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Keeping the Faith: The Organizational Saga of Anderson University from 1995-2015

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KEEPING THE FAITH: THE ORGANIZATIONAL SAGA OF ANDERSON UNIVERSITY
FROM 1995-2015

by

Mark Hughes

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
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Under the Supervision of Professor Dr. Brent Cejda

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KEEPING THE FAITH: THE ORGANIZATIONAL SAGA OF ANDERSON
UNIVERSITY FROM 1995-2015

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Abstract

This case study tells the story of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015. During this period, Anderson transitioned from a 2-year college to a 4-year university. The institution made this transition to remain viable and went through a period of decline because of the high costs associated with becoming a senior institution. After a leadership change, a period of stabilization occurred which set the stage for an evolutionary leader who determined the institution was ready for change. As an experienced strategic planner, this evolutionary leader engaged the faculty in the process of strategic planning which achieved their buy-in to develop the first 10-year strategic plan in the institution's history. This process incorporated the systematic approach of the hedgehog concept, resulting in an expansion of the institution to provide the necessary resources to enable the accomplishment of virtually all of the strategic initiatives related to the respective pillars: (a) great academics, (b) great faith, (c) great hospitality, and (d) great purpose, as identified in the strategic plan. The saga of Anderson was not so much the realization of the plan, rather it was the process of going through the planning process, identifying aspirations for the institution, reaching consensus on the pillars, and then developing an economic engine that provided the necessary resources. The intentionality of the planning process allowed for the creation of the economic engine that funded the initiatives, as indicated by the elements of the strategic plan that were accomplished. Specifically, this

study is significant to individuals who are interested in institutions that were founded by faith-based organizations and that strive to maintain a faith-based identity. In addition, the study is significant to researchers interested in colleges and universities as organizations as it uses organizational saga as a framework to study higher education institutions. During the time period for this study, a number of faith-based institutions struggled or even closed, while Anderson University successfully expanded degree opportunities, experienced substantial enrollment and endowment growth, and earned recognition at regional and national levels.

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

One of the unique aspects of American higher education is the diversity of the types of postsecondary institutions. Eckel and King (2007) pointed to the Jeffersonian ideals of limited government and freedom of expression as a major influence that resulted in states, religious communities, and individuals establishing and maintaining a wide range of higher education institutions. One example of this diversity is the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2017), which lists seven institutional types in its basic classifications.

For the purposes of this case study, faith-based institutions are defined as, “the presence of church-sponsored institutions of higher education, which include theological colleges, religious halls, seminaries and church colleges of higher education which represent Christian-based institutions” (Arthur, 2001, p. 137).

In the current higher educational environment, a majority of institutions are struggling to maintain their missions and identities. Andringa (2007) pointed out that most faith-based institutions are rooted in the liberal arts: “Maintaining this commitment to the liberal arts is a challenge for most religiously affiliated colleges as they position and brand themselves for today’s career-minded students” (p. 4). Bailey and Morest (2004) pointed out economic and sociological criticisms of the comprehensive mission of community colleges. Batman (2013) examined the challenges land-grant universities face in terms of the mission of providing access to the citizens of their respective states “amidst a troublesome economy, changing political landscape, and unprecedented demands on institutional resources” (p. 1).

Anderson University (2018e) in Anderson, South Carolina, has described itself as a Christian institution sponsored by the South Carolina Baptist Convention and has indicated that Christ-centered activities are an important facet of campus life. House (2003) conveyed, “Evangelical Christian colleges have had a unique role in the development of higher education in America and in producing Christian leadership for the world” (p. 480). House stated, “These institutions have sought to educate and train leaders not only by transmitting knowledge and skills but also by attempting to instill moral character, integrity, and responsibility in their students” (p. 482). Leaders of faith-based institutions seek to educate according to their Christian identities and, consequently, recognize and value the integration of faith and learning. House went on to say, “The evangelical Christian liberal arts college is especially adapted to create a context for educating the whole person. Christian colleges have a unique heritage, a clear purpose, a distinct identity, and a bright future” (p. 484).

