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PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP DURING STRATEGIC TRANSITION:
A CASE STUDY OF TWO CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

By

Douglas Neil Searcy

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Educational Studies

(Educational Leadership and Higher Education)

Under the Supervision of Professor Sheldon L. Stick

Lincoln, Nebraska

May 2010

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP DURING STRATEGIC TRANSITION:
A CASE STUDY OF TWO CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Douglas Neil Searcy, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2010

Advisor: Sheldon Stick

This qualitative research addressed presidential leadership during the strategic transition of the respective Boards of Trustees at Gardner-Webb and Wingate Universities (private, Christian institutions in North Carolina). In addition to interviewing each institutional President, personal 60-minute interviews were conducted with selected faculty members, trustees, administrators, and students and relevant documents were perused for substantiating information. The objective of the study was to learn how each institution's President guided their respective constituencies toward acceptance of change while conveying a sense of stability and focus on visioning.

Leadership theories and studies were introduced illustrating presidential considerations, roles, and implications encountered during institutional change (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007; Lawton, 2004; Nanus, 1992). Additionally, strategic change models were discussed to provide a greater understanding of the change environment (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer 1992; Lewin 1952; Mintzberg 1973). Denominational affiliation created complex dynamics for change as Conventions and partnering institutions struggled with issues of control and autonomy leading to tenuous relationships.

The findings were interpreted to mean that presidential leadership during the respective periods of strategic transition hinged on the effectiveness of relationships,

communication, and visioning, and apparently each was manifested in varying degrees at different times. Academic freedom, institutional stability, and faith surfaced repeatedly as participants used those ideas when providing a rich description of presidential leadership. All themes were analyzed and then discussed in the context of leadership and strategic transition literature, but with a special focus on Christian higher education. Among recommendations for future research was that leadership be directed toward differing denominational affiliations in transition and other kinds of institutional strategic shifts (i.e., from Division II athletic affiliation to Division I affiliation). Such work could help hone in on components of leadership that are of the greatest benefit during strategic change regardless of the circumstances.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This first chapter in the study of presidential leadership during strategic transition at Christian institutions of higher education identifies the primary issues and framework of the research. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, context, and significance of the study are followed by declarations of assumptions, delimitations, and limitations to the research methods used in the study. Toward the latter part of this chapter a list of key terms are defined for clarification.

Statement of the Problem

College and university leadership is charged with the execution of programs, services, and resources to stimulate institutional success. Various factors are used by the public to measure the levels of success achieved from institution to institution including graduation rates, retention rates, and institutional selectivity. Such factors, noted by potential students to narrow their college search, are measured by national and regional entities that report their findings to the greater public. For example, *U.S. News and World Report* is one of several outlets that publish data to satisfy the public's interest on aspects of institutional accountability (Ehrenberg & Monks, 1999; Marquerite, 2002), and such information, regardless of its accuracy or basis for presentation are deemed important to institutional constituencies. Many governing boards and boards of trustees' desire their respective institutions and their presidents to fare well in such publications as well as demonstrate progress toward defined goals and illustrate how such activities serve to aid in fulfilling the mission of an institution (Duderstadt, 2007).

Most postsecondary institutions claim that as a part of their mission it is vital to produce productive and educated citizens capable of impacting society favorably.

Historically, American higher education has been considered to be the engine driving national and international development (Hauptman 2008; Rudolph, 1990), but the past 25-years have exposed evidence that there has been a decremental move to the U.S. global standing in higher education. According to a report by the National Commission for Accountability in Higher Education (2005):

- The U.S. does not lead the world in college completion rates;
- Large developing economies (India and China in particular) are educating more students in science and math and a large part of the available workforce in science and technology comes from able international students, many of whom have been trained in the United States;
- Student costs for college have grown faster than the consumer price index and financial support programs, such as Pell Grants have become woefully inadequate;
- Four out of ten students fail to graduate from a college or university within six-years of their initial matriculation;
- High achieving and low income students (those within the top 25% of their high school class) do not enroll in college; and
- The majority of minority students in college do not graduate.

In addition to the unfavorable international comparisons there have been domestic economic challenges prominently exacerbated by the recent financial disaster that impacted the United States and most other nations. Juxtaposed have been the

increasingly escalating costs for attending colleges and universities, with a result being heightened awareness to the value added by attending a postsecondary institution and a call for increased transparency and accountability in higher education (Duderstadt, 2007; Ehrenberg & Monks, 1999; Grantham, 1999; National Commission for Accountability in Higher Education, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine presidential leadership during a time of institutional strategic transition. The vehicle was case studies of two private, Baptist institutions of higher education in North Carolina that underwent a change in Board of Trustees selection (Wingate University in Wingate, NC and Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC). Presidential decisions, demonstrated leadership characteristics, and communication from the offices of the respective presidents during each of the strategic change processes provide a window into how those individuals were able to effect the desired adjustments in policy without disrupting continuation toward mission accomplishment.

The dynamic of major governing board transition at each of those two private, Christian institutions was the context. Trustees generally, and especially at the two respective institutions, have oversight of all activities pertaining to an institution. In the instances of Wingate University and Gardner-Webb University decisions of their respective Boards could immediately shift institutional direction or structure resulting in a lasting impact.

Thus it was imperative to be sensitive to the power wielded by such trustees. Among institutions similar to the two in this study, crafting of a board's composition

typically is a responsibility for the institution president. Church-related postsecondary institutions need to have a governing board that presents a broad but diverse perspective, is vested in helping to stimulate institutional growth and programmatic development, and concurrently support an institution's mission, vision, and values. Such obligations are demanding and it is not easy to fill the positions with persons capable and vested in the responsibilities.

Context

Models of successful strategic transitions are found within available literature, but many address entities other than higher education (Bennis & Tichy, 2007; Drucker, 1968; Kotter, 1996). Yet, within the parameters of postsecondary education there are many different types of transitions, such as: adding an area of emphasis within a defined program of study, adding academic programs, merging colleges, changing from a two to four-year institution, establishing institutional satellite locations, changing from a college to university, or changing the process for selecting a board of trustees.

The latter strategic decision, changing the process for selecting a board of trustees, was pursued by five institutions in North Carolina during the fall of 2007: Campbell University, Chowan University, Gardner-Webb University, Mars Hill College, and Wingate University. Those institutions proposed that board selection would allow the respective institutions to develop relationships with trustees regardless of personal religious affiliation. The pivotal issue was that a trustee, regardless of denominational affiliation, should be able to effectively benefit an institution.

Each of the five postsecondary institutions had been founded as a church-related (Baptist) institution and had received considerable financial support as a part

of that affiliation. In return, those five institutions traditionally provided financial support to matriculating North Carolina Baptist students through scholarships. Also, each of the five institutions infused a philosophy of Christian ideals into curricular and extra-curricular activities and has professed a Christian philosophy in their respective missions.

Traditional processes for selecting individuals to serve as members of the respective institutions' boards of trustees has subscribed to the dictates of the North Carolina Baptist Convention; limiting the candidate pool to Baptists and 2/3's of the persons comprising a board must come from North Carolina Baptist Churches (North Carolina Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, 2007). Initiating a different process for board of trustees' selection markedly altered an institution's relationship with the North Carolina Baptist Convention. Most prominently impacted was the monetary support. For each percentage of trustees chosen without adherence to the North Carolina Baptist Convention protocol, the funding support to an institution decreased by that same percentage (North Carolina Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, 2007).

Theoretically an institution could lose all of its financial support from the North Carolina Baptist State Convention by an extensive modification to its process for trustee selection. The 2008 – 2010 allocation and projections for the five institutions are listed below in Table 1. Wingate University initiated the strategic transition of how its trustees were to be selected one-year ahead of other institutions and thus shows a greater percentage deduction for the 2008-09 fiscal year.

Table 1.1: North Carolina Baptist Convention Annual Allocation for Christian Higher Education 2008-2010.

Higher Education Budget Lines	Budgeted Amount 2008	Budgeted Amount 2009	Budgeted Amount 2010
Wingate University	\$ 546,128*	\$ 364,085*	\$ 182,043*
Gardner-Webb University	\$728,170	\$ 546,128	\$ 364,085
Campbell University	\$728,170	\$ 546,128	\$ 364,085
Mars Hill College	\$728,170	\$ 546,128	\$ 364,085
Chowan College	\$728,170	\$ 546,128	\$ 364,085
FTE Enrollment Formula	\$1,140,931	\$ 840,686	\$ 540,441
NC Baptist Scholarships	\$1,260,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,100,000
Allocation Subtotal	\$5,859,739	4,839,283	\$3,278,824
Council Operations	\$68,750	\$68,750	**
Total	\$5,928,489	\$4,908,033	\$3,278,824
<p>Notes:</p> <p>* Wingate's direct allocation and the enrollment formula allocation reflect Wingate's desire to exercise its option to nominate its 2008 Trustees by existing Conventional Bylaws, thus reducing their funding by 25% in subsequent years.</p> <p>** Operations funding is eliminated in 2010</p> <p style="text-align: right;">North Carolina Baptist Budget (2010)</p>			

Role of a President

The role of institutional president has changed since the first postsecondary presidential appointment (Henry Dunster, 1640 – 1654) at Harvard College. Institutional

presidents during the 17th and 18th centuries usually were clergy who taught and performed administrative functions (Duderstadt, 2007; Newberry, 2005; Snavely, 1955). That changed by the 1800's. The institutions were becoming markedly larger and there were many more tasks that needed the attention of a fulltime professional. Presidential selections then were chosen on their proclivity for managing complex issues with faculty and staff as well as political issues external to an institution (Duderstadt, 2007). That shift, in what was sought in a person who was to lead an institution, meant that a president was expected to be a progenitor for activities revolving around an institution's mission, vision, goals, and how they translated into long-term, institutional viability.

Currently, higher education institution presidents are expected to be: a good personnel manager and understand how to delegate responsibilities, a catalyst for generating enthusiasm among faculty persons for continued high academic excellence, a leader for improving faculty and support personnel salaries and benefits, a fundraiser securing external funding sources, a change agent for improvement of student learning and elevating standards, an advocate for equity and opportunity for all qualified persons, a leader in capital construction, and a community spokesperson working to integrate the institution into the local, state, and national economies (Duderstadt, 2007). Also, presidents must lead decision-making regarding institutional priorities with due consideration for available resources and the demands from external markets (Kerr & Gade, 1986).

The role of an institutional president has been studied from perspectives including: demonstrated leadership in a newly obtained position, political affiliations and relationships, presidential selection processes, leadership skills, and Christian beliefs

(Christensen, 2007; Glover, 2005; Lawton, 2004; McPherson, 2002; Newberry, 2005; Suisick, 2007; Vaughn, 1989). Newberry (2005) studied Christian college presidents to learn how their faith influenced institutional leadership. It was determined that those Christian college presidents utilized a “president as pastor” model of leadership and that their spiritual persona was evident in institutional planning, supervision, student recruitment, and virtually every aspect of institutional life. Accordingly, the data were interpreted to mean that participants in respective institutions shared a like vision and understanding of a president’s leadership and fostered a positive institution – student/faculty fit.

Lawton (2004) studied two long-standing, Christian college presidents and outlined their visionary leadership roles as change agent, spokesperson, direction setter, and coach (Nanus, 2002). Lawton said that those four dimensions of presidential leadership were found in other research on presidential leaderships, but that thematic findings of time, change, and relationships were uniquely applied to those with a Christian world-view. The author explained that each issue (relationships, time, and change) had spiritual implications for the presidents and could be measured in a faith context. For example, institutional change would be subject to prayer or spiritual consideration. Decisions might or might not take place based simply on available resources and conventional wisdom, but all projects would be considered through faith-based deliberation.

Glover (2005) studied Christian college presidential leadership style as the summary of beliefs, values, and techniques that impacted an entire institution’s community. For the research, Glover interviewed 15 first-time college presidents (seven

with higher education backgrounds and eight from outside of higher education) to learn how they displayed leadership to initiate change. Glover's study was qualitative in nature and required detailed, in-depth interviews resulting in coding and theme analysis.

The key finding was that presidents worked most closely to initiate change in areas they knew the most about (Glover, 2005). Presidents from the academy usually worked with curricular issues. Presidents from development backgrounds avoided academic issues and worked within business and finance to institute change. Glover also reported that presidents favored initiatives meant to signify symbolic change; the way an institution would be perceived or reframed by a wide span of constituencies potentially shifting the identity of the institution. The relevance of Glover's work is that presidential decision-making, with-in the context of a favorable governing board has important symbolic (and practical) ramifications, and can fundamentally alter an institution.

Glover's (2005), Lawton's (2004), and Newberry's (2005) research on a Christian college president lends credence to an in-depth study of such persons during periods of strategic transition because of the special flavor conveyed by a Christian college environment.

The President and Faculty

Presidents are hired to run institutional affairs, yet faculty members purportedly have academic freedom and the responsibility to oversee the academic process. Ultimate accountability for the academic success and overall management of an institution is entrusted to a president by a board of trustees and, therefore, delicate political support and challenge for the academic process is a must. Sometimes a president must negotiate between faculty and administrative needs or demands when rendering decisions. In

essence, such dilemmas force a president to balance demands of differing priorities and constituencies (Birnbaum, 1992).

For example, a budget process might require considerable resource allocation for physical plant renovations and to do so might necessitate appropriating funds from other institutional priorities such as new academic programs, faculty positions, or academic services. Such decisions might lead to a spurious perception of presidential decision-making being a lack of support for academic priorities.

The President and Institutional Culture

Presidents are considered to be the face of an institution, and the person directing institutional vision. Thus, such a person needs to know, understand, and articulate an institution's culture, ethos, and traditions. Clark (2007) described this perspective as the "institutional saga" or "long-standing characteristics that determine the distinctiveness of a college or university" (Clark in Duderstadt, 2007, p. 5).

Clark suggested that "a saga, located between ideology and religion, partakes of an appealing logic on one hand and sentiments similar to the spiritual on the other;" that universities "develop over time such an intentionality about institutional life, a saga, which then results in unifying the institution and shaping its purpose." Clark noted, "An institutional saga may be found in many forms, through mottoes, traditions, and ethos. It might consist of long-standing practices or unique roles played by an institution, or even in the image held in the minds (and hearts) of students, faculty, and alumni. Sagas can provide a sense of romance and even mystery that turn a cold organization into a beloved social institution, capturing the allegiance of its members and even defining the identity of its communities" (Clark in Duderstadt, 2007, p. 5).

Role of a Board of Trustees

College and university presidential constituencies are many and vary in importance (Duderstadt, 2007; Lawton, 2004). Students, faculty, staff, parents, community members, and alumni have a stake in the decision-making of an institutional

leader, but no one perspective is more important than the collective voice of a board of trustees, the ultimate body responsible for institutional performance and group most interested in the quality and effectiveness of programs and services (Chait, Holland & Taylor, 1987; Kerr & Gade, 1989). The collective opinion of a board of trustees can drive decisions-making, influence visioning, and establish policy.

A board of trustees is responsible to hire and fire a president, develop and approve institutional policy and decisions, leverage external support for institutional progress, and serve as a fund raising arm of an institution (Chait, Holland & Taylor, 1987; Kerr & Gade, 1989; Selingo, 2007). Boards often include influential participants with hopes that those individuals can support the institution by using political and business relationships to the benefit of an institution (McCorkle & Archibald, 1982). In private college and university settings, where external support is of critical importance to financial solvency, a board of trustee composition can be the key factor in institutional sustainability and progress (Kerr & Gade, 1989).

Boards traditionally have had limited involvement in presidential activities and leadership, yet in recent years, with public demand for accountability and business failures, boards have become more engaged in the supervision and direction of presidential responsibilities (Dika & Janokik, 2003; Paul, 2007). For successful board relationships to develop presidents must provide substantial investments of time and energy (Chait, Holland & Taylor, 1987; McCorkle & Archibald, 1982). Some presidents are internally focused toward institutional management and do not have the time or ability to directly engage trustees in meaningful dialogue about the institution. This failure leaves a board disadvantaged to provide robust leadership. Without presidential

time investment, conversations can be strained and formal as both parties lack a common experience to support an engaged and well educated discussion. The result could be poor decisions on key institutional issues (McCorkle & Archibald, 1982).

Time and relationship with an institutional president are important because a board of trustees has statutory authority over an institution; how they exercise their power varies per institution and is based, to a large extent, on the leadership of a president and how trustees view that engagement (Dika & Janokik, 2003). The concept of presidential relations to a board of trustees is a key issue in this study of presidential leadership, because success in the strategic transition of a board of trustees is predicated on a president establishing an effective relationship with a board and then maneuvering that board's composition to benefit the university.

In a study conducted by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, college and university board members identified themselves as prepared or unprepared for trustee leadership (Fain, 2007). Of those who self-reported they were unprepared for board service only half reported very positive relationship with their respective presidents. In contrast, from trustees who said they were very prepared over 75% reported a very positive relationship with a president (Fain, 2007). Thus time with a president can result in positive perceptions by the trustees.

Significance of the Study

Presidents of church-affiliated institutions will benefit from this study. Research on two institutions in the process of redefining their relationship with a denominational convention are shared through case studies consisting of multiple interviews from sitting presidents, faculty members, trustees, students, and senior administrators. Of particular

interest is the timing of the research conducted during the process of the strategic transition of separation from a denominational convention. This perspective allows for the most current perspectives of presidential leadership characteristics and institutional impacts.

During the past 25 years multiple Baptist, postsecondary institutions have explored loosening ties with their respective state conventions (Leonard, 2003). This study is of specific interest to Baptist institutions continuing in a relationship with respective conventions (Jessup, 2008). Other denominations likely will have interest if only from an empirical perspective. Findings from this research should provide discussion points for church-affiliated institutions if they initiate any strategic transition in their allegiance with external bodies.

Delimitations

Delimitations speak to the methods used in the research process that will narrow the scope of the study (Creswell, 2002). This means that the findings must be considered as applicable only to the institutions, events, participants, and conditions studied.

- This study provides a view of leadership during strategic transition from the perspective of two Presidents from institutions in North Carolina that have long-standing relationships with the Baptist of North Carolina. Conducting in-depth interviews at two institutions narrowed the scope of the study, but it enabled collection of data within a reasonable time and respected geographic limitations.
- North Carolina Baptist affiliation of the two institutions in the study offers limited context for the research.

Limitations

Limitations address the possible weaknesses in the study design (Creswell, 2002).

The following perspectives present potential limitations.

- The focus of presidential leadership during strategic transition studies two leaders at private institutions in North Carolina. Those Presidents might not be representative of other presidential perspectives in either the public or private sector.
- The circumstances of strategic change at those two institutions were different. Differing political impacts might have influenced presidential leadership and decision-making.
- A small number of people from an institution have an intimate view of presidential leadership as related to the strategic transition. It is imperative to gain an appropriate number of participants to address presidential leadership from a variety of different perspectives to ensure that the data collected is valid. To achieve that end it was necessary to interview an appropriate combination of trustees, faculty, students, and administrators.

Assumptions

By conducting this study the researcher made certain assumptions about the data gained from participants. The researcher assumed that the participants could and would report accurately regarding the respective President's leadership characteristics during the strategic change, and that the participants could articulate those changes and make connections through their experiences and observations.

Furthermore, assumptions were made that the process for receiving the data and the validity of the questions were meaningful and relevant to other institutions within the higher education community.

Definitions

Academic Freedom - The right and freedom experienced by faculty through their affiliation with a college or university to teach responsibly, express opinions, and participate in free inquiry. This right is guaranteed for public institutions as an outgrowth of the First Amendment of the Constitution guaranteeing Freedom of Speech. Private institutions do not have the same Constitutional relationships and therefore academic freedom is honored at the discretion of the institution (Rabban, 2001).

Affiliation – Formal relationship educational institutions maintain with a non-profit, church-related denominational group or convention. Financial support is offered to the educational institution which in return provides a climate that philosophically supports the denominational perspective through their mission, policies, or offerings. The level of affiliation can be extremely loose with little or no visible connection or more structured where the educational institution acts in concert with the denomination agenda. In some cases the affiliation may be more prevalent where the institution acts as an arm of the denomination promoting specific programs and denominational perspectives. Some institutions host prominent divinity schools that enhance the religious composition of the institution and philosophically enhance the institutional mission by their presence. Financial support from the denomination may vary from direct budget support to student scholarships.

Board of Trustees – A governing board elected or appointed to guide and direct policies and protocol at educational institutions (Chait, Holland & Taylor, 1987).

Faith Development - Growth process that develops cognitive, moral, and emotional responses and interpretation in relation to a deity (Fowler, 1981).

Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) - Mandated by the 1992 Higher Education Act, the National Center for Educational Statistics collects data from higher education institutions.

Leadership – (as defined in this study) Leadership will be defined as the actions, words, emphasis, influence, priorities, and messages of the president to all constituencies (Wren, 1995).

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) - Located within the Department of Education and Institute of Educational Sciences this body is the primary federal entity responsible for collecting data on education.

Organizational Readiness – The process of determining the level of acceptance a group will illustrate during the process of a strategic change (Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer, 1993).

Religious Development - Growth process characterized by affiliation with spiritual systems, practices, organizations, structures, and customs.

Self-Perpetuating Board (Trustees) – Classification of a board of trustees indicating that the group selects its own members giving institutional authority over decision-making (as opposed to a third party or denominational convention).

Spiritual Development - Growth process characterized by a personal awakening or awareness (not necessarily centered on a deity).

Stakeholder – Any constituency to a university (or other entity) that has a vested interest in the results of a change process. Traditional stakeholders within the college and university setting include: faculty, staff, alumni, students, parents, trustees, and community members (Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer, 1993).

Strategic Planning – An organization or institution's process of designing future endeavors for progress and growth paying specific attention to organizational resources (financial, intellectual, human, and physical) (Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer, 1993).

Strategic Transition – Intentional effort to alter an institution (make-up, design, or process) by shifting resources or policy to enlist a desired outcome.

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

Grand Tour Question:

- How do Presidents and presidential constituents at two selected Baptist postsecondary institutions describe presidential leadership during institutional strategic transition, establishing a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees?

Sub-Questions:

- What key messages (language - words or phrases) were used by a President to frame the institutional transition to establish a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees?
- How did a President initiate that strategic transition?
- How did the President communicate the key messages to institutional constituencies?
- How did the content of the key messages or delivery vary according to respective constituencies?

- What personal style (mannerisms, stories, or tone) did a President employ to manage multiple constituencies and institutional messages?
- What specific tactic, or methods, exercised by a President were helpful to support an institutional transition?
- What relationships or alliances were most important during the strategic transition?
- How was the decision of moving to self-perpetuating Trustee selection part of a larger vision or strategy?
- How does the selection of a Board of Trustees shape institutional identity?
- What were the potential road blocks to the institutional change?
- How did a President deal with those road blocks?
- What priorities did a President set during the strategic change?

This chapter has presented the platform upon which this investigation was conducted. The next chapter provides relevant literature on the institutions studied and also gives background information on the relationships between selected Christian institutions of higher learning and respective state conventions. That material is followed by a selected presentation of theoretical views on leadership and how those ideas might clarify the actions taken by the two Presidents whose actions moved their institutions into a new covenant with the North Carolina Baptist Convention.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter will present relevant literature and models to create a theoretical framework for the study of presidential leadership and strategic transition. A review of background perspectives of the study will be followed by an overview of appropriate literature on theoretical positions and views on leadership related to higher education and strategic change.

Background

Baptist college presidents work in tandem with the institution's board of trustees to collectively establish institutional goals and objectives. The nature of these political relationships is central for understanding the importance of this research. The following sections explain these issues.

Purpose for Self-perpetuating Boards

The trustee and institutional relationship has a twofold implication, symbolic and practical. It is symbolic in that the relationship signals perceived governance under the North Carolina Baptist Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. It is practical because the North Carolina Baptist Convention provides significant funding to the institutional budget of each North Carolina Baptist school. Moving away from this relationship alters both factors (change in governance and loss of monetary support), and creates new dynamics (Chait, Holland & Taylor, 1987; Jessup, 2008). Changing the selection process for the board of trustees also could signal a philosophical change in the institution. If so, the move might be toward greater secularization and lead to impairing the historical

relationship, mission, ideals, and philosophy initially established (Duderstadt, 2007; Frances, 1987).

Relationships between church-related institutions and their various constituencies are based on common goals of Christian principles, values, and ideals (Newberry, 2005; Wicke, 1964). Yet it has been argued that the openness and search for truth in higher education and fundamentalism of Christian beliefs are not always compatible. David W. Key, Director of Baptist Studies at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, stated “The real underlying issue is that fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist form is incompatible with higher education...In fundamentalism, you have all the truths...In education, you’re searching for truths” (Finder, 2006, p. 2). Academic freedom certainly is one of the issues impacting that complex relationship for both the higher education institutions and Baptist conventions nationwide.

Decisions that alter the administrative structure or philosophical direction of an institution, such as a new naming process for a board of trustees, might lead to changes in how that institution is viewed by external parties. Also, it is possible that such modifications could lead to unexpected internal ramifications. The confluence of such factors, separately or collectively, could have deleterious consequences on necessary financial support, and potentially alter the perception of an institution’s character (Snively, 1955). Any or all of these factors could result in a change in the composition of a student body, or perhaps lead to a noticeable reduction in matriculating students. The sequel would be jeopardizing an institution’s viability for tuition-driven support. In contrast, enlisting new trustees conceivably might allow for selecting members with greater political influence or financial means and thus create opportunity for annual

giving increases, donations, bequests, and external influences that could support institutional progress (Chait, Holland & Taylor, 1987).

Some postsecondary institutions have changed their relationships with their respective State Baptist Conventions during the past 25-years. The transition process has been difficult for some to the extent of involving litigation, while for others the departure was more “amicable”. Institutions that have changed relationships without negative litigation include Wake Forest University, North Carolina Baptist State Convention, 1986; Meredith College, North Carolina Baptist State Convention, 1991; Samford University, Alabama Baptist State Convention, 1994; and Stetson University, Florida Baptist Convention, 1995.

Each of those institutions departed from their respective Baptist State Conventions but elected to maintain a historical relationship. After departure, some experienced philosophical shifts by pursuing a more moderate, rather than conservative, approach to institutional policies.

For example, one such policy relates to the use or consumption of alcohol on campus or at college sponsored events. “No alcohol” policies have been a point of distinction for Baptist institutions. Regardless of the intent of an alcohol policy, either to limit its use for religious or educational reasoning, the practice of most Baptist colleges has been to prohibit alcohol from campus or campus functions. After departure from their respective Conventions, Wake Forest and Stetson University chose to move away from that policy and allow alcohol to be present on campus, while Meredith and Samford maintained a more conservative approach; in keeping with original institutional policies. Long-standing members of state conventions have cited the movement to a more liberal

approach to education as the primary institutional purpose for departing from conventions, with the connotation that doing so was unsavory.

Debate surrounding postsecondary institutional ownership is another perspective. Many Baptist institutions maintain millions of dollars in assets initially funded by conventions. Using a simplistic paradigm of A leads to B, the conventions have contended that those institutions have been bought and therefore ownership and trustee selection can and should be managed on a conventional/state level. Doing so would allow a convention to monitor and maintain the political and faith center of an institution. Tangentially or covertly, the implication of such demands is to exercise control over an institution and by extension its faculty, students, policies, and practices. When removed from this context, the actions of the various state conventions may boil down to use of a bully pulpit and power of the purse.

It is important to note at this juncture that there is not one right way for moving to or away from a Baptist convention, due to the marked differences in institutions, respective priorities, and financial incentives or punishments. The following institutions experienced marked challenges in strategic transitions to establish self-perpetuating boards:

- Belmont University, in Nashville Tennessee, initiated a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. In response, the Tennessee Baptist Convention voted to remove the entire Board from serving at the institution. The discharged Trustees continued to service the University and the decision regarding the institution's ability to separate from the Convention went into litigation. Belmont initiated a court order indicating that any newly elected "Convention" Trustee who tried to attend

the annual Belmont University Trustee meeting would be trespassing and arrested. In 2007, the institution and the Tennessee Baptist Convention settled their differences and concluded their 56-year relationship, thus allowing Belmont University to have a self-perpetuating Board with no formal ties to the Tennessee Baptist Convention. As a result, Belmont will provide gifts to the Convention in the amount of \$1,000,000 followed by \$250,000 each year for the next 40-years (Belmont University, 2007). According to Belmont University, the gifts represent an expression of gratitude to the Tennessee Baptist Convention for its historical support, both financially and spiritually.

