that was something general faculty don't usually have to deal with and it was probably not a good use of their time. Yet, they had to be aware of it because it had to be doable. There were some fairly spirited

discussions on the budgetary model. And, again, there had to be compromise. Institutions

wanted to be sure, almost guaranteed that they would come out ahead on this deal, versus

the risk involved in a new program, and a different kind of program, and start up issues,

and collaboration and sharing with others. So I think that went through a lot of discussion

and came to a point I think where we found a level that we could each agree on, that was

again, compromise. Not something that everybody felt completely thrilled with, but if we

were going to do it this is the way it has to happen.

Jan added that the issues around the budget could have been related to the differences in how the

budget for the inter-institutional program differed from how budgets were handled at the campus

level. He recalled,

There certainly were strong differences of opinion on whether this was the right model

and even if the model would work. I think though that if I step back it's probably not so

much the individuals that felt quite as strongly about that. I mean they may have had

some ideas in their own mind about what they would like the budget to be and they may

have seen that wasn't going to work and then they could come around, but I think also it

reflected some campus issues that they couldn't control. And then knowing at least that

they had made a strong stand and they could back off and say this is what we've got to do

to make this work. And since the presidents were all onboard they usually would

overcome local problems at some level.

Course development was a funding issue for several of the programs. Regarding the

Returning Professional Pharm. D. program, Jody recalled that course development and teaching

for the program were not considered a part of the duties of faculty at either of the institutions in

the program. It was up to each institution to provide funding for this. He said,

The faculty at both colleges, when they voted in the curriculum said that faculty would

not get release time to do our courses and we would have to pay them extra

compensation. So both institutions knew that if someone taught we were going to have to

pay those people to develop materials for us. So it was going to be up to us. Instead of a

typical academic program that would come through the department and the department

would assign faculty, it was up to us to find faculty to teach the program and us to

negotiate with those faculty members.

The courses for the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program were in development as the

program was being implemented. Over time Jody recalls that as the commitment on the part of

the partner institution waned and NNU took on more of the responsibility for the program. He

told me,

I just don't know that their administration is as supportive, but I don't know because we

don't have that conversation really. But, um, they are not willing to put the resources into

it I guess, or they are not putting the resources into the program. Which makes it seem

like it's not a priority for their institution as much as it is for ours.

The Certificate in African Studies program is a grant funded program. Funding is

managed and implemented by the principal investigator from a large research institution. Course

development funds are provided through the grant to faculty at institutions within the university

system who can use the money as summer salary to develop courses. The grant also provides a

faculty development fellowship awards program. Rebecca told me,

Another way that faculty get involved is that we have funding for faculty development

fellowship awards. And it's a competitive process that's really meant to bring in faculty

who have no experience with Africa. Mostly they're used to let these faculty travel to

Africa and get content to add to existing courses. We're actually going to develop three courses from grants that we gave them last year because faculty did so well and we can add three courses that we didn't expect to have.

The Human Development and Family Studies program is part of a multi-state, multi-system alliance. Funding for the program is funded in part by the alliance, however, course development and delivery costs are the responsibility of the institutions. Students in programs supported by the alliance pay a common price per credit hour to the institution where they are enrolled. The teaching institution keeps 75% of the money, 12.5% goes to the admitting and enrolling institution, and 12.5% supports the alliance. According to Barbara,

What happens to that money does differ from campus to campus. For example, on some campuses the faculty are teaching their courses in the program as part of their regular load. On other campuses they're teaching it as an overload and getting paid extra. So that's an area where the individual campus and sometimes the individual faculty makes that decision.

Barbara noted that it is expensive to bring together key people from each of the institutions to meet to work on the program. Grant funding was initially obtained for the initial work of the alliance and the model for inter-institutional collaboration for online programs was developed. He recalled, "I think that having that funding to develop, basically we were developing a model of inter-institutional collaboration, that was really the key." The alliance also provides some funding for marketing:

The whole inter-institutional program is marketed but individual institutions also do some of their own marketing. Some of that playing field is leveled by the inter-institutional support that is available for the whole program. So, the board of directors of the alliance

will decide that we're going to give the Human Development and Family Studies

program this amount of money to do marketing. And then they can decide how to do that

whether it's taking out an ad in a journal or having a reception at a conference which is a

group effort rather than an individual institution.

Managing money across institutions can be a problem for collaborative programs and

grant funded programs have additional requirements. Rebecca noted,

I think there were a lot of expectations with the other principal investigators about

funding and how much funding they would receive even though they have the same

budgets that we have. But things are different at smaller institutions and money changes

hands differently. It's a major issue in any program that you're dealing with - money.

The participants in this study revealed some of the ways budgeting issues affect the

program planning process. They did not discuss funding and budgets in detail, but it was clear

from their conversations about their program planning processes that without adequate financial

means to develop and implement an online program challenges will arise that affect the design

and implementation of the program. Inter-institutional program planning for online courses is

often a response to the problem of resource scarcity. In lean budgetary times the pressures to do

more with less will have an effect on program planning decisions and ultimately the design of the

online program.

Operation and Administration of the Program

Operation and administration issues are about how the program is or will be operated and

managed. Planning and implementing the program are parallel activities in some ways as

planning continues after the program is rolled out. Ten of the twelve participants interviewed

discussed issues related to operation and administration of the program including tasks

associated with day to day administrative activities to keep the program running. Six of the program planners in this study were involved in the operation and administration of the programs themselves and took on roles that included central program director or operational manager working with program governance to manage aspects of the program such as student services, course development, managing student enrollments, working with registrars, handling money and budgets, technology infrastructure, reporting grades, advising, managing problems in courses, and so on. Several critical incidents were discussed around operation and administration issues.

In her role as program director for the Online Core Curriculum (OCC) Ann's responsibility included working with the institutions involved in the collaborative to develop and implement standard enrollment policies and procedures. In addition to the enrollment services she was also responsible for coordinating an online bookstore for which OCC students could then use to purchase and obtain their textbook materials. She also worked with faculty to prepare them for the enrollment services they were responsible for. It was in her role as director that she was involved in implementing the central online bookstore without the full support of all the participants at the planning table. The failure of the online bookstore resulted in poor student services and posed a challenge for the administrators of the collaborative project.

Participants in this study described attempts of program planners to manage the project in the early planning stages of the program and the transition to more challenging tasks of actually managing aspects of the program as it is implemented. With the OBSIT program a governing board was appointed to oversee the operation of the program with plans to appoint an executive program director that would report to the governing board. In the planning stages of the OBSIT program Denny recognized that there should be a person responsible for administration of the

program. He said, "I feel sorry for the person who is coming in as the director of the OBSIT because they're going to get a rude awakening when they realize that there's not a good understanding of this piece." During the planning of the program various aspects of operation were started and handled by Denny and then handed off to the director for full implementation. Jan describes the transition from the planning team to the program director.

> I guess we entered sort of a gray era for a little while until we got an executive director on board. That's been very helpful in making it work from that point on. Once it was possible to hand off those responsibilities to an executive director things went much more smoothly. I think we were all aware of it and we all tried to make things work. It wasn't that nothing happened, it just, things were less clear and I would say some momentum was lost but not totally. So it was just a hiccup in the system, which was at a difficult point and made it a little hard to do things.

Jan describes the tension between planning for the administration and operation of the program and actually handing it off to an operational manager.

> I think there needs to be a hand off of some sort of the initial project manager to sort of an operational manager. The less smooth that is the more problems come up and the more difficult it's going to be to make that work. I guess that developing it and implementing it aren't the same thing and there's got to be some transition for that and that needs to be planned very carefully.

> Operation and administration of the program are issues that must be addressed in

program planning but these issues are not always addressed adequately. Issues around policies and procedures are planned but someone has to be in a position to carry out the plans once the program is launched. Jody described the failure for Brookwood to take on their responsibility for

operation and administration of the program at their institution as one of the issues that hindered the program the most. NNU and Brookwood began the process as a joint program. Both Brookwood and NNU took on responsibilities for operating the program at their respective institutions. However, as time went on the major responsibility for implementing the program fell to NNU. Staff turnover and a lack of program support at Brookwood affected the implementation and administration of the program at that institution. When the program director at Brookwood left the institution, the responsibility for developing courses and managing aspects of the program was passed on to new personnel who knew little about the program. NNU took on more responsibility for the operation of the program and eventually Jody and other staff at NNU were managing all the logistical and the administration issues for both institutions. Eventually, the operation management for the program became a full time responsibility for NNU. Jody told me that this was not the way operation and administration of the program was planned. It evolved over time. He recalled, "No one ever came to the table and talked about this. It's not like there was a meeting where OK, NNU really needs to take this on, it's just happened. It's just been thrown at us."

The RN to BSN program planners established a central coordinator to handle administrative needs for the program. Gloria, an associate dean who sits on the steering committee is also the central administrator of the RN to BSN program. The steering committee is made up of associate deans for each undergraduate program in the program. They meet once a month to discuss policy decisions. Among other responsibilities Gloria provides to the faculty the class roster of students from all five institutions, the names of students to technical support staff for enrolling in the learning management system, works with partner institutions at the community college and technical school levels to establish prerequisite courses for incoming

nursing students, and works with faculty and students to manage enrollment caps in the courses. She says about her position as central coordinator,

> It's not the work I do but it's the position I hold. I don't think this collaboration would have stayed together without a central office, because each of the institutions is not going to go back to all 5 gathering information. It's kind of the glue in the center that pulls it all together. So no matter who is doing the collaboration, I feel strongly that you need a central coordinator.

The Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program is a joint program and at the time of the interview shared the administration of the program by having co-chairs of the program on each campus. The joint program is seen as a full partnership offered by two separate institutions in two separate university systems. Damon expressed some concerns about the work involved in administering the program. He says, "Everything is handmade. Until we can figure out how to integrate into an ongoing system of the universities it's always going to be labor intensive, and it's not sustainable." The administration of the program is shared between each institution and as a joint program recognizes and accepts each institutions policies and procedures. Students select a primary chair and follow the guidelines of the institutions of their primary co-chair. Damon says,

> On dissertation research, on prelim verses comprehensive exam schedule, protocols for the dissertation, which we call a record of study and they call a dissertation because we can't change all that stuff. It's different on both institutions so we just have to accept one and go with that then we can get that negotiated through our own institution.

Damon notes that this is a very time consuming approach.

Various people work on it every day. That's the thing. We've changed department heads,
we've changed a substantial proportion of the graduate faculty, every time we add a
person to that joint program you can't assume they know, they've been there, they have
the values, they understand this or that. So they've got to join that program and have a
shared vision of where that program is going.

Admissions and Registration

Working across multiple institutions with disparate admissions and registrations poses a
challenge to inter-institutional online programs. Ten of the twelve participants interviewed
discussed how decisions were made to implement common policies and procedures for
admissions and registration for the programs that took into account the needs of both the students
and the administrative procedures on each campus. Agreements had to be reached about which
institution students would be admitted to and register with, where the degree would come from,
how students would withdraw from courses, varying tuition structures among institutions, and
other related issues. For all of the programs that had been implemented at the time of the
interviews for this study the students apply to and register at one of the collaborating institutions,
which then becomes their home institution. Fees are paid to the home institution, official
transcripts come from that institution, and they get their degree from that institution. One
exception to this is the Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program, which
awards the degree from both institutions jointly.

At the time the programs in this study were planned and implemented there were few
existing centralized systems or methods to share student data among registration systems at
partner institutions. Thomas recalled,

A critical incident for us was the discovery of multiple student information systems. Because we didn't even know what a student information system really was when we were fist getting started. And we certainly thought they were all the same. I think, you know, we had the buy in from the faculty and the folks who wanted to do the MBA, so we were like all right, this is great. And then as we started working the details, because this is going to be the first program we offered, we were like, Oh, they'll just register and there is bound to be some kind of centralized system here, you know that people, can… You know we were naive. And so, we had to sit down with some folks who knew student information systems and start hashing through this and figure out how to do it.

Jan talked about how it isn't always possible to identify students who are applying to the OBSIT program when they apply to the institution because admissions procedures do not identify them as OBSIT program students. He said,

> Students are accepted by the institution. They apply. They need to be identified as a student of this program so they can be distinguished so we can identify them. One of the problems sometimes is that when they apply we don't always know that they are applying. If they contact us then we know and can assist them. If they just apply online which is possible, then we don't always know they're there. So there are still some issues to be resolved there.

All institutions involved in the inter-institutional online programs in this study offer some of the courses that make up the program. In most cases an agreement had to be reached to accept courses from other institutions by transfer credit. Barbara talked about how the Human Development and Family Studies program resolved the transfer credit problem.

One of the things that we've agreed to basically is that it doesn't matter where the course

is taught. Our students all sign up through our institution for those courses and we had to

work around our transfer credit limits to make that happen. You know, we're only

allowed to transfer in 9 credits from other institutions and this program required that

faculty from other institutions teach a lot more than 9 credits. So we had to basically

agree to waive that requirement.

Thomas talked about how the decision to transfer credits for the Online MBA program was

reached:

We went through all the graduate councils and all the policy situations so that if I am that

student at Mason I take my two courses at Mason. All 14 of the other courses from the

other campuses are transferred back to Mason with a grade, not pass fail, so that it goes

into my GPA and my degree comes from Mason.

Jody, Barbara, Gloria, and John talked about how tuition differences were handled among

the institutions. Jody noted that the differences between the public and private institutions in the

returning Professional Pharm. D. program were significantly different, but Brookwood agreed to

accept much less in tuition for the collaborative program. He said,

And that was a decision that was made up front because actually for Brookwood students

this is a very low fee for our program because it's a private school. So they had to agree

that they were going to take much less in tuition.