Andringa (2007) explained among the 800 faith-based institutions in the United States, the overwhelming majority do not have substantial endowments and are tuition dependent to operate in the black. Andringa (2007) further elaborated on governmental, societal, and economic challenges to maintaining this unique sector of higher education. Rivard (2013) pointed out small colleges have been on the edge of sustainability for decades. Rivard (2013) went on to say recent disruptive events in higher education have led educational leaders to conclude that it is a time for institutions to restructure, transform, or consider new funding models. Brown (2011) wrote that since the economic recession of 2008, small, private colleges have faced several challenges, including little to no return on endowments, reductions in philanthropic support, escalating overhead

costs, competition for students, families in need of additional financial aid, and growing public concern for the value of higher education. Dire predictions for higher education, paralleling the downturn in the financial markets, have been made given that “schools are over-leveraged, liabilities are increasing, liquidity is drying up, costs continue to climb, and the product is increasingly unaffordable and of questionable value in the marketplace, and income is declining” (Taylor, 2010, p. 5).

The various demographic, economic, and financial challenges pressing on colleges that have historically been operating on slim margins are warning signals that more institutions face possible closure or need a turnaround. Many of these challenges impact the ability of faith-based institutions to maintain their distinct identities. However, one institution—Anderson University—which described itself as having a Christian identity, flourished while many, as stated previously, have struggled.

Purpose of the Study

Colleges and universities have been studied as organizations in a number of ways. According to Birnbaum (1988):

Practitioners or analysts who typically view an institution through the lens of a bureaucratic, collegial, political, or symbolic system are likely to see different organizational environments, select different elements as important or unimportant, and come to different conclusions about cause and effect. (p. 201)

Birnbaum (2000) also stated, “Learning how colleges and universities work requires seeing them as organizations, as systems, and as inventions” (p. 1). Common objectives enable people to function in their proper roles and work together in a formal social structure. When they are viewed as systems, structure and the roles that are played have

less significance. According to Birnbaum (2000), “American colleges and universities are the most paradoxical of organizations” (p. 3). They are one of the largest enterprises in the nation but are not well managed and, in some respects, are the least business-like. On a positive note, these institutions exhibit diversity, access, and strong quality standards. Because the higher education system in the United States is envied by most countries around the world, many foreign students come to U.S. institutions to study. The higher education system is considered paradoxical because it is poorly run yet quite effective. Many businesses are struggling to compete internationally because of out-of-balance trade, but this is not the case in higher education with so many students desiring to study in the United States; “business” has never been better.

One of the more common approaches to studying higher education as an organization is Clark’s (1972) organizational saga, which was used as the framework for this study and is explained in detail in the following section. Clark (1972) defined an organizational saga as “an expression of a unified set of beliefs about an organization by its members that emerges from the organization’s history about some unique accomplishment, characteristic, or circumstance and is held with conviction” (p. 183).

The purpose of this case study was to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015. Since 1995, Anderson expanded its academic offerings to become a comprehensive university, offering bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees on campus and online. To enable this broadening of the academic enterprise, the physical plant of the main campus also expanded. Anderson’s enrollment and the endowment also dramatically increased. Recently, Anderson was ranked as one

of the best regional universities in the South by both *U.S. News and World Report* and *The Princeton Review*.

Conceptual Framework

Burton Clark's (1972) organizational saga served as the conceptual framework of this study. Clark's (1972) organizational saga "presents some rational explanation of how certain means lead to certain ends, but it also includes affect that turns a formal place in to a beloved institution, to which participants may be passionately devoted" (p. 178). Taking the time to learn the various sagas of an institution leads to a better understanding of the foundational premises and the culture and values that are expressed through the life of the university. To illustrate the framework, Clark (1972) drew on his research of three liberal arts colleges—Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore—and distinguished there are two stages in the development of an organizational saga. The first stage is initiation, which "takes place under varying conditions and occurs in a relatively short period of time; fulfillment is related to the features of an organization that are enduring and more predictable" (Clark, 1972, p. 180). Clark (1972), a sociologist who studied higher education and other institutions, referred to the long-standing characteristics that determine the distinctiveness of an organization as forming an "organizational saga." As Clark (1972) conveyed:

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 images 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. (p. 235)

Central Question

For this study, the central research question was to explore Anderson University's organizational saga from 1995 to 2015: How can the organizational saga of Anderson University between 1995 and 2015 be described and defined?