- Georgetown College in Kentucky, under leadership from William H. Couch Jr., President, made the decision to establish a self-perpetuating Board because of concerns over limitations to academic freedom (Finder, 2006). This issue came to a head for President Couch when Rev. Hershel York, the President of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, asked Georgetown College to consider hiring a faculty member in the religion department to teach a literal interpretation of the Bible. The request was rejected, but notable negative press was generated over the controversy. President Couch stated that a more intentional effort to clarify academic freedom would help assist the institution in their application for a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa (Finder, 2006). In 2005, the relationship between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Georgetown College was redefined with the Board being able to select new members. Notably, the new agreement contained wording that the Convention's annual contribution of 1.4 million was to be phased out over the next four years.

- Shorter College Trustees established a third-party foundation and transferred ownership of the institution away from the Georgia Baptist Convention (Pierce, 2005). Reportedly, Convention officials had sought to exert pressure on the Board for actions that likely would have threatened the institution's accreditation. In response to Shorter College's action the Convention sued the institution for not following established guidelines and protocol. The Georgia lower courts agreed and in 2005, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled, in a 4-3 decision, that the College had acted improperly when they shifted ownership to the third-party foundation. The old Board of Trustees was disbanded and a new Board was named by the Georgia Baptist Convention without any input from the institution (Pierce, 2005).
- Grand Canyon College was established by the Arizona Southern Baptist in 1949 and became a University in 1989. In 2000, Grand Canyon University separated from the Arizona Baptist Convention at a time when the institution experienced extreme financial hardships from lack of external support. The institution's President, under advisement from auditors and current trustees, took that action believing that separation would allow the institution to grow financially through new trustee relationships, and also enable the institution to sustain accreditation and viability (Baptist Standard, 2000). The financial challenges continued to mount for Grand Canyon University until it was pushed to the brink of bankruptcy in 2003. The next year (2004) the institution was sold to Significant Education, LLC and became the first "for profit" private institution in the United States. Programs and services changed markedly. In 2005 and 2006 the Art, Music, and Theatre programs were discontinued and 17 faculty members from the

Biblical Studies Department were terminated. But programs in other disciplines blossomed and the institution now claims a student enrollment close to 20,000.

- Missouri Baptist University initiated a separation from the Missouri Baptist Convention in 2001. The Missouri Baptist Convention filed suit against the University and four other entities that also pursued self-perpetuating Boards (Hinkle, 2001). Cole County Circuit Court Judge Tom Brown denied the Convention's suit and dismissed the case against the University. Appellate Courts have the case under review. Roger Moran, research director for the Missouri Baptist Laymen's Association and supporter of the conservative sect of the Missouri Baptist Convention stated,

When the Convention's democratic process no longer produced the results desired by the Mainstream/Corporative Baptist Fellowship moderates that dominated the Boards and agencies of the MBC, they simply voted to “steal” the institutions. To hide the politically motivated “theft” of the convention's agencies, the Trustees hired lawyers and declared that their “fiduciary responsibility” suddenly required the actions they took. We have watched in dismay as hard-line moderates have used their evaporating majority-status on the Boards and agencies of the MBC to systematically dismantle this Convention (Hinkle, 2001, p. 2).

Randy Fullerton, Trustee Chairman for Missouri Baptist University, addressed the ownership issue with the State Convention by claiming that the Trustees were the legal owners of the agencies and not the Convention (Hinkle, 2001). The case has remained in litigation since 2002 with a decision pending from the State.

- In 2003, William Jewel College entered into a discussion with the Missouri Baptist Convention regarding freedom of academic instruction. Convention leadership warned the institution that if they did not eliminate nondenominational approved programs on the William Jewel campus then the Convention would

remove over one million dollars in annual funding. William Jewell College leaders disagreed with the Convention's efforts to dictate policy in such areas as governance, creationism, and campus newspaper content. As a result, the Missouri Baptist Convention severed their relationship with William Jewell and immediately discontinued all financial support. As a by-product of that dispute William Jewell College now maintains a self-perpetuating Board (Hinkle, 2001).

The above examples illustrate the potential consequences rising from a lack of congruence between presidents, institutions, and governing boards, especially of church-related institutions. Likewise, the ability of an institutional president to prevent and/or support transitions is elevated and the need for assessment of presidential leadership and board relationships becomes a priority worthy of further examination.

Background for Church-related Postsecondary Education

The foundational perspective of Christian higher education, as espoused by Baptist postsecondary institutions, as well as the expected role to be played by a president of a Baptist college or university and a respective board of trustees are central for understanding the importance of this research. The following sections explain these issues.

Foundational Institutions

Higher education was closely tied to the structure of the church during the Colonial Periods of America's history. Institutions during that time were generally established as outgrowths of churches with the purpose of training young men for the ministerial and civic positions of leadership (Christensen, 2007; Goodchild & Wechsler,

1997; Snavely, 1955; Wicke, 1964). Snavely (1955) reported that prior to 1855 fully 25% of the 40,000 college graduates (10,000) had been engaged in church-related jobs.

Higher education in Colonial America was formed on the English system of residential colleges. Faculty members and students lived together and engaged in dialogue and learning on classical topics and liberal arts (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Newberry, 2005; Schroeder, Mable, & Associates, 1994). The liberal arts curriculum was advantageous for dialogue on philosophy, literature, and religion, especially as it was done in the context of a Christian world-view. The first college to be established in America was the University at Henrico, Virginia in 1619 (north side of the James River).

That liberal arts institution was founded by Sir Edwin Sandys with associates from the Virginia Company, and was to be based in classical learning and Christian principles in order to cultivate the new world (Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). On March 22, 1622 an Indian uprising left 347 colonists dead and Henrico annihilated. When the charter of the Virginia Company was revoked in 1624, Virginia became a royal colony and plans for the College were abandoned (Snavely, 1955).

Formal higher education in America lay dormant until Harvard was opened in 1636 by Puritan congregational leadership. Following Harvard, eight additional church-related institutions were developed over the next 134 years with philosophical and theological underpinnings of their respective beliefs (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). Those institutions: ostensibly had a deeply religious focus and were grounded in the classical approach to the liberal arts and curriculum including Greek, Latin, literature, philosophy, religion, mathematics, and some science. Eight of the

nine institutions established during the Colonial Period were private and seven have remained so:

- Harvard University in 1636 (Puritan, private) and chartered in 1650, Massachusetts Bay Colony. Originally Harvard College.
- College of William and Mary in 1693 founded and chartered (Anglican, public), Colony and Dominion of Virginia. Public university.
- Yale University in 1701 founded and chartered (Puritan – Congregational, private). Originally the Collegiate School of New Haven, Connecticut Colony.
- The University of Pennsylvania in 1740 founded and chartered in 1755 (Nonsectarian, private). Originally the Academy of Philadelphia.
- Princeton University in 1746 founded and chartered (Presbyterian, private). Originally the College of New Jersey. Province of New Jersey.
- Columbia College in 1754 founded and chartered (Church of England, private). Originally King's College. Province of New York.
- Brown University in 1764 founded and chartered. (Baptist, private). Originally College of Rhode Island. Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.
- Rutgers, the State College of New Jersey founded in 1766 and chartered but did not open until 1771 (Dutch Reformed Church, private). Originally Queen's College. Now a public university.
- Dartmouth College in 1769 founded and chartered (Puritan – Congregational, private). Province of New Hampshire (Snively, 1955).

Public vs. Private Perspectives

Lines between the public and private disposition of Colonial institutions could be considered a matter of semantics. Most of early institutions had governance that was supported by state entities as well as leadership and administration from the private / church sector. Lines between the separation of church and state had not formally been drawn as most charters were initiated before the signing of the Constitution of the United States in 1787. Yet the greater reason for the blur between public and private development in higher education was innately tied to the culture of the Colonial Period. Church activity was a part of the social fabric that crossed into the realm of education. Some “Sunday schools” in colonial churches taught reading and writing, and sermons of the time were the population’s exposure to God and related core issues of the time including freedom and civic responsibility (Peterson, 1983; Rudolph 1990). In addition, available financial resources in governmental, civic, and private networks were limited due to the short history of the country and developing economy.

As an outgrowth of the Great Awakening, starting in 1679 at Northampton, Massachusetts and then becoming re-ignited by Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* (1687), interested and motivated private, church-related entities considered part of their religious and civic duty to include faith development and education in the lives of the their community as well as to develop young ministers for service to the church (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 1994; Rudolph, 1990; Snively, 1955). Only the University of Pennsylvania (nonsectarian) was formally developed without church affiliation during that period (Snively, 1955), but it was and still is a private institution.

Although limited, public support for the higher education was noted through a number of events during the Colonial Period. As government developed, citizens recognized the privilege in formal representation and made overtures to establish an official voice that would represent higher education in elected forums. For example, William and Mary College formally elected two members of the Virginia House of Burgesses (Snively, 1955). The Virginia House of Burgesses, formed in 1619, was the first legislative body created in the New World, and represented eleven regions in proximity to the initial Jamestown Colony. Concerns and ideas of those in the William and Mary community would be voiced within the local government by this representation.

As Colonial politics shifted with British influence prior to the Revolution, the House of Burgess became the Virginia House of Delegates in 1776, and then became the primary elected political structure for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Another formal political connection to education was established at Queens College (now Rutgers University and the state university for New Jersey). The Rutgers Board of Trustees included the State Governor and three other state officials from the Providence of New Jersey (Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). The Governor's appointment gave political voice and opinion to the internal workings of the University, yet held only perceived political and social implications of support for University issues within the public setting.

In addition to the formal representation on boards as explained above, a number of public laws and ordinances impacted the development of private higher education during the Colonial Period. The Northwest Ordinance of 1784, Land Ordinance of 1785, and Northwest Ordinance of 1787 annexed land east of the Mississippi and north of the

Ohio River. The initial ordinances divided up the territory into 10 states and the subsequent acts provided for how the land would be allocated. The Land Ordinance of 1785 made specific land allowance for the formation of education institutions including colleges and universities (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Losce, & Fife, 2000).

These factors and the cultural blend of society with education shaped the debate over higher education institution governance in the Colonial Period. A basic issue was whether a state government should control private institutions and regulate its curriculum. A corollary was whether public influence could and should drive the selection of students and the formation of an institution's faculty and staff. A third issue was whether state entities could overturn an institutional charter and determine the academic and related policies for an institution? This latter argument came to a head in 1819, as private ownership of colleges was tested by the Dartmouth Case (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966).

Dartmouth College vs. Woodward tested Dartmouth's ability to retain its charter when challenged by the New Hampshire legislature to reinstate the recently removed President, William H. Woodard. If allowed, the move would have caused Dartmouth College to become a state entity controlled by the leanings and direction of the legislature. Dartmouth's case was argued by alumnus Daniel Webster, a New Hampshire native, who pulled from a previously upheld decision (*Fletcher v. Peck* 10 U. S. 87; 1810) to argue the sanctity of a contract (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997). The first two court decisions ruled in support of the State of New Hampshire, but Webster had anticipated those events and pursued the case to the United States Supreme Court.

The U. S. Supreme Court (Chief Justice John Marshall) agreed with Webster's position and upheld the institution's (Dartmouth University) right to remain free from state interference (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). The Dartmouth ruling (1819) is viewed as having been pivotal in the formation of additional private universities. By the time of the Civil War (1861) over 516 institutions had been formed in 16 of the 34 states, and many were church sponsored. The continued rise in church affiliated sponsorship initially was attributed to the cultural role of religion in society and the desire to develop young ministers for service to the church. But the Civil War and subsequent difficult fiscal circumstances impaired the ability of many institutions to be successful; strong religious affiliations became even more important for ensuring continued solvency.

Change in Influence and Priority

After the Civil War higher education began to experience new influences on the classical curricula and purpose. Scientific methods of investigation were challenging the traditional methods of deductive reasoning in theology and philosophy and gave new credibility to the pursuit of research and scientific disciplines (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Wicke, 1964). Research and the German model of higher education that focused on specific studies leading to master and doctoral work began to seep into American higher education. In 1876 Johns Hopkins University was founded along the German model of higher education (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997). German institutions (Heidelberg, Berlin, etc.) pursued scientific foundations at an advanced level leaving undergraduate teaching as a secondary priority (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997).

Colonial institutions steeped in classic curriculum noted the emphasis on new disciplines and pedagogy and initiated shifts in science and math to keep pace. Harvard's President (Charles Eliot) recognized the potential mixture of curricular options and responded by creating the "Elective System." With this new system for selecting courses, Harvard allowed students to move outside of a standard curriculum and create a course of study that best met student expectations (Wicke, 1964). The idea of a central course of study ("majoring") in a particular field was emulated by many institutions and allowed for increasing students' participation in study areas across the curriculum (Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). However, a majority of the church affiliated institutions remained grounded in their core offerings of Bible teaching and religion courses (Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966).

Ideas of the Enlightenment (intellectual and philosophical) also impacted the classic curriculum during the 18th Century. Influences from Descartes, Locke, and Rousseau shifted the expectations of what students should know and the importance of varying subject matter (Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). The Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason because of the influence from Thomas Paine's publications in 1794, 1795, and 1807, emphasized scientific method and empirical study in subjects such as mathematics and medicine, and also criticized the Christian church for its corruption and efforts to secure power. In a drastic example of shifting priorities, Thomas Jefferson, as a proponent of liberalism in both social and educational circles, influenced William and Mary to shifted basic offerings in their curriculum, adding medicine and law degrees while doing away with theology (Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). Shifts in the classical

curriculum illustrated a change in times for the church-sponsored institutions and were further motivated by additional legislation including the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890.

The Morrill Act of 1862, introduced by Senator Justin Morrill of Vermont, provided land to create public higher education institutions in each state to focus on industry and vocational training (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Williams, 1991). Much of the land was in turn sold by the states and the proceeds directed into the creating and sustaining of state higher education institutions (Cross, 1999). The curriculum in those institutions moved away from extensive and intensive study of the liberal arts and began to focus on specific disciplines to promote public industry and agriculture (Cross, 1999; Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997; Losce & Fife, 2000; Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966; Williams, 1991). It was a time when the higher education institutions began to address the societal needs created by the Industrial Revolution (late 18th and early 19th Centuries).

Between 1872 and 1890, Senator Morrill submitted 12 additional bills to obtain funding for higher education institutions. The second Morrill Act was passed by congress on August 30, 1890. It was geared toward former Confederate states and served to provide financial resources to institutions that could illustrate equal inclusion of African Americans in education by integration or by providing separate institutions (Christy & Williamson, 1992). According to the legislation passed during the years between 1862 and 1890, any state that spent the original Morrill Act of 1862 funding solely for the education of white students had to provide a separate but equal avenue for Black students to pursue higher education. The 16 Historically Black Institutions of the south today were developed through that legislation (Christy & Williamson, 1992).

Baptist Higher Education and the Great Awakening

The First Great Awakening of the 18th century initiated an evangelical movement within the faith community moving from Europe to the Americas during the early to mid 1700's. That faith movement centered on an individual's personal pursuit of God and had far reaching social and educational impacts. It was a time defined as a period of renewal, and resulted in more people beginning to study the Bible and developing a strong fervor for religious activities. As individuals became empowered, the movement provided interest in building churches and educational institutions to promote greater faith interactions (Lambert, 1999; Lucas, 1994).

As an example, Baptist churches and the Baptist Association of Philadelphia established Rhode Island College in Warren, Rhode Island in 1764. The original charter of the institution called for 22 Trustees to be Baptist and that the eight of the Board of Fellows were required to be "forever" Baptist along with the institution's president (Snively, 1955). Rhode Island College was indicative of Baptist institutions during that period; institutions formed with the idea of educating students for a specific ministry. Rhode Island College later was moved to Providence, Rhode Island and renamed Brown University after a noble benefactor Nicholas Brown contributed over \$150,000 to the institution. Interestingly, in 1942 Brown University broke from the Baptist Convention and allowed all trustees and the President to be from any denomination of choice and free from religious requirements (Snively, 1955).

Baptist Higher Education and the Second Great Awakening

The Second Great Awakening (1790 – 1840s) also served as a spiritual catalyst, as did the first, but the second one took on a role to initiate social activism.

Denominations like the Methodist, Baptist, and Church of Christ gained momentum in social arenas such as prison reform and care for the mentally ill (Lambert, 1999).

Activity was initiated toward programs that supported social good, and increased denominational following. A by-product was continued, and even renewed, interest in higher education institutional development. As more colleges were built, higher education struggled with institutional governance because more influence was exerted from multiple perspectives in and outside of institutions.

As an example, 1814 Baptists from the Triennial Baptist Convention in Washington, DC believed it important to establish a college to educate ministers. Luther Rice, acting on behalf of the Convention, led the movement and helped open Columbian College. That institution's charter was received February 9, 1821 (Leonard, 2003; Snavelly, 1955). Rice took on the role of fundraiser / treasurer and supported senior leadership in the initiation of programs, curriculum, and financial services. Unfortunately, the institution's efforts at raising money were not as successful as Rice's and the result was that Columbian College incurred significant debt. Friction developed between the Convention and institutional leadership and the Baptist Convention required the school to have Baptist leadership assume various institutional roles (Snavelly, 1955). Baptist intervention caused philosophical problems for the college personnel and finally resulted in the entire faculty resigning in 1826 (Snavelly, 1955). The institution remained in existence through the mid 1800's and was fully under the control of the Baptist from 1898 – 1904 when it was renamed George Washington University and became a non-sectarian university (Snavelly, 1955; Leonard, 2003).

Development of Baptist institutions of higher education continued from the Second Great Awakening, early 1820s through 1830s, though the early 1900's as exemplified by the formation of church affiliated institutions in all Baptist organizations. The American Baptist (1813 - 1947), National Baptist (1881 - 1944), and Southern Baptist Convention (1826 - 1952) initiated over 45 higher education institutions. The American Baptist Churches organization formerly was the Northern Baptist Convention (established in 1907). It changed its name in 1950 to the American Baptist Convention, and then to the American Baptist Churches in 1971. Among the American Baptist institutions of higher education instituted during this time included:

Alderson -Broaddus College, West Virginia, 1871,

Bucknell University, Pennsylvania, 1846,

Bates College, Maine, 1863,

Benedict College, South Carolina, 1870,

Morehouse College, Georgia, 1867

Ottawa University, Kansas, 1865,

Spelman College, Georgia, 1881, and

William Jewel College, Missouri, 1849.

National Baptist established the following schools:

Arkansas Baptist College, Arkansas, 1884,

Butler College, Texas, 1905,

Mary Allen College, Texas, 1944, and

Morris College, South Carolina, 1908.

Southern Baptist formed the following institutions:

Baylor University, Texas, 1845,
 Belmont College, Tennessee, 1952,
 Carson-Newman College, Tennessee, 1851,
 Furman University, South Carolina, 1826,
 Grand Canyon College, Arizona, 1949,
 Mercer University, Georgia, 1833,
 Meredith College, North Carolina, 1899,
 University of Richmond, Virginia, 1830, and
 William Carey College, Mississippi, 1911 (Snively, 1955).

Contemporary Baptist Life

The current stratification of Baptist life in America is none—the-less complex than its history. Factions and groups prevail as the dominating force as opposed to a national, unifying vision or denominational approach (Leonard, 2003). This is evidenced by the number of denominational factions that remain active in the current political landscape including American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), American Baptist Association (ABA), Baptist Missionary Association of America (BMAA), Interstate and Foreign Landmark Missionary Baptist Association of America, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship Association (FBFA), National Association of Free Will Baptists, and Independent Baptist Church of America (Brackney, 2006, Leonard, 2003). In essence, the core and consistent factor remains that many Baptist believe in the autonomy of the church and its ability to function and legislate structure on a local and individual basis (Leonard, 2003).

Wingate University

Wingate University is a four-year private, Christian institution located 45 miles southeast of Charlotte, North Carolina. It offers 40 undergraduate majors in Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Fine Arts, Music, and Sport Sciences (Wingate University, 2010). Additionally, the institution provides learning opportunities for students interested in selected pre-professional programs, graduate degrees in Business, Education, Sports Sciences, a Physician Assistant Program, the Doctor of Pharmacy Degree, and Doctor of Education Degree. In addition to academics, Wingate student-athletes compete in 17 NCAA Division II sports (Wingate University, 2010).

During the academic year 2009-2010, Wingate University reported an enrollment of 2159 students; comprised of 2/3s fulltime undergraduates and 1/3 part-time students and students seeking advanced degrees in selected masters or doctoral programs. Over 70 percent of Wingate's students come from North Carolina and 55 percent are women (Wingate University, 2010).

Wingate was founded as Wingate Academy (a high school) in 1896 and named for Manley Wingate, the President of Wake Forest University. Two Baptist Associations formed an alliance to raise funds to create the school (Little-Sweat, 1997). During the depression years (1929-1935) the local Baptist Associations needed support in maintaining the institution and called upon the Baptist Convention of North Carolina to help underwrite the programs and services. The Convention agreed but required input on trustee selection and required Wingate's ongoing commitment to Christian ideals and principles (Little-Sweat, 1997).

Wingate transitioned from a high school (1896) to a two-year college (1923) to a four-year college (1978) and then became Wingate University (1995). During its existence it has maintained a strong and supportive link to the North Carolina Baptist Convention and honored the agreement crafted in 1896 (Little-Sweat, 1997).

Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb University is a four-year private, Christian institution located 40 miles west of Charlotte, North Carolina. In addition to the main campus at Boiling Springs, North Carolina, Gardner-Webb offers programs at 16 satellite campuses across the state of North Carolina (Gardner-Webb University, 2010).

Founded as a boarding high school by the Kings Mountain Baptist Association in 1903, and later joined by the Sandy Run Baptist Association, the Boiling Springs High School was chartered on December 2, 1905 (Jolly, 1997). The institution became Boiling Springs Junior College in 1928 in response to the growing local demand for higher education. In 1942, the institution's name was changed to Gardner-Webb College in honor of the North Carolina Governor Max Gardner and his wife Fay Webb Gardner (Hambright, 2005). The institution was accredited as a senior college in 1971, and officially became known as Gardner-Webb University in January 1993 (Jolly, 1997).

Gardner-Webb offers 45 undergraduate majors in Arts, Science, Business, Education, and Nursing. Additionally, the institution provides learning opportunities leading to Masters Degree Programs in Business, Accounting, Education, Divinity, Counseling, Nursing, an Educational Specialist Degree, and Doctorates of Divinity and Education (Gardner-Webb University, 2010). Gardner-Webb students compete in 21 NCAA Division I sports. The most recent enrollment data showed that Gardner-Webb

had more than 4,000 students (64 percent are women), more than half were involved in the satellite GOAL program (Greater Opportunity for Adult Learners), and international students attend from 30 different countries (Gardner-Webb University, 2010).

Trustee Selection

Prior to 2007 both Wingate and Gardner-Webb Universities selected trustees as outlined in the Bylaws of the North Carolina Baptist Convention. This document stated that each institution would maintain a Board of Trustees consisting of 75% North Carolina residents and up to 25% residents from outside of North Carolina. The Trustees were elected to a four-year term with 25% of the body rotating off annually (North Carolina Baptist Convention, 2007). Wingate and Gardner-Webb maintain Boards consisting of 36 individuals. (The institutions could also elect for a limited number of alumni trustees to serve, increasing the number of total participants.) Each year North Carolina Baptist college and university presidents recommended a list of potential trustees to the North Carolina Convention for approval. Trustees were accepted or denied by the Convention based on the individual's participation in a church that was in good standing with the NC Baptist Convention (North Carolina Baptist Convention, 2007). Altering this selection process was the central focus of each institution's strategic transition.

Accreditation

Accreditation agencies, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges (SACS) increasingly have become visible on issues of disclosing how institutional resources become translated into quality educational opportunities for matriculating students, and have promulgated criteria

that must be satisfied in order for a given institution to be eligible to award degrees (Frances, 1988; Ratcliff, 1996; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). SACS stipulates that institutions need to be in compliance with Core Standards and Comprehensive Standards to receive full accreditation or re-affirmation. For compliance with Core Standards an institution must illustrate that it has a governing board that can independently support institutional advancement, a clear institutional mission statement, and methods of analysis for institutional effectiveness (Commission on Colleges Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2001). Comprehensive Standards are more specific and operational and include requirements for such items as the university library, faculty qualifications, course content, student services, and fiscal resources (Commission on Colleges Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2001). Holding such accreditation is tantamount to verifying that an institution is in compliance with federal requirements as stated under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2006). Federal guidelines for accreditation included:

- Institutional assessment is in place to determine the level of student achievement in degree and job attainment,
- Institutional offerings are directly related to the mission and purpose of the institution,
- Institutional administrative information and processes are made available to constituencies,
- Academic program duration and content are appropriate,
- Institutional processes are in place to address student concerns, and

- Institutional advertisement and marketing accurately represent institutional offerings.

Institutional programs such as Financial Aid are compliant with Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendment (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2006). It is not mandatory to have accreditation in the current American system of higher education, but most persons and entities consider it to be a litmus test for institutional quality. In addition to institutional credentialing, most entities within a postsecondary institution are expected to maintain professional accreditation and within such designated entities, such as Schools or Colleges, there usually will be professional credentialing by national and/or state organizations.

The crux of all such accreditation efforts is to assure consumers that what is provided under the rubric of education equals or exceeds minimal standards, and thus it serves as a means for protection to the public. Loss of accreditation status potentially could result in a loss of federal funding or diminished perceived value to one or more aspect of an institution. As a result, the so-called volitional participation in accreditation processes usually becomes elevated to an imperative (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Usually unrecognized in such dynamics is the cost for acquiring accreditations; including, the allocation of resources in actual dollars and designation of work-hours to assure that the standards for compliance are or have been satisfied. Such decision-making usually rests with persons entrusted with the responsibility for guiding an institution toward fulfillment of its mission: directors, regents, presidents, and others given responsibilities for ensuring that compliance has been met.

Federal Accountability

The federal government plays a role in institutional accountability as it requires institutions receiving federal funding to comply with numerous regulations. These regulations and corresponding reports identify policy and protocol are in place to ensure federal regulations regarding aid programs are met and that students are treated fairly (King, 2002). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), located within the Department of Education and Institute of Educational Sciences, is the primary federal entity responsible for collecting data on U.S. education (2008).

The NCES uses the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) surveys, as mandated by the 1992 Higher Education Act, to collect and publish relevant information from more than 9,800 institutions in the United States on: program completions rates, graduation rates, finances, enrollments, institutional prices, and financial aid (NCES, 2008). Such data can be employed by higher education administrators, policymakers, governmental agencies, and education planners to address prevailing and anticipated trends and perhaps assume a posture more favorable for future challenges. Additionally, judicious use of such information can assist in identifying institutional “success” (or “failure”), and also enable consumers to make informed decisions about an institution/program of studies that might best meet student educational needs.

Of special note is that IPED reporting is required from all postsecondary institution receiving federal funding for student financial aid and claiming to be in compliance with Title IX of the 1965 Higher Education Act. Failing to adhere to IPED protocol and accurately report the data can result in a loss of Title IX funding as mandated by the Higher Education Act, 1992.

Christian Higher Education Accountability

Federal accountability impacts private, Christian colleges in the same manner as any other higher education institution under Title IX. Of note is that some prospective consumers hold Christian institutions to an even higher standard in relation to their promises regarding faith environment, growth, and development (Newberry, 2005). Parenthetically it is of interest that many Christian college mission statements promise to provide and promote faith dialogue and exploration among students. Wingate University's mission statement references cultivating faith within a "Judeo-Christian heritage"; while Gardner-Webb University's mission statement references "spiritual challenge", "integrating scholarship with Christian life", and "significant contributions for God and humanity" (Gardner-Webb University, 2010; Wingate University, 2010).

In addition, furthering a person's devotion and dedication to enduring ideals, in higher education and in the workforce, are important issues for many students who continue to search for meaning and purpose within their choice of institution and career (Konz & Ryan, 1999). Assessment and quantification for those Christian colleges' outcomes is appreciably more difficult due to the nature of faith development, and thus accountability can be more difficult to identify and articulate. Leadership in Christian higher education and especially among Christian college presidents recognizes the importance of espousing institutional values and spending time establishing the credibility of those statements. But too often it becomes a hazy venture, especially since it does not readily comport to standards that allow for checking off numbers on accreditation reports. Especially among Christian colleges and universities, the presidents are the primary custodians of accreditation compliance, securing federal

funding, and confirming that institutional outcomes measure up to declarations of mission and promise to students.