Gloria told me how institutions in the Collaborative RN to BSN program handled admissions and

how that affected the rate of tuition charged.

These students are admitted to their home institutions, one of these five institutions. We

came up with an admissions policy that we all adhered to so that kind of leveled the

playing ground. We also, even though each of these institutions had different tuitions, made the decisions that they would be charged the same tuition no matter which of the institutions they went to.

Gloria said that coming to an agreement about a common tuition rate was challenging. She recalled, "This business about us all charging the same tuition, I mean that was radical. You just don't do that. But, for this collaboration to work he realized this has to happen." Barbara told me how agreement among the financial officers at the institutions resolved the tuition problem for the Human Development and Family Studies program,

The first year with the Human Development and Family Studies program, we didn't have a common tuition. So, some schools were more expensive than others because tuition is higher at some places than others. And then the financial officers at our institutions agreed to a common tuition and set a common tuition for each institution, I mean for the entire program.

Agreeing about a common tuition rate was also an issue for the Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences program. John explained:

We ran into other problems as we went along because we had differences in tuition. We had differences in fees that were charged and so finally our provost who became informed of the program and made the decision that was important thought that on our part because he said, we'll just match ours exactly to what they do. Once that happened that just opened up all kinds of doors and just things began to fall into place. And it made it so much easier.

Ann discussed a related issue, a common withdrawal process for all students taking OCC courses regardless of which institution they were admitted to. In her work with the OCC project

Ann was involved in working with registrars from the partner institutions to establish a withdrawal process that would be common to all partner institutions. Doing so meant implementing a separate withdrawal procedure at the institution level that varied from the procedures used for traditional courses on campus and increased the workload for the registrar's office.

Issues associated with admissions and registration were discussed by most of the participants I interviewed for this study. Jan offered insight into why this is a common problem among inter-institutional programs. He said,

> Things like support services, student services, registration, some of the things that required input from the campuses was very difficult to work with because each campus handles those things very differently. As long as is was a departmental or faculty level issue it was fine, but when it became an institutional issue like admissions or registration, or records or things like that then it became more a problem. And it's mostly because this is not a very common thing - to have a consortium of state institutions voluntarily working together. They're just not used to doing that.

Curriculum and Course Development

Curriculum planning and course development are issues that are closely tied together when planning inter-institutional online programs. Ten of the twelve participants reported issues related to curriculum development. Nine of the twelve discussed issues related to course development.

For the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program, the curriculum from both participating institutions was combined by staff members and program planners to meet the objectives for both institutions. Faculty then reviewed and approved the final version of the

curriculum. Once the curriculum was approved faculty with assistance from staff on each campus were charged to develop and produce the online courses. Concerning faculty involvement in curriculum development Jody notes,

> Well, they voted to have the program, but it had to meet their current standards. So then somebody had to pull those standards together and try to combine them and find out what the similarities and differences were. And then that curriculum, once that was developed, was voted by faculty. But the faculty were not really involved heavily. The administrators of the program did that part.

Most participants described curriculum planning as a task that was negotiated among program planners to reach consensus and agreement. In some cases some of the content was standard across all institutions and there were foundations courses that everyone could agree on. Gloria recalled,

> Very quickly what they discovered was that there were five core content. There are foundations, assessment, community health, research, and management leadership. They may teach them in different ways they may have different names, but essentially that was the core content that all five schools of nursing taught. Well it just happened these five schools had five core content so what they did was they divvied those up to the five institutions.

Similarly, for the Online MBA the content for the program was basically the same at each institution offering the program. Deans from each institution approved a curriculum and decided which institutions would be responsible for each course. For the OBSIT there were foundation courses that were identified that could be easily agreed upon. Denny stated,

You could kind of identify those first courses that you knew you must have. Some of those trickle up real fast. There are some courses that are going to be obvious. You're going to have to have them. There's going to be total agreement and it's not hard to get them moving.

Beyond the foundation courses, curriculum planning may become more complicated. Jan describes curriculum planning as a challenging activity even among faculty members at the same institution. Involving other institutions with varying institutional approaches to the program is even more difficult. He describes the discussions about curriculum at the planning table for the OBSIT program:

I think there were some heated meetings, particularly, with curriculum. You can always expect that. Probably get a little hot about that. People have their favorite areas. So I don't consider that anything unusual. We have that on campus in any given area. And if you go across departments it would even more so.

Carol, another member of the OBSIT planning team recalled,

I guess as a faculty member, even here on my campus, about curriculum, and that's something that faculty just, it's the one thing that there is always an argument about given our various backgrounds and our view of our field. We always have these personal lenses that we wear around and we say, "Well, this is what the field is, this is what IT is, or this is where computer science is" and the weighting of the various learning concepts that are out there. There's always the struggle. And even at the collaborative level that's got to be there as well, either from the perspective of here is how we do it on my campus, this is what I know. And we had a lot of that. That's very natural I think. At our institution we know how to do it [laughs]. And I sort of expected, you know sort of give and take.

That's just a personal thing. It's collaboration. And we spent many, many hours, just as we spend many, many hours here internally on campus in our department discussing whether it's just a simple change in curriculum or a total revamp of curriculum.

Once a curriculum is developed and approved shared courses are developed. Course development is a task that faculty and instructional designers or instructional developers undertake. For the Online MBA faculty developed the courses with assistance from the System Virtual Campus Center. The Center provided instructional design and development staff and funds for the course development process. Thomas made a distinction between course development and course production. Course production is an issue related to online course content that requires technical skills to produce that the average faculty member may not possess. He explained,

Course development is faculty building content, thinking about pedagogy and strategies, and how they want to assess learning. And course production is where the designers and graphics and multimedia people, you know, Flash developers, come in and take the content that's been developed and they work with the faculty member and they actually produce the course.

Gloria told me that for the Collaborative RN to BSN program the faculty from each of the institutions worked together to develop courses for the program. Staff members from the system office are hired to work with faculty to update and maintain the courses and place them into the course management system. Electives are developed and offered by individual institutions offering the program. Gloria said,

Each of the five institutions had their faculty who taught that content on campus, so the one's who taught health assessment at all five institutions got together and actually came

up with a course that all could agree on. They actually did the same thing with research. They did the same thing with all of them.

In terms of course development for the OBSIT program, instructional designers were assigned and provided by the system to work with faculty to design, develop, and produce the first courses for the program. Once a program director was in place and the program planning handed off to the program director the remaining courses were developed by the faculty and staff at the institutions involved in the program.

Two of the programs represented in this study, the Certificate in African Studies and Human Development and Family Studies left both curriculum and course development entirely to faculty members. For the Certificate in African Studies program the grant was written and implemented by faculty members. Rebecca explained,

> The initial grant called for several courses to be developed in different areas. Those courses were divided among each institution. I think it was a combination of the principal investigators knowing their institutions and knowing what could be done there and the courses. So, they decided and listed in the grant what courses and what fields and they actually, in the process they decided what courses would be developed. They asked faculty if they would be willing to work on those courses.

The Human Development and Family Studies program faculty decided all the curriculum issues and program requirements. They also develop the courses. Leaving curriculum development to faculty may require some assistance in terms of how to develop curriculum for an inter-institutional online program. Bob, an academic dean and program planner for the multi-state alliance offering the Human Development and Family Studies program describes a situation in which faculty were developing curriculum for an inter-institutional online program without

first thinking about broader implications for inter-institutional program and curriculum issues. He described the early efforts of a group of faculty collaborating on the development of an inter-institutional online program:

> The only thing they had done to decide what would be in this curriculum was to collect up everybody's favorite courses that they wanted to teach. Oh, I was just appalled, realizing that they had not started at the beginning. They had simply aggregated everybody's course they were ready to put online and that was going to be their program. Now, in doing so they hadn't vetted these courses for duplication or for omitted things. They had not begun, as you can do inter-institutionaly, at the beginning point which is what do we want to accomplish for our students, which is appropriate. It has to be the first question, but they had never asked it. If you're going to have an inter-institutional program, it's not shared inter-institutional courses. It's a program with coherence, a program with objectives, a program you can assess and determine if students really do benefit from it or not. I think for most faculty, in their whole lives they only adapt programs. There's a change and so you change a course or two, or, an objective or two. But in this case they're building a whole new program together.

Technical Considerations

Nine of the twelve participants interviewed in this study discussed technical issues related to planning and developing online programs. Technical issues include the technical infrastructure needs, course development and delivery matters, and technical support.

The technical infrastructure available at a campus or to an entity offering online programs can affect the ability of a program to be launched or implemented. The infrastructure can determine the ability to implement necessary online resources such as online registration systems

or course delivery tools. Ann, Jody, Jan, Carol, and Damon, and John discussed issues related to technical infrastructure and registration and admissions, noting that not only do each of the institutions handle those things differently, the systems they use to manage these types of operations cannot share information across campuses.

Jody explained that with the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program the registration systems at the institutional level were not designed to address the needs of the online program. Special handling for registration was needed because there were no procedures in place in the existing technologies. He recalled, "In the beginning when we were trying to navigate through the university system, the technology, we were trying to do registration, the financial part of it and we never fit the mold for anything at the university." While the traditional models for addressing these issues had to be negotiations among staff from the admissions office, the bursar's office, and the registrar's office, part of the issue involved the need for a technical solution to make these issues for online programs fit into the existing ways of doing business.

Thomas described an issue with registration that threatened to stop the Online MBA from launching. In the beginning there were no centralized student information systems to coordinate the admissions and registration of students in the inter-institutional program. Thomas recalled,

> We wanted to try to do it electronically. Registrars at first were like, No; it has to be on paper. And so, there were probably 75 or 80 of these forms starting to fly all over the, you know, around. Because you had to fill out the form, have your advisor sign it and then your advisor faxed it to the registrar of your campus. So the registrar could look at it and see if you had any holds on your record. Then they signed off on it and they faxed it to the registrar at the host campus who would then say, OK, it's alright and they'd register them for the course. And so after that first semester of all the faxing and they

couldn't read it they said let's do it electronically. So, then we spent the next year and a

half designing what would be the million-dollar System Virtual Campus Center

information system. We've built what we call the System Virtual Campus information

system which is kind of a hybrid student information system that allows us to pull data

from the various disparate student information systems on the campuses so that students

that are at Oakton and are taking courses at Greensboro can go through this system and

get registered in the course at Greensboro without being admitted.

Technical infrastructure issues also involve course development and delivery matters.

The participants interviewed in this study talked about the different types of course management

systems used in the delivery of online programs. These tools require technical support and

infrastructure at the campus or system level to support the needs of the online program. These

tools are expensive to license and maintain. Faculty and students must be able to use the tools

effectively so some level of training and support are necessary. In some cases the university

system provides centrally managed and supported course management software that is available

to all institutions. The Collaborative RN to BSN, Online Core Curriculum, Certificate in African

Studies, Online Bachelor of Applied Science in Technology, and Online Bachelor of Science in

Information Technology programs all use a system provided tool and take advantage of the

support provided by the system to the institutions. Regarding the selection of the system course

management tool for the OBSIT and OBAS programs Denny notes, "There's been a definitional

statement made that says, it's WebCT and we support it." When asked about the importance of

discussing the issue among program planners He said,

That discussion would have to encompass lots of people. I mean, we haven't even talked

about all of the ancillary groups who are stakeholders in this process that would

potentially have something to say about that if it weren't a done deal. That cuts a whole

chunk of planning out, to not have to worry about that.

Gloria notes that for the Collaborative RN to BSN several course management tools were used

but eventually the system decided to contract with D2L. She recalled,

In our years since we've taught our courses on the Internet we've been in 4 platforms.

And our students just kind of roll with the punches and they get the new one and they

learn a new one. But right now all 5 institutions are using D2L. Our System has signed an

agreement with D2L, so all System schools are now using D2L. So that's much better.

But we did go through 4 platforms.

In some cases the choice of which tools and supporting software to use are decided by the

program planners and a variety of tools are sometimes used across the program. Damon

explained that the Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program uses a specific

course management tool but allows for flexibility and choice from faculty members for the use

of other course delivery options. He said,

We use WebCT. No one likes it but we use it. And we use Centra, some use Breeze, we

use a lot of different strategies and could get more efficient with this if we would. But

every faculty member, first of all they are teaching a different content which has a

different structure, which has a different delivery need, and they have a preference. So

you can't say to everybody, everybody's going to use this. You do that and they say no,

not everybody's going to because I'm not going to do it. So there has to be flexibility in

it. The more flexibility you build into it the less efficient you build. It's a trade off.

The Human Development and Family Studies program takes a similar approach. Barbara

suggested that using a variety of tools was not a problem for students. She said,

There are differences across institutions with which learning software we're using. So a

student in one course might be using WebCT and in another course they might be using

Blackboard. My perception is that it hasn't been a problem at all. They're fairly

comfortable and seem to be able to pick it up without any problem.

For the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program the course management tool was

selected by Jody who was a program planner and also supported and implemented the software.

He made the decision based on which course management tool provided the most support for

administrators implementing the software. Regarding how partner institution, Brookwood,

responded to the decision of NNU to use WebCT Jody said,

We went with what we thought was best. But we did discuss it and at that time (they have

WebCT now, they did not then) they were just whatever we wanted to use because they

weren't, they couldn't support the software either. You know like if we used a different

package. It was available to us for free. And they were willing to have Brookwood

students have accounts. And that was another issue that we had to make sure since we

had students from two institutions that we could accommodate both sets of students.