The concept of organizational saga includes two distinct stages. To answer the central research question, two subquestions were developed to consider these respective stages of an organizational saga:

- To consider the initiation stage of the organizational saga, why did Anderson University undertake steps leading to significant organizational change/transformation?
- To consider the fulfillment stage of the organizational saga, how have faculty, students, and alumni adopted the values and traditions that represent the current sense of organizational belonging at Anderson University?

Introduction of Methodology

A qualitative approach was used for this study. There is no doubt that Anderson had flourished in terms of rankings, campus and enrollment size, additions and improvements of facilities, and expansion of academic programs. This study sought to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015, a question best answered through a content-rich, in-depth qualitative analysis. The specific qualitative methodology was a case study. The case study method was appropriate as

these types of studies contain a defined boundary of a single institution and the contextualized contemporary phenomenon was investigated (Hatch, 2002). Case studies are the preferred strategy when how or why questions are asked. Creswell (2007) pointed out, while case study research may be established among the number of qualitative research choices, the case study method is not just a type of qualitative research but also a pattern that may include a variety of forms of evidence. The vast majority of data for this study was collected and analyzed through this qualitative approach in which a holistic understanding of the single case under investigation was gained through multiple sources of data (Yin, 2009).

Definitions of Terms

Mission statement: The goal of a university mission statement is to clearly define its identity, goals, and culture so that it operates efficiently and can easily present to the outside world (Ehrlich, 2000). Mission statements define an organization and guide both daily operations and long term aspirations (Emery, 1996; Wright, 2002).

Faith-based institution: “The presence of church-sponsored institutions of higher education, which include theological colleges, religious halls, seminaries and church colleges of higher education which represent Christian-based institutions” (Arthur, 2001, p. 137).

Southern Baptist Convention: “The purpose of the Southern Baptist Convention is eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the Baptist denomination of Christians, for the propagation of the gospel, any law, usage, or custom to the contrary notwithstanding and the mission statement is as a convention of churches, our missional

vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations” (Southern Baptist Convention, 2018).

Christian universities: Litfin (2004) suggested there are two different ways Christian universities have defined themselves. One way offers a Christian umbrella under which a diverse range of voices can be expressed as long as they reflect and support the broad educational mission of the school. The second way offers “to make Christian thinking systemic throughout the institution, root, branch, and leaf” (Litfin, 2004, p. 98).

Organizational saga: “An organizational saga is a collective understanding of a unique accomplishment based on historical exploits of a formal organization, offering strong normative bonds in and outside the organization” (Clark, 1972, p. 178).

Carnegie classification: The origin of the Carnegie Classification was for research-driven purposes. However, “now it is commonly used by institutional personnel, state systems, foundations, membership organizations, news magazines, and others, it is so highly institutionalized that it is often invoked without explanation or rationale” (McCormick & Zhao, 2005, p. 54). While this system has merit in assisting institutions, it is not perfect.

Administrative environment: “Rationality assumes that the purpose of decision making is to create outcomes that maximize the values of the decision maker” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 57). Usually, rational administrators weigh all alternatives and consider the consequences for particular decisions, then select what they believe is the best solution to the problem. Birnbaum stated, “All but the simplest decisions have many

alternative outcomes, each of which requires trade-offs between competing values” (p. 58).

Assumptions

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) pointed out, “Assumptions are so basic that, without them, the research problem itself could not exist” (p. 62). The most fundamental assumption of this study was that the viability of faith-based higher education institutions would continue to be of question to individuals interested in higher education in general and in faith-based institutions specifically. Secondary assumptions of the study were centered on the data included in the analysis. Because this study included personal interviews, it is assumed participants answered truthfully and represented accurately the aspects of the organizational saga of the institution. A final assumption is that the framework of organizational saga would enable me to examine both involved individuals (actors) and events (action).