Summary

Consistent backgrounds, traditions, and perspectives of Baptist institutions suggest that institutions may have similar interests in denominational ties to conventions and challenges regarding transitions to loosen those ties. The following discussions of strategic planning and change and presidential leadership, particularly among Christian colleges and universities, explains fundamental issues related to leadership among such institutions.

Strategic Planning and Change

Introduction

Formalized in the business community after World War II (Smart & Tierney, 1999), the concept of strategic planning encouraged entities to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats so as to better catalogue available energies and thus enhance profitability potential. Some areas of higher education recognized a shift in their market during the 1970s and began to apply the business model to prepare new programs and services and modify existing menus. The 1980's brought rising inflation and a severe economic downturn that led to the closing of struggling colleges and universities. According to Ehrenberg (2001), more than 350 campuses closed between 1975 and 2000. More than 50 percent of them were four-year institutions and strikingly over 90 percent were privates with enrollments hovering around 500 students.

Fuller (2008) claimed that Christian college enrollment trends as recent as 2007 - 2008 were equivocal at best and more likely discouraging. Based on a study of the 165

members to the National Association for Biblical Higher Education, with 112 responding, it was reported that just 27% of the institutions met their stated enrollment goals for 2008, and that it was possible that the information disclosed was the start of a potential downward trend in enrollments (Fuller, 2008). Realization of enrollment limitations and fiscal restrictions led such institutions to seek a more robust planning structure (McCorkle & Archibald, 1982; Smart & Tierney, 1999). As opposed to planning based on current demands, many institutions started to become more “strategic” on aligning resources and programs.

If college and universities are to survive the troubled years ahead a strong emphasis on planning is essential...Institutions will be compelled to become more introspective and analytical, to undertake long range planning... they will be forced to set priorities and develop strategies, overcome institutional inertia, and make long-overdue choices (Kotler & Murphy, 1981, p. 474)

Business Model and Higher Education

Change in the business community is a constant factor as competitors vie for customers and constantly seek to gain greater shares of a market (Bok, 2003). Higher education generally was less inclined to think about such circumstances, at least until the emergence of the for-profit institutions of higher education. Specifically the emergence of the University of Phoenix shifted the dynamics regarding “traditional”– residential based education to a greater understanding of how revenue, customer based approaches, and distance education influence the viability of educational institutions (University of Phoenix, 2008). As noted in the University of Phoenix impact on California, 70,000 students have received degrees from the University between 2000 and 2008 (University of Phoenix, 2008). Public and private competitors notice the shift in operations and

competition from for profit programs and are challenged to think strategically about the new norms being developed.

Recognition of this has led an increasing variety of institutions, including many struggling liberal arts colleges and non-elite state colleges, to adopt portions of the Phoenix model, especially when dealing with part-time, evening and military students. Flagship state universities and highly selective independent institutions typically have disdained this model, though even here a few institutions have created a “university college” or other rubric that enables them to pursue a separate and distinct educational model with respect to students who might not qualify for regular admission, or who have special needs and interests. (Koch, 2008)

Even with prevailing environmental factors there was not a sense of urgency on the part of higher education to adopt a business approach to operations. Instead, the postsecondary institutions continued to make modifications slowly especially with regard to marketing for students and seeking non-traditional learners (Duderstadt, 2007). But during the past two decades it appears that many institutions of higher education have become more similar to the business community in their efforts to ‘sell their products’ (Bok, 2003; Gioia & Thomas, 1996). Many institutions currently use Podcast and even YouTube videos to disseminate both educational and institutional information to students and community constituencies.

The robustness of extended learning using computer-mediated platforms, especially those predicated on asynchronous interactions has demonstrated that learners now view higher education as a product to be purchased, and many current and prospective students weigh all facets of an institution before committing to matriculation (Ehrenberg & Monks, 1999). Many students want higher education brought to them and to fit into their current schedules instead of conforming to the traditions of attending classes at a specific location and time (Diamond, 2002; Losce & Fife, 2000).) Some

highly selected institutions are able to continue relying upon an image crafted over many years of exclusivity. But most postsecondary institutions have gravitated toward meeting the desires of students, some vigorously and some reluctantly, because of a buyer mentality that has moved from that of an eager consumer to one of a demanding customer.

The changing dynamics and challenges in higher education (instability in enrollment, external demands for accountability, and uncertainty in funding sources) have forced most institutions to examine their existing methods for accommodating change to ensure that current efforts result in maximum outcomes (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). The financial implications of successful change always are important. But nowhere in higher education are the issues of change and the employment of well conceived strategic approaches to such changes as significant as for the small, private institutions, particularly those represented by the two church-related postsecondary institutions selected for this study (Gardner-Webb University and Wingate University).

Gardner-Webb University and Wingate University are heavily dependent upon tuition driven revenues. When a marked amount of external monetary resources are withdrawn, such as by the Baptist Convention from the State of North Carolina, the results can influence course offerings, the number of students accepted, extra-curricular programming, scholarships, and the amount charged for tuition to students. Detrimental changes to one or more of these aspects, or in the case of tuition having it increased, can have a profound impact on student enrollments. If two or more aspects are influenced, such as decreasing scholarships and increasing tuition, the result can be profound and possibly shake an institution's ability to survive in its current posture.

“‘Strategic change’ in academia is a phrase that introduces its own ambiguity into institutions not accustomed to thinking and acting strategically” (Gioia & Thomas, 1996, pg. 370). The authors stated that planning committees and various structures in colleges and universities are used to aligning resources that help staff and faculty perform their duties in a manner that ostensibly is most efficient and productive. But to achieve such a level of performance requires a leader capable of and willing to articulate carefully developed ideas that enable persons to reframe traditional perspectives on planning.

When strategic planning has the potential for dramatically altering an institution’s character it is imperative that the process be well-conceived and then, of equal or greater importance, carried out in a manner deemed appropriate for all constituencies. Change and postsecondary institutional transition have been studied from many perspectives: organizational change and readiness, perceptions of senior leadership, similarity to business and industry, change models, and approaches to change by institution type (Bryson & Crosby, 1995; Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Kipp, 1999; Mintzberg, 1978; Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). Each approach to institutional change often is tailored to the needs and circumstances of a given environment but also evolves around the leadership, style and preference of the given leader (Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer, 1993; Lewin, 1951). The following strategic change models are presented to provide greater context for presidential leadership during strategic transition. Analysis of data from this survey will determine if either President from this study subscribed to this or other noted change models.

Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer (1993)

At various moments in the life of an institution, strategic decisions or transitions occur that chart the path of an organization. Institutional acceptance of the change is critical and the process for achieving it can be analogized to a skilled orchestra leader directing the members under the baton; initiating planned change to organize resources while including multiple voices and perspectives. The model proposed by Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer (1992) centered on creating an inclusive plan to benefit employees, and it emphasized participation focusing on institutional structure. The authors developed their theory based on experience in organizational change and a desire to shift change from being responsive to challenges to preplanned and intentional. Involvement of all vested parties seeks to foster involvement with voices heard from all directions, which then should enable cultivating an atmosphere of readiness for change. The authors recommended the following steps.

Determining organizational readiness - Define the organization's readiness for change by using multiple approaches to identify the areas most resistant to transition. Pivotal questions warranting attention include: 1) Is the organization in a crisis, and if so how is the issue defined? 2) What has been the organization's historical approach to change? 3) Is the organization prepared for the time commitment needed to create the desired change (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993)? For example, an organization who has experienced significant drops in market share and is in financial crisis will respond differently than the same organization experiencing major growth. Differing needs, circumstances and levels of crisis will alter individual and corporate response.

Developing commitment - This phase requires a study of the role and responsibilities of the incumbent Chief Executive Officer. Included are: 1) Analyze support currently and potentially available from persons in top management positions (for church affiliated institutions it would be a board of trustees); 2) Provide fluid avenues for ensuring that persons in other leadership roles (typically a senior administrative staff plus deans and department chairs or unit coordinators) can be involved in the change process; 3) Listen to the messages being received from constituencies, audit messages being distributed; 4) Seek to minimize mixed messages; and 5) Address concerns rapidly and thoroughly and oftentimes with personal attention. The authors' support the commitment phase as a key to success because it establishes a mental framework where success can be generated (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993)

Identify a planning team – A broad based oversight committee should be organized to provide leadership. This group should be comprehensive in nature, representing most if not all constituencies, and be guided to recognize the impact of how the institution's vision might be infused with energy and engagement to support the change process (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Kouzes and Posner believe in this same format for developing collaboration and energy to inspire a vision for the future. The corporate negotiation among peers further sets the stage for increased readiness for change.

Educating the organization about the process – It is important, and the value of this step cannot be overstated, for the person leading the change process to develop a plan for sharing information with important constituencies (i.e., board of trustees and senior institution administrators) and to create a process enabling all constituencies to ask questions freely and share ideas. This step facilitates stakeholder involvement, provides

information to a community in an ongoing basis, and should lead to a less complicated transition. An organization can more effectively implement what it understands (Kipp, 1999). Conversely, Kipp contended that the greatest amount of time in most change process was devoted to issues that a corporation already considered an area of strength. The implication was that too many valuable resources were expended without gaining a productive outcome, and that it probably would be most advantageous to devote available resources on the greatest challenges, and to elicit understanding and awareness in order to breed better decision-making and analysis.

Stakeholder involvement – At most institutions, internal and external stakeholders have investment in the programs, services, and life of the institution and can offer key perspectives valuable to the planning process. Faculty members want to support and direct the vision for academic curriculum; alumni appreciate the reputation of the institution and can offer direction to preserve the perceived worth of their degree; trustees are invested in the policy and work of the president and can direct institutional offerings. According to Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer (1993) stakeholder voices are important to the construction and implementation of a compelling strategic plan. If levels of involvement are overlooked an institutional program can be left void of breadth and depth. In this planning stage, the authors recommended that an environmental assessment occur to investigate how others are impacted by strategic decisions (Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer 1993). Relationships should be investigated to determine the impact of change on internal and external constituencies.

A strategic planning contract is established - At this stage Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer (1993) noted that strategic leadership should establish clear expectations of those

handling and sharing information during the planning and implementation process. The intent would be to help alleviate internal questions, concerns, and conflict.

Lewin (1951)

Change in an organization was described as a state of imbalance between forces moving the institution forward and restraining forces holding the institution in the status quo. According to Lewin (1951), force-field analysis began as factors within an organization loosened to create a new reality, and that would then move to re-establish a new organizational state. Unlike Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer (1993), Lewin addressed change from a macro-perspective acknowledging the organic factors necessary to instigate change. The nature of this change process assumed that change is constant and inevitable with multiple periods of change moving an institution to new perspectives. To achieve change, three steps were required:

- Step One - Factors holding the institution in place must be “unfrozen”,
- Step Two - Once imbalance is achieved the system can experience levels of change free of limitations, and
- Step Three - Once change is achieved, acceptance of the new reality must be established across the organization and then “refrozen” (Lewin, 1951).

Lewin (1951) saw the “unfreezing” process as especially important as old methods of work, systems, ideas and perspectives had to be examined to result in a new state for the organization. He emphasized the importance of corporate power and change in group discussion, and explained that group dialogue and analysis of current organizational processes could yield higher levels of unfreezing and change than any single directive (Lewin, 1951).

Mintzberg (1973)

In a 1973 study, Mintzberg found that top executives had little direct time to plan within their work day and that a majority of their activities were fragmented and not self-imposed leaving little opportunity for in-depth strategic analysis of decisions. Carlson and Guest in respective studies in 1951 and 1954 indicated that daily structure was relatively unpredictable for managers leaving little time for strategic planning (Bass, 1990). Mintzberg (1973) believed that planning could occur through a much less predictable process and probably was not simply a listing of steps or a formalized strategic process. He claimed that the planning process was much more moldable and should be considered as a plan of operation and also as a mental model/environmental condition that an organization should design to influence daily decisions toward broader goals (1973). Mintzberg emphasized the following strategic concepts:

- Strategy was established by formal and informal leaders who have the best perspective and information regarding the organizational history, tradition, ethos, and culture. This perspective will allow for and create buy-in of strategic change measures and sustainability,
- Strategy was a process of decisions that enable an organization to grow in a pre-planned direction through daily operations, and
- Strategy was used to gain an advantage over competition through decisions that consider the impact of internal and external factors. The interplay between these factors is realized on a continual basis (Mintzberg, 1973).

This last point from Mintzberg was especially revealing for higher education considering the shift to the business model of change. Gioia & Thomas, (1996) believed that a

greater sense of urgency existed on the part of higher education in the past two decades and that those institutions who further examined issue of resource management and competition would be among the most successful.

Pettigrew and Whipp (1991)

Pettigrew and Whipp's (1991) change model acknowledged the differing impacts of internal and external factors that influenced transitions. The internal context described protocols, goals, and structure of the change process while external or outer context referred to factors not directly controlled within an organization, yet had significant influence over outcomes (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). The authors defined the following factors that influenced change both in and out of an organization.

- Environmental impacts and assessment – Analysis and awareness of organizational strengths and weaknesses should be determined in addition to how resources interact to produce change. Impacts of these interacting dynamics should be noted with projected impact on the change process.
- Matching strategic thinking with operational change – Unnecessary confusion can develop from mismatched planning and implementation. Careful attention to resources allocation, operational communication, and realistic progress toward change can strengthen buy-in from key participants from both internal and external perspectives.
- Human resources - Personnel interaction greatly influences the success or failure of change. Experienced staff and faculty with supportive participation influence other members of the university community to support change efforts (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991).

A noteworthy perspective from Pettigrew & Whipp centered on their emphasis of differentiating internal and external factors (1991). Often those responsible for strategic change place the greatest emphasis on issues reflecting personal strengths, yet many times the issues that cause the greatest impact are external and can be seen as out of institutional control (Kipp, 1999). Pettigrew & Whipp (1991) recommended those factors be taken into consideration as efforts were undertaken. This effort would include a process of planning and re-analyzing data from inception of strategic initiatives until completion.

Cohen, March, & Olsen – 1972

Contrasted against traditional designs of planning and change, Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972), attempted to bring together the problems and ambiguities affiliated with planned change by introducing the “garbage can” theory of organizational planning. Also known as organizational anarchy, the model described how ambiguity and irrational behaviors link together to produce planned change. The authors based their research on inter-departmental communication problems in an academic setting.

According to their research the departments studied did not provide cohesive structure and flow of information or resources (Cohen, March, & Olsen 1972). Those environments seemingly did not connect solutions to problems with the most direct resource to solve the challenges faced by students, faculty, or staff. In many business structures this lack of congruence can result in failure to achieve desired outcomes. Still, the authors suggested that organizational outcomes and change were not always related to an organized process that moved from problem to solution, but reflected more of a series of disconnected events and resources that aligned to produce change (Cohen, March, &

Olsen 1972). This model suggested a unique relationship between non –linear factors where progression of a particular process did not pass through rational steps, yet successful outcomes were achieved by random interaction of positive efforts toward an organizational vision. The theory was characterized by three primary factors:

- “problematic goals”- a clear understanding of data, circumstance, or resources is not attained leaving needed details in process undefined,
- “unclear technology” – protocol or systems with the organization are not clearly defined or understood by participants. Multiple systems may exists to accomplish like tasks, and
- “fluid participation” – personnel and communication within organizations are constantly shifting leaving little stability for systems decision-making process and causing other factors to lead organizational design (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972).

Although the “garbage can theory” defined a change environment in significantly different terms than other models of strategic design, it is important to consider that various environments do not naturally lend themselves to distinct protocol and structured decision-making. Autocratic hierarchy may lend itself to a single authority of decisions and ultimate responsibility with one party, yet when multiple constituencies and participants have equal voice a more ambiguous style of decision-making can result. One voice might provide clarity, yet multiple voices could potentially provide depth, creativity, and broad perspectives on organizational issues that potentially reach solutions undetected by the linear un-inclusive decision-making process.

Participation in the academic decision-making process can rise and fall based on the level of interest faculty maintain in the topic. Some members of a faculty have greater interest in departmental decisions as opposed to university policy or procedures. Thus it may be difficult to create systems that work uniformly. Many components of university systems present such qualities including:

- various levels of interest in institutional decisions,
- differing levels of resources,
- multiple levels of access to information based on different leadership styles of Deans and department heads, and
- complexity in thoughts and rational between faculty and staff in different disciplines (Cohen, March, & Olsen 1972).

Decisions based on relevant information or resources can yield vastly different perspectives leaving decision-makers to move through multiple options (“trash cans”) to find solutions that best fit multiple perspectives (March & Olsen, 1979).

Mintzberg’s (1978) ideas on “adhocracy” also conceptually supported the “garbage can theory”, as planning and organization were linked to a fluid design where creativity and flexibility created new mental models for planning and change.

Summary

While often organizations must be responsive to fast developing circumstances and quickly maneuver to a productive position, strategic planning models create a more intentional and sustainable structure toward change. The following review of leadership theory further explores leadership especially in context of change.

Presidential Leadership

Introduction

College presidents, especially those at smaller, Christian colleges, have many expectations placed upon their shoulders: raise funds, ensure students' concerns and needs are addressed, guard academic freedom and the institutional mission, provide for the institution's physical plant, negotiate political structures, consistently communicate institutional issues with internal and external constituencies, and provide positive leverage for institutional strategic transitions. Some presidents are fortunate in being able to utilize senior leadership and available resources to help achieve such objectives and create positive measurable outcomes (Duderstadt, 2007). The succeeding paragraphs are narrowed in scope to address presidential leadership at Christian colleges.

An expectation of a college president is that due attention will be devoted to ensuring organizational change occurs so events transpire in line with the mission and vision of the institution (Duderstadt, 2007). According to Gioia and Thomas (1996) engaging in actions viewed as strategic change implies deliberate re-calibration of direction predicated upon resources, prevailing economic and social conditions, and external influences from governing bodies. Lawton (2005) suggested that the change process should be achieved with institutional "buy-in", and an understanding and agreement from internal and external constituencies (Kipp, 1999). Of paramount importance is that faculty and staff are engaged with the process since they are the levers implementing change. Not to be ignored is the need to ensure relevant external constituencies are partners in such deliberations and decision-making because oftentimes

they are the face of an institution and the means for continuing or initiating additional sources of funding.

Commitment to change from constituencies is established through a clear institutional direction from carefully prepared communication, planning, and forethought (Cowburn 2004; Duderstadt, 2007). Duderstadt (2007) called this commitment to change a “trailblazing spirit” which emphasizes “risk taking and innovation” to establish a direction for the further enhancement of an institution (p. 272). An ideal paradigm would reveal that a president engaged faculty, staff, students, and other constituencies in the thinking and planning about how a certain change might benefit an institution. Then, through careful communication to the university community and external supporters the concept would be shared with the goal being to stimulate and encourage acceptance of the change process, or perhaps modification if appropriate. Cowburn (2004) claimed that such flexibility and openness was critical to encapsulate constituencies into the deliberation activities and create the belief each member had a role in formulating ideas and reaching the determination, instead of allowing the idea to bubble up, that it was a mandate imposed.

The world of higher education is not the place it was forty years ago, when it was assumed that state funding would increase with rises in student numbers, where decision-making was a leisurely process of consultation and consensus and where the external environment was reasonably predictable. The current decline in state funding, the increasingly entrepreneurial nature of the sector, the changing profile of the students and the development of new methods of learning mean that universities need to be adaptable

and ready to respond to new opportunities if they are to keep ahead of the competition (Cowburn, 2004).

The multiple and complex issues in higher education lend themselves to the potential of more and deeper strategic transitions for institutions of the 21st century. The negotiation of strategic structures and realization of potential opportunities existing for quality student programs is important for the success of an institution. In addition, the transitional nature of the denominational affiliation and institutional formation sets the stage for ongoing shifts in relationships and priorities for educational institutions and religious associations. Issues of influence and political motivation merge with community needs and individual leadership to mold these historical transitions establishing the movement in faith relationships as the norm as opposed to the exception. A review of leadership models and theory will set the stage for further in-depth analysis of how individual leaders are motivated if not wired to maneuver the complex environment of these faith-based institutions and their external relationships with constituencies and various organizations.

According to Bass (1990) over 7,500 studies have been conducted on leadership topics. It is worthy of pointing out that the Bass data was published 20-years ago and so it can be conjectured that the number of such studies has increased considerably. With the mammoth amount of theory and scholarly literature available, this section of the review chapter is purposed to define relevant leadership theory applicable to the study. The following provides a base of knowledge regarding commonly applied leadership theory and models including: relational leadership, situational leadership, servant

leadership, and transactional and transformational leadership, visionary leadership, and charismatic leadership.

Relational Leadership

Stogdill conducted a survey of leadership traits to determine what characteristics were most noted in leaders as opposed to followers (Stogdill in Wren, 1995). Traits noted included: intelligence, scholarship, initiative, and verbal facility. Yet according to Stogdill the traits were not the most important factor(s) for determining leadership acuity.

The findings suggest that leadership is not a matter of passive status or of the mere possession of some combination of traits - It appears rather to be a working relationship among members of a group, in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying cooperative tasks through to completion (Stogdill in Wren, 1995, p.131).

Stogdill described characteristics of social participation, sociability, popularity, and cooperation as key traits of a successful leader, and commented that there was interconnectedness between an individual's ability to effect favorable personal relationships and evidence leadership characteristics.

Relational leaders drew clarity and direction in work pursuit from the interconnected nature of work relationships (Bass, 1990; Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007). The stimulus for action was to be informed and evidence an understanding of how individual relationships were connected, leveraged, and contextualized by participants (Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007). Those networks were maneuvered by personal characteristics and managed by individuals who had the greatest interpersonal skill base.

Komives, Lucas, McMahon (2007) (Relational Leadership Model -RLM) supported the interconnected nature of relational leaders and further defined RLM in the context of five characteristics: purpose, inclusion, empowerment, ethics, and process.

They provided a platform for the application of their model through personal interactions with groups and organizations, and by critically examining factors deemed to be consistent in other leadership models. Clarification of the Komives, et al. approach is provided below.

- *Purpose* was directly related to the leadership task. The authors said that leaders' vision gave direction to followers and provided the potential to inspire and offer incentive to follow.
- Developing an *inclusive* environment was important to relational leaders as they interacted with multiple constituencies, building consensus for decisions that had to be made or for an organization's pathway.
- *Empowerment* for a relational leader meant that grass roots action on the part of followers, when delegated from the relational leaders, created strong buy-in and an understanding of group goals and outcomes.
- *Ethics* was a core principle for relational leaders. Trust and mutual understanding were constant and integral component factors within this model. Followers had to be comfortable trusting the core decision-making of a leader, which revolved about displaying adherence to ethical principles.
- *Process* was important because relational leaders had to appreciate and display an understanding of how the circumstantial issues impacted the many levels of an organization. Showing sensitivity to such conditions happened when a relational leader was able to assist group members maneuver issues so outcomes reflected meaningfully through the vision and direction of an organization (Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007).

Situational Leadership

Behavioralist Hersey and Blanchard (1979) framed relationships in the context of task versus consideration. Consideration was defined as “the behaviors indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in the relationship between the leader and the members of his staff” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1979, p 95). Hersey’s (1984) situational leadership model showed that leaders responded to organizational circumstances using what was believed to be the best methods or approaches to achieve optimal results, and in the process had no compunctions about altering or adapting a leadership style (behavior) to fit a situation. In addition, situational leadership related to a follower based on what was perceived to be his/her given style, preferences, and prevailing circumstances. The authors said that people and settings were different and required leaders to assess and apply the methods that would be most apt to garner a desired outcome.

Situational leadership stages were set into a matrix with high and low tasks emphasis on the x axis and high and low relationship characteristics on the y axis. The following is a description of situational leadership quadrants (Hersey, 1984).

- S1 (high task focus and low relationship focus) – In this quadrant the leader makes decisions and communicates to the follower each step necessary to complete the desired task. Often these followers lack motivation and commitment to complete necessary responsibilities without significant direction, supervision, and clarity (Hersey, 1984). This style may also be employed with new employees who have limited exposure to institutional norms and structures. The leader provides higher levels of direction to ensure clarity of the message and instigate strong levels of performance. One-way communication is the hallmark of this

quadrant with little or no feedback being received by the follower to support task completion.

- S2 (high task focus and high relationship focus) - In this quadrant the leader engages the follower to solicit ideas or opinions. Many times the follower is inexperienced and leaders use this method as a teaching or coaching tool to support follower growth and development. Although the process is two-way the decisions are still made by the leaders. Tasks outcomes remain a high priority.
- S3 (low task focus and high relationship focus) – In this sector, the follower is often skilled and experienced, capable of making decisions and completing the task with little or no direction. The leader provides autonomy to the follower with the expectation that the process is completed to the leader's satisfaction while providing motivation and support to enhance the follower's confidence. Individuals are considered potential leaders in the organization and greater efforts are made on the part of the leader to ensure that actions are directed to effective outcomes. This participative method offers guidance and quality control with the main emphasis being placed on building trust and camaraderie between participants.
- S4 (low task focus and low relationship focus) – In this quadrant, the leader delegates appropriate tasks to the follower and does not directly participate in the process. The leader remains available to answer questions or provide support as needed, but the follower is charged with the direct responsibility of obtaining the necessary outcome without supervision. Followers in this sector are experienced, self-directed, and have the necessary skill set to

address challenges and complete the task ensuring quality implementation (Hersey, 1984).

This notion of situational leadership can be applied to various types of organizations. The norms of a particular environment drive a leader to use appropriate methods and utilize certain skills. For example, an environment that prized interpersonal relationships would require a leader to focus attention on developing relationships to accomplish work even if that leader had a tendency for an authoritative style with little emphasis on interpersonal connection to employees. The ability to adjust to the human factor and maneuver within social circumstances can help create the needed work environment to stimulate organizational change. With the many dichotomous leadership approaches available, the ability of an individual to assess and move within a style is important for success. Leaders who alter their behaviors to fit multiple situations and leadership challenges have the potential to engender greater acceptance from a wide range of constituencies (Bass, 1990).

Charismatic Leadership

German sociologist Max Weber (1922) explained charismatic leadership as an exceptional personal quality that motivated others to participate in the pursuit of a (noble) vision or concept that was greater than a single person (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Oftentimes charismatic leaders can articulate complex or emotional ideas with simple yet compelling words that others readily identify and support. With such identification comes acceptance and loyalty to an organizational vision while engendering exceptional individual and organizational performance (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Charismatic

leaders purportedly were capable of launching new endeavors, inspiring others to reach new levels of performance, and/or inciting organizational change or renewal with significant levels of individual and group engagement. Conger and Kanungo (1998) described the following five behavioral attributes of charismatic leaders.

- Personal risk taking,
- Sensitivity to group needs,
- Sensitivity to the culture and environment,
- Clear vision, and
- Acting in unconventional manner for the benefit of the group.

Charismatic leaders reportedly have strong scanning and environmental assessment skills (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). That translates into them being able to read situations, environments, and people and readily assess moods, issues, and concerns of individuals and/or groups. Through careful application of attention to detail and personality the charismatic leader helps others believe they are valued and connected to an organization.

Visionary Leadership

Visionary leaders motivate followers by painting a picture of organizational possibilities and opportunities, encouraging follower curiosity of a desirable potential future. Once followers are aware of the possibilities presumably they are more likely to join in an effort and contribute to the greater good of an organization. Nanus' (1992) model of visionary leadership described vision as a part of leadership within the following four categories:

- Direction Setter – Leaders examine external and internal environmental factors to determine the best possible avenue(s) for success. Once a path is chosen the perspective is communicated.
- Change Agent – Leaders recognize necessary organizational shifts and use an understanding of the future to communicate and establish supportive and engaged change.
- Spokesperson – Leaders articulate proposed future movement of an organization giving life to a plan and supporting others as they learn more about organizational direction. The goal is to foster buy-in to the process.
- Coach – Leaders offer direction to support and direct the development of a vision.

Lawton's (2004) work compared Christian college presidents on the visioning model espoused by Nanus (1992). It was reported that the presidents use common language and stories that connected future actions of an institution to an institutional mission. Lawton (2004) reported that followers noted being more comfortable with the change model when common themes and language were used to explain actions set into movement as respective institutions sought to achieve future goals.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership was characterized by the personal giving of time, energy, and/or skills to complete necessary tasks (Greenleaf, 2003). First discussed by Greenleaf in a 1970 article, the servant leadership model focused on the needs of followers and maximized efforts to minimize pressures or challenges others faced. This leadership style is an outgrowth of personality for some, resulting in it being viewed as natural and lacking in pretense. As a by-product of service learning, others might elect to emulate a

leader's style, thus creating an organizational ethos where individual efforts become maximized to benefit the greater good of an organization and its constituencies leaving personal recognition or status as a secondary consideration (if at all). Power relationships in this model are minimized and each part of the hierarchy shares work to accomplish organizational goals.