Other technical considerations mentioned by participants in this study include aspects of

course development and delivery of online courses. Developing online courses requires technical

skills and expertise that is not always available among faculty members who wish to teach

online. For this reason technical support staff and instructional designers specializing in online

course development are often needed to help faculty design and produce online courses and

provide training about teaching online using course management systems. Participants in seven

of the nine programs in this study mentioned the importance of the technical support staff who

worked with faculty to design, develop and support the delivery of online courses. Jody

described how the lack of adequate technical support staff affected the design of the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program:

> We were developing the courses and I was coordinating that. Not from the content standpoint, but from the development. But at some point I needed someone else to help with that and that's not something that we ever had. So a decision was made early on to shoot to the student who had the lowest modem speed and the lower end computer and try not to keep things too technically advanced. Not just my development, but my support of the students was a consideration, the time that it takes to do that. So we kept things as simple as possible and still could teach what we needed to teach, concentrate on the organization of the materials and how things are presented. That it didn't have to be flashy and it didn't have to be multimedia all the time.

Technical support and distance education support staff are sometimes provided by the system. In cases where the program was a system-wide multi-institution collaboration some or all of this support was provided, at least initially, by staff employed at a system level organization. The Collaborative RN to BSN contracted with a system entity to provide ongoing assistance with course development, training, and technical support for the course management system. The Online MBA, Online Core Curriculum, Online Bachelor of Applied Sciences in Technology, and Online Bachelor of Science in Information Technology received assistance with course design and development as well as training in the use of the course management tool from support staff provided from the System level to support the program for the System. For the Human Development and Family Studies program, Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online, and the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program faculty designed the courses but received some level of technical assistance from support staff at the institution level.

Social and Political Issues in Inter-institutional Program Planning

The third question in this study asked: What social and political relationship issues were negotiated when designing inter-institutional online programs? The participants in this study revealed several ways the social and political relationships represented at the planning tables affected the design of the programs and relationships among program planners: 1) organizational identity, the culture and contexts represented by the program planners, 2) leadership roles, both formal and informal that emerged among program planners, 3) the value of relationship building to help meet the goals of the program and the interests of the program planners, and 4) commitment to the goals of the program were the factors identified by participants in this study.

Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is the way an organization or institution identifies and markets its self and is identified by others. In inter-institutional partnerships the program planners at the planning table represent organizational identity. Ten of the twelve participants in this study described specific situations in the planning process that involved negotiating issues around organizational identity. Participants in this study mentioned size and mission, reputation, role identity of planners representing their institutions, and inter-institutional rivalry and competition as organizational identity factors in inter-institutional program planning of online programs. Differences among program planners regarding what is expected of them from their institutions is a form of role behavior and will affect the relationships and the decisions about the program that are negotiated at the planning tables.

Ann described a situation in which a registrar held firmly to her position that changing the processes and procedures for withdrawals would create a situation that would not be acceptable for the institution. In negotiating for the interests of her institution the registrar was

operating in an organizational role and was initially unwilling to explore options for the good of the collaborative. Denny described organizational identity factors at play at the OBSIT planning table. Early in the planning process the program planners were working on curriculum issues. One program planner from a large research institution had concerns about a perceived loss of reputation and brand that could result from partnering with smaller institution. Because of these identity issues agreeing on a curriculum was a major task. He said,

> And we had five campuses here with very different missions. And their missions, and also their brand and their perceptions of themselves as academic entities with reputations to uphold and that sort of thing were not in the same place. There were regional universities, and there were small colleges until like yesterday had been two year institutions, and so forth. And so to get them to agree on a curriculum was a major, major step. And this sort of 6 hundred pound gorilla was one of the research institutions. They view themselves in this crew, and not everyone else would agree with them from within the crew, but they themselves kind of see themselves as the most important academic institution in that particular group. If you put this institution with another larger research institution it would be different. But when you put them with a small community college you know, they think that they're the ones that have to be guarding their standards, and managing their quality, and not liquidating their degree with fly by night professors from small community colleges.

Bob described a similar situation with the Human Development and Family Studies program. The program planners met with graduate deans to determine their level of commitment to the inter-institutional program and whether they would support it. He recalled,

The graduate dean from I think the smallest institution in the bunch, knew he just couldn't possible do it because it just would ruin their standards. Now, there were some universities where I would have expected that. It was surprising to see where the greatest concern came from - a graduate dean ready to leave his position. And he did, just months after that. Someone from the institution who as I looked at it had the most to gain from this and absolutely the least to lose because, as graduate schools go they had the smallest one. And therefore, uh, just because of size. Now I think, as you get bigger your national prominence grows just with size. And so I'm thinking, "OK, why is he so opposed? And will his opinion prevail?

Bob told me that a highly respected graduate dean at one of the most prestigious research universities at the planning table made an open commitment during this meeting to support the program and encouraged the others to do so. He credits this dean's support as the turning point in gaining support for the program among the graduate deans.

Thomas described that the institutions that were involved in the Online MBA program ranged in size from 23,000 students to the smallest at around 2500. When I asked him how the size difference affected the program planning he said:

I think they found that they were more alike than they wanted to think they were. I think they realized that it really is sort of Mason State, and then the rest of them. Even though you've got at least three of those schools that are in that collaborative that are what I would call Mason State wanna-be's, they want to be the next research institution. So they try to play themselves as that.

He goes on to say,

If people ask you what is the most well known highly respected institution in the system they're going to say Mason State. And it is. And so from there they're going to step down. And so, we're going to have faculty that are at the, I feel like all our institutions are very good and highly ranked, but there's still a top and a bottom.

Rebecca described organizational identity as a factor for the Certificate in African Studies grant funded inter-institutional program. She described the role of Jackson University, a large research university and the flagship institution in the university system, working with smaller institutions to plan the program. She said, "Being the flagship for the state, people don't want Jackson to tell them what to do. And so it always causes problems."

Barbara suggested that name recognition rather than the size of an institution may be an issue in inter-institutional program planning but having said this she went on to link name recognition with the size factor. She said,

I don't know that it's the size of the institution but is some differences in history and sort of name recognition. So people get to be known. For example, Whitman State has had a strong family financial planning program for a long time and they are better known. So, they tend to get more applicants and Lincoln being a smaller institution and people are less familiar with us we, tend to get fewer applicants.

Jan describes organizational identity issues related to the OBSIT program as rooted in local policies and practices. He described the issue as having to do with institutional culture. He said,

I think it has more to do with local governance of the institution than what kind of institution it is because each institution has its own way of doing things. And that's probably even more important than what classification the institution it is.

Organizational identity was a key factor affecting the design of the Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program. A long standing rivalry existed between the two institutions and yet the nature of the joint program required that the two institutions work together as full partners. Damon explained, "The joint program is a full partnership; a collaborative program is an individual institution joining with another but not as partner as more just a member." This approach to planning the inter-institutional program along with the existing rivalry between the institutions required negotiation at the planning tables in many areas. John said,

> It's interesting because these two institutions are rivals. We were rivals in terms of, not just out on the athletic field but in recruitment for good students. And it was an intrastate rivalry which kind of added to that intensity. But yet we recognized the need to work together because of the importance of the field that we were in and the fact that many people didn't recognize the need for those particular programs. We knew we had to work together in order to help ourselves rise above a certain level and it was difficult to do. Someone once told me, well our faculty between the two institutions work well but our bookkeepers don't, and we discovered that, many, many fiscal problems, many technical problems on connecting via transmission and so forth.

Damon told me that Canton, a large research university, already had a Ph.D. program in Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences when they decided to offer the online version of the program. However, the partnering institution, Langford, a smaller state university, did not have a doctoral level program. He says,

> We were authorized at Canton for a Ph.D. in agricultural education. Langford was not authorized for the Ph.D., nor was it authorized for the Ed.D. So in order to get that done

we chose to go the Ed.D. route, partly for efficiency. To be honest about that we still have the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. and Langford has the Ed.D. as a joint program and also a separate Ed.D. as a resident program. We did protect our own institutional Ph.D. program as being unique. We want to be the best we can be and at the same time we want to protect that brand if you will.

Organizational identity issues around brand and reputation raised concerns about which of the two institution students would want to register with and was a factor in deciding how the degree would be given. John recalls,

And that was something that we were concerned about at the Langford level because Langford was not known as well as Canton and did not have the reputation nationwide and internationally that Canton did. And we feared that most students would choose the Canton portion. And once we resolved that issue by saying that it was truly a joint degree and that the diploma would be, it wouldn't be Canton, it wouldn't be Langford, it would be Canton/Langford and have both logos on the degree. I understand and I never even thought about that, but when the students go through for the regalia and their hoods they have joint colored, which I thought was kind of neat and wouldn't have thought about that at all.

Carol talked about how organizational identity affects the decisions program planners make at the planning table. He related how individuals represent their institutions operate in a role identity and do what their institutions expect of them. He said,

You've got that other dynamic in there which is we represent our campuses. Either that we feel like that *we* do it right or that if you attend a meeting like that when you come back to your campus, you know the curriculum that is fleshed out is not going to be well

received back on your campus, it's as though you were a failure in those processes

somehow. And so it's sort of like you carry the flag of the institution here. And it's, "Oh,

you bring us back this? [laughs] You haven't done us justice." And so it's another knock

on an individual I suppose. And I don't know if anybody felt that way or not. It just

seems to me that that would cause some additional sort of rigidness in any deliberations

and trying to achieve some agreement.

The participants that I interviewed described various ways in which organizational

identity was a factor that had to be negotiated in these inter-institutional programs. Differences in

organizational size and mission, brand and reputation, and inter-institutional rivalry and

competition were some of the factors described by these participants. The role identity and

relationships of the program planers affected the relationships at the planning tables and the

decisions that were made about the programs.

Leadership

Ten of the twelve participants in this study described various examples of leadership that

existed or emerged among the program planners. Some leadership roles are formally defined

while others emerge as a result of social relationships. Leadership roles described by the

participants included project conveners or initiators and those who were actively involved in

strategy making. Project conveners are the people who identify needs and initiate an online inter-

institutional program to address an educational issue. For the purposes of this study strategy

maker is described as a leadership role in which someone "serves as a focal point for

information, assumes a position of centrality in the channeling of resources among partner

organizations, as well as among and between individual participants, and mediates and resolves

conflict" (Donaldson & Kozoll, 1999, p. 12).

Five of the programs described in this study are in state system wide multi-institution partnerships initiated by upper administrators at the system level. These programs were initiated by the system to meet emerging educational needs. Project directors were provided from the system level who were knowledgeable about program development, the goals of the program from the system perspective, issues related to online program planning, and facilitating change, and working across institutional boundaries to lead inter-institutional teams and to accomplish common goals. In some cases inter-institutional online programs had not been done before and the vision and processes for how this would work was provided by these program initiators and project directors.

Ann describes her role as director of services for the Online Core Curriculum (OCC) project in charge of coordinating online student services for the initial rollout of the project. In that role she worked with student services personnel from the institutions involved in the program to come to agreements about common approaches to student services. She was responsible for coordinating these teams and facilitating their work towards the common goals for the OCC project. She also worked with faculty to prepare them for their role in teaching courses in the OCC. And she worked with students to provide information about the program and how to access the services necessary to enroll and take courses through the OCC. She worked with multiple people and entities to shape the processes and procedures for how the OCC would function.

Denny described the role of the project director for the OBSIT program. The project director, Ellen, was responsible for assisting the program planners to meet program requirements from the system level, channel resources to support program development, and to provide leadership and guidance for working to develop a system sponsored inter-institutional program.

The project director provided information to and from the system administrators to the program planners, provided guidance and assistance with the writing of agreements and memorandums of understanding for working in a collaborative arrangement, and worked with the program planners from all institutions involved to help them resolve issues and carry out the plans for the program. These are project management types of activities that kept the project functioning and crossed the boundaries between the system level upper administration support and the institutions involved in the program planning. While this model worked well for the OBSIT program, Denny told me that with the OBAS program the project director's leadership role was given to a system level administrator who did not understand how to work with inter-institutional collaborations and did not understand the technology used to plan and offer the programs. He ignored the policies and procedures for inter-institutional collaborative projects established previously by the project director for the OBSIT and attempted to engage with individuals on the planning teams and on their campuses rather than work collaboratively with all members of the team. Denny told me,

> So, Don for example, would work independently with one of the campuses of the OBAS. There are three campuses. He and one campus would get together and play golf and have lunch and come up with a lot of decisions and then he would turn around to the other two campuses and say, "And so we're going to do it this way." So, you know there've been several points where they've nearly fallen apart over questions where they just felt like they couldn't possibly agree.

Gloria described the role of the system extension facilitator who worked to help the Collaborative RN to BSN program planners. She refers to this person as a neutral facilitator and says the system extension helped to facilitate the partnership. She does not refer to him directly

as taking on a leadership role however system extension and this neutral facilitator had a role in initiating the inter-institutional partnership for the program as well as serving in a strategy maker role. She describes several situations where the role of the neutral facilitator took on a strategy maker role. She told me,

> But any time, anytime a decision had to be made, you're starting to talk about doing something, anytime one of the institutions would start to say, "But we can't do that. How in the world, well how can we get that done?" And he from the get-go would say, "I don't want to hear about how you will get it done. I want to hear about what do we need to do. Let's figure out what we need to do. I'll help you figure out how to do it. But, don't get caught up in we can't do that. It hasn't been done." I bet I heard him say it two dozen times. "No, I don't want to hear that. Let's talk about what needs to be done to make this happen. I'll help you do it." He would steer the discussions so he was very clear on - I mean this business about us all charging the same tuition, I mean that was radical. You just don't do that. But, for this collaboration to work he realized this has to happen. He's in every meeting with university system explained what we were trying to do, gave the rational for it and got a waiver for it.