Delimitations

A primary delimitation of this study was the inclusion of a single institution in the case study. Rather than researching several institutions, which would have produced limited results, the examination of one institution, Anderson University, allowed for a more in-depth analysis. Although not generalizable, the findings should be of interest to leaders of other faith-based institutions. A secondary delimitation was the choice of organizational saga as the framework. The framework was designed to examine the organization and not the individuals who were members of the organization. The purpose of the study was to look at organizational functioning and not the perceptions of individuals about their preferences, likes, or dislikes.

Limitations

As a qualitative case study, the findings of this study are not generalizable. The study was bounded by a time frame. As such, conditions that impacted the identity of the institution were limited to internal and external conditions that existed during a specific time frame. The study provided insight to a challenge reported by many faith-based institutions. The conditions during the time frame included in this study continue, challenges to the broader purpose of educating the whole person continues and is projected to remain a concern during the coming decade.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to higher education scholars who are interested in the diversity of higher education institutions in the United States. Specifically, this study is relevant to individuals who are interested in colleges and universities that were founded by faith-based organizations and that strive to maintain a faith-based identity. In addition, the study is significant to researchers interested in colleges and universities as organizations as it uses organizational saga as a framework to study higher education institutions.

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

Creswell (2008) defined a literature review as “a written summary of journal articles, books, and other documents that describes the past and current state of information, organizes the literature into topics; and documents a need for the proposed study” (p. 89). The purpose of this study was to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015. This literature review was organized around this purpose and presented in two broad sections.

One of the characteristics of higher education in the United States is diversity among types of institutions (Eckel & King, 2007). The first section of the literature review begins with an overview of the various types of higher education institutions in the United States. The purpose of this section was to review the literature that specifically addressed faith-based institutions as a distinct type or institutional identity. Eckel and King (2007) pointed out the concept of higher education as a marketplace has challenged the fundamental characteristics that have shaped U.S. higher education. An overview of institutional mission and a review of literature related to Christian colleges maintaining linkages to their original religious denominations and missions concludes this section.

Birnbaum (1988) stressed the importance of viewing colleges and universities as organizations, systems, and inventions. The second section of the literature review focused on two of these three components—colleges and universities as organizations, and, then as inventions. This section starts with a review of the literature on the culture of higher education organizations, an examination of “what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it” (Tierney, 1988, p. 3). The organizational saga concept (Clark, 1972) is then reviewed, as it served as the framework for this study. An overview of

research incorporating the organizational saga immediately follows and the second section concludes with an incorporation of the organizational saga concept in the study of faith-based institutions.

Higher Education in the United States

The U.S. Department of Education (as cited in Eckel & King, 2007) has identified 6,500 postsecondary institutions that have participated in federal financial aid programs. One of the most recognized means of understanding the diversity of institutional types in these 6,500 institutions is the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education was established to examine and “make recommendations regarding the major issues facing U.S. higher education” (McCormick & Zhao, 2005, p. 51).

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education developed its classification of colleges and universities in 1970. The classifications were first published in 1973 and subsequently updated to reflect changes among colleges and universities. Derived from empirical data on colleges and universities, the purpose of the classifications were to support the commission’s program of research and policy analysis. The basic classifications organized institutions into the following seven categories: (a) doctoral universities, (b) master’s colleges and universities, (c) baccalaureate colleges, (d) baccalaureate/associate’s colleges, (e) associate’s colleges, (f) special focus institutions, and (g) tribal colleges (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2017a).

Anderson University in Anderson, South Carolina, is listed as a master’s college and university in the Carnegie Foundations Basic Classification of Institutions of Higher

Education. The description of that category indicates that such institutions “award at least 50 master’s degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees” (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2017b). Anderson has described itself on its website and promotional materials as a “Christian institution sponsored by the South Carolina Baptist Convention” and has indicated “Christ-centered activities are an important facet of campus life” (Anderson University, 2018).

Faith-Based Institutions

This study considered private, faith-based higher education institutions as a specific type of institution of higher education and defined *faith-based institutions* as: “church-sponsored institutions of higher education, which include theological colleges, religious halls, seminaries and church colleges of higher education which represent Christian-based institutions” (Arthur, 2001, p. 137).