Spears (1998) supported Greenleaf's work by crafting ten characteristics of a servant leader, and why they likely would elicit favorable responses to a leader.

- *Listening* – the ability to hear the perspectives of others and translate that information into an effective work strategy. Spears (1998) claimed that servant leaders helped actualize followers by valuing their participation and contribution to a process, that in turn can increased a follower's investment in an organization and its outcomes.
- *Empathy* – the ability to see circumstances from another's perspective and understand one's feelings by placing themselves in that position. Spears stated that empathy helped others believe they were understood, thus validating their perspective and giving credibility to their circumstances. This was important as leaders connected with constituencies; drawing them into a shared perspective for an institutional vision (1998).
- *Persuasion* – the ability to influence others based on the credibility of a leader or importance of a topic being addressed rather than the position or authority of a leader.
- *Awareness* – the ability of a leader to recognize the circumstances and influences that surround his or her own leadership, especially the leader's strengths and

weaknesses. This perspective allowed for leveraging influences to support productive work environments.

- *Foresight* – the ability to see ahead and project how resources and circumstances could support or challenge an organization’s movement.
- *Commitment* to the growth of people – a leader’s desire to enhance the development of individuals whom they serve. Although altruistic by nature, this perspective ultimately supported organizational advancement, because as followers grow and develop they can maximize their skills to garner greater results.
- *Building community* – an ability to enhance a work environment, increasing the positive interactions between colleagues resulting in a more productive work environment characterized by trust, support, and positive relationships.
- *Conceptualization* – an ability to see ahead and frame a mental model of outcomes that support growth and development consistent with an organizational mission and vision.
- *Healing* – an ability to nurture followers. A leader addresses specific personal or organizational challenges, which if left unaddressed could lead to bad feelings and ultimately a poor work environment (Spears, 1998).

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Leadership can choose from different strategic paths to accomplish organizational change and achieve desired outcomes. Noted previously, Hersey and Blanchard, (1979) examined how work situations can influence the action of leaders to impact organizational and individual outcomes. In contrast, Bass (1990) described two

approaches to leadership defined by the motivational interest and skill of a leader.

Transformational leadership was explained as actions by persons who can respect others and thus motivate them to achieve higher order outcomes (Bass, 1990). It was a leadership philosophy that moved beyond the wants and interest of an individual to achieve goals for the greater interest of the organization and others.

In contrast, transactional leadership was explained as pursuit of immediate goals through a process of rewards or incentives. Motivation was external generated (Bass, 1985). While transformational leadership dealt with followers on an altruistic level, transactional leadership required external stimuli. But Bass (1990) said that the most successful style of leadership was the one that effected the desired change making the most effective and efficient use of available resources.

Summary

The leadership models presented an overarching view of relevant leadership approaches available to college presidents. Style and circumstances may direct how presidents choose to direct the activities of their institution in consideration of institutional goals. Further research will determine how strategic planning and leadership impact the college president during institutional strategic transition.

Chapter Summary

Literature and background perspectives create a theoretical framework for the study of presidential leadership and strategic transition. Literature demonstrates varied leadership methods to develop an institutional vision and deploy resources in support of organizational goals and programs. Strategic planning models provide context for leveraging human resources to create an environment conducive to effective change. In

this context background information and history of Christian higher education illustrates the need for a review of presidential leadership in changing the selection process for an institution's board of trustees. The following chapter will establish the research methods and protocol for this study of presidential leadership.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Overview

This chapter provides a description of the methods, with special attention paid to the rationale for selecting a case study approach. The following categories structure this chapter: introduction, rationale for qualitative research, site and participant selection, research questions, data collection, coding and analyses, role of the researcher, and potential personal biases that might have influenced the results presented.

Introduction

The purpose of this case study research was to uncover the leadership characteristics of two Baptist University Presidents whose institutions were engaged in a strategic transition that had a significant influence upon financial resources and the potential mission of each institution. It was anticipated that the findings would provide insight to presidential decision-making and how presidential leadership can foster positive institutional change while simultaneously mitigating external criticism. The methodology involved personal interviews with 17 persons from each of two postsecondary Baptist institutions in the State of North Carolina; Wingate University and Gardner-Webb University. Participants included each university President, and the following persons from respective institutions: four senior administrators, four faculty members, four students, and four members from each Board of Trustees.

Individual interviews created opportunity for each participant to elaborate on personal perspectives of an institution president's leadership during the period of strategic transition and to reinforce commentary with examples, when possible. As those

stories unfolded, the researcher took copious handwritten notes; audio recorded each session, with permission, and then engaged in the process of coding the data and interpreting its content. It was expected that varied perspectives would surface and therefore an inductive approach to analysis was used (Hatch, 2002). The following sections provide the context for the study and give justification for the research methodology and approach.

Rationale for a Qualitative, Multiple Case Study Approach

A qualitative approach was selected for this research because it enabled the researcher to better understand and articulate the experiences of Baptist University Presidents during a period of strategic transition that resulted with an alteration of their State's Baptist Convention's relationship as the controlling element in the ongoing lives of their respective institution. Interviews with volunteers from each of the four groups of participants allowed for crafting detailed descriptions of personal interactions with their President during the period surrounding the strategic transition process. Also, those interviews provided a forum for soliciting commentary about how participants understood other persons' views on the activities of their President. The intent was to cull information from multiple sources, including the progenitor of such activity (the institution President), on what transpired to make the process successful. The findings are exposed through a process of examination, discussion, and interoperation. Patterns and themes identified by the researcher are expected to illuminate successful presidential leadership in Baptist institutions of higher education (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Merriman, 1998).

Qualitative research gives a researcher an opportunity to dig deeper into a topic and uncover information not commonly exposed by quantitative approaches, because the process allows participants to expand on specific thoughts or ideas and provide examples (Hatch, 2002). This process is especially important in the analysis of presidential leadership because few people have an opportunity to closely examine postsecondary presidents in their daily role, spend one-on-one time with them, their cabinets and trustees, students, or gain access to information regarding a university's plan for strategic implementation of a pivotal change in organizational relationships. This study examined presidential leadership during a period of strategic transition by allowing participants to tell their stories of circumstances, messages, processes, and the impacts of decisions (Creswell, 1998; Merriman, 1998). Creswell (1998) described the process as a "human experience", and said that a researcher (and reader) can gain greater understanding of complex issues through a qualitative process. It was that kind of understanding that was sought from this study.

Creswell (1998) identified five types of qualitative research: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. A case study approach was selected for this investigation because it is defined as a bound system, and therefore uses a limited number of participants within the context of a defined amount of time to gather and report data (Creswell, 1998; Merriman, 1998). This research was on two college presidents, their leadership teams, and selected members of each institution's faculty, students, and trustees.

Selecting multiple institutions further enhanced the validity of the study providing for comparison and development of like themes from multiple sources

(Merriman, 1998). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) investigating two institutions allows a researcher to probe differing perspectives presented by the participants to create multiple, valid realities that add to the depth of the study. Case studies also provide a specific backdrop for the research bringing to life relevant leadership experiences and placing presidential actions into more meaningful context.

Site and Participant Selection

The study population consisted of five Baptist postsecondary institutions in North Carolina engaged in a shift in affiliation from the North Carolina Baptist Convention to becoming independent institutions with self-perpetuating Board of Trustees: Campbell University, Chowan University, Gardner-Webb University, Mars Hill College, and Wingate University. For this study two institutions, Gardner-Webb University and Wingate University were the sample frame because of their relationship with the researcher. The Presidents at Gardner-Webb and Wingate confirmed the researcher's access to the institutional leadership, and also to selected members of each institution's faculty, students, administrators, and trustees.

Access to the President, administrators, faculty, students, and trustees was imperative to selection criteria, because each grouping offers a different and potentially viable perspective of their respective President's leadership, thereby providing a stronger data set for analysis, interpretation, and application (Hatch, 2002). The identified leadership positions had a wide breadth of knowledge and interaction with a president and presumably could and did accurately report meaningful levels of influence, success, and challenge.

Conducting interviews and self-reflection with persons in key positions offers the best method to establish internal meaning and understanding. According to Gioio and Thomas (1996) developing “meaning” was a social construction where participants in the change process had the best understanding of their own experiences and could provide relevant explanations. Providing a wide range of interviewees also increased the potential for validity of common themes within the data (Hatch, 2002).

Research Questions

Creswell (1998) said that a “Grand Tour Question” was intended to define and limit the research process. The “Sub-Questions” provide structure to a study. The interviewees were expected to provide personal perspectives not considered prior to the study and therefore an inductive procedure was meaningful (Hatch, 2002). The combination of research questions were carefully considered, vetted by a quasi-Delphi manner, in order to enlist meaningful responses and provide for the greatest potential results. They are listed below the Grand Tour Question.

Grand Tour Question:

- How do Presidents and presidential constituents at two selected Baptist postsecondary institutions describe presidential leadership during institutional strategic transition; establishing a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees?

Sub-Questions:

- What key messages (language - words or phrases) are used by a President to frame the institutional transition to establish a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees?
- How did a President initiate that strategic transition?

- How did a President communicate the key messages to institutional constituencies?
- How did the content of the key messages or delivery vary according to respective constituencies?
- What personal style (mannerisms, stories, or tone) did a President employ to manage multiple constituencies and institutional messages?
- What specific tactic, or methods, exercised by a President were helpful to support an institutional transition?
- What relationships or alliances were most important during the strategic transition?
- How was the decision of moving to self-perpetuating Trustee selection part of a larger vision or strategy?
- How does the selection of a Board of Trustees shape institutional identity?
- What were the potential road blocks to the institutional change?
- How did a President deal with those road blocks?
- What priorities did a President set during the strategic change?

Data Collection

According to Creswell (1998), there were four basic types of qualitative data; observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials. It is important that the method of inquiry match the research tradition with the most reasonable, logical data collection process (Merriman, 1998). For the purpose of this study two methods were employed: interviewing and document reviewing.

Interviews

In addition to each institution President, 16 individuals (four in each group) were interviewed from each university. Those persons were presumed to have valuable perspectives of the strategic transition process and capable of articulating on the leadership skills used by their President. Multiple perspectives offered greater validity to the findings, especially given the fact the data were triangulated (Hatch, 2002).

Interviews took place on a respective campus at a location that supported the confidential nature of the study. Those interviews were scheduled for 60-minute blocks of time, but provisions were built-in allowing freedom to exceed that time frame and pursue important lines of discussion as necessary. Interviews were audio taped with permission, transcribed by the researcher, and coded for consistent themes. Persons in the following or similar positions were sought as interviewees, but allowances were made to accommodate persons preferring to not participate in this study.

Table 3.1 – Interview Participant Guidelines

- President – one from Gardner-Webb University and one from Wingate University.

Administrative Personnel (Four per institution)

- Assistant to the President – one from each university.
- Vice- President for Academic Affairs – one from each university
- Vice-President for Development – one from each university.
- Vice-President for Business Affairs.

When one or more of the above persons was not available participants were sought from the following:

- Vice-President for Athletics.
- Vice President for Student Affairs.
- Vice-President for Enrollment Management.
- Director for Church or Community Relations.

Faculty Members from each university (Four per institution)

- Chairperson for a large Academic Department.
- Chairperson for a small Academic Department.

- Faculty Senate President.
- Faculty Person at Large.

When one or more of the above persons was not available participants were sought from the following:

- Faculty Senate Executive Committee Member.
- Prior Senate Presidents.
- Other persons with Departmental Leadership Experience.

Student Representation will be sought from among the following (Four per university).

- Student Government President.
- Student at Large (identified by the Student Government President).
- Student involved with Student Affairs Leadership.
- Student from the Institution's Honor Society.

It was planned that if such persons are not available reasonable substitutions would be made and so noted in the text of this manuscript.

Representation from the Board of Trustees included the following (Four per university).

- Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Three Trustees at Large and could include Board officers.

Upon selection of the volunteers, pseudo names were assigned to each person and

no information divulged to anyone else. Only the respective University Presidents were identified by name and it was done with their consent. Audio tapes were used for verbatim transcriptions and copious notes taken to augment the data and provide additional researcher perspective and reflection. The transcription and re-reading process took place within 24-hours of an interview to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the interview data, and transcriptions will be distributed to respective participants to verify the contents. Notes and transcriptions were re-read to ensure accuracy prior to releasing the transcriptions to participants for verification of content.

Open-ended questions were used to encourage the participants to represent their perception of a President's leadership and interaction with the strategic change process (Creswell, 1998). All questions were used as a guide for discussion while allowing the

researcher to pursue other lines of discussion for discovery of new and unanticipated information or patterns. That allowed the researcher to move through questions and engage in dialogue that best brought out descriptive data (Gioia & Thomas, 1996).

The interview questions were vetted by submitting them to a panel of five experts in research. None were participants in this study. That “content analysis” allowed others to informally assess whether the tool accurately measured or was effective in obtaining what was intended (Creswell, 2002). Additionally, the researcher piloted the questions and process for data analysis with two volunteers; one from each of the two sample institutions and neither person was a subsequent interviewee.

Among the potential disadvantages for the interview process was: 1) data is filtered by a researcher who might be biased, 2) an interviewee might lead a researcher in a false direction, and 3) the presence of a researcher might alter the comfort or freedom of an interviewee thereby skewing the results (Creswell, 2002). Additionally, it needs to be recognized that volunteers for a study might be different from persons who do not volunteer.

To address the above potential issues, the researcher’s possible bias in relation to his intimate history and relationship with Christian higher education and the Baptists institutions, was explained to each participant prior to an interview. Furthermore, the letter of invitation included commentary on that topic. The issue of possibly going in an erroneous direction only can be addressed by multiple reviews of data sets from the various participants. If one seems unusual it might warrant special attention and perhaps a detailed treatment. All interviews occurred in the private offices of the interviewee or administrative conference room and participants were reminded of their rights as “human

subjects” emphasizing the confidential nature of the interview. The issue of distinguishing between volunteers and non-volunteers was not a subject for concern in this study because the intention was to secure volitional participation. The process shown below in Table 3.2 was followed.

Table 3.2: Sequence of Activities for Implementation of Study.

SEQUENCE	ACTION	PURPOSE
1.	Contact the President of each institution.	To ask for permission to conduct research and outline the research process.
2.	Define potential participants at each institution in conjunction with the President.	To establish clear expectations of institutional participation.
3.	Obtain participant information and enter into a data base.	To establish contact information for participants.
4.	Establish dates for potential interviews.	To frame the interview process.
5.	Send initial contact letter requesting participation and outlining Internal Review Board requirements.	To encourage participation and ensure the amenity and rights of participants
6.	Contact each participant.	To build rapport, answer questions and confirm the interview time.
7.	Send follow-up e-mail clarifying the interview time, purpose, and process.	To provide information, encourage participation, and illustrate the value.
8.	Conduct the interview, transcribe the data, and read all material.	To gather data and initiate coding.
9.	Send a handwritten note of appreciation to each participant after the interview.	To thank participants

Both initial and follow-up correspondence was deemed essential information regarding participation in the study as potential participants might have subsequent reservations about such engagement, or possibly forget their commitment to participate.

Notably, when that follow-up communication did occur it re-iterated information on the following: interview recording process, confidentiality (institutional and individual privacy), informed consent and University of Nebraska, Lincoln Institutional Review Board approval to engage in the research, and the subsequent use of the data.

In addition, participants were informed that all taped interviews and transcriptions would be kept in a locked safe at the researcher's home for one year after an interview and then destroyed. During that 12-month period the information was to be perused for relevant information to share with the academic community in the form of professional presentations and publications.

Documents

Selected documents were requested to provide additional insight into a President's leadership during strategic transition. Documents provide a supporting text-based source of important information and contribute to the painting of a picture on how a university community was kept up-to-date of the strategic transition (Creswell, 1998). Documents sought included, but were not limited to depending on relevance, the following sources.

- Faculty Senate minutes were requested from a Senate office and used to study messages to faculty regarding the strategic transition. The minutes were coded for terms representing concepts, issues, ideas, etc. related to the process and cover the time frame from when the transition was initiated to the time of data collection for this study.
- Strategic planning committee minutes were requested from a President's office and used to describe how the institution viewed, planned for, and then initiated

the process of change. The strategic planning minutes were analyzed by coding for like terms, ideas, and points of interests.

- Budget information was requested from respective Presidents for the purpose of identifying how the planning process considered the changes in financial support.
- Written communication between the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and each institution were requested for analysis of concepts, issues, ideas, etc. related to the strategic transition process.

Data Analysis: Coding

“Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning” (Hatch, 2002, p.148). Once an interview has been transcribed a researcher begins the analysis of organizing data into usable components. The process is called coding, an ethnographic tool used to place data from interviews, observations, and documents into like categories (Hatch, 2002). During the coding process the researcher identified and combined multiple sources from the raw data to answers the specific research questions (Wolcott 1994).

The first step used in analysis was "open coding" (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990); when words or phrases from the transcriptions were placed into categories. As like phrases or concepts emerged and themes become evident, that information was grouped and labeled. At that incipient stage of analysis an audit trail was initiated to identify where data came from (who said it and when). The researcher's intent was to obviate specific individuals during the process of reporting the data, but it was imperative to link sources and information when making connections and providing context as the data is further interpreted. Obfuscation of individuals was done by virtue of only referring to groups of participants from the respective institutions. Open coding

was a flexible process. New categories surfaced during the re-reading of material and allowed the researcher to create better alignments of information and themes.

After open coding was completed, the transcripts were re-read to examine the categories and determine if they were linked. That was the "axial coding" process (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It highlighted the inductive process of qualitative examination, taking specific information and categories to build a bigger picture, illustrating a more complex frame of interrelated data provided a new way to view the topic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Axial coding allowed the direction for analysis to emerge from the data as opposed to creating categories from theory or research objectives, because it was done topologically (Hatch, 2002). Using open and axial coding was the process the researcher used to examine causation, outcomes, or impacts and enabled making meaning from the data (Creswell, 1998).

Verification

Qualitative studies use verification to determine if the data and findings from the research are trustworthy and validate a researcher's understanding of the data (Creswell, 1998). A researcher should be most concerned with whether the data provides a clear and understandable perspective from study participants. To achieve that result the researcher used the following procedures: rich descriptions, triangulation, member checks, and reporting all potential and existing personal biases.

First, thick and rich descriptions were used to create a clear understanding of the data. That enabled the researcher to paint a picture of the data using substantive and substantial information from the interviews. Providing specific details, including relevant

narratives with individual perspectives helped establish greater credibility for the data interpretation.

Second, using multiple data collection sites and interviewees served to triangulate the data; providing for differing perspectives for confirming and supporting the findings (Guion, 2002). As the data was coded and the participants noted from the varied and multiple sources a triangulation of the data results surfaced, giving the perspectives identified greater credence.

The third method of verification was member-checks. Transcriptions were given back to all participants for direct feedback regarding the accuracy of the contents and interviewees' intent. Identifying personal bias also supported issues of verification, and is addressed below.

The Role of the Researcher and Personal Bias

The role of the researcher in this qualitative study was to initiate the investigation, ensure all appropriate safeguards were followed, acknowledge all personal beliefs and experiences that might color data interpretation, record the data correctly, and utilize structure to analyze and then present themes (Creswell, 1998; Merriman, 1998). In many ways personal bias could support and enhance the analysis of the phenomena being studied. The researcher acknowledged his link to Christian higher education and private education as both an asset and challenge to the research.

The researcher attended a private, Baptist liberal arts institution, worked at one of the institutions being studied, and was employed at the other institution being studied. Those factors supported the researcher's interest in the topic as well as his understanding and awareness of these academic communities. Being closely affiliated to the institutions

also was a primary factor in gaining access to the President, staff, and data. The researcher has an appreciation for Christian higher education and the strengths and weakness involved in decision-making during strategic transition.

This chapter has presented the manner by which the study was conducted. The next chapter presents the results according to how the sub-questions are answered and then how they bear on the grand tour question.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Overview

There are four major sections to this chapter. ***First*** is a description of data and analysis from the participant interviews based upon open coding, and the emergent themes that were derived from the axial coding process. ***Second*** is a description of the four interview participant categories (faculty, student, administrators, and trustees), which is followed by a description of each Presidential participant. The ***third*** major section presents three thematic perspectives derived from the coding efforts, followed by relevant interview data. The ***fourth*** and final section answers the research questions. Discussions of contrast in presidential leadership styles and connection to relevant literature follow in chapter five.

Coding and Theme Identification

Open Coding

The incipient data review allowed for identification of a list of relevant phrases, words, and concepts that had been repeated in multiple interviews and across various groups. As the interviews and documents were culled continuously for data an audit trail of content was created. The first letter of an interview group was used for the audit identification such as: faculty “F”, student “S”, administrator “A”, and trustee “T”. Additionally, each individual participant was assigned a specific number 1-8, which was used in conjunction with the letter to reference data associated with a code (i.e., F-8 represented faculty member #8). This audit trail identification method was used to attach selected content or quotes from interviews to a corresponding code.

Through continual assessment of the data in the open coding process, categories became more evident and 19 codes were formed during that initial process. Re-reading the data for additional connections and perspective provided further clarity and specificity. The 19 codes were honed and connected as the material emerged indicating further synergy between the interviews and the data. Subsequently 12 (essential) codes were distinguished at the conclusion of the open coding process.

Axial Coding and Theme Identification

Upon further review during the axial coding process (when the wide themes were related via inductive and deductive reasoning) broad themes emerged across the study. Those concepts were woven throughout the interviews and provided additional context for understanding the process of presidential leadership during the periods of strategic transition. (The integrated coding and theme data is summarized below in Table 4-1.)

Table 4.1 Essential Code and Theme List

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

A. THEME: The Importance of Relationships

- 1 Code – President Has Experience and Relationships with Baptist Convention
 - Has experience with Baptist systems, teams, and committees
 - Has experience with Baptist leadership and decision-making
 - Has experience with essential Baptist tenants (priesthood of believers)
- 2 Code – President Provides Institutional Stability
 - Promotes security
 - Provides continuity – will remain connected to Baptist ideals
 - Will not enlist significant change to institutional identity

Reassure the public (donors, supports, students)

3 Code – President Illustrates Personal Sincerity

Is genuine, honest, and transparent with others

Engenders trust

4 Code – President Understands of Historical Relationships of Baptist Institutions

Honors presidential predecessors

Anchors leadership history, traditions, and institutional identity

5 Code - Ability to Minimize Conflict through Engagement

Listens

Ask good questions

6 Code - Influence of President's Personal Story

Relates personally to Baptist and Baptist relationships

Aligns with concepts of Baptist freedom, trust, and autonomy

B. THEME - The Importance of Vision

7 Code - President Initiates Positive Movement for Institutional Growth

Willing to make tough decisions to support the institution

Believes financial support and stability are essential

Believes the future under new board members is pivotal for identity

8 Code - President Possess a Clear Vision for the Future

9 Code - Presidential Believes Academic Freedom is Essential

Address fear of denominational influence in the academic environment

Addresses concern over selection of future Trustees

C. THEME - The Importance of Communication

10 Code - President Promotes a Simple Message

Repeats central concepts to reassure constituencies

Illustrates a positive and reassuring tone

11 Code - President Communicates Consistently

Provides on-going communication

12 Code - President Promotes Confidence in the Message

Believes that institutional transition is imperative for institutional success

Minimizes roadblocks of fear and loss of funding while preserving past

Emerging Themes

The three emergent themes that surfaced were: Importance of *Relationships*, *Communication*, and then *Vision*. Each arose from the interpretation of Presidential leadership, experiences, skills, and interactions from the perspectives of each of the interview groups. Below is an explanation of each theme and the supporting codes.

The Importance of Relationships

The interviewees believed that each President had noteworthy experiences within Baptist circles giving them opportunities to develop and enhance mutually beneficial relationships that better served their respective institution. In addition, each President recognized the need to support institutional constituencies while continuing to enhance positive internal and external relationships throughout the strategic transition process. Multiple codes contributed to this theme. The relationship perspective was developed further through a respective President's understanding of team development within an institution.

The concept of team development consisted of creating a staff and administration that told the President the truth about important issues (even when a perspective was not

favorable to the President). Honest and engaged dialogue supported administrative autonomy and empowered frontline decision-making. Staff engagement supported discussion about important campus issues and also minimized potential conflict regarding transition.

Furthermore the relationship theme was enhanced by a President's ability to promote a belief of institutional stability and continuity. Assuring the public, donors, students, faculty, staff and others that the institution would not change markedly was an important issue in support of an institution's transition. Finally, the importance of relationships was advanced by each President's interpersonal skills and distinctive personal qualities of moral and ethical excellence. Both Presidents evidenced significant personal sincerity, honesty, and transparency. Both brought authentic personal stories to their leadership. The respective constituencies stated that they believed in their leaders and trusted them as individuals.

The Importance of Communication

The two Presidents used simple but specific messages to communicate their institutional transitions. Those ideals were repeated consistently in all messages and fostered credence among all levels of their constituencies. The key messages included:

- Each institution will remain Christian (supports Baptist ideals and heritage),
- Each institution would maintain a positive position with their Convention,
- Each institution would select their trustees when moving forward, and
- Each institution would maintain academic freedom.

Further enhancing the importance of communication was that each President imparted a level of confidence that encouraged others to envision a stronger future, and one where

students and learning environments were the top priority. The contents of all messages were consistent to each constituency and there was no evaporation on the level of importance given to those ideas throughout the transition.

The Importance of Vision

Each constituency believed that the future of the respective institutions was the key element that swayed their support for the institutional transition. Supporting a new and engaging future and vision for institutional programs was paramount for all constituencies. It was re-iterated that the new vision maintained the history and tradition of an institution, preserved academic freedom, took steps to ensure future research and development, and created new and vibrant programs. All of the constituencies were concerned with an institution's financial viability and wanted to support decisions that would enhance actions that would encourage and enhance efforts to remain self-supporting.

Participant Description

The following section outlines interview group characteristics. General information is given to show the experiences and perspectives of those who participated. For each category; *faculty, administrator, student, and trustee*, four participants were from Gardner-Webb University and four were from Wingate University. Specific titles, names, or other defining details have been omitted to ensure participant confidentiality. Presidential information and data concludes the presentation of research information in this section.

Faculty

The eight participating faculty members represented in the study had a combined

teaching tenure of 267 years. All had served their respective department as Chair (five served in that role at the time the interviews were conducted), three served as Dean of a School, and two served as Chair of their respective Faculty Senate. The group of eight - faculty members held terminal degrees in their respective disciplines of: Science, Religion, History, Business, Psychology, and English.

Administrators

The administrators participating in the study represented a cross section of senior leadership at each institution. Areas of leadership included Academics, Athletics, Business and Finance, Development, and Church Relations. The eight administrators had a combined tenure of service to their institutions of 156 years and carried the titles of Vice-President or Dean.

Students

Two sophomores, one freshman, two juniors, and three seniors participated in the study. None of the students were transfers and each articulated that their respective institution was one of the top three institutions of their choice. Each student participated in co-curricular campus activities and student organizations. Four of the students had work-study jobs of 20-hours per week, three participated in Division II varsity athletics, seven participated in at least one student organization, five held leadership positions within selected organization, and six were in-state residents. Their majors included: Science, Religion, Sociology, Marketing, Mathematics, and three were undeclared.

Trustees

The trustees participating in the interview process had contributed a total of 72- years serving their respective institution as a trustee. Both Wingate and Gardner-

Webb University had four-year terms for trustees and allowed for individuals to repeat on the board as their services were needed. Three of the trustee participants had served as Board Chairperson, and all eight had provided trustee committee leadership.

Presidents

Both Presidents agreed to participate in the interview process and to allow use of their name in the results of the study. The following two descriptions were provided from presidential bios offered from the office of the President at both Wingate and Gardner-Webb Universities. (Complete bios are listed in chapter one.)

Dr Jerry McGee, Wingate University

Dr. Jerry McGee has served as Wingate University President since 1992. During his tenure the University has experienced tremendous growth, nearly doubling in size. In addition, numerous facilities have been opened in the past 18 years and new academic programs were initiated elevating Wingate to a doctoral degree granting institution (Wingate University, 2009).