Gloria describes the importance of having someone in a leadership role who can assume a position of neutrality in helping to lead or facilitate the work of the group in an equitable manner. She says,

> Because I think in order for something like this to work, it needs to be equitable across. Everybody needs to gain the same amount and give up the same amount. I think if one of us had chaired it, if one of the institutions had chaired it, whether or not it was true, the

sense would have been that you're steering things the way you want them, not what's best for the group. Even if it's just psychologically, I think you start hurting the group.

Professional staff from the systems sponsoring these programs provided leadership and guidance to the projects. But, the program planners at the institution level provided leadership to the planning teams as well and were often seen as the decision makers. Gloria told me that the associate deans from each institution served as the head leadership of the collaborative. She said, "And any of the policies were always run by the deans, but it was essentially the associate deans, that from the very beginning that was the leadership group." The OBSIT program formed a governing board consisting of upper level administrators from the campuses involved. This group provided leadership to faculty members from the institutions working on the operational board. Carol, a member of the operational board described how leaders emerged among the faculty on that board as a result of their work together. He told me,

> I think there were key folks who attended that meeting who sort of naturally moved into the, what one might consider as a leadership role, someone that just sort of commanded the respect of everybody in the group. And that was important as well. I mean even the social aspects of, you know, listen to me, I know the best place to go and sit down and have a chat and a glass of wine or whatever. You know, it was just… Jace for instance was a very good person I thought, in terms of not only sort of directing the group. We had some structure outside of the collaborative group, but it was the internal group, the four or five representatives from the campus. It was, and that's who I'm really talking about, because we did have some structure. We had a, I believe at that point some of the LSG folks who were there and helping us to get things going. They provided some structure and some leadership as to where we ought to go. But then it was this sort of natural, and

these are I guess sort of personality types that essentially commanded the respect of the

other folks in the group. And it was, it was a welcomed thing. It wasn't a competitive sort

of atmosphere. And so there was, it sort of the key person that sort of emerged as the

person that you know you kind of talk to and bounce the ideas off of, and someone's

opinion that you sort of respected maybe a little more than some of the others. And that

worked out really well.

The Certificate in African Studies program was designed as a system-wide program but

the principal investigator, Minkah, was the only person who was described by Rebecca as having

a leadership role. Minkah initiated the grant and was responsible for the program planning and

oversight for the project. She was seen as a leader among faculty members working in African

studies and was often consulted about how to set up programs before she initiated this grant

project. Rebecca describes her as the clear leader among the other two principal investigators and

the person who made decisions about the program. She said,

Minkah's the worker and she's the chief. Without her this project would have never

gotten funded or written. And she did all the initial work and has continued to keep up

with it because she believed in the cause.

The Returning Professional Pharm. D. program was a partnership between a public and

private institution in a state. The leadership was intended to be shared between the two

institutions but as time went on the primary responsibility and leadership for the program

planning and implementation was taken on by NNU due to staff turnover and waning interest at

the partner institution. Jody described the work of the associate dean who was able to work with

various campus departments at NNU to resolve problems with admissions and registration issues

and form lasting mutually beneficial relationships with campus entities. He also described the

work of the project director at NNU who was responsible for working with faculty from both institutions to design and develop a common curriculum.

Thomas talked about leadership and program oversight related to the Online Masters in Business Administration program. He said,

One of the things we have in all our programs is we have oversight committees and in the case of the MBA there is the executive oversight committee which is made up of the eight deans. And then we spun off an oversight committee for Academic Affairs, which is made up of two faculty from each campus who may or may not teach online but they represent faculty oversight. So when there is a problem with a course, we may find out about it but we're going to bring it to the committee and let them deal with it however they think they should.

The Human Development and Family Studies program is part of a multi-state, multi-system alliance. A team of associate deans share the leadership role for the activities of the partnership. The alliance convenes teams of registrars, teams of financial officers, teams of graduate deans, teams of faculty, and teams of academic administrators. An administrative board is made up of deans or associate deans of each institution. Regarding these teams Bob told me that it is important to know who should take on the leadership role. He said,

There are people who cannot lead these teams. They can be on them but they really cannot lead them. And those are the people that can't figure out what others are thinking by listening to them, and can't figure out how to make their own circumstance accommodate differences from other places that need to be accommodated.

Barbara told me that in the faculty teams there was a faculty leader who would organize meeting agendas and lead the meetings as well as a board liaison to the faculty. She said, "So one of the

associate deans would participate with the faculty and help to communicate between the faculty and the board. A consortium institute was established by the partners in the multi-state, multi-system alliance that provides project management services to the inter-institutional partnerships. Bob described the leadership and project management role provided by a consortium institute:

> I keep thinking that the services that this team and the institute provide are pretty ordinary, but the fact is that they are not the sort of ability that university people seem to inherently posses. And they require a form of attention that most university people just can't give to an inter-institutional project. Somebody else has got to keep things flowing between meetings. Just make sure everybody gets their things done at the right time, with reminders and paperwork. These things have to be pretty easy for people to participate in because if they are not they'll have to give up.

The Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Program was a joint program spanning two university systems requiring full partnership from both institutions in the program. The participants interviewed for this study did not discuss the role of system leadership in the planning and implementation of the program. In discussing the leadership of the project Damon said,

> One institution took on the leadership role, but ironically both institutions thought they were the one's that were taking that role on. Now if you and I have a partnership that's based on a 50/50 relationship it won't work, it has to be based on a 70/70. I'm not sure what that overlap has to be, but if I'm not willing to do 70% perceived work and accept your 30% and you're not willing to do the same then we're going to have a lot of difficulty, particularly when you have institutional challenge in the system itself.

When I asked Damon how the leadership was shared at the planning table he said,

Fundamentally it worked because first of all John Rodgers who was the department head at Langford and I worked together and I think we both had the philosophy that by golly that's going to be good for us if we make it work. John saw the real benefits out of it by developing a doctoral program there, opportunity to add faculty and critical mass, the opportunity to collaborate in some research activities. We saw that as an opportunity to expand and experiment with distance education, to provide valuable service to extension mid-career professionals and a whole bunch of other things. His perceived value and my perceived value weren't always congruent but they were always compatible. So what he saw would benefit, maybe increasing the size of faculty or adding the doctoral program, I saw something different from that, but they were all benefits.

Relationship Building

Participants in this study described various social and political relationship issues that either helped or hindered the planning of the inter-institutional online program. Negotiating the social and political relationships among program planners was a factor in various aspects of designing inter-institutional online programs. Ten of the twelve participants interviewed for this study described situations in which relationships among team members formed the basis for resolving conflict, gaining commitment to the program, obtaining support and resources to meet program needs, and strengthening relationships among program planners. Forming relationships with external organizations or entities that could support the goals of the program were also key factors in helping the program planners meet the goals for the program.

Relationships among program planners may or may not exist before entering into a partnership to develop an inter-institutional online program. However, relationship building is a

process that has to be considered in the planning process. When asked if he had worked with other members of the program planning team before Jan said,

> Never. This was quite a deal. But I think we built fairly quickly. It's always a slow process that gaining mutual respect and trust of the others and again, accepting that we are different and we're not going to ever think the same way but find something that we can all live with. And by taking that point of view and that approach it certainly worked.

Some teams had a history of working together before planning the inter-institutional online program. Established relationships among team members formed the basis for reaching agreement on issues quickly. In negotiating about a common tuition across all five of the institutions involved in the Collaborative RN to BSN Gloria told me,

> Well they talked about it and they realized it wasn't going to be the same for everybody. So, some might think it was inequitable, but in other ways the institutions help each other. So they just said we're going to go in this with a collegial relationship and we know it's not always fair or equitable, but it's all going to come out in the wash.
> It was the same thing when they came up with the curriculum. They probably decided on those five core content in probably forty five minutes. It took longer, obviously to develop the courses around that. But it did not take them long. These are administrators that probably had been working together for twenty years at various levels throughout the state. You already had a group that was used to working together and used to give and take.

Bob told me that the people who planned the multi-state, multi-system alliance for inter-institutional online programs knew each other in other capacities before working on this project. He said,

When this started it was started by a group of administrators who knew each other, had not collaborated on things, certainly had served on professional boards together so that there was a respect for one another. And I think everybody liked each other, which are those things we have to have to make this work.

He went on to say,

It is about people, but I like to think it's about academic quality as it's planned and the way to get there is to engage the right people. Now it is true that any partner that puts the wrong person into the mix can stop everything. So the people are a critical variable. But I think it's about getting the right people, well, really, the right mix of people, the right leadership, to get to a good academic outcome.

Thomas described issues related to organizational identity that posed challenges in building relationships among the faculty from the participating institutions. He said,

I really think the most challenging is kicking it off the first time and getting people to play well with others. You know, even though we're within a system, each one of our institutions is independent. And so, you know there's, no matter how you do it you have to get them past the fact that it's ok to work with each other and it's ok to accept those courses that are not theirs, and there really are faculty who can teach just as well as the faculty on your campus.

When asked how the relationships among faculty members and the SVCC were established he talked about issues of trust. He said,

We definitely had our share of tomatoes thrown at us in the beginning. There was a lack of trust that the System was actually going to do something that was going to help them. You know, big brother was going to come in and actually be a helper? So we had to work

on that and that took some convincing because the system didn't have a reputation for

doing that. We had to do a lot of convincing.

Regarding the importance of building trust and good relationships among faculty and

administrators within the system Thomas described how the program planners at the system level

worked with the campuses. He told me,

And that's, you know, it may sound kind of Polly Anna, but if I were to say why the

SVCC has been so successful I would contribute it to the staff and the management

understanding how to work with the campuses. And I do believe that one of the reasons

why it works is because the campuses see the passion that's here. They believe us. And

I'm not saying everyone's like that, but here in this office we sort of stand apart. Because

the campuses really do believe that we're doing this for them and not for the system

administration. I just believe the way you can do that trust with those campuses, it has to

do with the quality of the work you do but it also has to do with the level of comfort and

trust that they feel and how they view the integrity of the organization.

Jan talks about relationship building in terms of respect and compromise among the

program planners for the OBSIT program. He said,

Compromise is common in some form of another in virtually everything we do.

Particularly if you want to influence the shape of things and bringing people with

experience together works better than say if you had a brand new dean or someone who

had just gotten their Ph.D., people who have dealt with problems before and had to work

through difficult situations. Just that experience, even though the setting is quite different,

made that a little bit better than it otherwise would have been. But again, it was the

willingness that this was something we're all doing that we want it to work to as best we

could and we all had to get to that point that we could accept each other's differences and just agree to compromise and do the best job that we could and reach consensus.

Allowing for social time during team meetings was described as an important factor in relationship building among program planners. Damon discussed the meetings during the early stages of the program planning that helped to form important relationships between the faculty at each of the two institutions in the Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program. He recalled,

> We were able then to get the two faculties, the department of agricultural education at that time at Canton and the department of agricultural education communications at Langford together to explore our mutual interest and that was a very, very important meeting. It took place in a retreat setting over two and a half days and it just evolved into a very good full partnership relationship.

Damon told me that social time is an important aspect of team meetings. The program planners were located hundreds of miles apart and would meet for two-day periods. He said,

> We'd go in a morning and work through two days, which is a little bit too long, but you just kind of have to do that if you are going to spend much quality time. The other thing that it is very important is to have some social time there and if you are too task oriented with that I think the whole group tends to burn out and give up, It's too much work, but if there is a little bit of social interaction that takes place then we are willing to try and get a second breath and go again.

Like Damon, John suggested that the social aspect of working with the faculty teams was an important factor. He said,

Once we kind of got that going we knew immediately we need to get our faculty involved

and really nothing of substance took place until we got those faculty involved. Because

we knew nothing was going to happen until we got them together. And once they got

together and begin to map out the matrices of classes, how we would do it, where they

would pick cohorts. That type of thing. How would we handle the issues of adjunct

faculty and so on. And really those were fun times. We had a lot of fun doing that. These

were meetings that sometimes would last, they were always a full day, sometimes a

couple of days. We would go out and eat and do things together, it was just fun.

The social relationships established in these meetings was a factor in keeping the teams working

well together. When asked about conflict in the relationships among team members Damon

responded,

Conflict? Yeah we had conflict, yeah. There's always, it's no different than a family,

you're always going to have some conflict. The trick is to figure out for all of us to work

on anticipating things that might be in conflict and then trying to figure out how to

negotiate that. And the joint faculty was very good at that. Part of that was because of

social relationship that was established through these retreats.

Carol talked about the importance of building good relationships among members of the

operating board in getting the work of the OBSIT teams accomplished. He said,

I think that first of all we had a very solid group of dedicated and what's always amazing

to me is that these are the participants, the faculty, at least at the level of operating board,

as I was, they were just good people to work with. I mean even in disagreement. And I

think a good bit of that was solved internally for the operating board. There were a couple

of folks that socialized outside of these hours long meetings that we had. We got together

and we wound down and we ate together, we even went out in the evening. I remember a

meeting that we had in Lincoln and we went out to Lincoln nightlife. And as a group we

socialized and at the same time we talked about various issues and continued the

conversation in a bit more relaxed atmosphere. And I think that was very important in our

process.