Hughes and Adrian (2002) argued Christian higher education institutions can foster their faith commitments and advance into higher education institutions that are first rate. They contended an institution’s status as faith-based does not mean it has to be second rate. A Christian commitment and academic programs can coexist and create faith-based educational institutions of the first order. Seven different faith traditions (i.e., Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Mennonite, Evangelical/Interdenominational, Wesleyan/Holiness, and Baptist/Restorationist) were included in their review. Initially, many of these institutions offered baccalaureate degrees and, eventually, broadened their scope and vision, academically and religiously, to offer advanced degrees of study. They have also tried to connect academic programs to their faith-based missions. Over time, faith-based institutions have matured into comprehensive universities with a strong

commitment to excellence. These faith-based institutions have been intentional about relating their faith to the community around them. Since many of their faith-based counterparts have struggled with mediocrity and have been focused on avoiding a “slippery slope” of some type, these institutions, instead, have focused their priorities on outreach programs that reflect their core values and deepen their faith-based missions. Examples of outreach programs are education majors tutoring students to read, business majors offering leadership opportunities for at-risk youth, and music majors teaching students in local schools to read music and offering them voice lessons.

In *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, historian Mark Noll described the decline of Evangelical thought (Noll, 1994). Noll (1994) pointed out some religious traditions promote the life of the mind more (or less) than others. Some faith-based higher education institutions are very active in outreach and service but not particularly reflective about their Christian orientations. At institutions where faculty and students have been highly engaged in outreach and service, Noll claimed little time has been spent on examining the core Christian values and commitments in which the outreach and service should be grounded. In spite of growing wealth, political influence, and educational achievement, Noll argued Evangelicals have contributed little to first-order public discourse in the academy. Noll also pointed to the false disjunctions that often characterize their world views:

To make room for Christian thought, evangelicals must also abandon the false disjunctions. The cultivation of the mind for Christian reasons does not deny the appropriateness of activism, for example, but it does require activism to make room for study. (p. 245)

A sectarian strategy on the other hand, Noll (1994) suggested, has its limits.

In *Quality with Soul*, Benne (2001) considered how six premier institutions of higher education keep the faith with their religious traditions. The institutions were: (a) Calvin College, which is a reformed college; (b) Wheaton College, affiliated with the evangelical tradition; (c) St. Olaf College and (d) Valparaiso University, which represent two different Lutheran churches; (e) the University of Notre Dame, which is a Catholic institution; and (f) Baylor University, associated with the Southern Baptist denomination. Benne (2001) asked the question “What are the essentials in maintaining a strong connection with each school’s sponsoring religious heritage, one in which the vision and ethos of that heritage are publicly relevant to all aspects of the school’s life?” (p. 179). Benne (2001) concluded, “The careful attention given to persons, ethos, and vision has made our six schools identifiably Christian in all the major facets of their lives” (p. 206) and identified 14 areas a faith-based institution of higher education needs to consider to maintain their religious heritage (see Figure 1).

Benne (2001) explained there are three components of Christian tradition and pointed out the components must be publicly relevant. These components are (a) vision, (b) ethos, and (c) the Christian individuals who embody that vision and ethos. Benne wrote, “Vision is Christianity’s articulated account of reality. It is a comprehensive account encompassing all of life; it provides the umbrella of meaning under which all facets of