Dr. Frank Bonner, Gardner-Webb University

Dr. Frank Bonner has served at Gardner-Webb University since 1987 when he joined the University as Vice President for Academic Affairs. His role later evolved into Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, and then Provost and Senior Vice President. He was named President in May 2005 and took office on July 1 of that year. As part of his leadership Gardner-Webb has grown significantly in academic programs extending extensively in graduate and satellite programs during the past 23 years (Gardner-Webb University, 2009).

Document Review

Varied text based documents were reviewed to provide insight into the respective Presidential leaderships during the strategic transition periods of the two institutions. Primary document included Board of Trustee minutes, Faculty Senate minutes, strategic planning documents, and relevant correspondence regarding the transition process. All of those documents were deemed to be supportive of the interview analyses.

Presentation of Data

Introduction

Each interview group gave a different perspective to the topic of presidential leadership during their respective strategic transition. The selected members of the faculty presented the greatest amount of information regarding academic freedom and the potential for an institution to be influenced by external forces. administrators, who interacted with a President on a fairly consistent basis, addressed issues of presidential communication and the purpose of the strategic transition. Also, they were able to provide insights a more personal side of their President than the university community knew or even considered.

Interestingly, the students evidenced little to no awareness or perspectives on the issues or the role of presidential leadership. Their comments were best explained as sweeping generalities related to institutional philosophy, similar to material a student would receive in an admissions brochure. Conceivably they were not sophisticated about the intricacies of institutional administrations, or machinations. Finally, the trustees were intimately involved and aware of the transitional issues and presidential leadership. They spoke freely about decisions regarding convention relationships and how the

decisions made could drastically impact the face of an institution in years to come. The culmination of hearing and then analyzing the interviews allowed the researcher to gain a far more comprehensive understanding of the issues attendant to the change.

THEME ONE: Presidential Relationships

Presidential Experience

Presidential experience was acknowledged as a major point of emphasis for leadership during strategic transition. While students recognized a general level of professional experience as necessary to obtain the presidential role; administrators, faculty, and trustees acknowledged an appreciation for greater presidential experience, specifically with the Baptist State Convention and with Baptist traditions.

As noted in chapter one, denominationally affiliated institutions can experience challenges with centralized convention bodies. The administrators acknowledged their awareness of challenges being faced at a presidential level by other Baptist institutions and how decisions at those sister institutions had relevance to their campus community.

Administrator Eight: State Baptist Convention's have been involved in a series of power struggles and theological debates that have resulted in some very rapid transitions of power and policy changes, and it has not been a stable environment... and the colleges have not been immune to this at all.

Dr. McGee was directly involved in an institutional "power struggle" in 1992 when he served as the Vice-President of Development at Furman University, in Greenville, South Carolina. That institution declared intent to depart from the South Carolina Baptist Convention, which was met with immediate disapproval by the South Carolina Convention and the Baptists throughout the State. Although Furman completed the separation, it did not occur without appreciable anxiety for all parties. As Vice

President for Development, McGee dealt with institutional supporters and Convention entities. Those experiences, and ‘scars’, apparently instilled confidence among Wingate University administrators and faculty that Dr. McGee had a complete grasp of the circumstances and issues attendant to the transition, and that the hostility associated with that event shaped how he approached the Baptist Convention of North Carolina.

Administrator Two: I look back at the experience the President had with the South Carolina Baptists when he was at Furman, and I think that that experience he brought to the table helped him realize how important a collaborative approach would be.

Dr. McGee also experienced a denominational transition as a participant of the senior level staff at Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina. Meredith College, like Wake Forest University earlier, changed its relationship with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The Wingate administrators unanimously stated that it seemed obvious how a person with less experience might not recognize the potential challenges that existed for an institution of higher education to remaining affiliated with its State Convention.

Administrator Three: McGee is the only President of the five affiliated institutions in North Carolina to have already walked down this road before. ...Although many would have said early on – ‘what’s the problem? We’re still getting our money; we’re still getting our Trustees from the Baptist State convention.’ Dr. McGee could see how conventional influences were shifting and could impact us. Through his experience he could see the potential future and help us avoid the pit falls.

The administrator interviewees said that experience in the Baptist system made an impact on the way their President led the institution through the transition process. Specifically, his awareness of the adverse outcomes associated with some of the other transitions probably heightened his efforts toward effecting an amicable transition at

Wingate University. Furthermore, some of the administrators commented that other experiences in their President's life likely contributed favorably toward his decision-making; commitment to North Carolina Baptist coupled with this childhood history provided a perfect platform for positive transition. Those points were not embellished.

Administrator Three: I think Roberdell Baptist Church in Rockingham and Richmond County represent a place in his (McGee) life where he experienced a lot of childhood freedom, where he experienced life; he lived in a community with high trust, high expectation - a place where he takes pride in identifying himself as a product of that community, instead of just how he's a successful university President, instead he holds up his heritage with a high degree of pride. In this community he molded many of his positive perceptions and images of Baptist life and the freedom it offers.

Freedom and heritage were consistent messages describing Dr. McGee's leadership during the transition. McGee acknowledged that personal perspective, and affirmed the belief in a concept of freedom with an ability to challenge issues of faith, especially in an educational environment. Freedom was identified as a key component of his leadership within the academic community and was deemed to be an appreciation that subsequently assumed pivotal proportions by the interviewed members of the faculty.

(This topic is addressed in detail under theme two in the context of academic freedom.)

Dr. McGee: I was blessed to grow up in a community of grace - full of the most loving people I've ever been around, and almost all of our activity in that community was based around the church. We had a Presbyterian church, a Methodist church, and a Baptist church and we happened to be Baptist but we also went to church at the Methodist church very often - I learned from being around people who think differently, who interpret scripture differently, those who don't agree with you all the time but have a different opinion. Some of the happiest days I had as a church member was having a wonderful discussion in Sunday school and then going to lunch afterwards and arguing my point of view against someone else's point of view on the scripture you studied that day and you learn from one another that way. I remember so many times I had an "ah hah" moment, like, oh I hadn't thought about it that way but I just think you learn from people who are different from you and who think differently.

Academic leadership should and typically does treasure the concept of freedom of thought and critical thinking (Diamond, 2002). Experiences, personal and professional, influenced and molded Dr. McGee to the extent his actions and statements evidenced a personification of affirming freedom of thought and expression.

Understanding of Historical Relevance

At multiple times in Wingate University's history the institution came to a cross road, resulting in difficult presidential decision-making. Three such events were: shifting from a two to four-year institution, changing from a college to university, and then beginning a College of Health Sciences. Each resulted in changing programs and services as well as the reallocation of resources to fund progressive endeavors. One administrator commented on Dr. McGee's understanding of institutional history and its impact on his decision-making as follows:

Administrator Three: He has...a sense of history, acknowledging his predecessors and how they faced difficult times, transitional times in institutional life, and how that has influenced him to press on, although I think it burdens him to some degree, knowing that the era of his watch will be critiqued at some future date and there will be those who will size him up as being a real transitional, and transformative President, or they will look back on him and question if he failed to seize opportunities. I'm not a historian, but think they're going to look back on him, and see him as one who has guided this institution in a way that has minimized conflict and achieved some of our greatest institutional outcomes.

Another administrator attributed the careful presidential deliberations during the transition to personal interactions with members of the Convention. According to that interviewee, those interactions went beyond professional courtesy and reached a deeper level. Members of the Convention were considered "friends" as opposed to members of a body or a political entity.

Administrator Four: I don't think the 'friendship' had much to do with the Convention itself, in other words the body politic - it had to do with the individuals who are a part of it who had been good to Wingate over the years, who've been helpful to Wingate, and who have sent their children here and wanted their grand children to come to school here. And if you didn't separate delicately you could be perceived as running away, not only from the constraints of the body politic, but also the values of the people who had helped make this institution what it was.

Dr. McGee took that concept a step further and commented on the relationship members of the Wingate community have shared throughout history. He believed that the values of the people hired by the institution have created an institutional persona that was congruent with the mission and purpose of the institution, and specifically was not because of an allegiance to a third party alliance.

Dr. McGee: We can point very proudly to our Baptist heritage and I think we always have strong ties and we'll never change that. The Baptists of North Carolina came here on horse driven carriages and sat around pot belly heaters in Meadow Branch Baptist Church and prayed this school into existence. This is who we are as an institution and, not because we're Baptist, but because we are a group of people that care about one another and we have Christian love for one another, to our neighbors and our friends and, and we respect one another.

Dr. McGee's tenure as President of Wingate provided programmatic evidence for this theme. During his tenure as the institution's President, he has endorsed and celebrated Founders Day in the spring of each year, observed by a special service and speaker. That event has been to celebrate the history of North Carolina Baptist and its intertwined relationship with the University. McGee has spoken at the event and referenced aspects of the institution's history and relevance to its current mission and function. The result has been to craft and reinforce a distinct congruence between intuitional values and institutional history. The trustees echoed an appreciation for the history of the institution and recognized Dr. McGee's personal stake in effecting a successful transition.

Trustee Two: His Baptist life means a lot to him personally, so I think it's not a crusade on behalf of the University, but it's important to him again with his heritage...simply put, Baptist is in his blood. For all the right reasons, he does not want to get into a situation of compromising that relationship or in some way reflecting negatively on the Institution or Convention.

The Wingate University Trustees recognized the interconnectedness of institutional relationships and how that history and partnerships were important to a successful transition. Likewise, the trustees seemed appropriately sagacious in electing to change models and recognize that if agents of change were not accepted by the communities where change was taking place, implementation would be more difficult to achieve.

Trustee Three: To make major changes like that (change in trustee selection) you better make sure that you are considered the good guy and that if people don't buy into it, at least they recognize you as someone who is not passing through - that you have bought into this place and that you respect the traditions...

A Positive Approach

Both Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee were praised for their positive approach to the strategic transition with the Baptist Convention of North Carolina. Even though their resolve to redefine their respective institutional relationship with the Convention was clear and unwavering; their approach to people and systems were deemed to be positive and transparent, and each President apparently resolved to remain civil and create a positive and productive relationship. Dr. McGee commented as follows on his relationship with Convention members.

President McGee: I can honestly say that I have never been angry during the process. I have not felt any animosity for the leaders of the Baptist State Convention - again a lot of them have either graduated from Wingate or they have sent their children to Wingate and they feel very good about the experience they had here and so, we will always be part of the Baptist family.

Although Dr. McGee's approach was positive, it did not take into consideration members of the Baptist Convention or community who were upset with the institution's venture toward establishing a new relationship. That position was expressed during private meetings and conversations with the trustees. In those cases it was incumbent on the President to set a positive institutional tone, and there were multiple administrators and trustees who emphasized that fact and how it was addressed.

Trustee Two: One of the things that he does so well is - he exudes a lot of confidence and is a very positive person. He has never allowed himself to be pulled down into the mud of negativity or name calling or into an argument that the advantage could go in this case to the Baptist State Convention. You have to have confidence in yourself to be able to do that.

In addition to leading with confidence, Dr. McGee also emphasized collegiality and communication. He wanted others to be a part of the transition process and consistently affirmed the institution's position.

Administrator Three: The President has lead all of us through an attitude of hope that we would retain a very positive relationship with the North Carolina Baptist. We seem to have adopted this philosophy - that this is not going to be an adversarial break in any way. Instead it's going to be collegial. We are going to talk to a consensus and we're going to agree to move forward with the different relationship.

On the campus of Gardner-Webb University, Dr. Bonner was known for a similar approach; characterized by an easy temperament and analytical mindset. His attitude and behaviors reportedly endeared him to his constituencies. The interviewed faculty members claimed they and others valued his intellectual approach and that the trustees and others appreciated his personality and genuine care for all parties involved.

Trustee Five: The President always takes the high road with regard to issues and always speaks in very positive terms. He just works his way into your heart, into your thinking so that you just know that whatever comes up, Dr. Bonner is going to do the right thing. You admire him on a

personal level and begin to get an insight as to his great experience, his deep thoughts, and his background and so forth. And so, the more you're around him personally, the more you realize how many different strengths he does have.

Dr. Bonner worked directly with the Convention on the approach, wanting mutually beneficial outcomes for both parties. As seen by similar efforts undertaken in other states, the degree and extent of hostility that became generated between a given institution and its respective Convention could and has led to fractured relationships and minimized subsequent institutional effectiveness. Those problems included loss of institutional funds through litigation; loss of leadership effectiveness because of time lost attending to on-campus issues, and subsequently marginalized programs and declining student enrollments. Dr. Bonner was emphatic, clear, and articulate that a different approach would be followed as Gardner-Webb entered its strategic transition of trustee selection and subsequent alteration of its relationship to the North Carolina Baptist Convention.

Dr. Bonner: In discussions with the Convention we agreed that the spirit of corporation would be the key – the relationship will be a voluntary relationship on both sides. No more coercion or control or regulations or requirements that it's based on a spirit of voluntary, mutual relationship. And that I think is what carried today and again, it goes back to be based on trust.

Dr. Bonner is respected for his manner of personal interaction and steady and predictable character. A trustee noted that he is “as sturdy as a rock and people take cues from his steady, excellent leadership.” Another trustee commented on their favorable personal interaction.

Trustee Five: He's always very interested in you, what's happening with you, and how your family's doing, and wants to know about your environment and your circumstances. And when he asks about these things you get the impression that he's asking because he really is deeply interested in you and your welfare.

At the core of Dr. Bonner's approach to the Baptist Convention was his personal interaction with constituencies. Sources noted that his personality and character provided a firm foundation for accomplishing difficult tasks within the strategic transition. In essence, his reputation preceded him and served to facilitate discussion. The administrators reported that Dr. Bonner's positive ability to interact with the Convention membership stemmed from and reflected his high moral standards, acceptance of responsibilities, and probity. Ostensibly the transition might have been addressed from a calculated and perhaps uncaring business model, yet the personal characteristics and motivation of Dr. Bonner were viewed as a contributing factor impacting in the success of the venture.

Administrator Eight: It would be a serious misreading of Dr. Bonner to draw the conclusion that he's simply interested in an established market... the, the Christian identity of the University is something that grows organically out of his own identity as a Baptist layman and as a Christian.

Dr. Bonner regularly attended a Baptist church in Shelby, NC and was actively involved in its leadership and teaching. That part of his personal life was seen, by those interviewed, as having direct application to his ability to lead during the transition; it further personified him as a person of belief and integrity. Another administrator noted that Dr. Bonner's desire to advance the fundamental mission of Gardner-Webb University was deemed to be an outgrowth of his own faith and purpose in life.

Trustee Five: Dr. Bonner has such a great and easy way with Trustees and other people on a personal basis. Because of that personal relationship, you wind up with great respect for him, and a great respect for his opinion and for his thoughts on different matters. As a result of that, when he stands before the Board of Trustees, he doesn't need to do an overly dramatic presentation about anything knowing of his strong and genuine faith and his tendency to always come down on the right side of things. His nature is to always take the high road on things.

Institutional Stability

All interviewees cited the need for institutional stability; to keep an institution free from drastic change. Interviewees affirmed the respective institutions history, including its relationship with the Baptist State Convention, well as how that relationship was actualized within a campus community. Actualizing the values of such a relationship included an emphasis on faith-based programs, shared campus values, and a commitment to academic freedom. The interviewees all claimed to have been comforted from knowing what they could expect from one another, their respective institution, and especially their respective President. According to interviewees, these factors contributed to a feeling of stability.

Dr. McGee used the traditional structure of Wingate University to perpetuate the historic relationship with the Convention and express institutional values.

Administrator Three: Dr. McGee has said in a number of public settings, in particularly settings with large Baptist presence how Wingate University will still be the same institution going forward as it has in the past. He tends to use the markers to bare evidence of that such as chapel observance, the presence of a campus minister, the church relations, etc... He has sighted those as markers along the road to illustrate how we are on the same journey and how these things are a part of our heritage and affiliation with the Baptist faith and Baptist family.

Dr. Bonner also promoted institutional stability and affirmed Gardner-Webb's continued emphasis on matters of faith.

Faculty Five: As far as changing, Dr. Bonner has said we're going to continue our Christian emphasis. The relationship with the Convention will be a little bit different, the strings in other words, are little bit different, um, but... he wants to continue to be who we are as an institution.

In addition, Dr. Bonner linked the history of Gardner-Webb with the future by citing institutional progress and advancement as a priority. An administrator commented on this perspective of reinforcing the University mission and vision.

Administrator Four: The President's messages have given us an opportunity to bring greater clarity to the institutions mission and our vision. When the President is talking to our constituencies he highlights the strengthening of the already strong Christian foundation of the University. He also emphasizes that we will be a top notch academic institution that focuses on learning more so than research and has a commitment to intentional service learning and community service.

Dr. Bonner further supported a specific transition through the Gardner-Webb strategic plan. Of the six primary goals in the plan, one dealt directly with nurturing positive relationships to the University. The action statement specifically identified relationships that preserved the history and heritage of the University, and stated:

- Goal 6.2 Promote the University through enhanced relationships, marketing, and preservation of the University's heritage and history. (Gardner-Webb University Strategic Plan, 2009)

Although the Baptist Convention and churches were not noted directly, the reference to heritage created a direct connection to the past and reinforced continuation of positive relationships and helped to promote institutional stability.

Summary

Relationships are multi-faceted. Both Presidents had personalities that supported a positive approach to the transition; helping others find acceptances, and cultivating efforts to foster felicitous compliance to the changes. In addition, each of the sitting Presidents had relationships that were steeped in a long and favorable history with the NC Baptist Convention. Relationships (personal, professional, cultural, social, economic, and religious) within an institution and with external constituencies were deemed important for continuity and stability. The objective was to ensure a belief among all relevant parties that there would be a continuation of the institution's mission with a clear vision toward heightening its profile, and that those parties could have confidence and understanding of mutual expectations.

Finally, this section of chapter four has reported that a President's personal and professional experiences were regarded as crucial for the strategic transition to be conducted favorably, especially with regard to interactions conducted between and among members of the State Convention. Being able to speak the Baptist language and evidence a history of living the Baptist life furnished convention representatives with proof that the negotiations were being conducted with a devotional and stalwart person. Trust and mutual understanding ensued.

THEME TWO: VISION

Introduction

Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee developed their respective institutional vision with similar outcomes in mind. Topics related to student growth and development, institutional progress, faith enhancement, financial development, and academic freedom were evident throughout the interviews.

Academic Freedom

Central to the transition away from the Baptist Convention of North Carolina was ensuring maintenance of an institution's purpose and vision, and continuing the practice of academic freedom for instructional personnel. As noted in chapter one, several institutions had been influenced, and even directed, by governing bodies to conduct internal affairs in way that directly altered the academic purpose and pursuits of the instructional faculty members. In this study it was learned that the administrators, faculty interviewees, and each President endorsed the sanctity and importance of academic freedom, and that it was a consequential issue for institutional transition.

The faculty members interviewed stipulated that external influences would not be allowed to alter classroom settings and learning environments. The two Presidents affirmed that condition and assigned it priority. Each acknowledged their role in ensuring such liberty, as appropriate to circumstances, at all levels of an institution; including the selection of trustees who had the capacity to influence institutional decision-making and even the curriculum.

It was notable that Drs. Bonner and McGee always had been attentive about the Convention's potential influence of academic freedom. Dr. McGee stated that encroachment on academic freedom was one of the primary "tripwires" he watched as he monitored the status of the Convention's political leaning. Dr. Bonner stated that the core reason to initiate the transition with the Convention centered on intellectual freedom and pursuit.

Dr. Bonner: I want them to know and be confident that academic freedom is secured, so that faculty no longer needs to fear that their teaching would be jeopardized... From the very beginning academic freedom has been my driving motivation in this transition.

For some, fear motivated the faculty to support the transition away from the Convention. Surprisingly, the entire faculty membership at both institutions, as reported by the respective interviewees, acknowledged the potential influence on the curriculum from external entities.

Faculty Three: But what scares me is to see what had happened to some of our sister institutions in other states. Where the conventions started to say, well, "You can't use that textbook, because that textbook talks about evolution" - When you're micromanaging like that, then that's a problem.

Another faculty member commented on how such fear has increased, especially during recent years.

Faculty Seven: Through the years, I have seen this scare, this fear, of the colleges that somehow one group of the Convention is going to gain control and then force their view point on how to teach and what to teach, throughout the college. Not only in what is taught in religion, but in history, certainly science, and I have seen that fear just grow as the years go by.

Instructional faculty within each discipline could relate to the potential infringement on a personal level. Many were able to provide examples of how their work could be negatively impacted by third party intervention, which was inimical to most instructors because they stood as experts in their respective fields.

Faculty Three: I teach literature and I can envision some narrow mindedness judging the literature even that I teach as being literature that should be censored, if the viewpoint of a deciding body is too narrow. And we have had instances here when even productions on campus have created a furor. I mean just legitimate plays that have always been well received became controversial because some conservative individual who didn't even come to the play raised a stink about some word in the play or some way a scene was staged. Now that to me is a real infringement upon academic freedom.

From an institutional perspective, infringements on academic freedom can impact the legitimacy of the institution's reputation. The faculty interviewees claimed to have pride in their scholarly endeavors and appreciated learning environments that supported and enhanced the tradition of excellence and freedom that came with that reputation. Conversely, some institutions regulated by external entities can and have gained a reputation for stifling educational pursuit and research. That singular issue was a paramount concern to the Presidents, administrators, trustees, and faculty interviewed. The students did not appear to be knowledgeable of this perspective.

Administrator Eight: Colleges have a commitment to academic freedom because it is a necessary prerequisite for reputable research to take place. Faculty need to be able to work in an environment where they're not looking over their shoulder every time they start a new research project or write a new article. They need that freedom to take opinions which may be

unpopular and that's one of the things that makes a college unique as opposed to a church or a mission agency or a retirement home. That's part of what it means to be an institution of higher education and so that is one of the goals of the redefining of the relationship - to secure academic freedom.

Despite the apparent naivety of the Students, this concern expressed a vested stake in the quality of students' experiences, engagement of the learning environment, and privilege of the instructors to pursue scholarship in their designated disciplines. Beyond the classical platforms for learning, academic freedom encompasses openness to and understanding of people from different races, beliefs, and cultural traditions. Protecting those liberties were foremost in the minds of the persons responsible for ensuring such sovereignty.

Faculty Three: The preservation of academic freedom is important and the preservation of cultural diversity and even religious diversity. I don't want us ever to be thought of as one of those narrow bible college types of institutions, I want us to be thought of as a place where real education goes on and real scrutiny in their thinking and how that applies to their lives will go on.

Presidential leadership on the issue of academic freedom was considered of the utmost importance because of the potential influence trustees could have on an institution's programs and structure. Multiple interviewees expressed that the institutions' had no choice but to separate from the State Convention.

Trustee Two: We really didn't 'choose' to leave the Baptist - I think there are probably many of us who wish things could continue. The reality is the Baptist leadership of the Baptist State Convention continued to change itself and I think it became much more right-winged, much more political action with the potential agenda of mandating to the institutions - what they will believe, what philosophies they will inculcate down from professors to students, etc... And certainly they wanted to make sure that we pick the trustee to be a certain personality, certain genera of philosophy.... Those were the days when it started happening - and those were the days when we really realized and it became obvious to us as a Board that it was time to do something different.

Institutional Potential

Both President Bonner and McGee initiated the strategic transition, in conjunction with their respective Boards, with the hope that altering the Convention relationship could lead to a stronger, better future for the universities and their students. All levels of interviews agreed that pursuing a better future for a University was important and worth the investment of time and resources to accomplish it. One administrator commented on Dr. McGee's vision and how his perspective and passion helped encourage others to envision the possibilities.

Administrator Four: I think the President felt, and rightly so, that the University had a great deal more potential, than could ever be realized under the constraints of the Baptists system. That has to do with the recruiting of Trustees, with the passion of the Trustees and their wherewithal to help move this institution. I'm sure he's convinced of that - that was the motivation. It, it had everything to do with the ability to blossom beyond where we perceived we could go.

The two Presidents recognized the role that a Board could play in moving an institution forward. Although there were multiple ways to increase quality in a college or university, stimulating a trustee relationship seemed to have multiple benefits, such as developing and leveraging trustee skills to support institutional efforts and promoting stronger development efforts to stimulate financial resources or political support for an institution. According to Dr. McGee, relying on a single denominational affiliation to supply the level of commitment and financial contribution did not seem realistic.

Dr. McGee: ...for us to grow this institution, for us to literally move it from good to great, which has been our mantra for several years now, we have to be able to get the very best people, the most gifted people, the most generous people that we can possibly get to be Trustees.

Existing trustees supported this perspective. They claimed to have firsthand knowledge of the type of trustee that could help advance an institution.

Trustee Four: One of the members of our executive committee is a guy that used to head a large international company. He had tens of thousands of people working for him. He was the head of the company in North America. ...He is an excellent example of the kind of trustee we can have. His leadership and his business skills and his depth of knowledge and his analysis of decision making is unparalleled, but he is not a member of a Baptist church. The Board is now moving into a different era - where we are now bringing in people with business skills that we've never been able to attract before.

Student Growth and Development

According to an administrator at Gardner-Webb, Dr. Bonner had a genuine interest in the how a student's education would impact the world after that student had been graduated.

Administrator Three: ...He has real interest in wanting students at Gardner Webb to leave with a Christian focus and to represent these concepts in their lives, and to live a life of meaning for them and do good in the world. For him I don't see it as overly religious, but it's distinctly religious. You know it's not full of religious language or that he's, making his mansion bigger in heaven or something like that, but rather, I think he sees this as part of his faith, service, and leadership on a very personal level.... You will have confidence that the guy who is at the head of these programs is making these things happen. If you give him time it's going to happen. Things will start to reflect his genuine, real interest in it. It is not rhetoric for him.

Likewise Dr. McGee's vision for the future of Wingate's students was seen in how he wanted to structure the learning process. His appreciation for debate and critical thinking were clear, yet he was keenly aware that faith-based institutions can be perceived as wanting to produce students who think a certain way. Dr. McGee strongly disagreed with that philosophy.

Dr. McGee: First of all I think there is a significant difference between education and doctrinarian - I think you have to be really careful not to cross that line. You know even if I'm teaching a religion class here, I teach the class, but I don't try to impose my beliefs on the students. I try to encourage them to develop their own beliefs and I try to show them how important my personal beliefs are to me, but the idea is not for them to leave the classroom thinking exactly like I do about the issue. The purpose of education is to talk intellectually about the issues – to explore key concepts and challenge one another. There are institutions where it is more about domination and “this is how you have to think” or “this is how you have to interpret this scripture”. Rather than how we approach the issue here, I think, we say here is a scripture and ask “what do you think about it” and students are encouraged to think for themselves and make their own decisions.

Faith Development Vision

The faith perspective at Gardner-Webb and Wingate was a key component of their mission statements, and it played out in both philosophical and practical ways. Philosophically, both institutions desired to stay connected to their history and promote the Christian heritage that was developed across the years. Administrators, students, and faculty members supported the Christian as opposed to denominational direction for each university's affiliation.

Administrator Two: I hope the future of the university is like our past and comes directly from our University values. Our University values are formed not by our denomination or affiliation but by the character of the people that have been attracted to work here over the years. Now, where did they get these values? Probably at homes and their churches... Then they were attracted to work because of our common mission and purpose and this produces a positive by-product in our community and its people. But I'll tell you where it doesn't come from - it does not come from a list of things we get from the Baptist State Convention saying this is what you do. It comes from a Christian view point and commitment whether from a Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Catholic background but we are serving one God.

In addition, the vision of faith development and identity also had a practical perspective. Throughout the history of both institutions (and many other

denominationally affiliated institutions cited in the literature review), students were recruited through connections with local churches or other parties affiliated with a convention or denominational body. Interviewees commented on such a practical relationship and voiced a desire to continue those relationships with the churches for recruitment purposes.

Faculty Two: I think the President sends a positive message to our institution by continuing our relationship with the churches by employing a person to be the church relations individual in the development area and by having a campus minister. So I think that sent a message that we were wanting to continue to recruit students from Baptist churches as we always had so that even though we were no longer going to align ourselves with the North Carolina Baptist.

Another practical perspective was mentioned by students. Where some denominational affiliations may be perceived as exclusionary, the Baptist approach, at Wingate and Gardner-Webb, always had been inclusive. Students from other denominations were accepted and welcomed into the community. A student interviewee emphasized the high level of institutional acceptance of multiple faith perspectives.