Carol described how growing social relationships led to a turning point in his own willingness to

compromise on curriculum issues. He told me about a meeting of the operating board:

Well, I think we were, you know, it was an overnighter. I mentioned there were a couple

of social hours that we had. I don't know if it was the last of that discussion about the

curriculum, the big curriculum issue, the programming one. But it was, and it might have

been where we resolved that. It made me feel that way. For me, when I left Lincoln I felt

like we really were going to have a project. That it really was going to happen. And I

wasn't going to ask to be removed from the involvement.

He added,

I was the one who felt like, OK, I've learned something in this and I agree with you now,

with the argument. It was just sort of a relief to me that we could get beyond whatever

may have been out there. That you know I'm doing this because my institution does it

this way or because, you know, that somebody believed that this is just the right way to

do it. But all of that sort of disappeared in my mind at that point in that I know that

people are listening to *me* with as much respect as they are listening to anybody else. And

again, I sort of leaned back toward the social aspect, just knowing who the folks were,

that we were there. That we were sort of locked up in a sense [laughs]. Not like I'm going

to drive back to [the city] tonight and drive back down the next morning just because I

don't want to be with these people or anything [laughs]. It was, we were a group. We

became a working group I think at that meeting, and with the knowledge that we've got a

job to do and we, and we can get it done.

Forming relationships with organizations and entities outside of the program planning

teams was described by several participants in this study. Jody talked about building

relationships among leaders and key people at the institution level in other departments to gain

their approval and willingness to help change traditional policies to meet the needs of the inter-

institutional online program. As a result their requests to those units for support were understood

and honored. In addition, the program planners were recognized on campus as knowledgeable

about online program planning and were called upon to share their expertise to other programs

that were emerging on campus. However, the relationship with the program planners at the

partner institution waned due to staff turn over and eventually there was little communication

about the program between the two institutions. Jody noted that the two institutions continue to

enjoy a good professional relationship although he did say that if another opportunity were to

arise to collaborate on a shared program he would want to have everything clear from the

beginning about who would take responsibility for which aspects of the program.

Gloria told me about relationships with external organizations that were important in

getting the resources needed for the inter-institutional program. She described a situation in

which the Collaborative RN to BSN program needed help from community colleges in the state

to develop and offer pre-requisite courses for students entering the program. She recalled, "We

already had a partnership, a working relationship. And I knew the person who was in charge with

doing their online courses. So I called her. And she said OK, we'll do it."

She went on to tell me,

But all of this is networking; getting to know the people who can help you, working with them, creating these working relationships so that you've got somebody to call when you get in a bind, when you get put in a corner, and not just throw your arms up and say, "Oh, guess that won't work" and that kind of thing. And you just kind of have to keep prodding. And we just had wonderful, wonderful relationships with these people.

Not all relationships described by the participants in this study were cooperative. Ann described relationships where a program planner might not feel engaged and feel that he or she has little input on the planning team. She described program planners who do not engage effectively in the process and why they might take on this resistant approach:

Certainly, engaging everyone in the process early on, in the decision making process, making people feel a part of it is important. Whether they come out of it with their desires, wants, and needs, is probably irrelevant, but I think they need to feel that they have a stake in it. And when something doesn't, when someone doesn't feel as though I've got a chair at the table, then I'll just sit on my hands and I'll let this just roll down hill. It's a very cynical view, but it's a view that we have to at least profess exists. The campuses are very competitive. They see themselves as competing against each other. And, what's best for the student is not necessarily their main goal.

As described earlier, Don's approach to building relationships among individual team members on the OBAS team rather than follow the expected collaborative model led to poor relationships between institutional team members and Don as well as between upper administrators leading the project. Gloria describes the challenge to relationships among the program planners for the Collaborative RN to BSN program when one of the institutions and the system facilitator formed a separate relationship to develop a national program without consulting the other program

planners on the team. She recalled,

> There were institutions in this program that were unhappy that they had not been
>
> contacted, that they had not been given the opportunity. And I think to this day there's
>
> still some bad feelings about that. We've kind of gotten over it and we've gone on but I
>
> don't think it will be forgotten.

When asked how this affected the inter-institutional program Gloria responded, "Nothing

changed there. But I do think it left a bad taste in a lot of people's mouth and I don't think they

will ever forget it." The institution that went outside of the partnership to offer a national

program remained involved with the state program as well. Gloria said about the relationship

with this institution, "All I can say is it's working and I think it's working because of the

camaraderie and the feeling that we're going to support everybody and we're going to make it

work."

<p style="text-align:center;">*Commitment*</p>

Commitment to the program and the program planning process was an issue mentioned

by nine of the twelve participants interviewed. Commitment to the purpose and goals of the

program has to do with the obligation and pledge of the program planners to engage in a

collaborative inter-institutional process to plan and offer a shared online program. The non-

traditional way of planning and offering the programs required a willingness to try something

new and to cross institutional and departmental boundaries to work with people and processes

that were sometimes unfamiliar. Some participants shared that they or other participants were

initially doubtful and uncertain about working inter-institutionally and about the program. Some

participants expressed a passion about the work they and other program planners were doing in

the inter-institutional program planning teams. Organizational identity issues, doubts about

working inter-institutionally, resistance to change, lack of focus toward program issues, failure to follow through on agreements, concerns about the viability of the program, and differences of opinion about curriculum surrounded the commitment issues described by participants.

Some of the program planners and members of project teams were reluctant to commit to the inter-institutional program goals and ways of working collaboratively. Ann recalled how the lack of commitment from one student services representative affected the Online Core Curriculum program planning team. She told me,

> There was one school in particular, and that was the only school, whose representative wasn't quite yet, hadn't quite bought into this whole idea of collaborative student services. You could almost sense that she was, felt like she was being dragged into this. In other words, a decision had been made apparently by her administrator, that this institution would be a part of this collaborative. I'm not so sure whether she ever really embraced that decision. I think she just kind of went along. Whenever something new was brought up, she never got passed the, "Well, we don't do it like this" phase. Whereas, the others went through that phase and then they began to look at, "Well, let's see how we can change it to make it better for the students." But this one individual really never got passed that. And I think in some respects, I'm not sure if she would ever get beyond it. But, it made the group dynamics really interesting.

Denny described a similar lack of commitment among the OBSIT program planners in the early stages of program planning. The project was initiated at the system level and the institutions in this partnership had been invited to participate in the project by high level administrators at the system level. None of them had worked collaboratively to plan an inter-

institutional program and needed to determine what was expected of them and their institutions before they could fully commit to the project. He told me,

> Within the working environment of the collaborative itself, the way that we proceeded initially was by, as you recall, this is the one that was top down, so these folks were in some sense, "invited" by the system, there were air quotes there (laughter), to participate and yet, you could tell easily by their behavior that there was a sense that they were being mandated to participate. And so we spent a *lot* of time in the beginning just feeling out, they needed to feel out what their participation was going to be. They had never come to the table voluntarily and they needed to understand what that balance was of when they would walk or whether they would stay. And so the thing spun for a while.

Carol also talked about his initial lack of commitment toward the processes and goals of the OBSIT program. As mentioned earlier, the turning point came for him when strengthening social relationships allowed him to see the value in working together and offering the program inter-institutionally.

As the program planning evolved for the OBSIT program the commitment to the program became stronger and was mentioned as one of the factors given for it's success. Jan told me that commitment to the program was the reason the planning team held together even though there were challenges from a variety of sources. He said,

> All of this, the technology evolves, the curriculum evolves, institutions evolve. There are a number of issues to deal with. I think it really comes back. I think the consortium works really well because the players have been committed to it. And I think if that weren't there then it would not have worked either. There's a number of stumbling blocks that could have killed the program.

He went on to say,

> We've been very fortunate with the, I would say with the players in this that the players
> at all levels, and there has been a lot of change, and a lot of different people have been
> brought into it over time, that each one has come in and adapted, and come to the same
> kind of commitment and desire to make this be a successful program.

Damon told me a similar story about evolving commitment in the planning of the
Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences Online program. He described a turning point that
occurred during a planning meeting that moved the planning forward. He said,

> We had just struggled and struggled together and we weren't making the progress and it
> was 4:30 in the afternoon on a Friday and the joint faculty were there, there were about
> twenty of us. We had been working on about five or six different sub-committees and
> trying to get things done and there was just a feeling right there that this may not ever
> happen. And 4:30 and we had the course outline laid out and actually I said, "If this is
> going to happen we've got to have faculty who are willing to deliver courses in this time
> schedule." And in twenty minutes we had people write their names down. I think it was
> just a fork in the road and we knew that we either were going to have to take the right
> fork or we were going to have to go into the parking lot.

Damon described how that incident affected the commitment of the team members and the
planning of the program,

> They said, "We've got too much invested. Let's just do it", the Nike kind of mentality.
> Just do it. That just do it spread through the whole group and they said, "Yes damn it,
> we're going to do it." And we just wrote our names on the sheet and from that point on
> we had course of study and we had professors of record, and we had people who were

going to advise, and we had a graduate committee come together, and we had then the whole thing.

Obtaining commitment from key stakeholders and administrators was a factor described by several participants. As described earlier Jody talked about the importance of getting the commitments of campus leaders to support the goals and needs of the Returning Professional Pharm. D. program. Bob talked about the need to gain the support and commitment of the graduate deans allowed the planning of the Human Development and Family Studies program to move forward.

Denny, Jody, and Rebecca described situations where program planners did not participate fully as they had agreed or simply failed to comply with agreements reached in the planning process. Denny described Don's lack of commitment to the collaborative process that nearly derailed the OBAS program. His colleagues and directors at the system office who could have stepped in to help Don to understand the collaborative process and the nature of planning inter-institutional online programs did not intervene to help correct the situation. Denny described how this lack of commitment to the process and to the goals of the collaborative nature of the program had lasting effects on the program design and implementation as well as the relationships of those involved in the planning process. Jody described how the waning interest from the partner institution and failure to follow through on original agreements led to the need for NNU to take over the major responsibility for planning and implementation of the program.

Rebecca described situations where two of the program planners who were co-principal investigators and program planners for the Certificate in African Studies program failed to carry out their responsibilities to plan and hold meetings, develop courses, and communicate in a timely manner with the principal investigator and other planners. She described the lack of

commitment from two program planners and contrasted that with Minkah's commitment to the goals of the program:

> So the reality is that although the two other principal investigators really want this to happen and want their name attached to it they don't want to put the effort that is required to do it. Minkah's the worker and she's the chief. I mean without her this project would have never gotten funded or written. And she did all the initial work and has continued to keep up with it because she believed in the cause.

When asked how about how this might affect the program she said,

> I think it could really collapse the program. But because Minkah will just take charge of it and do it and make it transparent and you know, has the documentation or whatever we need to say, "OK, well, you didn't do this and it had to be done." She's willing to do that.

> Several participants interviewed talked about their passion and commitment to the program. Thomas described the dedication of the staff of the SVCC that he suggested is grounded in their desire to make online programs available to the students in their system. He said,

> There is a passion that I don't necessarily think is unique; I think it's unique that it's shared by all six people. It's a passion to make these programs available to better serve people looking for educational opportunities. Not one of these people, and I include myself in these six, is doing this for just a job.

Jody told me, "I feel very fortunate that I work with people that feel as strongly as I do about supporting the students. And the students are what's important in this process. And we've got to give them a quality program."

John summarized his thoughts and lessons learned about the process of engaging in an inter-institutional online program planning team. His comments are grounded in the need for commitment to weather the challenges that may arise throughout the planning process. He said,

I've learned you have to think long term. You can't have it, it's not going to happen over night. The second thing is you can't let one frustration stop you. And as I told you as I began to see as we went along there were just so many instances that things could have caused it to fail and if you gave up and quit it would have failed at that time. So there are going to be tremendous disappointments, there are going to be numerous things that you have to overcome. That's the second one. The third thing though is if you have enough support and if it's a good enough program it's going to happen because there'll be enough people push and support it and continue down the line. And then probably the last thing is that there has to be at least one person that's just willing to devote huge amounts of time to see that this process goes through. There's got to be someone that's willing to in some cases to devote time everyday to developing the relationships, to making the calls, to writing the things that need to be done in order for that to be accomplished.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand what factors in inter-institutional program planning affect the design of online programs. In this chapter I presented the findings of this study organized around the three research questions.

The first question asked why educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan and develop online programs. This study suggested that career advancement needs for professionals, emerging needs for skilled workers in specific fields and extending learning opportunities not otherwise available on campuses were reasons the participants in this study

identified for planning an online program. The targeted students for the programs in this study were unlikely to attend a campus for classes because of long work hours, family responsibilities, or distance to the institutions that offered the programs. An online program was determined to be the best option for reaching the students who needed the degree the program offered. The study also found that while the educational needs for these online programs was given as the reason to offer them, none of the institutions involved could offer the programs alone. Two factors were identified by participants in the study as reasons for the decision to partner with other institutions to offer online programs, 1) resource scarcity, 2) the opportunity to be a part of an exciting new educational opportunity.

The second research question for this study asked what educational program issues were negotiated when designing collaborative online programs. Six program design factors were identified that were negotiated in the inter-institutional planning of online programs for the majority of the participants interviewed. They are 1) program support, 2) funding 3) operation and administration of the program, 4) admissions and registration, 5) curriculum and course development, and 6) technical infrastructure considerations. In a traditional campus setting these six factors are addressed by institutional policies and procedures that are not designed to address the needs of inter-institutional online programs. Individual institutions represented at the planning table have organizational missions, policies and procedures which are unique to each institution. Participants at the planning table must take these issues into consideration and work with representatives and teams from each institution to negotiate policies and procedures that could affect the ability to plan and implement inter-institutional online programs.