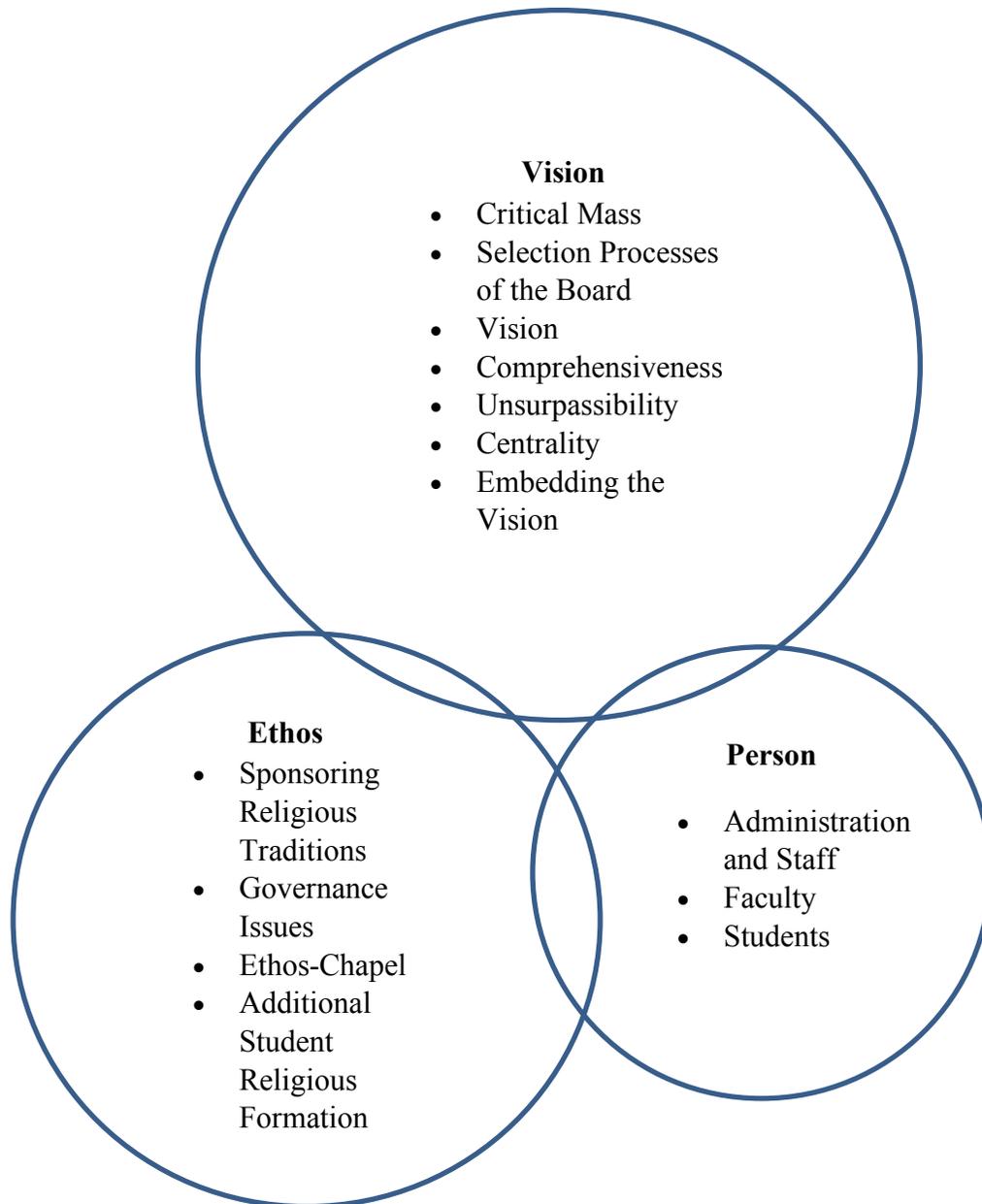


Figure 1. Three components of Christian tradition.

life and learning are gathered and interpreted” (pp. 6-7). According to Benne, Christian vision is unsurpassable, meaning there is not a better account, and, for most Christians, its central core stands the test of time. Benne continued by saying it represents truth to the believer. This is significant because the Christian story must be paramount over any other account of life. If that is not the case, then the believer does not feel they can justifiably

claim to be a Christian. Benne also pointed out Christian vision is a central component of life.

Benne (2001) referenced the significance of these three components in an institution's religious tradition and highlighted they must be genuine in the lives of the people and in the daily culture of these Christian institutions. Benne conveyed the vision must be pertinent in the academic life of the institution and provide theoretical justification and direction for the ethos. According to Benne, "The ethos of the tradition must in some relevant way condition and affect the life of the college or university. And persons who bear the vision and the ethos must participate influentially in the life of the school" (p. 8). Benne also explained some individuals connected to the institution may not be participants in the tradition, but they can still know, value, honor, respect, and even continue the tradition.