Student Three: I think that having a connection with the Baptists gives students, a chance to express and explore their faith with organizations like CSU and FCA, but there's also students on campus that are Jewish and believe in other faiths, so I think that's one thing that's good, is even though we are connected with the Baptists, there's still students that are interested in this school and feel comfortable - connected, you know, they know they can get a good education and enjoy being in the kind of close community that Wingate provides.

An essential level of comfort must emanate from a classroom where students engage in discussing issues of faith and life in an academic context. Considering that faculty members have a high level of authority and power in a classroom, there is potential for students to be wary about a particular denominational leaning or influence. One faculty person reported how to directly confront such a perception. Accordingly,

that person sought to provoke discussing a balance on ideas that had been part of the campus historical norm.

Faculty One: We've always tried to say we're not a church and we're not trying to evangelize and thereby kids can come into the classes and not feel threatened in a religious sort of way. Whatever their religious background has been or whatever their religious background has not been...I teach, a values orientation approach. I don't label it Baptist and I don't even label it necessarily Christian because there are people in class that are not Christian and I don't want that to be an infringement. But I think that just in the way I choose to teach a lot of my courses, I have already decided what kind of value orientation works for me and hope that that will be a far reaching effect on the students I teach, whatever their denomination.

Issues of faith can be polarizing. Two faculty interviewee voices of dissent spoke out against the new relationships citing that the institution's values might be compromised.

Faculty Seven: I'm not comfortable with this new relationship because I honestly believe it blurs the identity we have. If you're hiring people with little or no religious conviction, then you're going to lose the Christian identity and of course his main concern is that we get to select the Board of Trustees and that the Convention no longer has that veto power. Well, if you find people who are doing the hiring for faculty and staff or selecting Trustees, and they don't have a strong Christian commitment, then they're not going to hire people with strong convictions, so therefore, you're in limbo, you're in never-never land, you claim to be Christian, but yet, you have people who are either apathetic toward Christianity or even antagonistic

Another faculty member was concerned that the faith perspective of the institution would be weakened through the transition.

Faculty Two: I actually have a concern that we would continually move further and further away from the emphasis on faith development, that it would become almost something that would be part of the history of this institution, but not really important.

On the contrary, both Presidents believed that altering the relationship with the Convention would push the institution to further faith programs. Dr. McGee and Dr. Bonner were committed to enhance programs that supported faith development. At Gardner Webb, the President commissioned an institutional committee to support faith development on campus and promoted additional steps to ensure that religious programs and services remained a high priority.

Administrator Eight: Under our President we have a campus ministry program, a chapel requirement for our undergraduates, and an office of church relations here with a full-time employee, and we make funds available for Christian, student organizations... None of that's going to change, in fact, we are committed to institutionalizing those things so that they, they have even greater permanence.

Financial Vision

Faculty Six: Here most people are very satisfied with the academic direction, but of course, a university is always about money, money, money. And that's what it comes down to. And for the President, he has to get out there and make the money so we can do the things in academics that we want to do. We need new science buildings so get out there and raise money so we can get a new science building. I think ultimately when it comes down to the President ... whether they have an understanding of academia or not you know, we need money, so there's a lot of pressure for that.

The ultimate fund raising responsibility for an institution rests with a President. Despite all of the reported philosophical benefits of a new relationship with the Baptists State Convention, there remained a strong pragmatic vision that establishing a new relationship would financial benefit an institution. Wingate, under Dr. McGee, began preparing for the potential of a new relationship before the actual transition occurred. Prior to the initiation of the transition process the North Carolina Baptist Convention funded approximately one-million dollars to Wingate. All but \$300,000 had been removed from the yearly budget by the time of the interviewing.

Administrator Two: It is a challenge to be able to replace the money, I mean its not like we have a million dollars every year at the end of the year laying around somewhere for us to be able to do something with. But again vision being what it was - they started taking that out on a gradual basis over time which allowed us not to have that one time hit in the budget. This is brilliant.

That commitment was not without some expectation that the future return on the investment would be higher than the current level of sacrifice. In fact, the financial vision for the strategic transition assumed that future financial contributions would greatly exceed the current financial provisions from the State Convention.

Administrator One: Now that we elect our own trustees, we can be in position ask those individuals with means to contribute and offer their expertise. All the things we are trying to do through the capital campaign can benefit - buildings, endow scholarships, endow professorships, endow lectureships, all kinds of endowments would be possible and would improve the quality of our education. ... We are going to be attracting trustees who can sustain higher levels of giving. We are expecting then that the contributions of trustees will be more substantial and that could be transformational for the institution.

To sustain forward progress in fund raising, institutions must manage the perceptions of their constituencies. Interestingly, this issue apparently has been a primary reason why many development offices, particularly in Christian higher education, also are linked to offices of external communication or marketing. To ensure that undertakings, such as a transition succeeded in meeting a financial vision, a President was committed to monitoring external perceptions.

Trustee Five: Universities are susceptible and vulnerable to all sorts of speculation or innuendos. A big roadblock is the fact that you can't afford to have a lot of questions or bad talk about your University - you need to keep telling the good story, it needs to be a positive story and it needs to be perceived in the community as a positive story. It comes into play as universities are recipients of financial resources, financial gifts from churches and from their members. And so, to the extent that people think we want to get away from Christianity or being Baptist then of course that's going to dry some of the financial resources and we can't afford for that to happen.

Summary

Both Presidents believed that establishing new relationships with the Baptist State Convention would position their respective institutions to achieve their potential more fully. Their visioning included setting a firm financial foundation, ensuring academic freedom, preserving a strong heritage of faith, reaching the institution's optimal potential, and promoting positive student growth and development. Clarity in expressing each of those points supported presidential leadership during the time of strategic transition.

THEME THREE: COMMUNICATION

Introduction

"In the absence of good information –people often make things up...." (unknown)

Throughout the interviews it was stated that a specific message, communicated in multiple venues, helped establish and prepare an institution for optimal levels of acceptance to the planned strategic change. The following describes interview perspectives on the need for effective forms of presidential communication, including establishing purpose and clarity in the message, demonstrating transparency, sharing a student perspective, and illustrating passion and conviction.

Establishing Purpose and Clarity in the Message

Four key presidential messages provided clarity throughout the interviews; 1) Both institutions would remain Christian institutions consistent with their history, 2) Both institutions ultimately would select their own trustees, 3) The process for trustee selection would be as amicable as possible, and 4) Academic Freedom would be maintained. That clarity in communication provided a belief of consistency among the interviewees and the confidence it generated helped all constituencies support the transition. Both Dr. Bonner

and Dr. McGee synthesized and refined those messages regarding the institutional transition and used them in many venues. According to an administrator, Dr. Bonner speaks to selecting trustees and how events would relate to the future of the Christian identity.

Administrator Eight: Dr. Bonner has done an outstanding job of articulating the need to secure some greater autonomy for our trustees and therefore for our institutions - While at the same time, articulating an ongoing commitment to the Christian, Baptist identity of the institution and to the Baptist State Convention. Those are things I've heard repeated over and over again in different ways.

Dr. Bonner affirmed that position and emphasized the message of remaining a Christian institution within a Baptist tradition.

Dr. Bonner: I think the main thing is that I've tried to use every venue that was appropriate to reiterate that Gardner-Webb was going to remain a strong Christian institution. In fact the number one strategic goal, we have six strategic initiatives in this strategic plan, and the number one is to strengthen the Christian foundation and identity of the institution. So I tried to reassure everybody that I could, every time the topic was appropriate, whether it be speaking to a civic club or to the faculty or to an alumni group or to a community group, whatever it was, whenever it was appropriate for that topic I would stress that number one, Gardner-Webb is going to remain, if anything a stronger Christian institution, that's not in question; and secondly that we would remain affiliated with the connection, that we would remain a Baptist institution, that we would revere a continue of Baptist tradition and heritage.

Dr. Bonner adopted a similar approach in other venues, but added a special twist to capture the attention of his listeners.

Administrator Six: He has a line that he is using now in all his speeches when he opens it up and he says, "Gardner Webb's primary purpose is not education." And he's trying to get the big collective gasp from the audience. He goes on to say, "Our purpose goes beyond education, our task is to shape people and lives and prepare people to make a positive difference in the world." And really he explains that this is how our university going to advance the Kingdom of God -and how are we going to set our students out to accomplish this task.

Establishing clarity in communication has had multiple purposes. Dr. McGee aimed to provide a clear approach to the transition, thus adding stability to the University environment, and to place a high priority on a positive approach for all constituencies.

Administrator One: I believe the President has been masterful in his approach. Dr. McGee has stated clearly, “We are Baptist, We will always be Baptist. We value our relationship with the Baptist church. We don’t want any alienation whatsoever.” We hope the truth of this statement is felt by the Baptist State Convention.

Both Presidents wanted to eliminate concern from constituencies and minimize rumors. Although repetition of the key messages was a primary method for continuing to gain buy-in and minimize concerns, other factors influenced the success of the communication plan. Being familiar with the key players and Baptist language was an important element in communication with the Baptist Convention. Dr. McGee maximized his ability to communicate based on his understanding of the Convention environment.

Trustee Three: You got to have somebody who speaks the language who thinks – and knows what you know and talks the talk. Knowing or feeling the territory is so important - I think North Carolina is Jerry McGee style - it is his home. You have to have someone who speaks the language of the Convention and can talk the talk – his experience here was very beneficial to the transition.

Sharing Information and Demonstrating Transparency

Building trust and support for the strategic transition was important for both Presidents. Accordingly, they constantly provided as much information to minimize questions or rumors about the change process.

Administrator Eight: Dr. Bonner, as a matter of principle, believes in what I would call maximum disclosure and transparency, and as far as possible, he will share as much information as he can with constituencies up to the point of violating someone else’s privacy - he doesn’t encourage secrets and because of that others trust him more.

Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee considered faculty meetings a prime venue for sharing information.

Faculty Seven: He has reported to the faculty 7-8 times and has given a great deal of information and in doing so has been extremely transparent all the way down the line.

Faculty Eight: I think that Dr. Bonner's been very good about explaining every step on the route where we would go and what the impact of that would be on our Trustees, on our finances. We all realize that there's a significant impact or funding from the denomination ceases or is phased out.

Trustees and administrators believed that their respective Presidents had been successful in communicating with internal and external constituencies, but Students on both campuses claimed to have been somewhat disconnected from the central information. The students appreciated the President's presence on campus and believed they had access to him, but that access did not translate into information regarding the strategic transition. Parenthetically, it needs to be re-iterated that the Students tended to be surprisingly unsophisticated about the process and probably did not aggressively seek information.

Student Four: He always makes himself available to approach, at any time, in fact if I had to approach him at any time over my past three years that's always been possible. I've always been able to get in touch with him to talk.

Emphasizing the observation mentioned above, the Students interviewed were not well informed of the strategic transition. Most said that they were not aware of the transition or the purpose for it.

Student Five: I would say if you walked up to someone just out on quad and said, "hey what do you think about Gardner Webb and the other colleges splitting from the Baptist Convention" you've probably got a pretty good chance that they'll say, "What are you talking about" or "I

don't really know that much about it" or "I haven't really heard that much about it." I wouldn't say that they really care all that much.

When asked what more the student would want out of the President the students responded that communication was essential, but there was little in terms of identifying what kinds of communication or frequency deemed necessary. This fact could be considered from two foci. One is that the students truly were naïve and possibly not interested. Second, it might have been that greater consideration should have been given to providing them with a full disclosure behind the transition effort.

Student Three: More communication definitely - I would like to see more communication and I say because we survive off such a family environment so I would like to see that kind of, those kind of elements and characteristics of a family, implemented into the structure of the university.

Conviction

Presidential belief in the strategic transition was important to those interviewed. Individuals following a President into the new era of an institution were comforted by the institutional leader's assurance for the transition. Constituencies based their reliance and confidence in the strategic transition on the intensity, passion and conviction conveyed by each President, as conveyed through institutional communication. Other than the students, the interviewees reported that the personal trust they had in their respective President translated into trust for the strategic transition.

The presidential communication style did impact how constituencies measured the need for the transition. Although Dr. Bonner was noted to be quiet and reserved in most settings, he was vigorous and direct in communicating that Gardner-Webb would select their own trustees upon moving forward.

Trustee Five: One of the things that he, in a very quiet, and again, reasoned way did, was to talk about the fact that, while there are a lot of things that are negotiable, a lot of things that could be compromised on, we see the selection of trustees as being important and we need to be in a position where we make the decisions entirely about the selection of trustees.

Dr. McGee expressed passion and conviction through his assertions that the move from the Baptist State Convention was the correct choice for Wingate University. An administrator commented on those convictions as follows.

Administrator Two: I think the President's fervor comes from his absolute conviction that this is what has to be done to best support the life of the institution and he believes it is the right thing to do for the future of the institution.

This level of conviction is translated to others within the organization as noted in the comments by other administrators.

Administrator Two: I personally think it is important to reassure our public. So they won't allow some of these emotional folks out in the Baptist landscape who simply do not appreciate Christian higher education and may have pre-conceived ideas about the University to say to our primary audience of donors, supporters, parents, students etc. that the institution is under-going some major identity change. We will still be an institution going forward as we have in the past and I have no reason to doubt that as long as Jerry McGee is our President.

Faculty members also were aware of Dr. McGee's conviction and passion, and the institution's Board of Trustees supported both his vision and manner for professing them.

Faculty Three: The faculty perceive that he's always been empathetic, and gracious, and yet determined that there's going to be an amicable separation, if the separation is necessary, to preserve our traditions and our independence – this is something that we are willing to do.

Answers to Research Questions

Introduction

Presidential decisions, demonstrated leadership characteristics, and communication from the offices of the respective Presidents during the strategic change processes provided a window into the actions of the persons entrusted to guide the fortunes of each institution. Understanding how the management, guidance, and direction was effected was important because institutional strategic change can, and sometimes does, shift the long-term financial viability of an institution as well as its programs and services. Actions undertaken by an institutional president during such transmutation inevitably makes indelible marks on processes and outcomes.

The dynamics related to governing board transition at each of the two private institutions provided the context for this study. The trustees had oversight of all activities pertaining to an institution. In the instances of Wingate University and Gardner-Webb University, decisions of their respective Boards could immediately shift institutional direction or structure resulting in a lasting impact. Thus it was imperative to be aware of the powerful role such boards of trustees could play, and that the crafting of a board's composition typically was an essential duty for a president at a small private institution. For church-related postsecondary institutions it was imperative to have a board of trustees that presented a broad but diverse perspective, and was vested in helping to stimulate institutional growth and programmatic development, while concurrently supporting the institution's mission, vision, and values.

Research Questions

Grand Tour Question: How do Presidents and presidential constituents at two selected Baptist postsecondary institutions describe presidential leadership during institutional strategic transition, establishing a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees?

Constituencies described Presidential leadership through three primary themes

- *The Importance of Relationships,*
- *The Importance of Vision, and*
- *The Importance of Communication.*

Sub-Questions:

1. What key messages (language - words or phrases) are used by a President to frame the institutional transition to establish a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees? *Each President used a variety of messages to support and clarify their institutional position. Messages related both to the transition of a Board and impact on the ethos, nature, and perception of the university. Key messages included:*

- *Each institution will remain Christian (supports Baptist ideals and heritage),*
- *Each institution would maintain a positive position with their Convention,*
- *Each institution would select their Trustees when moving forward, and*
- *Each institution would maintain Academic Freedom.*

2. How did a President initiate that strategic transition? *Formally, the Presidents did not initiate the strategic transition. Trustees at both institutions requested their respective President to initiate a change of relationship. Informally, both Presidents advocated for a shift in relationship through dialogue with the executive committee of the Board of Trustees. In addition, both Presidents maneuvered a network of institutional*

constituencies to dialogue about their perspective and support a change in relationship that they believed would be in the best interest of an institution.

3. How did a President communicate the key messages to institutional constituencies?

Messages during the transition period were communicated orally through presentations, multiple written committee reports, and numerous person to person interactions.

Additional expectations of communication were expected from various other entities within each university, including but not limited to senior staff to their respective divisions, and university relations to external entities.

4. How did the content of the key messages or delivery vary according to respective constituencies? *The content of the key messages did not vary significantly from or between constituencies.*

5. What personal style (mannerisms, stories, or tone) did a President employ to manage multiple constituencies and institutional messages?

- *Dr Frank Bonner assumed an academic tone with a priority of emphasizing academic freedom as a central point.*
- *Dr. McGee led with conviction, stating that the move to self-selection of trustees would certainly take place through amicable dialogue with the Convention.*

6. What specific tactic, or methods, exercised by a resident were helpful to support an institutional transition? *Both Presidents illustrated extreme transparency, sharing information with multiple constituencies to minimize and negate rumors and answer questions.*

7. What relationships or alliances were most important during the strategic transition? *Although all constituencies were important, the Presidents placed a high priority on communicating with their respective Boards.*
8. How was the decision of moving to self-perpetuating trustee selection part of a larger vision or strategy? *Moving to a self-perpetuating Board allowed for both institutions to make strategic choices in the future that presumably would be supported by access to greater financial resources.*
9. How does the selection of a Board of Trustees shape institutional identity? *The Board will make decisions for the future of each institution including curriculum, size, resources, facilities and presidential leadership.*
10. What were the potential road blocks to the institutional change? *Institutional changes could be challenged by a lack of buy-in from various constituencies.*
11. How did a President deal with those road blocks? *The two President's shared information with respective constituencies to increase transparency. Also, the Presidents ensured that the current institutional changes were in accord with the institutional strategic development and that they supported the institutional ethos.*
12. What priorities did a President set during the strategic change? *The Presidents set basic goals including: the institutions would become self-supporting for trustees, the change would be amicable for an institution and Convention, and academic freedom would be preserved.*

Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter described the coding process and organization of the survey findings. Participants were also described, illustrating relevant experience to support a credible

body from which to cull data. Research findings were presented illustrating multiple perspectives both unique and similar to participants. Three themes emerged from interviews including: the importance of relationships, importance of communication, and importance of vision. Finally, research questions were answered providing basic response to research inquiry.

Although each interview group (Presidents, faculty, trustees, administrators, students) emphasized different priorities relevant to the strategic transition, the overarching themes and perspectives were consistent throughout the research. Interviewees also provided interconnected perspectives linking themes together. An example of this is illustrated by Dr. McGee's childhood history contributing to his personal perspectives on freedom and thus influencing his professional understanding and emphasis on academic freedom. The cross connections between data illustrate greater complexity and breath of application for results.

An in-depth discussion follows in chapter five revealing greater understanding and depth of the finding. Research material will link to literature offering further depth and discussion for presidential leadership during strategic transition.

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CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This qualitative study examined presidential leadership at two Baptist postsecondary institutions during a time of critical strategic transition. This chapter provides an overview of the study, a discussion of the themes, and recommendations for additional research.

Overview of the Study

The leadership characteristics of two Presidents of Christian universities were studied during a strategic shift in the selection process for each institution's Board of Trustees. Selected administrators, faculty, students, and trustees were asked to describe their respective President's leadership during the institutional change. In addition, the Presidents were interviewed for the purpose of gaining their perspectives on how each approached the strategic initiative. All interview data was transcribed and then coded for like themes. Culling of key concepts and ideas resulted in identifying the importance of the following three themes: relationships, vision, and communication. In the following paragraphs each of the key motifs is discussed with relevance to presidential leadership and institutional transition.

The Importance of Relationships

Introduction

The findings allowed for stating there was a similarity between President Jerry McGee of Wingate University and Dr. Frank Bonner of Gardner-Webb University in the context of institutional relationships and leadership. Both Presidents placed a high

priority on relationships with both internal and external constituencies. Neither President fully adhered to a specific theoretical structure, as noted by a review of relevant literature in chapter two, but both illustrated effective leadership skills and implementation utilizing components of the models addressed in that earlier chapter. The following section provides a discussion and analysis of the key findings related to the relationship theme under the areas of: presidential experience, institutional history, positive approach to change, and institutional stability.

In chapter two the relevant literature on relational leadership identified factors and traits supporting selected leadership styles and purposes for usage at different times and in varying circumstances. Differing approaches to leadership were explained based on factors such as charisma, differing situations, attitude, and personality (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Hershey & Blanchard, 1979; Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007). Augmenting that information was research on presidential visioning, leadership, timing, and effectiveness (Jessup 2008; Lawton, 2004; Oosting, 1985; Newberry, 2005; Wysong, 2000). The following paragraphs relate the findings from this investigation to available literature and explain how each of the two Presidents acted or did not act to ensure the strategic transition of a respective institution was carried forth effectively, efficiently, and collegially.

Presidential Experience

In the world of business it often has been said that it is ‘not what you know, but who you know’ that makes the difference in achieving success. This concept extrapolates well into the realm of education and is relevant to this study of presidential leadership during a time of strategic transition.

Relational leaders recognize the importance of people and personal interaction as an influencing factor within institutional growth and development (Bass, 1990; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon; 2007). Especially in times of change, attitudes and opinions of organizational members and external constituencies drive the success and speed of transition at any level and ultimately can impact the implementation of new programs and services (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer; 1993, Kipp, 1999). The term ‘presidential experience’ embodies these multiple perspectives, especially experiences acquired during tenure as a president and the relationships that developed from years of service in higher education. As noted by Stogdill, mere leadership skills are not enough to fulfill leadership needs within complex organizations; instead, “working relationship among members of a group” are essential in developing consensus and congruence related to specific transitional issues (Stogdill cited in Wren, 1995, p.131).

Interview participants within Gardner-Webb and Wingate University described their respective President’s approach and demonstration of ‘working relationships’ and the apparent spheres of influence each used to support the transition in the selection process for the Board of Trustees. Multiple interviews of administrators, faculty and students allowed for concluding that their respective President had a special ability to dialogue effectively and interact positively with all constituents.

Oosting (1985) conducted research in ten Christian institutions to determine key presidential characteristics of management and identified 10 presidential management concepts. Of the ten, two directly related to the importance of relational leadership further supporting the findings of this study; an emphasis on people (in contrast with an administrative focus) and a desire of the presidents to interact with constituencies to gain

a better understanding of issues and concerns relevant to institutional offerings. Both were prominent characteristics of the two Presidents in this study.

Trustees especially noted the need for a high level of presidential connectivity within the North Carolina Baptist Convention, stating that a level of intimacy and awareness was instrumental in a strategic transition process. Interviews with both Presidents yielded ample evidence of such relationships and their concerns for ensuring those relationships were sustained and employed.

Dr. McGee sought to preserve his considerable contacts with key individuals within executive-level leadership positions associated with the State Baptist Convention prior to and throughout his tenure as a President. He was on a first name basis with numerous Baptist leaders and in many cases provided detailed descriptions of their relationships and common bonds. In addition, multiple leaders within the Convention had children who attended Wingate University and relationally connected with Dr. McGee as a parent to a Wingate student. According to Dr. McGee, his positive relationships with key leaders were a valuable asset during the transition. Reportedly those connections and friendships helped to ease conversations and allowed for meaningful discussion of issues without associated baggage. Notably, Dr. McGee said that earlier challenging experiences had helped hone his approach to the strategic transition process. Dr. McGee was Vice-President of Development at Furman University during that institution's change in relationship with the Baptist Convention of South Carolina.

Dr. McGee: I had an experience at a university when we changed our relationship with the South Carolina Baptist and the people that were associated with that change at the time would be quick to tell you that we did a lot of things wrong. But I did learn from that experience, learned that there's, there's a right way and a wrong way to change the relationship.

According to Dr. McGee, his Furman experiences made a considerable impact on the importance for effective and positive dialogue with others, and how negative interactions, regardless of source or degree, could limit and destroy discussions and hamper the effectiveness of all prior planning.

Dr. Bonner maintained an intimate working knowledge of Baptist circles within the State. His leadership at Gardner-Webb, and also earlier experiences at Furman University, supported adhering to multiple views of Baptist life, yet it was his relationship with his father that might have been the most decisive influence on his perspective toward leadership. For many years Dr. Bonner's father was an academic administrator and provost at Furman University encountering internal and external challenges during his tenure.

Dr. Bonner: Dad had been chief academic officer under one title or another for most of his thirty two years... and... was a staunch, staunch advocate of academic freedom and academic excellence and fought a lot of battles. In the sixties there were a lot of battles with the Baptist State Convention of South Carolina.

Christenson's (2007) study of presidential leadership and institutional cycles explained the 1960s as one of the most turbulent and difficult times for college and university leadership. According to Dr. Bonner, those conflicts were not limited to campus debate or political posturing. It was during that time, the 1960s, when he began to cultivate and embellish his understanding of the interactions between a campus and a State Baptist Convention, and the importance for clearly supporting academic freedom regardless of the nature of an institution's affiliation.

Those inroads to Baptist life, for Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee, provided each with an intimate working knowledge of the systems, people, and processes interspersed

throughout higher education and state conventions. The by-product of those experiences was the development of insight and understanding of how an institutional president could orchestrate change and concomitantly motivate university personnel to be supportive of the new direction(s).

Although Dr. Bonner and McGee emphasized people in their approach to transition neither specifically identified one group over another in level of importance. Faculty members, administrators, and trustees reported believing that they were connected to their respective President and it was most interesting how almost all interviewees agreed with a vision for an institution. The only group that claimed to have been disconnected from presidential leadership regarding transition was students. On both campuses the students reported that more information and communication regarding the transition was needed.

Understanding of Historical Relevance

An experienced president should be aware of the historical and cultural understandings needed to enact change within complex structures. Likewise, presidents also should be sensitive about understanding how such systems require sophisticated political and administrative competency when engaging constituents and manipulating events and people. Komives, Lucas, McMahon (2007) explained such factors in their Relational Leadership Model (RLM). According to the authors, understanding and maneuvering processes in any organization required leaders to engage circumstance, personnel, and administrative systems to guide their organization around potential pitfalls and challenges (Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007). It was not that presidents were expected to be Machiavellian in the sense of being a schemer seeking to manipulate for

untoward purposes, but that such leaders needed to realize that sometimes it was necessary to be circumspect, judicious, perspicacious, and always alert to possible obstructions.

Presidents McGee and Bonner knew the organization of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and were familiar with its constitution, and bylaws. They understood the ingredients required for effecting change and the impact a decision of the scope proposed might have on institutional offerings and future viability of the institution. Their ability to understand the nuances of what was being addressed and also to have a detailed knowledge of the persons involved with the change process helped to add value to their decision-making processes (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007). They acted based on knowledge of expected outcomes, but also had facilitated the process because of their interpersonal relationships with key individuals.

Such adeptness can generate greater credibility to their leadership by promoting internal and external collaboration (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007). The two Presidents in this study were viewed as being keenly sensitive to events and able to engage in difficult discussions because they knew information, and could maneuver effectively and discreetly within the inner workings of the Convention.

The two Presidents also reported that contributing to their respective institutional history and legacy was an important factor that impacted their approach to the strategic transition. Faculty members and trustee participants supported this perspective, noting that leaving a positive legacy to honor those who had gone before them was a compelling factor for both Presidents.

Evidence of good presidential leadership usually includes institutional growth and development characterized through new buildings, advanced standards, and excellence in programs. Evidence was found for each of these components throughout the interview process as the Presidents, administrators, and faculty persons interviewed recalled positive relationships and personal impacts of past leaders at each institution throughout their respective 100-plus-years of history. Drs. McGee and Bonner sought to honor the legacy of their former leaders in their decision-making and to ensure that their approach to the strategic transition was conducted in a way that was honorable, ethical, and transparent –in keeping with the institutional tradition.

Greenleaf's (2003) approach to servant leadership was especially relevant within the historical context. An especially poignant perspective regarding history and legacy was the level of sacrifice prior leaders offered when seeking to advance the institution perspective. An example was noted in the continuation of programs and services at both Wingate and Gardner-Webb during the depression era. Leaders and faculty volitionally decreased their salaries and additionally performed necessary tasks to keep the institutions' doors open and serving students. Although less self-sacrifice was required of current leadership, the mentality of "putting the institution first" was (and is) still very much alive for both Drs. McGee and Bonner. Both Presidents described levels of self-sacrifice regarding their time and personal schedules to ensure institutional commitments are fulfilled.

Ten characteristics defined by Spears (1998) supported Greenleaf's Servant Leadership theory and interestingly, all ten were found in Dr. Bonner's and McGee's

leadership repertoires. The following three concepts and examples were especially noteworthy.