The third research question asked what social and political relationship issues were negotiated when designing inter-institutional online programs. The participants in this study

revealed four relationship factors represented at the planning tables that could affect the design of the programs and the relationships among the program planners: 1) organizational identity, the culture and contexts represented by the program planners, 2) leadership roles, both formal and informal that emerged among program planners, 3) the value of relationship building to help meet the goals of the program and the interests of the program planners, and 4) commitment to the goals of the program. Recognizing these relationship factors and working to develop and strengthen relationships among program planners and key stakeholders is essential. Doing so will help inter-institutional program planners to realize the full benefit from working together to plan and implement inter-institutional online programs.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand the factors in inter-institutional program planning that affect the design of online programs in higher education. The study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. Why do educational institutions form inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs?

2. What educational program issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

3. What social and political relationship issues were negotiated when planning inter-institutional online programs?

This chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions derived from the data analysis, discussion of the conclusions, and recommendations for future research related to inter-institutional planning of online programs.

Summary

This study was a qualitative study using interviews and document analysis as data collection methods. Twelve participants were interviewed who had experience in program planning for inter-institutional online programs. The participants represented nine programs located in the Southeast, Southwest, and Midwest of the United States. The programs represented in the study were online core curriculum programs, bachelor's degree programs, master's degree programs, doctoral degree programs, and certificate programs. The consortium types represented

in these planning teams included in-state system-wide multi-institution collaborations, public and private multi-institutional collaborations, multi-state multi-system alliance, in-state multi-system multi-institutional collaborations. Using a critical incident technique I conducted in-depth interviews with participants about his or her experiences in inter-institutional program planning for online programs. The use of the critical incident approach helped to elicit rich descriptive detail about participants' experiences in the collaborative situations and how the design decisions were made about the programs. The resulting data are primary source data that helped me to gain an understanding of the events as they occurred and their meaning from the perspective of the interviewee. I used documents related to the programs and the institutions involved in the program planning efforts to help me to validate what the participants told me during the interviews. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Pseudonyms were assigned and used for each participant and program to protect the identity of the participants. Microsoft Office Word was initially used organizing, coding, and sorting the transcribed interviews. As the data set grew I moved the data into Atlas.ti, a qualitative data software program, in order to gain more control and options to work with the data. A constant comparison method was used to compare the data from each interview and derive a set of codes and themes across all of the data until no new codes or themes emerged from the data. These data revealed findings related to each of the three research questions that guided this study.

Factors related to the decision to collaborate to plan and develop online programs included the need to expand learning opportunities for students who could not travel to a campus location due to time or distance to attend classes. Once the online program need was established the institutions realized that they could not offer the programs online without partnering with other institutions or agencies. Factors that related to the decision to form inter-institutional

partnerships to offer online programs included: 1) resource scarcity, 2) the opportunity to be a part of an exciting new educational opportunity.

Planning inter-institutional online programs involves negotiating educational program issues that are traditionally addressed at the local institutional level. Traditional policies and procedures for campus based programs do not adequately address these needs for shared online programs. Each institution at the planning table has its own missions, policies and procedures that are unique to the institution. Program planners must be able to cross institutional and departmental boundaries to negotiate these policies and procedures. This study revealed six educational program factors that were negotiated in the inter-institutional planning of online programs represented in this study: 1) program support, 2) funding 3) operation and administration of the program, 4) admissions and registration, 5) curriculum and course development, and 6) technical considerations.

The program planners in this study revealed ways in which the social and political relationships among the program planners strengthened or hindered the planning efforts and negotiation of the educational program issues. This study revealed four relationship factors represented at the planning tables that could affect the design of the programs: 1) organizational identity, the culture and contexts represented by the program planners, 2) leadership roles, both formal and informal that emerged among program planners, 3) the value of relationship building to help meet the goals of the program and the interests of the program planners, and 4) commitment to the goals of the program. Recognizing these relationship factors and working to develop and strengthen relationships among program planners was a key factor in realizing the full benefit from working together to plan and implement inter-institutional online programs.

Conclusions and Discussion

The findings of this study led me to draw the following three conclusions regarding inter-institutional planning of online programs in higher education:

1. Resource scarcity is the primary motivating factor for forming inter-institutional partnerships to expand access to online programs in higher education.

2. Educational planners must negotiate a variety of administrative, pedagogical, and technical issues related to the design and delivery of inter-institutional online programs.

3. Social and political relationships, especially those around organizational identity, are central to inter-institutional planning of online programs in higher education.

The following three sections presents a discussion of each of these conclusions in relation to the existing literature on program planning, inter-institutional and organizational collaboration, and distance education.

Reasons Institutions Partner to Plan Online Programs

Resource scarcity is the primary motivating factor for forming inter-institutional partnerships to expand access to online programs in higher education. For all of the programs represented in this study the purpose for offering an online program was to expand educational opportunities to students who could not attend classes on campus. Implementing online programs using emerging technologies is a complex undertaking requiring resources and expertise that may not be available at an individual campus. When faced with the need to expand access through online programs and situations of resource scarcity inter-institutional partnerships are formed to meet the online program needs that no one institution can meet alone.

Expanding Educational Access through Online Programs

The literature related to distance education indicates that there is a growing need for programs that address the changing educational needs of professionals who are already working in their fields as well as an emerging need for skilled workers in specific fields. Allen and Seamans (2007) found that the most often cited objective for online courses and programs is improving student access. Schrum (2000) writes, "Today the global education community is faced with a unique problem. Learners in every location must acquire new skills, be literate, and understand constantly changing dynamics" (p. 91). Seven of the nine programs represented in this study offered programs designed to meet the changing educational needs of students who wished to acquire new skills or update their professional degree.

The targeted students for the programs described in this study were busy professionals unlikely to attend classes on a campus because of long work hours, family responsibilities, or distance to the institutions that offered the programs. An online program was determined to be the best option for reaching the students who needed the degree the program offered. Hanna (2003) writes,

> Recent trends and studies in the United States indicate that learners, especially adults, expect institutions of higher education to be responsive to their individual needs, which increasingly means providing course schedules and formats that are convenient, easily accessed, and independent of fixed times and locations. (p. 68)

In a study examining five years of growth in distance education Sikora & Carroll (2002) reported, "Among undergraduate students, those with characteristics related to family and work responsibilities were more likely to participate in distance education" (p. 17). This study supports

the findings in the literature that suggest that changing educational needs and expanding access, are reasons institutions offer online programs.

Reasons to Form Inter-institutional Partnerships to Offer Online Programs

Participants in this study were clear about the need to expand access to students through online programs but none of the institutions in this study had the resources to offer the program alone. Inter-institutional partnerships are formed when two or more institutions wish to offer online programs and find they do not have the resources to plan and offer the program alone. Resource scarcity is frequently cited in the organizational literature as a primary reason for forming collaborative partnerships (Hord, 1986; Oliver, 1990; Schermerhorn, 1975). According to Oliver (1990), "When resources are scarce and organizations are unable to generate needed resources, they will be more likely to establish ties with other organizations." Likewise, the literature for inter-institutional collaboration for online programs in higher education suggests that resource scarcity is a primary reason to form partnerships. Sharma and Chaudhary (2003) wrote, "In DE, institutions collaborate primarily to share the financial burden of developing, providing and maintaining educational resources" (p. 2). Van Soeren et al, (2000) reported, "Accessibility and availability of resources were of concern, particularly for smaller, remote faculties" (p. 827). Similarly, all twelve participants interviewed in this study identified resource scarcity as a primary purpose for collaborating to offer the online program. Participants cited insufficient funding, inadequate technical infrastructure, a shortage of skilled faculty who were experienced in teaching online, and insufficient numbers of students to justify offering the program alone.

The findings of this study relative to the reasons institutions form partnerships to offer online programs are consistent with what is found in the literature. They partner to plan and offer

online programs because they do not have the resources to offer the programs alone. Resource

scarcity is the primary motivating factor for partnering to offer the programs.

Negotiating Administrative, Pedagogical, and Technical Issues

Educational planners must negotiate a variety of administrative, pedagogical, and

technical issues related to the design and delivery of inter-institutional online programs. Planning

educational programs requires a focus on key areas and tasks such as organizational mission,

program support, administration, funding, the needs of the learners, the types of learning

experiences that will be provided, who will teach in the program, how students will register, and

other substantive program planning issues. This study and others suggest that many of these

program planning factors have unique manifestations and become more complicated when

planning online programs in traditional education settings (Levy, 2003; McAlister, 2001; Patton,

2001; Schrum & Benson, 2002). Developing online programs requires not only program

planning expertise but also skill and knowledge in the issues related to online programs. Issues

related to the design and delivery of online courses, technical infrastructure supporting the

program, and selection and administration of course managements systems to name a few, have

specific technical requirements in the online program environment. Researchers in distance

education have identified a variety of factors to consider when offering online courses or

programs. Much of the research is focused on a review of factors such as course and curriculum

design, evaluating quality, delivery methods, student services, or faculty development within

specific programs and disciplines (Grandzol & Grandzol, 2006; Popovich & Neel, 2005; Schrum

& Benson 2000). Other studies have attempted to compile lists of factors to consider when

planning online programs. McAlister et al. (2001) suggested twelve topics that must be

addressed at the program planning level including: congruency with existing institutional

mission and strategies, administrative support, institutional obstacles to Web curriculum, intellectual property issues, instructor compensation, criteria for selecting classes to offer online, technical support for students and instructors, delivery methods, student assessment, technical skill of students, course delivery platform, and maintenance of course materials. Schrum and Benson (2002) identified the following factors that should be considered when offering online learning opportunities: faculty development, technical support, student services, curriculum design, program technologies, course design, and marketing and pricing. Levy (2003) suggested six areas that should be considered when planning online programs in higher education: 1) vision and plans, 2) curriculum, 3) staff training and support, 4) student services, 5) student training and support, and 6) copyright and intellectual property. The factors found in the literature overlap to some extent but also indicate various differences. Further research is needed to identify a more comprehensive description of program planning factors for online programs.

When institutions engage in inter-institutional partnerships to plan and offer online programs the complexity increases because the policies and procedures for planning online programs must be negotiated across institutional boundaries. Two studies were found that provide a list of factors to consider when offering inter-institutional online programs. Sharma and Chaudhary (2003) offer guidelines for success in inter-institutional collaboration for online program in eight areas: 1) confirm institutional commitment, 2) acknowledge and reward stakeholders, 3) adapt materials for local use, 4) create a quality control agency, 5) streamline course material and procedures, 6) ensure program content is current, 7) keep administration in-house, 8) conduct joint marketing strategies. Marles and Stefanick (2001) identified three main areas that are crucial to the development of inter-institutional online programs: 1) administrative concerns, 2) pedagogical and curriculum concerns, and 3) technical concerns.

This study adds to the online program planning studies by identifying six factors that must be negotiated in inter-institutional online program planning: 1) program support, 2) funding, 3) operation and administration of the program, 4) admissions and registration, 5) curriculum and course development, and 6) technical considerations. These factors fall into the three categories identified by Marles and Stefanick: administrative, pedagogical, and technical concerns. Program planners designing inter-institutional programs must negotiate these online program issues across institutional boundaries, within institutional boundaries, and with other planners at the planning tables.

These six factors are not unique to inter-institutional online programs but they take on different manifestations in a collaborative partnership. They are traditionally addressed by institutional policies and procedures that are not designed to address the needs of online programs let alone inter-institutional planning and offering of online programs. Individual institutions represented at the planning table have organizational missions and policies and procedures, (ways of doing business) which are unique to each institution. Campus administrators, including deans, department heads, faculty members, and registrars may initially be reluctant or unable to change these rules for the sake of a collaborative inter-institutional online program. Participants at the planning table must take these issues into consideration and work with representatives and teams from each institution to negotiate policies and procedures that could affect or derail the ability to plan and implement inter-institutional online programs. Each of the six factors is discussed in the following sections.

Program Support

Program support involves the support of the administration, faculty, or other stakeholders of the participating institutions and is a key factor in successful planning of online programs.

Husman and Miller (2001), Levy (2003), and Shelton and Saltsman (2005) discussed the

importance of the role of administrators in supporting online programs. Shelton and Saltsman

(2005) note: "A leader with institutional authority must champion the online program for it to

reach its fullest potential. Upper-level administrative support is necessary to bring about the

required organizational change within the institution" (p. 9). According to Levy (2003),

administrators have the potential to affect programs "…by securing resources, influencing

potential participants, supporting the changes, and implementing process that will overcome the

barriers that affect instructors and students" (p. 3). Similarly, this study found that administrative

support is a key factor in the success of the inter-institutional online program. These policies and

procedures are often designed for traditional programs offered on campus and need to be adapted

in some way to meet the requirements for the inter-institutional online program. Across

institutions in a collaborative partnership there are differences in tuition and fees, admissions and

registration, faculty workloads, and questions about residency that must be addressed for the

online degree program. This study found that in some cases the program was ready to roll out

when it was discovered that the program could not go forward because a policy or procedure in

place at the institutional level had been overlooked that could not be changed or altered by the

planning team alone. Successful negotiation of these issues allowed program planning to

continue planning and offer the program. For example, The Human Development and Family

Studies program was ready to launch when they discovered that the graduate schools of the

institutions represented in the partnership had rules and policies that made it impossible to launch

a collaborative online program. Program planners arranged a meeting of the graduated school

deans to inform them about the program and to ask for their support and commitment. Gaining

the support of this group of graduate school deans across the institutions was essential for moving forward with the program.