Benne (2001) stressed, however, that it is probably impossible for Christian institutions of higher education to place attention on all of the items included in Figure 1. Benne emphasized the importance of continued efforts in all of the broader categories, and suggested institutions strive to place attention on as many of the areas as possible.

Institutional Mission and the Christian University

Mission creep was a phenomenon in higher education during the 1990s. Morpew (2002) found, "Since 1990, more than 120 public and private 4-year colleges have changed their names and become universities" (p. 1). One reason for this change is that institutions have tried to align themselves with the student market and become more comprehensive. Subsequently, "the trend of moving away from the liberal arts college model to the comprehensive university model may indicate that colleges are adapting to

demands for new academic programs, innovative curricula, or new delivery methods” (Morphew, 2002, p. 2). Keim (2000) suggested studies by Marsden and Burtchaell “put the fear of God into church-related colleges and universities” (p. 264), stressing the confluence of history, economics, the changing demographics of constituents, and the forces of secularization have eroded the distinctiveness of Christian institutions.

A review of the literature on Christian higher education institutions identified three primary works that focus on institutional mission: (a) Burtchaell’s (1998) *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities From Their Christian Churches*, (b) Marsden’s (1994) *The Soul of the American University*, and (c) Benne’s (2001) *Quality With Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith With Their Religious Traditions*.

Burtchaell (1998) examined the disengagement of Christian colleges from their denominational affiliations and original missions through a multiple case study approach. He identified 17 institutions representing a range of theological origins:

- Congregationalist: Dartmouth College and Beloit College
- Presbyterian: Lafayette College and Davidson College
- Methodist: Millsaps College and Ohio Wesleyan University
- Baptist: Wake Forest University, Virginia Union University, and Linfield College
- Lutheran: Gettysburg College, St. Olaf College, and Concordia University
- Catholic: Boston College, The College of New Rochelle, and Saint Mary’s College of California
- Evangelical: Azusa Pacific University and Dordt College

Burtchaell (1998) identified a number of reasons leading to the disengagement of faith-based institutions of higher education from their religious traditions. A primary reason has been funding. Where once churches provided significant financial support to institutions affiliated with their faith, alumni, foundations, philanthropists, and state and federal governments began providing greater percentages of financial resources. A second reason has been the various constituencies and agencies involved increased calls for accountability. These include funding entities and approval and accreditation requirements from state, regional, and federal agencies and specialized accreditations for specific credentialing.

The faculty and administration of faith-based institutions have also contributed to the declining emphasis of the religious focus, according to Burtchaell (1998). Presidents have allowed institutions to follow a market-oriented approach, often following the leads of innovative or entrepreneurial institutions not founded by faith-based entities. Faculty allegiance has shifted from loyalty to the institution to loyalty to their academic discipline.

Finally, Burtchaell (1998) pointed to the gradual separation between the academy and the church. Burtchaell argued religious life has become increasingly foreign to faith-based institutions, referencing surveys that have identified the significance that religion has in terms of impact on college students' lives has greatly diminished over time; this is also true at faith-based institutions. According to Burtchaell, religion is viewed outside the limits of intellectual articulation and, consequently, is only marginally significant in human life. Faith-based institutions have lost their abilities to challenge secular culture because of this phenomenon.

Historian George Marsden (1994) described *The Soul of the American University* as a study that focused on the review of universities in the United States through the lens of religion. Marsden's work examined the nature of higher education through the founding fathers of universities in the late 19th century. Marsden conveyed many higher education leaders were Evangelical Protestants, so early colleges were organized based on these religious traditions. Many of the early Evangelical Protestant institutions were led by presidents who were also members of the clergy (e.g., Henry Dunster, the first President of Harvard University, and Thomas Clap, the first President of Yale University).