- *Foresight* – Drs. Bonner and McGee looked strategically into the future to visualize how institutional circumstances could be arranged to establish maximum benefit for the institutional community. That foresight translated into arranging resources (human and material) to benefit the transition. Specifically, Dr. McGee began to move funds received from the Baptist Convention of North Carolina “off budget” in preparation for the time when the monies were no longer provided by the Convention. This financial decision removed the dependency for the Convention funding allowing constituencies the chance to focus other benefits and challenges of the relationship. In addition, both Presidents initiated /continued relationships with potential trustees who were not Baptist. Although the actualization of these relationships may not come to fruition for several years: the strategic foresight of establishing these relationships will benefit the development of future governing boards.
- *Commitment* to the growth of people – Drs. Bonner and McGee desired to take their respective institution to a new level of service for students and institutional constituencies. In doing so, they recognized the contribution of leaders within the university and aimed to further support faculty and staff development for the betterment of institutional efforts. Specifically, Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee used the transition with the Baptist Convention to elevate staff members to executive level leadership and involvement. These leaders were knowledgeable of the Convention and used their skills to support ongoing dialogue and institutional

support. They attended meetings for the President and served as an institutional spokesperson when appropriate. Although the Presidents could have dominated the conversations throughout the change process; instead, they broadened involvement and in doing so helped others maximize their skills and potential while benefiting the institution.

- *Building community* – Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee wanted to capitalize on the extended resources that surround their respective institutions. That process meant actualizing the good feelings and resources of those affiliated with the institution. Promoting positive experiences was viewed as critical to build community, support school spirit, and further institutional support through development (Greenleaf, 2003). Specifically, both Presidents encouraged faculty and staff participation in community endeavors. United Way Campaigns, Relay for Life programs, and community churches and civic organizations were highly encouraged. In fact, Presidents McGee and Bonner developed campus committees for community United Way campaigns and even funded teams for Relay for Life.

The collaborative nature of these types of leadership opportunities was important for the two Presidents as they sought to enhance internal institutional support and external community engagement (Greenleaf, 2003; Newberry, 2005). Sharing responsibilities with vice presidents or other institutional leaders was not just a smart leadership move but it was a means for avoiding a potential burnout due to the exhaustive nature of the undertaking. By design and from necessity, the cyclical nature of relationships and service helped to define the culture of the two academic communities,

and drew participants into the process through a common bond of experiences and sacrifices.

Most of the administrators and trustees interviewed talked about how each President had participated in a similar difficult denominational transition and the associated hardships encountered. Thus the so-called scars earned, during their respective careers, gave each President a shield described as experiences on what to do and not do, and each seemingly wore it as a mantle. Those experiences apparently had planted seeds of determination to not repeat such mistakes and to find alternative paths to achieve mutually rewarding goals.

Hersey's and Blanchard's (1984) situational leadership provided a frame to better understand the idea of strategic emphasis on relationships. They said that such a leader would balance emphasis on task(s) and relationships, while providing oversight to garner maximum results. The higher the level of competence and resulting assurance of task completion, the greater inclination for a leader to allow for emphasizing and trusting relationships with staff and external constituencies (Hersey & Blanchard, 1984).

According to the situational leadership model, this approach would correlate to the S3 quadrant (low task focus and high relationship focus). In this sector, a president provides autonomy to a follower with the expectation that the processes are completed to a leader's satisfaction. This participative method offers guidance and quality control with the main emphasis being placed on building trust between and among participants.

A Positive Approach

Upon entering Dr. McGee's office for the presidential interview, it was evident that relationships were keenly important to him. Pictures of friends, family, and even

employees covered his walls, desk, and bookshelves. Those markers of relationships and interactions with others had been collected over the years speaking to a long and positive relationship with constituencies. Those symbols and mementos embodied, for Dr. McGee, the importance of a successful strategic transition of the Wingate Board of Trustees and his desire to promote positive interactions.

Wingate University like Gardner-Webb took great pride in a positive and personal touch within the University. That perspective pervaded all aspects of the campus community where everyone from the President to students, faculty and students reportedly claimed to be a part of something bigger than them. Multiple interviews cited that idea of a university family.

Although not a prerequisite for effective institutional transition, a positive approach to change can support and inform core values, support greater buy-in from constituencies, as well as offer additional personal energy and incentive to enhance difficult transitions. In stark contrast to transactional leadership emphasizing a system of rewards for performance, playing to the internal, value-centered motivation of employees to pursue the greater good of the organization (Bass, 1990), the leadership advanced by both Drs. McGee and Bonner was clearly of the transformational type. It emphasized positive interactions between a leader and follower seeking to ignite strong performances and buy-in spurred by mutual respect and strong motivation.

When articulating this positive approach, Dr. McGee drew upon his formative years with family members and church experiences to paint an intimate picture with the Baptist denomination – its people, ideals, and tradition. He was proud of such culture and tradition. “We can point very proudly to our Baptist heritage and I think we always

have strong ties and we'll never change that. The Baptists of North Carolina came here on horse driven carriages and sat around pot belly heaters in Meadow Branch Baptist Church and prayed this school into existence.” Interviewees from faculty members, trustee, and administrator groups commented, on multiple occasions, about when their President referenced a positive and personal connection, belief in the institution, and love for tradition within the school and Convention; all of which resulted in a desire for amicable negotiations. Through his strong, positive tone Dr. McGee set out to establish a relationship that each entity could be proud of – one that embodied care and compassion of his own feelings.

Dr. McGee: I'm absolutely confident (in the transition)... it's not a lot unlike raising your children. You know, I love my two sons more today than I ever have in my life but I don't see them every day and hopefully they're out there making wonderful decisions for their families and doing their professions in a way that is based on the values they learned at home. Growing up, growing up with a mother and father who loved them and gave them direction and that's kind of the way we are. We always will be a product of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, we always will be associated and be very proud of that and I hope that they'll be appreciative of what we're doing.

Although Dr. Bonner supported positive and amicable change through relational leadership his approach to change did not emphasize as great a need for a positive separation. Some accommodation should be made for the personality of both leaders, yet the change model for Dr. Bonner fell to a more analytical emphasis, residing apparently in his academic persona. No judgment was made regarding the effectiveness of either approach. Instead it was noted that both leaders excised a wide portfolio of skills to influence change and that occasionally each led with a distinctive approach indicative of their respective style.

Dr. Bonner was favorably regarded by persons within each of the interviewed groups. Special note was made of his ostensible care and compassion as it was displayed for others. One administrator commented that Dr. Bonner was extremely transparent, genuine, and demonstrated a sincere desire to connect with constituents and build a personal relationship. Such views were considered endorsement of the work done by Wysong (2000) on how expressions of collegiality by top administrators supported greater job effectiveness. Wysong's work with 13 institutions of higher led her to conclude that enhanced institutional effectiveness existed when leaders displayed transformational behaviors. "This indicates that leaders who showed idealized influence, who inspired and motivated, who stimulated followers intellectually, and who showed individual consideration led an effective organization (pg 53)."

Charismatic leadership (Conger & Kanungo, 1998) was relevant to the theme of relationships. Both President McGee and Bonner reportedly exhibited such characteristics; unconventional in their leadership approaches, assumed personal risks, illustrated sensitivity to group needs, demonstrated sensitivity to culture and environment, and established a clear vision. Sousa's research regarding planned change at a small, private college supported this perspective and found that demonstrating respect for existing culture and traditions was an imperative component for successful change (2007). Below are indices of how the two Presidents evidenced charismatic leadership.

- Sensitivity to group needs- Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee were keenly aware of the needs of constituencies and planned to support their wide and varied perspectives. It was important to keep an awareness of the potent political nature of the

circumstances and constituencies involved in the transition. Consequently, Drs. Bonner and McGee acknowledged the importance of the egos involved, especially among persons within the hierarchy of the State Convention, and each addressed them carefully and individually to assure a continuation of the collegial relationships and to enhance the prospects for a success transition.

Parenthetically, it bears mentioning that altruism likely was not the sole genesis for the presidential actions.

- Acting in an unconventional manner – The process for establishing a self-perpetuating board was unconventional by its nature. A majority of denominationally affiliated institutions remain connected to conventions for trustee selection and approval (Leonard, 2003). Thus, the direction chosen by the respective Presidents was fraught with potential landmines and the topic of financial support to each institution clearly was a dominant subject. Extensive loss of such support could have resulted in the crippling of an institution.
- Set a clear vision – Dr. McGee identified definitive and transparent parameters for why and how Wingate University would move to a process of a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. As those issues unfolded he quickly and concisely moved the institution into position to change its relationship with the North Carolina Baptist Convention, but did so with ample notice to the involved parties. Likewise, Dr. Bonner indicated that altering the process for Board selection had been a consideration for Gardner-Webb University for many years, and the move toward creating a self-perpetuating Board had been identified in strategic planning

discussions. The process for its implementation was enacted carefully but consistently and with total transparency.

- Sensitivity to the culture and environment – Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee were fully engaged in the life and history of their respective institution and aware of the cultural and political norms. Each acknowledged that they had recognized the long-standing traditions of their communities, and that it had been of paramount importance to ensure existing perspectives, beliefs, traditions, and mores, continued throughout the change process.
- Risk taking – Dr. McGee had taken a risk by initiating the self-perpetuating process before any of the other Baptist institutions in North Carolina. Prior to the Baptist Convention in fall of 2007 Dr. McGee submitted the initial notification letter to the North Carolina Baptist Convention that Wingate University intended on shifting to greater autonomy in selecting trustees. Electing this option was within the Convention's bylaws, but was clearly a statement of intention on the part of Wingate to develop a self-perpetuating board. It would be a full year before other presidents followed suit. His assertion that Wingate would change the relationship with the Convention in order to achieve independent trustee selection was considered bold by faculty members, administrators, students, and trustees interviewed. Dr. McGee's clarity of expression and visioning were deemed to be charismatic according to many interviewees. In contrast, Dr. Bonner took fewer risks when embarking upon establishing a new board relationship. Dr. Bonner and Gardner-Webb announced their intent to change the relationship after Wingate set the stage for the transition. Although the political

process had been measured and engaged by Wingate, the loss of funding remained a risky proposition for both leaders. During the respective interviews, both Presidents professed they had been equivocal about how their actions would fully translate for institutional sovereignty, fiscal security, and programmatic development. Conger and Kanungo (1998) claimed that embarking upon such indefinite courses of action, by both Presidents, was tantamount to substantial evidence that each was a risk taking leader regardless of the projected or potential positive impact of the transition.

Institutional Stability

Trustees and administrators at Gardner-Webb and Wingate Universities had been favorable toward the transition in the selection process for their respective Boards of trustees. Such a position was important because of how such entities exerted support for and enhanced institutional values and traditions. Participants interviewed from each institution claimed to have been supportive of the change, but there were a minority who expressed reservations regarding the long-term stability of their institution to continue incrementally developing, despite assurances from a respective President.

Both Presidents independently selected the theme of the institution remaining grounded in faith as their pivot when encouraging persons toward the completion of the process. Dr. McGee used the descriptors of “Christian” and “Baptist” interchangeable, noting that the institution would have a “historical Baptist relationship”. Dr. Bonner was more inclined to use the phrase “Christian”, while acknowledging a desire to continue maintaining a close relationship with the Baptist Convention. Those differences in

terminology did not appear to connote any difference in how each President viewed the impending change.

Apparently as intended, the ongoing use and emphasis of internal and external concepts of faith supported continuity of each institution's mission and such emphasis was deemed to promote institutional values and tradition. Oosting (1985) discussed that topic in his survey of presidential management and noted that a majority of presidents seemed constrained, and possibly inhibited, by their relationships with a denominational entity. Such persons typically employed the term spirituality instead of claiming allegiance to a given denomination or religious movement. Conceivably the use of the word spirituality or faith conveyed a healthy or righteous attitude to relevant constituents, while the notion of affiliation might ignite unnecessary emotional reactions.

Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2007) (Relational Leadership Model - RLM) explored that concept for relational leaders using the term ethics as the catalyst. The RLM allowed for understanding how and why followers of relational leaders usually responded favorably and were willing to evidence trust and claim understanding. In essence, when such followers were comfortable with a leader's decision-making there was adequate congruence with their perception of a leader's use of such ethical ideals, meaning that parties apparently held the same interpretations.

Trustees, administrators and faculty members were greatly influenced by the need for stability in the academic programs and need for enhanced financial support to each institution. The faculty participants voiced the fact their colleagues wanted

to ensure that academic programs would not be altered by the potential change in trustee composition. One faculty interviewee stated that enrollment could suffer as a result of the changing relationships with the Baptist Convention because historically many students had been recruited through a positive relationship with Baptist churches across the state. That perspective was voiced for both institutions.

Summary

Strategic transitions such as undertaken by Gardner-Webb and Wingate universities hold the potential for becoming unruly, tempestuous, and disastrous. For Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee the fact of having had a relevant personal foundation with Baptist ideals and history supported their desire to maintain effective relationships throughout the transition processes. In addition, each President's personal experiences with professional Christian higher education and profile as a respected academician enhanced interactions with the Convention, and various constituencies throughout their respective institution. It was the confluence of knowledge, experience, visioning, risk-taking, and leadership style displayed by each President that led to the success of the strategic transition for each university.

The Importance of Vision

Introduction

Dr. Bonner's and Dr. McGee's knowledge and understanding of their respective institution's past helped shape their strategic vision including the shift to a self-perpetuating board of trustees. Research support for the perspective that a clear sense of the past was helpful to frame decisions for the future came from a number of sources (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Jessup, 2007; Lawton, 2004; Oosting, 1985). Strategically

shifting to a self-perpetuating board of trustees was an intentional and designed approach for institutional advancement because each school had minimal success in fundraising (relevant to other institutions with greater breath and variance in their governing boards). That fact was repeated throughout interviews and was a revealing aspect of the visioning for each institution.

The following paragraphs describe institutional visioning articulated by participants in this research. Theoretical perspectives are used to draw relevant conclusions with primary emphasis given to Nanus' (1992) model of visionary leadership using the following four roles: direction setter, change agent, spokesperson, and coach.

Academic Freedom

As evidenced by faculty members, trustees, and administrator interviews, academic freedom was the primary theoretical construct undergirding the strategic change initiative at Gardner-Webb and Wingate. Faculty members in particular noted the imperative nature of the President's role in clarifying and directing this priority. Nanus (1992) labeled this visioning role as that of 'direction setter'.

The stimulus for Drs. Bonner and McGee's vision of academic freedom had been encouraged early in life of each. Dr. McGee said that the attitude toward critical inquiry and reasonable discussions had been cultivated as a child when attending church. He cited the fact issues had been debated freely and especially in church there had been ample room allowed for different opinions and perspectives. Dr. Bonner likewise gained his academic vision from formative experiences as a teenager, and in particular when he engaged his father regarding issues the latter faced as an academic leader at Furman University.

Dr. Bonner: Dad was a fierce advocate of intellectual freedom and academic freedom...he wrote an article entitled “Can Baptists Operate a First Quality Academic Institution?” ... He also wrote an article that appeared in what was then “Southern Baptist Educator” magazine advocating academic freedom... The academic freedom thing is kind of in the genes, kind of inherited.

According to Nanus (1992), a “direction setter” examined external and internal environmental factors to determine the best possible avenue(s) for success. Once a path has been chosen the perspective gets communicated. Drs. Bonner and McGee unabashedly cited academic freedom as the core of their vision for Gardner-Webb and Wingate, and communicated that perspective through their transition processes. Prior to the transition, each was concerned that the freedom experienced by both institutions was in jeopardy due to Convention political and policy leanings. Specifically, the Convention’s requirements for Trustee selection shifted, requiring trustee nominations to have connection with the Southern Baptist Convention. That had not been the case historically. The North Carolina Baptist Convention does not have a direct affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention and thus that quick and drastic shift in policy set alarms off at both institutions.

Administrators, faculty members, trustees, and students noted that academic pursuit had to be free without third party intervention or influence. Horror stories from other private, denominationally affiliated institutions were common in the literature citing Convention influence over curriculum, teaching, and hiring (Finder, 2006; Hinkle, 2001; Pierce, 2005). Infringing upon academic freedom was completely unacceptable for Presidents McGee and Bonner. Both fervently called for continued autonomy for all academic matters and worked to instill an academic priority throughout the change process. Such a canon was not risky. Instead if their philosophy had deviated the

outcome would have been detrimental because of agreements each institution's faculty held on the topic of academic freedom. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) shared the same perspective. SACS carefully reviews an institution's approach to curricular matters to ensure that academia was not constrained by philosophical leanings of any political or faith perspective. An institution's accreditation hinged on that objectivity.

Lawton (2004) studied the development of vision with two Christian college presidents. Findings from his study were understood to mean that academic rigor was a key component of the vision for each president. Lawton found that "... presidents wanted their colleges to be one of the best liberal arts colleges in terms of academic preparation, preparation for future employment, and preparation of students for graduate school" (pg 66). Dr. Bonner's and Dr. McGee's approach to strategic transition echoed and endorsed Lawton's premise.

Institutional Potential

Drs. Bonner and McGee stated that their respective institution could depart from the status quo and reach higher levels of institutional potential if given the opportunity to select their own Trustees. Literature from chapter two was interpreted to mean that processes can continue unchanged unless there is a stimulus or force to ignite transformation (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer 1993; Mintzberg, 1973). Both Presidents stated that it was their role to initiate such a change.

According to Nanus (1992) a "change agent" assesses organizational structure and purpose to clarify and define organizational shifts. Once the organizational change is identified the president leverages political and relational influences to

establish supportive change. Lawton's (2004) research on the vision of two, Christian college presidents noted that not only must a change agent's vision "lead in the correct direction, but it must inspire others to leave the security of a stable place and move in a new direction (88)."

Both Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee employed motivation as a change agent helping team members engage the transition through visioning. Analyses of the interviews presented evidence of this fact, noting that both Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee initiated institutional planning, allocation of resources, and development of programs to support faith traditions. Dr. Bonner formed a University-wide committee to study and enhance religious efforts on campus including the advancement of "Dimensions" the University Chapel program, established as a central component of student faith development. Dr. McGee encouraged the continued development of a like program at Wingate. The Lyceum Program for cultural development included Chapel services for academic credit, giving credence to the programs that further support the institution's spiritual persona and mission. Through the process, faculty members and administrators reported high levels of involvement in planning activities yielding new and innovative ways to conduct business. The transformational leadership (Bass, 1990) exhibited by both Presidents helped interviewees realize the potential of a new relationship with a board of trustees and how such a change likely could further support institutional development.

Financial Vision

Dr. Bonner and Dr. McGee claimed that establishing a self-perpetuating board was a transformational move for their respective institutions and such a move would offer

unparalleled freedom and access to qualified Trustees. According to both Presidents, the best Trustees were those who offered new skills to the Board and brought financial wherewithal to the institution. Under former guidelines, established by the North Carolina Baptist, each institution had to select a majority of Trustees from North Carolina Baptist churches (North Carolina Baptist Convention, 2007). That structure limited the scope of the selection process and thus the potential financial benefit stemming from new trustee relationships. Both Presidents worked closely with their respective development office serving encouraging (“coaching”) employees to seek out and sustain potential Trustees and perspective donors (Nanus, 1992).

Dr. McGee explained the limitations of the selection process in both practical and philosophical terms. First, Wingate Baptist Church (the founding church for Wingate University) was not in the North Carolina Baptist Convention. It maintained an affiliation with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina and thus was not able to affirm a trustee to the University. Likewise, other friends of the University who attended churches of other denominations could not formally participate to as a Board member. Dr. McGee was openly frustrated with that policy.

Dr. McGee: ... (A Trustee) could be from one extreme end of our state to the other and perhaps couldn't find Wingate on a map, but a Methodist who lives in Wingate who's had three generations of his family to attend Wingate could not be elected as a Trustee. And somehow that just didn't make a whole lot of sense to us.

Dr. McGee stated that in the future, new Trustees would provide a major institutional transition that could have profound, positive financial implications for the life of the institution. Trustees and administrators affirmed the President's perspectives noting:

1. They have friends and alumni who are not Baptist, yet have the potential to yield high return for the Universities in terms of gifts or donations, and
2. Trustees maintain business connections that could be leveraged to support gifts to the institution if denominational limitations were lifted.

Vision for Faith Development

Nanus (1992) noted that the role of “spokesperson” was essential when confirming and infusing components of a new institutional vision. For Wingate and Gardner Webb Universities faith was a key institutional value, and espoused in both institutional mission statements. As spokespersons for the change (or affirmation of existing priorities), Drs. McGee and Bonner affirmed the importance of a faith-based priorities to abate any and all concerns regarding potential deviation from the core mission of the institution. (Greater clarity regarding these core messages follows in the Communication section.)

Drs. Bonner and McGee believed that a self-perpetuating Board would reinforce and affirm current institutional values, and were firmly committed to continuing and even expanding institutional faith perspectives. In fact, as spokespersons, both Presidents used religious language (Newberry, 2005) during the change process and indicated that the transition had been “prayerfully considered” and that faith dynamics - including services, traditions, and heritage would be supported and enhanced on an ongoing basis. Dr. Bonner noted that maintaining a strong institutional, faith persona without formal denominational affiliation, would demonstrate greater commitment to faith perspectives and ideals. Furthermore, Dr. McGee agreed that by removing the obligatory exchange of

funds for name recognition, continuing and strong faith contributions would illustrate a greater relevancy of institutional faith priority for constituencies.

Some administrators and faculty were skeptical of new trustees noting that the desire for financial support could overcome a president's perspective of shielding the institutional mission. Conversely, Presidents McGee and Bonner believed the self-perpetuating nature of their Boards would act as another safeguard protecting faith ideology. Both Presidents set institutional priorities to enhance the institution's faith duty.

Student Growth and Development

At the heart of each institution was its' students. Drs. Bonner and McGee affirmed that idea and emphasized the core institutional purpose was centered on educating and supporting students. This perspective was affirmed in the literature where student growth and character development were set as key institutional learning outcomes (Lawton, 2004, Newberry, 2005). Dr. McGee advocated for student development while validating the intellectual freedom and student choice as elements of the learning process.

Dr McGee: ...I don't try to impose my beliefs on the students. I try to encourage them to develop their own beliefs and I try to show them how important my personal beliefs are to me, but the idea is not for them to leave the classroom thinking exactly like I do about the issue. The purpose of education is to talk intellectually about the issues – to explore key concepts and challenge one another.

Dr. McGee further elaborated on the concept of student freedom of choice and learning.

Dr. McGee: I think each individual person has to make up their own minds about issues and about how they interpret things and how they are going to live their lives. It is not for an institution to dictate to them. We try to model our lives in a

way that the students can see the way you are supposed to live with one another and treat one another....

Dr. Bonner expressed a similar stance by emphasizing student learning and growth as core elements of Gardner-Webb's institutional purpose. He stressed that students created positive change in the world and helped others. This transformational approach also has ancillary benefits for faculty, staff, and students through engaged out-of-class service learning and community service opportunities. Faculty and staff co-facilitated various service projects that aid students in "giving back" to the surrounding community. Of note is the family nature of the institution that promoted discussion and engagement on issues of social justice (Bass, 1996). Faculty appreciated the motivation to challenge students and initiate growth, believing the approach was critical to broadening students' intellectual capabilities.

Dr. Bonner was emphatic that concepts of student growth and development be not ethereal in nature. He was committed to practical application, empowering employees to encourage and connect with students. To support this effort, Dr. Bonner emphasized the importance of first year programming especially in freshman year seminar class and orientation process. He also supported ongoing efforts toward one on one mentoring. Dr. Bonner wanted employees to use informal and formal relationships with students to help students learn and grow (Mintzberg, 1973).

Summary

The participants, from all groups interviewed described the importance of establishing a clear vision for institutional progress during strategic transition. In addition, interviewees noted that presidential leadership was essential in the visioning process and that key institutional values had to be prevalent in such

declarations. Also, the interviewees conveyed that each President was effective in setting and articulating a vision throughout the strategic transition.

The Importance of Communication

Introduction

The findings from analyses of the participant interviews allowed for identifying communication as an essential component of strategic transition. It was paramount in the sense of needing to have been maintained and inclusive of all constituencies. Persons comprising the groups of interviewed administrators and faculty members consistently commented on the importance of communication to support internal morale as well as assist professionals in conducting university business with accurate and updated information. The trustees emphasized the importance of communication as a tool to instill confidence in the institution and reaffirm core institutional values to external constituencies. The following discussion outlines three key themes from the analyses: establishing purpose and clarity in the message, sharing information and demonstrating transparency, and illustrating presidential conviction.

Establishing Purpose and Clarity in the Message

Presidents McGee and Bonner used little variation in the messages communicated to constituencies regarding the strategic transitions. They believed that simple, core messages permeated the entire strategic transition process and so each one included the following ideas.

1. Each institution will remain Christian (supports Baptist ideals and heritage).
2. Each institution would maintain a positive position with the Convention.

3. Each institution would select their trustees moving forward.
4. Each institution would maintain academic freedom.

Each President established definitive priorities for their respective institution and in a calculated manner. Dr. McGee, in consultation with the Wingate Board of Trustees, developed the key institutional strategies for Wingate. Gardner-Webb University hired a consultant during the strategic planning process to help define key messages and support institutional identity.

Dr. Bonner: We've done a lot of work in recent months on our identity plan with the work of a consultant out of Cleveland, Ohio, but as we talk about our identity, as we talk about our brand identity and as we craft language that will be the basis for how we communicate our identity.

Consistent messages reinforced the mission and values of an institution and also minimized concern about drastic change thus supporting institutional stability. Those messages were disseminated through multiple delivery methods and in varying venues. Consistent repetition of the message was important for both Presidents because of the inherent difficulty in achieving continuity due to the number of people and varying levels of staffing at the institution (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). Faculty members and administrators noted how repeating the messages help solidify the transitional efforts and achieve higher levels of agreement. Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer (1993), supported this idea, noting that repeating communication can alleviate fear and develop stronger internal commitment to the change process.

Theoretical perspectives from chapter two were understood to mean that institutional agreement was an important factor contributing to success during times of change. Prior to strategic transition an institution was deemed to have a certain level of readiness to change (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1992). That readiness indicated the

level of acceptance maintained by institutional constituency's regarding the pending changes. For example:

1. Are the constituencies aware of how the change will impact programs and services?
2. Are constituencies aware of the benefits and challenges related to the anticipated change?
3. Are constituencies open to ongoing dialogue about the transition and its implementation (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1992)?

The third point, ongoing dialogue, was especially important in relation to communication because it impacted the ability of an institution to "hear" key messages being shared and revealed the attitude through which messages were being interpreted. Even with clear and coherent messages, utilizing multiple avenues of communication, successful articulation of a vision required a level of readiness for positive reception. To support ongoing communication the Presidents used a combination of the following to convey information and increase institutional readiness for change.

1. Ongoing reports to the Faculty Senate
2. Ongoing dialogue with the Board of Trustees
3. Ongoing dialogue with the President's Cabinet
4. Presentations to community groups and constituencies
5. One on one meetings with key institutional members
6. Strategic planning documentation
7. General meetings with student groups

8. Various institutional documents and/or electronic sources
9. Faculty / staff forums

Sharing Information and Demonstrating Transparency

Hofstede (1997) noted that the composition or make-up of a campus community greatly impacted how messages were received and interpreted, and that the culture of a community was shaped by a combination of formal and informal interaction. Gardner-Webb and Wingate faculty members and administrators commented about informal institutional opinion makers; key faculty and staff who interpreted institutional happenings and readily communicated throughout each institution. The participants said that those informal leaders often interpreted meaning from news articles or campus hearsay, and were essential conduits. Thus such opinion makers were kept in the loop by inclusion in strategic planning processes or addressed informally by a President or their representatives. That form of individual communication supported transparency because the Presidents often were seen as reaching out to constituencies and there was little obscured as the transition rolled forward.

Hall (1976) described communication in cultural environments as being high or low context depending on the level of interpersonal connection within the environment and how closely coupled they existed over time. The environments for both Gardner-Webb and Wingate Universities were a complex mixture of both high and low context. Considering the overarching mission and purpose of each institution, continuity in staffing and shared historical perspectives fostered environment expecting and receptive to a high communication ideology.

Of note was that some subsets of each university did not have similarly long-lasting and significant contacts that would lead to anticipating such communication. As an example, the length of time on campus was shorter for students (as opposed to administrators) thus requiring greater specificity and details when seeking to communicate with that constituency (Hall, 1976). Interestingly, whereas administrators, faculty, and trustees reported an effective degree of communication from their respective President, the students did not. Student buy-in was limited, presumably because of their narrow scope of knowledge and limited to negligible participation in the strategic transition process.