Program planners may need to gain support at the campus level to change local policies and procedures while working with the program planning team to solve the issues collectively across all institutions involved in the partnership. Jody discussed the need to work with various departments at the local campus level to change policies related to admissions and registration. Thomas, working at the system level, worked with registrars from institutions across the system to solve the registration problems that almost prevented the launch of the Online MBA program. Gloria, Denny, Jan, Carol, John and Damon talked about incidents where the issues in the inter-institutional partnership required approval and decision-making at the system level. Gaining support from stakeholders across systems, institutions, or across campus is not unique to online program planners. However, gaining administrative support to change traditional policies and procedures across the various organizations and institutions involved for a new type of program becomes complicated and is a key factor in the successful planning and delivery of online programs. Administrative support is also necessary for gaining the support of the faculty. Denny, Jody, Thomas, Barbara, Rebecca, and Gloria, Damon, Jan, and John, mentioned the importance of faculty support and buy in to the program goals as a supporting factor in moving forward with the planning and implementation of the program. Building relationships with administrators and stakeholders at the institutional and/or system level and across institutional boundaries is a key factor in gaining the needed support for the program.

Funding

Decisions around funding for the inter-institutional program have to be addressed across organizational boundaries. The costs for inter-institutional online programs are related to

program planning and start up as well as ongoing costs for implementation and maintenance.

Program planners interviewed in this study discussed funding issues related to online course

development, release time for faculty, how faculty will be paid, how tuition is set and paid, how

funds get dispersed to individual institutions, costs for program start up and implementation, and

ongoing costs related to the operation and sustainability of the program. As noted previously,

inter-institutional planning for online programs is often a response to the problem of resource

scarcity. In lean budgetary times the pressures to do more with less will have an effect on

program planning decisions that affect the design and implementation as well as the future

sustainability of the program. Funding models and budgetary issues for inter-institutional online

programs are not specifically addressed in the current literature on inter-institutional program

planning for online programs. Coming to an agreement about a viable funding model for the

shared program is an essential and key issue that program planners must undertake.

Operation and Administration

Online inter-institutional programs are expected to be long-term programs that will need

oversight and governance throughout the life of the program. Participants interviewed discussed

issues related to operation and administration of the program including tasks associated with day

to day administrative activities to keep the program running. It is important to establish a central

program director or operational manager to work with program governance to manage ongoing

aspects of the program such as student services, course development, managing student

enrollments, working with registrars, handling money and budgets, technology infrastructure,

enrolling students in course management systems, reporting grades, advising, managing

problems in courses, and so on. When an individual institution offers an online program this

would likely be assigned to the appropriate departments on campus. When offering inter-

institutional online programs an entity must be appointed to serve in this role as a central point of contact and management for the shared program.

Admissions and Registration

Working across multiple institutions with disparate admissions and registrations systems is a challenge to inter-institutional online programs. These issues may not present a challenge to single programs at an individual campus where students simply follow their institutional procedures for admissions and registration. However, this study suggests that negotiating admissions and registration issues is a fundamental issue related to inter-institutional planning of online programs. Participants in this study discussed how decisions were made to develop and implement policies and procedures for admissions and registration that took into account the needs of both the students and the administrative procedures on each campus. Ann, Thomas, and Jody talked about adapting admissions and registration systems that were designed for local campus use that could not share information across the institutions involved in the partnership. At the time the programs in this study were planned and implemented there were few existing centralized systems or methods to share student data among registration systems at partner institutions. Agreements had to be reached about which institution students would be admitted to and register with, where the degree would come from, how students would withdraw from courses, varying tuition structures among institutions, and other related issues. Adding to this complexity are issues surrounding how students are added to learning managements systems at one institution and how their grades generated in these systems are provided to the home institutions of the student. Institutions vary in how they handle these issues within an inter-institutional partnership but it is an issue that will require negotiating at the planning tables.

Curriculum and Course Development

In this study curriculum development was described as one of the most challenging and potentially contentious issues among program planners. Developing a curriculum for an online program and issues related to online course development are important considerations for the planning and offering of online programs. However, the existing research tends to focus on the issues that are associated with course design and strategies for online delivery rather than an overall approach to curriculum planning (Berge & Mrozowski, 2001; Grandzol & Grandzol, 2006; McAlister, et al, 2001; Popovich & Neel, 2005; Schrum & Benson, 2000). The participants in this study indicated that curriculum development is a critical factor for designing inter-institutional online programs since the curriculum is shared across all institutions in the partnership. Jan described curriculum development as challenging even among faculty members at the same institution. While this may not be unusual, it becomes more complicated across institutional boundaries with different missions and identities

Various strategies exist for developing and sharing courses that make up the curriculum for an inter-institutional online program. The courses may be developed and offered by each institution independently or the content may be developed by teams of faculty and staff from each institution in the partnership. Delivery methods, format of materials, maintenance of course materials, and instructional strategies and pedagogies for teaching online were among the factors related to course development cited in the literature (Grandzol & Grandzol, 2006; Popovich & Neel, 2005; Schrum & Benson 2000, McAlister, et al, 2001; Levy, 2003). The program planners in this study discussed issues related to funding for course development, processes for collaborating to develop courses, and accepting courses designed and taught at partner institutions.

Other issues related to course development found in this study were related to technical issues. It is important to note that six of the program planners in this study were administrators and were more focused on curriculum development than course development issues. Course development is a task usually undertaken by faculty members. As with other aspects of planning for online programs developing a curriculum and courses for online programs must take into consideration the technical capabilities and limitations of the shared online environment. Using technology to adapt or revise a course requires expertise and skill in using the technologies and emerging online pedagogies for teaching online.

Technical Considerations

The nature of online programs is that they are offered using technologies that are relatively new and emerging. Technical issues include the technical infrastructure needs, technical requirements for course development and delivery methods, and technical support. The technical infrastructure available for offering online programs can affect the ability of a program to be launched or implemented. The infrastructure can determine the ability to implement necessary online resources such as online registration systems or course delivery tools. As has been noted, one area where this is particularly challenging is with admissions and registration systems that support the students in the program. Solutions to the problems had to be created with teams of staff across the institutions. Students must be able to seamlessly move through these systems to register, take courses, receive grades, and earn their degrees. Course design and teaching methods must take into consideration the type of technical solutions available for course delivery. The issues related to technical considerations are multiplied in importance as planners try to work across institutions that may or may not have the necessary technical infrastructure available.

The Importance of Social and Political Relationships

Social and political relationships, especially those around organizational identity, are central to inter-institutional planning of online programs in higher education. Cervero and Wilson (2006) state, "The form of practical action that really matters is undertaken at the planning tables where people confer, discuss, and argue in making judgments about what to do to produce the important features of the educational program" (p. 94). The relationships in collaborative partnerships are described in the literature as key to successful collaborations and are constantly negotiated in the planning process (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Donaldson & Kozoll; 1999; Kanter, 1994; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994). The social and political relationships represented in this study illustrate how the relationship dynamics frame the planning process. The planners in this study engaged in negotiated relations of power at the planning tables to affect the program design as well as the relationships themselves. Four major relationship issues were identified around which negotiation strategies were exercised: organizational identity, leadership roles, commitment, and relationships themselves. Organizational identity is the primary social and political relationship factor that is negotiated in inter-institutional program planning situations in higher education.

It is important to understand the level of interdependence the institutions in this study engaged in to better understand how their social and political relationships affect the design of the programs and the relationships themselves. Varying levels of interdependence have been described in the literature related to levels of commitment and action required to engage with others (Cervero, 1992; Donaldson & Kozoll; Schermerhorn, 1979). Donaldson and Kozoll emphasize the importance of relationships in collaborative program planning and describe interdependence as the degree to which (a) organizations take each other into account in pursuing

their goals and (b) the organizations' growth and survival within the external environment are linked." (p. 5). The collaborative partnerships described in this study represent the form of interdependence described by Cervero (1992) as collaboration. Collaboration is described as the highest level of interdependence in which the institutions must take each other into account in pursuing their common goals.

To understand the relationship dynamics in this study it is important to note that before forming partnerships to plan the online program all nine of the programs represented in this study engaged in the form of interdependence described by Cervero as coordination. They took into account the activities of other institutions but avoided direct competition for the same set of learners by having their own market niches and a strong institutional mission and identity. The consortium types described in this study involved institutions in public state university systems. In some cases the institutions represented at the planning tables were a mix of research universities, regional universities, state colleges and community colleges. In one instance the partnership was between a research university and a private college in another part of the state. These institutions were not used to working together to plan academic programs. Once the decision was made to collaborate to offer the program their relationships changed to a higher level of interdependence. This collaborative form of interdependence frames the social and political relationship contexts among the planners at the planning tables who are used to working independently. It is in this newly formed interdependent relationship that issues of organizational identity arise and are negotiated.

Organizational/institutional identity is a powerful concept in higher education. The institution's mission and goals, reputation, branding, market niches, and over all uniqueness are highly prized and guarded. Institutions in higher education are used to working independently to

plan and offer their academic programs. Program planners involved in inter-institutional partnership to plan and offer an online program operate in role identity and represent the missions and goals of their institutions. Inter-institutional partnerships require that an institution give up some of its independence in favor of working collaboratively, which can be perceived a giving up some aspects of institutional identity. In situations where program planners operating in role identity perceive that their mission, brand, standards for quality, and identity are threatened they will attempt to negotiate to protect the power and interests of their institution.

Cervero and Wilson (2006) state, "Planners act in their social and organizational settings to produce educational outcomes and, simultaneously, to maintain or transform their political relations with others in those settings" (p. 192). Planners must be able to recognize and negotiate types of situations described as consultations, bargaining, and disputes (Cervero & Wilson 2006; Newman, 1994). This study offers empirical evidence for the situations and negotiation strategies identified by Cervero and Wilson. In this study nine of the twelve participants described negotiating relationship issues around organizational identity. Planning teams consisted of planners with relatively symmetrical power relations in terms of their organizational roles. However, institutional identity issues arose at the planning tables around issues such as size and mission, reputation, and inter-institutional rivalry and competition. Participants described situations where planners used their power to attempt to negotiate their own and their institutional interests in protecting their perceived institutional brand and reputation. For example, Denny recalled an incident where a representative from a large regional university continually expressed concerns about planning a program with smaller state universities. Discussions around curriculum development led to conflict as planners disagreed about what should be taught in the program based on what was taught at their own institutions. These

conflicts of interests required planners to spend time negotiating for a mutually agreed upon solution, work through the issues, and build or patch up relationships so that they could move forward in the planning process. John and Damon recalled relationship issues that had to be resolved around long standing institutional rivalry and competition in sports and other competitive arenas. To form an alliance to plan and offer a joint online program with former competitors was a radical change in relationships between these two university systems. Relationships among administrators, staff, and faculty members had to be built and nurtured. The participants exercised their power in trying to negotiate the goals important to them and to their institutions.

Building relationships of trust among institutional representatives is one way to strengthen the collaborative relationship among institutions (Kanter, 1994; Ring & Van De Ven, 1994; Schermerhorn, 1979). Building trust will minimize and neutralize the issues related to organizational identity. However, building trust takes time. Organizational identity issues are often manifested in the early stages of the relationship when the roles and missions of the individual institutions in the partnership as well as the overall goals for the shared program are still unclear. Planners who enter into a collaborative relationship with the ability to recognize issues that arise around organizational identity can prepare to address it up front. It would be useful for planners to develop strategies to build a shared identity around the program early in the relationship.

Cervero and Wilson (2006) define program planning as "a social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interests in contexts marked by socially structured relations of power" (p. 24). They go on to say, "As planners negotiate interests in relations of power, they produce educational outcomes and

simultaneously, social and political outcomes by reproducing or changing the social and political relationships that make planning possible" (p. 24). The planners in this study engaged in negotiated relations of power at the planning tables to affect the program design as well as the relationships themselves. The findings of this study confirm that the social and political relationships in an inter-institutional collaboration both frame the planning process through their interdependent relationships and are negotiated in various ways during the planning process.

It is important to keep in mind that while organizational identity is the primary relationship issue planners must negotiate in inter-institutional program planning in higher education the primary motivating factor for entering into these inter-institutional partnerships is resource scarcity. Institutions who are used to working independently and making their own decisions about substantive program planning issues must now give up much of this independence because they cannot develop the program alone. In some of the programs represented in this study the program planners were mandated to participate in the inter-institutional program planning. Once forced into a collaborative arrangement to meet institutional needs organizational identity issues surface as planners try to negotiate to protect the power and interests of their institutions. In collaborative arrangements everyone has to give up something to get something. This is rarely the first choice of the institutions engaged in inter-institutional partnerships. Working collaboratively is more difficult than going it alone. However, like it or not, when situations of resource scarcity arise decisions are often made to work interdependently with others to meet the program needs. The social and political relationships at the planning table affect the capacity for the planners to act to produce educational outcomes as well as social and political outcomes. It is essential for planners to attend to the relationship issues in inter-institutional program planning so that they might affect

the educational outcomes as well as shape the social and political outcomes that make the

program possible.

Implications for Practice and Research

The findings of this study offer an analysis of what planners do in inter-institutional

partnerships to plan online programs. It investigates the intersection of collaboration and

program planning to examine why program planners form inter-institutional partnerships to plan

and develop online programs, what educational design issues are negotiated when designing

inter-institutional online programs, and how social and political relationship issues related to the

program planning are negotiated among the program planners. The next two sections address the

implications for practices and recommendations for further research.

Implications for Practice

This study may be useful to administrators who are considering entering into inter-

institutional partnerships to offer shared online programs. This study identified a variety of

reasons that institutions choose to engage in inter-institutional online program planning. In this

study seven of the programs were convened or sponsored at the system level of a state university

system. Policy makers at the system level must determine whether to expand program access

through online programs. This is a costly endeavor in many ways. Seeing what other systems

have done to form partnerships to plan and develop shared online programs will assist

administrators in making the decision related to whether to proceed with a collaborative

partnership to plan online programs.