The idea of using various levels of communication to address differing level of knowledge and interest among constituencies was addressed by Sousa (2007). Sousa 's study of planned change found that the president used "high key" and "low key" perspectives (or messages) to define communication regarding the institution's change process (2007). "High key" messages were used to tout the unfolding story of the institution and the essential concepts that made the transition inspiring and engaging. "Low key" messages were used to talk about functional, strategic elements of the change process. By dividing the change voices into categories the president could identify and construct meaning with various constituencies to support buy-in and advance transition on and off campus (Sousa, 2007). Drs. McGee and Bonner did not segment specific messages within various audiences, although some comments and perspectives were used more often (the necessity to self-select trustees and the importance of positive relationship). Primary messages were used in conjunction with supporting themes to

paint a holistic view of change, yet these concepts were not segmented per internal or external audiences.

Still, organizational complexity impacted communication. Multiple layers of structure and varying functions (fundraising functions in contrast to grounds crews) made it difficult to ensure consistent information was spread throughout an entire university. Although apparently failing to achieve success with students, Drs. Bonner and McGee were proponents of ongoing dialogue regarding the strategic transition in multiple venues. Faculty meetings and Board of Trustee meetings were used as an opportunity to share the most recent information and planning regarding the transition.

Dr. McGee: I think the most important thing you've got to do as a leader is help people share. We've got so many people who care about our institution and who want to have a voice in what we're doing and we have to provide them that voice... You have to be careful and patient and listen to the public.

Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer agreed that key leaders can build commitment to change by listening, providing consistent messages, challenging mixed messages, and addressing individual concerns (1993). In addition, Kouzes and Posner (1993) said that the greater level of buy-in or commitment achieved the greater the potential for developing collaboration and energy to inspire a vision for the future. Drs. Bonner and Dr. McGee believed that through ongoing communication more people in their respective institution were educated about the purpose and need for the change. Kipp (1999) noted that an environment or institution would more effectively implement what it understood.

Illustrating Presidential Conviction

Drs. Bonner and McGee were unwavering in their belief that Gardner-Webb and Wingate were doing the “right thing” by developing self-perpetuating Boards of Trustees.

In fact, a level of passion crept into conversations when each spoke about the trustee selection process, its current limitations and the vast potential available through transition. It was evident that both Presidents wanted their respective institutions to engage in advancement activities and were convinced that the best method would be achieved through a new body of trustees. Furthermore, the greater the level of conviction and fervor displayed by Drs Bonner and McGee, the greater was the apparent buy-in from constituencies for the strategic change effort (Newberry, 2005; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Kotter, 1996).

According to both Presidents, they inherited their philosophies for assuming challenges and attacking them directly but cogently from family influences. Dr. Bonner spoke of his father's conviction regardless of the winds of public opinion, "He (Dr. Bonner's Father) always said he didn't care what people thought as long as he was doing the right thing." Likewise, Dr. McGee referenced his grandfather in the context of making difficult decisions.

Dr. McGee: My grandfather used to say, "Doing the right thing is seldom easy." And this wasn't easy and it was something I'd just as soon not have to have to deal with under my watch, but it had to be done.

'Doing the right thing' was mentioned throughout interviews with each sitting President and often in relation to Christian principles. According to Newberry (2005), "The Christian college president should make every effort to use faith-based symbols in his or her leadership rhetoric (229-230)." Dr. Bonner's and Dr. McGee's convictions were obvious when they discussed their faith, and both were convinced that a change in how trustees were chosen would not negatively impact faith-based priorities. Both used religious language to provide support and continuity

throughout communication endeavors. Dr. McGee noted that he would “...pray often and do the right thing for the institution.”

Summary

Discussion of presidential leadership in strategic transition yielded valuable information on manner and levels of communication employed. Both Presidents used various methods to reach out to constituencies. The interviewees noted that the transition was clear, dialogue was transparent, and that their respective President was transparent, decisive, and compassionate about the direction of their respective institutions.

Implications

Three themes surfaced from this study of presidential leadership during strategic transition to a self-perpetuating board: the importance of relationships, vision, and communication. An institution embarking upon a change process such as undertaken by Wingate and Gardner-Webb Universities, regardless of scope and character of an institution or dimension of the challenge, can utilize the following six points as a road map when preparing for such a journey.

1. It is recommended that presidents and boards establish an understanding of institutional and presidential relationships with a respective state convention, or perhaps legislative bodies, and determine what levels of the historic and/or practical relationship they choose to maintain in the future.
2. It is recommended that presidents establish and articulate a clear vision for the change process.
3. It is recommended that presidents establish clear communication protocol considering internal and external institutional constituencies in order to

encourage ongoing exchange and dialogue throughout the strategic transition process.

4. It is recommended that academic freedom serve as a central point of dialogue to enhance institutional support for the strategic change.
5. It is recommended that institutional leadership envision and articulate institutional potential. Initiating dialogue regarding institutional potential helps join multiple constituencies in a common purpose thereby enhancing institutional buy-in for a transition.
6. It is recommended that leadership heighten the institution's "readiness for change" prior to beginning the transition process. Developing concise institutional messages regarding strategic transition prior to starting a change process can better create the need for change and elevate institutional readiness and subsequent receptivity (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993).

Transitioning to a self-perpetuating board of trustees is a multidimensional challenge. Although, the three themes (relationships, visioning, and communication) are clearly identified as instrumental in the change process, each varies depending on institutional priorities and presidential experiences. The complexity of the multiple factors must be carefully assessed and then juxtaposed against circumstances as best disclosed to develop the best approach for change.

A strategic guide questionnaire for transition was crafted (Appendix G) to support presidential leadership and institutional dialogue for an institution considering a transition to a self-perpetuating board of trustees. The structure of the questionnaire was developed

based on research findings from this study, while allowing individual institutions to consider their own circumstances should they seek to embark upon strategic change.

Generalization of Findings

Sousa (2007) noted six key propositions in the successful implementation of planned change at a small, private institution. The nature and content of Sousa's (2007) findings are directly related to the findings found in this study of Presidential Leadership during Strategic Transition. These similarities support the generalization of findings to other opportunities for planned change. The following findings were derived from Sousa's study.

1. In order for campus members to perceive a planned change as successful, they must be able to:
 - a. Articulate the goals for the change initiative
 - b. Understand why the goals were put forth
 - c. See measurable outcomes as a direct result of the actions that were taken
2. Buy-in for the change process must be created through involvement. The level of personal involvement in the change initiative directly corresponds to the level of commitment to the process
3. It is possible to change the culture during a change implementation provided the following:
 - a. There is demonstrated respect for the existing institutional culture, including working through the existing structures to implement change
 - b. The community can see a benefit to changing the culture
4. In the higher education environment, change can be successfully led from the top down if the following conditions are present:
 - a. There is broad consensus that change is necessary (i.e. crisis)
 - b. Leadership shows respect for the existing culture
 - c. The change story presented by the leadership reflects the institutional identity
 - d. There is continuous communication with the campus community
 - e. There is broad involvement in the change process
5. Having effective leadership and creating understanding for the need for change (buy-in) are more important than having a formal planning process.

6. Barriers to the implementation of planned change in higher education can be overcome by addressing them during the change process as they are discovered (Sousa, 2007).

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional study of events and conditions, including the nature and extent of leadership enjoyed, would be advantageous to augmenting these findings, especially in different settings (geographic location, public, private, two-year, four-year research institutions) and circumstances. Replicated or constructively replicated studies might consider the following:

1. Presidential leadership during strategic transition to a self-perpetuating board in the context of differing denominational affiliations. Studies could elaborate on presidential leadership in redefining denomination relationships with other faith-based affiliations including the Methodist, Presbyterian, or Catholic Church. Of interest might be possible differing leadership behaviors based on denominational requirements and structure.
2. Presidential leadership during strategic transition of other institutional structures, such as athletic affiliations (NCAA Division II to NCAA Division I).
3. Other levels of institutional leadership during strategic shifts or momentous changes. Research could include examination of leadership from the chief academic officer or chief fundraising officer considering their differing perspectives and priorities as an institution loosens denominational ties. Of interest might be the differing response from these professionals based on their priority and investment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed key themes related to Presidential leadership during strategic transition of a Board of Trustee selection process at two Christian Higher Education institutions. The three themes that surfaced from the analyses were: the importance of relationships, vision, and communication. Each was presented with supporting evidence and buttressed with relevant literature. Implications stemming from the study were presented and a strategic guide questionnaire for transition was crafted (Appendix G). The primary focus of that guide is for use by an institution considering a transition to a self-perpetuating board of trustees, but judicious modifications can be made and it could serve as a platform for other types of changes. Chapter Six provides a succinct summary of the study and its findings.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY

Overview

This case study examined Presidential leadership at two Christian universities during strategic transition of a Board of Trustee selection process. Personal interviews were conducted with the four persons representing each of the following constituencies: administrators, faculty members, trustees, and students. Additionally the President from Wingate and Gardner-Webb Universities gave unfettered and presumably candid interviews. The goal was to investigate presidential communication patterns, demonstrated leadership characteristics, influence, and vision surrounding the period when the strategic transition occurred. Prior literature was used to frame the analyses. The following describes the demographics, description of methods, findings, and implications.

Demographics:

1. Sitting Presidents: Both University Presidents agreed to participate in the interview process and to allow use of their name in the results of the study. Dr. Jerry McGee had served at Wingate University President since 1992. During his tenure the University experienced tremendous growth, nearly doubling in size. Dr. Frank Bonner had served at Gardner-Webb University since 1987, when he joined the University as Vice President for Academic Affairs. He was named President in May 2005 and took office on July 1 of that year. As part of his leadership Gardner-Webb has grown significantly in academic programs extending extensively in graduate and satellite programs (Gardner-Webb University, 2009).

2. Administrators: Senior administrative leadership from each institution participated in the study representing Academics, Athletics, Business and Finance, Development, and Church Relations. Participants carried the title of Vice-President or Dean.
3. Faculty Members: The group of eight -faculty members held terminal degrees in their respective disciplines of: Science, Religion, History, Business, Psychology, and English. All had served their respective department as Chair, three had served as Dean of a School, and two had served as Chair for their respective institutional Faculty Senate.
4. Students: Two sophomores, one freshman, two juniors, and three seniors participated in the study. Each had participated in a variety of co-curricular activities. Their majors included: Science, Religion, Sociology, Marketing, Mathematics, and three were undeclared.
5. Trustees: The trustees participating in the interview process had contributed a total of 72- years serving their respective institution as a trustee. Three had served as Board Chairperson, and all eight had provided committee leadership.

Data Collection and Methods

Conducting 60 minute, one-on-one interviews and then engaging in qualitative analyses of the triangulated transcriptions enabled the researcher to understand perspectives and identify specific illustrations of emerging themes. In addition relevant documents were examined to triangulate data garnered from the interview sources. Upon selection of the volunteers, pseudo names were assigned to

each person and no identifying information divulged to anyone else. Audio tapes of the interviews were used for verbatim transcriptions and copious notes were taken during the interview processes to augment the subsequent interpretations.

Findings

Initial data analysis led to identifying 19 codes, which were honed to 13. Axial coding led to the emergence of three relevant themes: Relationships, Vision, and Communication.

The Importance of Relationships

Each President had positive connections with the North Carolina State Baptist Convention. That provided opportunities for further development of mutually beneficial relationships that better served their respective institution. Relationships (personal, professional, cultural, social, economic, and religious) within their respective institutions and with external constituencies were important for institutional continuity and stability, and contributed positively to outcomes during the strategic transition. Assuring the public, donors, students, faculty, staff and others that the institution would not introduce significant philosophical shifts in programs or services was deemed critical.

The Importance of Vision

Both Presidents reported that developing a self-perpetuating board of trustees would position their respective institutions to achieve their potential more fully. Their visioning included setting a firm financial foundation, ensuring academic freedom, preserving a strong faith-based heritage, reaching the institution's optimal potential, and promoting positive student growth and development.

The Importance of Communication

The following key messages were consistently communicated by both Presidents.

- Each institution will remain Christian (supports Baptist ideals and heritage),
- Each institution would maintain a positive position with their Convention,
- Each institution would select their Trustees when moving forward, and
- Each institution would maintain academic freedom.

Generalization of Findings

Findings from the study of Presidential Leadership during Strategic Transition may be generalized to other planned change efforts. Sousa (2007) noted six key propositions in the successful implementation of planned change. The nature and content of Sousa's findings were directly related to the findings found in the study of presidential leadership. These similarities support the generalization of findings to other opportunities for planned change. The following critical issues further support the generalization of findings.

Critical Issues

The following were deemed salient points and were supported by relevant literature.

1. Presidents and Boards should establish an understanding of institutional and presidential relationships with a state convention and determine what levels of the historic and/or practical relationship to continue.
2. Presidents should establish and articulate a clear vision for the change process.

3. Presidents should establish a clear communication protocol considering internal and external institutional constituencies in order to encourage ongoing exchange and dialogue throughout the strategic transition process.
4. Academic freedom should be a primary safeguard, especially for denominational entities.
5. Initiating dialogue regarding institutional potential helps join multiple constituencies in a common purpose thereby enhancing institutional buy-in for a transition.
6. Developing concise institutional messages regarding strategic transition prior to starting a change process can better create the need for change and elevate institutional readiness and subsequent receptivity (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993).

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Informed Consent Approval



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

**Identification of Project:**

Presidential Leadership During Strategic Transition: A Case Study of Two Christian Institutions of Higher Education

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this research project is to examine Presidential leadership during the strategic transition of the Board of Trustees at a private, Baptist affiliated institution in North Carolina.

Procedures:

The methodology will involve personal interviews with 17 persons from each of two postsecondary Baptist institutions in the State of North Carolina; Wingate University and Gardner-Webb University. Participants will include each University President, and the following persons from respective institutions: four senior administrators, four faculty members, four students, and four members from each Board of Trustees. Interviews are scheduled for one hour (60 minutes) and will take place at the respective participant's institution. The location of the interview will take place in a private location on the campus to minimize interruptions.

Individual interviews will create opportunity for each participant to elaborate on personal perspectives of the institution President's leadership during the period of strategic transition and to reinforce commentary with examples, when possible. As these stories unfold, the researcher will take copious note, audio record each session, with permission, and then engage in the process of coding the data and interpreting its content. It is expected that selected themes will emerge from the data sets coming from the participants at both institutions. Varied perspectives also might surface and therefore an inductive approach to analysis will be used (Hatch, 2002).

A qualitative approach was selected for this research because it will enable the researcher to better understand and articulate the experiences of Baptist university presidents during a period of strategic transition that resulted with a rejection of their State's Baptist Convention as a controlling element in the ongoing lives of their respective institution. Interviews with the volunteers from each of the four groups of participants will allow for crafting detailed descriptions of personal interactions with their President during the period surrounding the strategic transition process. Also, it will provide a forum for soliciting commentary about how those participants understood other persons to view the



activities of their President. The intent is to cull information from multiple sources, including the progenitor of such activity (the institution President), on what transpired to make the process successful. The findings will be exposed through a process of examination, discussion, and interoperation, and patterns and themes identified by the researcher are expected to illuminate successful presidential leadership in Baptist institutions of higher education (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Merriman, 1998).

Qualitative research gives a researcher an opportunity to dig deeper into a topic and uncover information not commonly exposed by quantitative approaches, because the process allows participants to expand on specific thoughts or ideas and provide examples (Hatch, 2002). This process is especially important in the analysis of presidential leadership because few people have an opportunity to closely examine postsecondary presidents in their daily role, spend one-on-one time with them, their cabinets and trustees, students, or gain access to information regarding a university's plan for strategic implementation of a pivotal change in organizational relationships. This study is expected to reveal presidential leadership during a period of strategic transition by allowing participants to tell their stories of circumstances, messages, processes, and impacts of decisions (Creswell, 1998; Merriman, 1998). Creswell (1998) described the process as a "human experience" and said that a researcher (and reader) can gain greater understanding of complex issues through a qualitative process. It is that kind of understanding that is sought from this study.

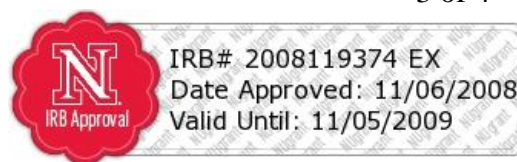
Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Benefits:

The benefit of this study is to provide insight into presidential leadership at a Baptist institution undergoing strategic transition of the Board of Trustees. In addition, this study provides perspectives to how institutions redefine their relationship with denominational conventions. The following are possible benefits from this research project.

1. Church affiliated institutions interested in changing their relationship with their respective board of trustees can gain a greater perspective of the impact presidential leadership.
2. College presidents of church-affiliated institutions can benefit from a case study analysis of presidents currently dealing with altering the process for board selection.
3. Board of trustees can gain insight into how other institution's deal with change and benefit from their success and challenges.

**Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality will be maintained through limiting the contact of key information to only the primary researcher. Upon selection of the volunteers, pseudo names will be assigned to each person and no information divulged to anyone else. Only the respective university Presidents will be identified by name and it will be done with their consent (see the final page of the Informed Consent Form). Audio tapes will be used for verbatim transcription and copious notes taken to augment the data and provide additional researcher perspective and reflection. If a person does not want to be recorded the researcher will take comprehensive notes of the interview to ensure an accurate representation of the data presented. Notes and transcriptions will be re-read to ensure accuracy. The transcription and re-reading process will take place within 24-hours of an interview to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the interview data, and transcriptions will be distributed to respective participants to verify the contents.

The researcher will code the material and summarize the results. An independent and unbiased professional researcher will review 10% of the coded transcripts to ensure accurate identification of key issues. All identifying information from such transcripts will be removed prior to that inter-reliability activity. Only the primary researcher and the secondary researcher (Dr. Sheldon L. Stick, Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln) will have complete access to all tapes and transcripts. To protect confidentiality, the transcripts will be held in the primary researcher's office, in a locked file cabinet as mentioned above, for a year after the study and then destroyed. The audio tapes will be destroyed immediately after transcription is complete.

Although no names will be gathered, the researcher cannot guarantee that individual responses would not be identifiable. Participants will be aware of this. To further support individual confidentiality, a limited number of administrators, students, faculty, and trustees will be interviewed thereby limiting the reader's ability to identify specific participants or attribute comments or data to specific individuals. All results from the research will be reported in a dissertation: *Presidential Leadership During Strategic Transition: A Case Study of Two Christian Institutions of Higher Education*

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may ask questions regarding this research prior to participation and any time during the research process. You may also contact the primary investigator at any time, office phone, (704) 233-8242, or after hours (704) 291-7546. Participants may also contact the secondary investigator, Dr. Shelton Stick by calling 402-472-0973. If have questions that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participating in this focus group interview.

**Freedom to Withdraw:**

Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time. Withdrawal will not adversely impact the participant's relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska, Gardner-Webb University or Wingate University. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this informed consent form to keep.

Signature of Participant:

Signature of Research Participant

Date

_____By checking, I agree to be audio taped

_____By checking, I do not agree to be audio taped

Name and Phone number of investigators(s)

Doug Searcy, M.Ed., Principal Investigator Office: 704-233-8242

Sheldon L. Stick, PhD, Secondary Investigator Office: 402-472-0973

Presidential Identification: By signing below I consent to being identified by name as the President of my institution.

Signature of President

Date



Individual Interview Questions

OPENING

Tell me your name, the department/school/area/ discipline you study within the University.

What do you enjoy most about the University?

BEING BAPTIST

What does being Baptist mean to this campus?

How could a denominational change in relationship impact the University?

TRUSTEES

How does the selection of a Board of Trustees shape institutional identity?

How can a change in this process impact the University?

PRESIDENT LEADERSHIP

How has the action of the President to support a change in relationship with the Baptist State Convention of NC impacted the University?

What key messages (language - words or phrases) are used by the President to frame the institutional transition to establish a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees?

How has the President communicated the key messages regarding the new selection process for the board (change in relationship with the NC Baptist Convention)?

What personal style (mannerisms, stories, or tone) did the President employ to manage multiple constituencies and institutional messages during the transition?

What specific tactic, or methods, exercised by the President were helpful to support an institutional transition?

What were the potential road blocks to the institutional change and how did the President address these?

CLOSING

Suppose you had could talk to the President about establishing change, what would you say? Of everything we have discussed what would you emphasize as the most important?

APPENDIX B

Permission to Conduct Research at Gardner-Webb University



November 5, 2008

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
302 Canfield
Post Office Box 880433
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to grant approval and support for Doug Searcy to conduct research at Gardner-Webb University.

I will be happy to assist in his study and am confident that it will be productive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Frank Bonner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A. Frank Bonner
President

APPENDIX C

Permission to Conduct Research at Wingate University



October 31, 2008

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
302 Canfield
P. O. Box 880433
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written to offer my personal and professional support and approval for Doug Searcy to conduct research at Wingate University. I feel that he has chosen a unique and interesting topic, and I am confident that the results of this research will be helpful to other Chancellors and/or Presidents of institutions who will be facing similar decisions concerning denominational relationships.

I look forward to working with Doug Searcy as part of this project and eagerly await the results of his research.

Sincerely,

Jerry E. McGee
President

JEM:bdm

Office of the President

Campus Box 3055, Wingate, North Carolina 28174-0157 / 704-233-8111 / Fax 704-233-8014

APPENDIX D

Individual Interview Guide

Individual Interview Questions

OPENING

Tell me your name, the department/school/area/ discipline you study within the University.

What do you enjoy most about the University?

BEING BAPTIST

What does being Baptist mean to this campus?

How could a denominational change in relationship impact the University?

TRUSTEES

How does the selection of a Board of Trustees shape institutional identity?

How can a change in this process impact the University?

PRESIDENT LEADERSHIP

How has the action of the President to support a change in relationship with the Baptist State Convention of NC impacted the University?

How did the President communicate the key messages regarding the new selection process for the Board?

What personal style (mannerisms, stories, or tone) did the President employ to manage multiple constituencies and institutional messages during the transition?

What key messages (language - words or phrases) are used by the President to frame the institutional transition to establish a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees?

What specific tactic, or methods, exercised by the President were helpful to support an institutional transition?

What were the potential road blocks to the institutional change and how did the President address these?

CLOSING

Suppose you had could talk to the President about establishing change, what would you say?

Of everything we have discussed what would you emphasize as the most important

APPENDIX E

Wingate University Invitation to Participate



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

October 20, 2008

Dear Colleague,

As a part of my doctoral dissertation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am conducting a case study analysis among members of the senior leadership, Board of Trustee, faculty, student, and staff leadership at Wingate University. The focus of the study is to examine presidential leadership during the institutional change in relationship with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina as evidenced by the new selection process for the Board of Trustees. Institutional strategic change of this nature can shift the long-term financial viability of an institution as well as its programs and services. Leadership during such change inevitably leaves indelible marks on process and outcomes. Presidential decisions, characteristics demonstrated, and communication shared during strategic change will offer a distinct view of leadership.

The study of presidential leadership during transition of the Board of Trustees is important, because trustees have oversight of the institutions therefore decisions of the Board can immediately shift institutional direction or structure making long lasting impact. Due to the powerful role a board can play, developing the Board composition is an essential duty for the president in a private institution. Ensuring a broad, diverse perspective within the composition of the Board is helpful to stimulate growth and development while supporting the institutional mission, vision, and values. Baptist institutions and their presidents who consider a change in relationship with their respective conventions can benefit from this study. This research has been approved by the President of Wingate University and the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska Lincoln.

Data for this research will be collected from respective volunteering participants during a 60-minute interview occurring during the next several months. Questions regarding presidential leadership and institutional transition will be asked in open-ended format. The comments you provide during these interviews will be strictly confidential. Any identifying material will be omitted or altered to preserve anonymity for any future use of the data. Importantly, you need to realize that despite all efforts to ensure anonymity there is a small chance that some remarks reported to the professional community might be viewed as originating from a particular person. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. More information regarding your rights as a participant is included on the attached form. To participate, please sign the attached informed consent form and return it to me by October 27th.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that has not been answered, you may contact me at (704) 233-8242. Furthermore, you may contact my advisor and secondary investigator, Dr. Sheldon Stick in the College of Education and Human Sciences, at 402-472-3392.

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Doug Searcy, Ph.D. Candidate,
University of Nebraska Lincoln
Home Telephone: 704-291-7546
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board: 704-402-312

APPENDIX F

Gardner-Webb University Invitation to Participate



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

October 20, 2008

Dear Colleague,

As a part of my doctoral dissertation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am conducting a case study analysis among members of the senior leadership, Board of Trustee, faculty, student, and staff leadership at Gardner-Webb University. The focus of the study is to examine presidential leadership during the institutional change in relationship with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina as evidenced by the new selection process for the Board of Trustees. Institutional strategic change of this nature can shift the long-term financial viability of an institution as well as its programs and services. Leadership during such change inevitably leaves indelible marks on process and outcomes. Presidential decisions, characteristics demonstrated, and communication shared during strategic change will offer a distinct view of leadership.

The study of presidential leadership during transition of the Board of Trustees is important, because trustees have oversight of the institutions therefore decisions of the Board can immediately shift institutional direction or structure making long lasting impact. Due to the powerful role a board can play, developing the Board composition is an essential duty for the president in a private institution. Ensuring a broad, diverse perspective within the composition of the Board is helpful to stimulate institutional growth and development while supporting the institutional mission, vision, and values. Baptist institutions and their presidents who consider a change in relationship with their respective conventions can benefit from this study. This research has been approved by the President of Gardner-Webb University and the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska Lincoln.

Data for this research will be collected from respective volunteering participants during a 60-minute interview occurring during the next several months. Questions regarding presidential leadership and institutional transition will be asked in open-ended format. The comments you provide during these interviews will be strictly confidential. Any identifying material will be omitted or altered to preserve anonymity for any future use of the data. Importantly, you need to realize that despite all efforts to ensure anonymity there is a small chance that some remarks reported to the professional community might be viewed as originating from a particular person. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. More information regarding your rights as a participant is included on the attached form. To participate, please sign the enclosed informed consent form and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that has not been answered, you may contact me at (704) 233-8242. Furthermore, you may contact my advisor and secondary investigator, Dr. Sheldon Stick in the College of Education and Human Sciences, at 402-472-3392. Attached to this letter you will find an informed consent form. Please complete this form and return it by October 24th.

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Doug Searcy, Ph.D. Candidate,
University of Nebraska Lincoln
Home Telephone: 704-291-7546
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board: 704-402-3123

APPENDIX G

Strategic Transition Guide Questionnaire

Strategic Transition Guide Questionnaire

RELATIONSHIP

1. To what degree does the university want to maintain a relationship with the denominational entity?
 - a. What mission perspective, value orientation, historical perspective, or resource objective are involved with maintaining the relationship?
 - b. How would these factors be shifted given a change in relationship?
 - c. Can the institution articulate mutually beneficial components to the relationship and/or potential change in relationship?
2. What is the president's relationship with the convention?
 - a. What key contacts and entities are positioned to support the dialogue about a future relationships transition?
 - b. What experience does the president have with denominational affiliation and transitions?
3. What is the presidential relationship with internal constituencies (faculty, students, administration) and external constituencies (parents, trustees, community, media) regarding a shift in relationship?
 - a. Is there adequate institutional support and readiness for such a change?
 - b. What relationships need additional support or communication to initiate a transition to a self-perpetuating board?

VISION

1. Is there a clear institutional vision for strategic change in the selection process of the board of trustees?

- a. Have benefits and challenges been identified?
 - b. Is there positive energy to support and address these issues moving into strategic transition?
- 2. Does the institutional vision articulate broad perspectives pertinent to altering the board selection process?
 - a. How are issues of faith affiliation addressed within the vision?
 - b. What components of the transition illustrate an institutional financial benefit?
 - c. How can institutional potential be increased or leveraged through transition?
 - d. How can student growth and development be enhanced through strategic transition?

COMMUNICATION

- 1. What are the key messages that must be communicated to support institutional transition?
 - a. What are the essential voices within the institution that must be considered when developing the key messages?
 - b. How can varying points of view be included to support a large institutional perspective without excessive, specialized points of communication?
- 2. What structures can be put in place to demonstrate transparency and support shared information?
 - a. Are students sufficiently included in the process?

- b. What cultural norms must be considered when establishing communication patterns?
 - c. How can key opinion-makers be included in informal communication processes?
- 3. Does leadership share a conviction that moving the relationship is important to institutional advancement?
 - a. How does this conviction balance with institutional efforts to support denominational entities?
 - b. How can presidential conviction be communicated and leveraged to support institutional progress?