This study highlights the practical action planners take in the planning and design of

inter-institutional online programs. The findings of this study identified six educational design

factors around administrative, pedagogical, and technical concerns that are important to consider

in inter-institutional partnerships to plan shared online programs: 1) program support, 2) funding 3) operation and administration of the program, 4) admissions and registration, 5) curriculum and course development, and 6) technical considerations. These factors take on unique manifestations when planning online programs in collaborative inter-institutional arrangements. Administrators and program planners will be able to identify potential issues before they enter into the collaborative arrangement to plan and offer the program. Program planners who are looking for examples of what other program planners have done in planning inter-institutional programs will be able to refer to the findings of this study and these six factors to inform their own practice.

Finally, this study provides a detailed account of how the planners in this study negotiated social and political relationship issues at planning tables. Organizational identity is a primary relationship factor that is negotiated in inter-institutional program planning in higher education. It is essential to understand the social and political relationship issues that are likely to arise in the inter-institutional planning context. Planners must be able to act within these contexts to maintain or transform relationships that will enable them to effectively produce educational outcomes. Program planners entering into any type of program planning situation may benefit from the experiences of the program planners in this study. The essential issues related to collaboration and program planning are not unique to collaborative planning of online programs. Program planners will benefit from gaining an awareness and understanding of the types of social and political situations that are likely to arise at planning tables and the negotiation strategies used by the program planners in this study. Program planners engaged in inter-institutional planning for online programs will gain from having a specific list of potential relationship factors that may arise related to planning inter-institutional online programs.

Recommendations for Further Research

Cervero and Wilson (2006) state, "Working the planning table offers a way to anticipate and negotiate the interests of stakeholders and the power they exercise to promote their interests" (p. 260). They go on to say, "In our analysis, planners cannot only see power and interests, they can anticipate doing something with and about them" (p. 261). Planners must be able to read their role and the political contexts of power and interest to effectively work the planning tables. This assumes that the planners have appropriate levels of self-awareness and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, an awareness of the interests and needs of others in a social context, and the ability to understand and manage the multiple interests and relations of power at the planning tables. These are concepts related to emotional intelligence. Can program planners be successful if they do not possess these characteristics? In this study Bob suggested that there are people who can be on these teams but not lead them because they do not possess these interpersonal skills. It would seem that these skills would be necessary for all planners, not just those in leadership roles. It would be useful to look at the characteristics of successful program planners in collaborative program planning projects to determine essential characteristics of emotional intelligence related to successful program planning. It would be useful to teach program planners how to be more skilled in relationships and negotiations

Another area for research is related to group dynamics and team development. The people at the planning tables in this study represented teams of planners working together at various planning tables to obtain mutual goals. These are working teams that span institutional boundaries to solve complex problems and as such go through stages of team development and group dynamics. How does the Cervero and Wilson approach to program planning take these concepts into consideration among teams at the planning tables? To what extent could team

building activities facilitate the work of these teams and lead to more productive collaborative partnerships?

Further research into negotiation strategies and how those strategies apply to collaborative program planning would be useful. What are the specific negotiation tactics planners use at inter-institutional planning tables in each of the three types of situations described by Cervero and Wilson? A common solution to bargaining situations is to compromise, or agree to disagree. What are the forms of action that ultimately lead to this solution of compromise? Are there common courses of action that are used in consultative situations and disputes? Is a dispute situation a failure to negotiate effectively? Are these situations located along a continuum where various strategies are tried until there are no further options for negotiation? Is power the ultimate strategy for managing dispute situations where only conflict exists and power reigns? Further research into what types of situations arise and the specific forms of action and negotiation strategies taken along with the end result of these negotiations would be helpful.

Factors related to institutional/organizational identity required careful attention and negotiation among the planners represented in this study. Organizational identity surfaces early in the relationships and is related to differences in type, size, or status of the institutions in the partnership. How do these differences affect the balance of power and interest at the planning tables? It would be interesting to compare program planning among institutions that are unlike with that of "alike" ones to see if the differences are significant. If these factors are found to be intrinsically potent in inter-institutional collaborative partnerships what are the implications for selecting partners and for how planners must prepare to act at the planning tables?

An area for research exists around the reflective practice of the planners involved in inter-institutional program planning. I began this study by saying that the processes and strategies that

are effective in building and maintaining effective relationships in a collaborative partnership are learned in practice, but not taught. Reflection on past experience therefore has been the best teacher in learning about effective courses of action. More experienced program planners may have tacit knowledge based on their past experience. In relying on this past experience are they missing new and innovative ways of engaging in program planning that may transcend their learned set of possible actions? The planners in this study engaged in various negotiation strategies but there is no indication that they were actively reflecting on a course of action during or immediately following the incidents they described. In fact, several participants had no prior experience in collaborative inter-institutional program planning to draw from. Several participants told me it was good to take the time to reflect and talk about this with me and saw value in sharing their experiences with others. Is it possible to develop a set of factors that guide reflective practice for program planners or does this become too prescriptive? Further research into the reflective practice of program planners could offer insight. Helping planners to become more reflective about their planning practices and consciously choosing appropriate actions based on experience informed by theoretical perspective could be helpful.

Finally, it is important to note that in retrospect using the Critical Incident Technique for collecting data about program planning activities may not be sufficient to understand the full extent of the power and interests that are represented at the planning tables for inter-institutional program planning. The CIT helped me to gain an understanding of the events as they occurred and their meaning from the perspective of the participants I interviewed. I was able to obtain rich descriptive information from the planners as they recalled significant events in their past experience. However, based on my experiences in working with inter-institutional teams in higher education I expected to find more situations where the relationship issues and the conflicts

were not so easily resolved. Situations involving power and politics can be messy and complicated. Most of the participants I interviewed described the situations in a way that put their institutions and their ability to negotiate the relationship factors in the best possible light and to their satisfaction. The critical incident method is self-report. While I believe it is a good method for gathering data about what people actually do, I believe observation would be the best method to obtain a fuller understanding of the power and politics at inter-institutional program planning tables.

<div align="center">Final Notes</div>

Engaging in inter-institutional partnerships to plan, develop, and offer shared online programs in higher education is one way to meet the changing educational needs for online programs. This study examined issues related to program planning, collaboration, and distance education to help identify defining characteristics that tell us what works best and what to avoid when engaging in inter-institutional partnerships to plan online programs. Distance education is growing rapidly and the need to offer programs at a time and place convenient for non-traditional learners is increasing. At the same time we are beginning to experience an economic slowdown in the United States. These factors alone increase the likelihood that the interests in inter-institutional partnerships to offer online programs will grow and partnerships will be formed to offer these programs. It will be important to go into these partnerships with a sense of what planners need to know and do to effectively plan and develop inter-institutional online programs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRE-INTERVIEW PACKET

Brief Description of the Study

Collaboration is often more difficult than working alone because of the need to take a variety of relationships or points of view into consideration. Yet, it is a program planning and implementation strategy that is being entered into by a growing number of postsecondary education entities for the purpose of planning and offering distance education programs. An assumption of this study is that the relationships involved in collaborative program planning affect the design of the programs. And yet, the processes and strategies that are effective in building and maintaining effective relationships in a collaborative partnership are learned in practice, but not taught. Reflection on past experience therefore has been the best teacher in learning about effective courses of action. This study seeks to make explicit the tacit knowledge gained through the experiences of participants in collaborative program planning for online programs.

The following is a list of design considerations that are often addressed when planning online programs. In a collaborative partnership these design issues involve the resources and interests of the institutions and organizations represented by the collaborative team. Program planners involved in technology based collaborative program development need to understand the processes of interdependent relationships and how to work within a collaborative to ensure the desired resolution of these and other issues for the participants involved. For our conversation you may want to review this list as you think about how these issues were resolved for the online program you will describe. Please feel free to add design considerations that you feel are missing from this list.

- Technical Infrastructure

- Learning Management System

- Facilities/Resource Management

- Policies and Procedures

- Consistency with Institutional and/or Organizational Mission

- Program Need

- Administration of the Program

- Accreditation

- Contracts and Agreements

- Financial Management

- Ownership

- Marketing

- Support Services

- Student Services

- Registration Processes

- Course Calendars

- Curriculum Development

- Course Development

- Faculty Recruitment

- Faculty Development

- Program Assessment and Evaluation

Overview of the Critical Incidents Method

Prior to our meeting I would like you to reflect on your experiences in a collaborative online program planning situation. I will ask you to recall two critical incidents that occurred in the collaborative that affected the design of the program. Think about one incident which supported the collaborative program planning efforts, and one that in some way hindered the collaborative program planning. The incidents you describe may have occurred at any time during the collaborative process. For example, while you were leading or supporting the efforts of others in the collaborative, during negotiations with other participants in the collaborative, or with stakeholders in your organization.

For the purposes of this study, a critical incident is an experience that stands out vividly in your memory because it was particularly encouraging or particularly difficult. For the interview I will ask you to tell me about a critical incident that represents a time when your efforts associated with collaborative online program planning were 1) threatened, challenged, or otherwise obstructed from within the group or by stakeholders in your organization, or 2) your efforts were really going well and supported by the group or the stakeholders in your organization.

Overview of the Interview Process

When we meet for our interview I will begin by asking you to briefly describe the program planning situation in which the critical incidents you will describe occurred such as the following:

- What was the officially stated purpose of the collaboration?

- What organizations or institutions were represented in the collaborative?

- What roles were represented on the team? Who was responsible for what?

- How often did the group meet face-to-face?

- How did communication among team members occur?

- How did you prepare yourself, and how were you prepared by others, to carry out your role on the collaborative team?

- What are the top five design decisions made by the group for this program?

Then, I will ask you to recall from memory two incidents that occurred in a collaborative online program planning situation that affected the design of the program. Think about one incident which supported the collaborative program planning efforts, and one that in some way hindered the collaborative program planning efforts. I will ask you to expand upon each of these incidents by asking you to provide details such as the following:

- When and where did the incident take place?

- Imagine that you are back in time at the situation. What exactly happened? Who said and did what?

- What were you attempting to accomplish? What opposition did you face? What support? Who was involved? What were the barriers to accomplishing your purpose? How did you deal with these problems/barriers?

- Why do you think this situation occurred in the first place?

- What advantages did you have in this situation? What advantages did others have?

- Who was at a disadvantage and why?

- What were the final results of this situation?

- What did you learn from this situation? How have you applied what you learned to similar situations?

Keep in mind that these questions represent the overall approach I will take to our interview. Please don't be concerned with trying to recall this information now. I will ask you questions like theses as we discuss each incident that you think is significant. Thank you for participating in my study. I look forward to our conversation.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "Collaborative Planning of Online Programs " conducted by Marie Lasseter from the Department of Adult Education at the University of Georgia (770-725-0314) under the direction of Dr. Ronald M. Cervero, Department of Adult Education, University of Georgia (706-542-2221). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The purpose of this study is to understand how the relationships and decisions made among participants engaged in collaborative program planning affect the design of online programs.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:
1)   Review an information packet prior to the interview which includes the following documents: Brief Description of the Study, Overview of Critical Incidents Method, and Overview of the Interview Process.
2)   Participation in this study will require one personal interview with the researcher lasting approximately 2 hours. A brief follow-up telephone interview may be necessary if the researcher needs to clarify information.
3)   Provide documents related to the scope of the collaborative project. These may include items such as descriptions of roles and expectations for how the collaboration would occur, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, action items from group meetings, and examples of program components that illustrate where collaboration guided the outcome of the design decisions.
4)   I give my permission to allow the researcher to audio-tape the interview in order to transcribe the tape and interpret the data.

My participation in this study will contribute to the knowledge in the area of collaborative program planning for online programs and I may gain some personal insight into the collaborative program development processes.

No discomforts or stresses are expected.

I understand that there are no foreseen risks involved in this research.

I understand that information about me or provided by me will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. The tape recording of my interview will be destroyed at the completion of the study's data collection, analysis and write-up. December 2006.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project and can be reached at 770-725-0314.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Marie Lasseter   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Signature   Date
Telephone: 770-725-0314
Email: mariel@uga.edu

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature   Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.
Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D. Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Part 1: Background and Context

- What was the officially stated purpose of the collaboration?

- What organizations or institutions were represented in the collaborative?

- What roles were represented on the team? Who was responsible for what?

- How often did the group meet face-to-face?

- How did communication among team members occur?

- How did you prepare yourself, and how were you prepared by others, to carry out your role on the collaborative team?

- What are the top five design decisions made by the group for this program?

Part 2: Critical Incidents

I would like to ask you to recall from memory two incidents that occurred in a collaborative online program planning situation that affected the design of the program. Think about one incident which supported the collaborative program planning efforts, and one that in some way hindered the collaborative program planning efforts.

- When and where did the incident take place?

- Imagine that you are back in time at the situation. What exactly happened? Who said and did what?

- What were you attempting to accomplish? What opposition did you face? What support? Who was involved? What were the barriers to accomplishing your purpose? How did you deal with these problems/barriers?

- Why do you think this situation occurred in the first place?

- What advantages did you have in this situation? What advantages did others have?

- Who was at a disadvantage and why?

- What were the final results of this situation?

- What did you learn from this situation? How have you applied what you learned to similar situations?

Thank you for participating in my study. Your insight and experience are valuable assets in helping to understand the issues involved in inter-institutional program planning for online programs.