Marsden's study revealed the secularization of these early institutions in the United States and the disestablishment of religion from them. Marsden (1994) called this secularization a paradox because the university system in the United States was built upon the foundation of evangelical Protestant colleges. He explained, by the 1920s, these colleges had become "conspicuously inhospitable to the letter of such evangelism" (p. 4). In the years to follow:

The paradox turned into an irony in that liberal Protestantism eventually turned against the Protestant establishment, and our nation's leading universities ended up excluding any religious influence, except as chaplaincies or divinity schools, both perceived as no longer a part of the core business of the academy. (Marsden, 1994, p. 4)

According to Marsden (1994), the two questions asked of Christian college presidents became, (a) "Are you still Christian?" and (b) "Are you keeping the faith?" Marsden found many higher education leaders were not cognizant, had become

complacent, or had concluded it was inevitable for the slippery slope of secularization and the subsequent disestablishment of religion from these institutions. Burtchaell (1998) identified a disengagement of higher education institutions from their church-sponsored denominations and their founding missions. Marsden (1994) went further and contended U.S. universities had disestablished themselves completely from their original faith-based linkages. Benne (2001) considered both viewpoints in continuing the discussion of mission in the context of Christian higher education institutions.

Benne (2001) referenced Burtchaell's (1998) earlier work and expressed in detail the secularization of Christian higher education. As discussed earlier, Burtchaell talked about 17 institutions from seven different traditions that the author believed had strayed from their original Christian missions. In *Quality With Soul*, Benne (2001) considered how six premier institutions of higher education have kept the faith with their religious traditions. Again, the institutions were (a) Calvin, which is a reformed college; (b) Wheaton, affiliated with the evangelical tradition; (c) St. Olaf and (d) Valparaiso, which represent two different Lutheran churches; (e) Notre Dame, which is a Catholic institution; and (f) Baylor, associated with the Southern Baptist denomination.

Benne (2001) agreed with Burtchaell's (1998) basic premise that most Christian institutions have fallen away from their original purpose. Benne disagreed, however, with Burtchaell's conclusion that the majority of these institutions had strayed too far to come back to their original missions and suggested a continuum between an institution that has been completely secularized and an institution that is committed to their faith-based tradition. Benne suggested institutions in the boundaries of this continuum should be given credit for attempting to reconnect their relationship with the sponsoring church

affiliation and proposed strategies for making the relationship stronger. Contrary to Burtchaell's more pessimistic viewpoint of the point of no return, Benne conveyed a more positive view to reestablish faith-based traditions.

Burtchaell (1998) pointed to the rise of the disciplines as a reason for the disconnection between the institution and the founding faith-based tradition. Benne (2001) emphasized, "Christian college faculty members have usually been trained in graduate schools that reflect the Enlightenment paradigm" (p. 62). Benne stressed that although some professors in training become "secularized," they were nonetheless hired to guard the theological center in Christian institutions. Benne also criticized the failure of faith-based institutions to articulate an adequate theological identity and mission.

Benne (2001) continued Marsden's (1994) discussion of the early days of U.S. higher education and pointed to premier institutions such as Harvard University, Yale University, and Princeton University and their founding by church-related organizations. Benne also referenced the link between a number of public and land-grant institutions to the practices of Protestant denominations, such as mandatory chapel attendance. Benne conveyed:

All have gradually moved through several phases: first, making education "nonsectarian" by identifying with a general, generic Christianity; then by appeal to spiritual and moral ideals of a vaguely religious or patriotic case; and finally by the exclusion of specially Christian religious values and practices in the name of allegedly universal intellectual, moral, and democratic qualities. (p. 4)

According to Benne (2001), Christian institutions needed to pay close attention to their public relevance and the central activities of the college (e.g., dedicated time allotted

in the academic calendar for Chapel services, counseling services are coordinated by Christian counselors, and general core courses, such as Old and New Testament, are required for graduation). Benne connected the Christian heritage of faith-based institutions to their public relevance because this is vital to their long-term sustainability as fully committed Christian institutions. This connection was essential because if public relevance was waning over time, the chances of the Christian heritage becoming nonexistent increase substantially. Even institutions where secularization has transpired can experience a decline in their public relevance and find the influence of the sponsoring body to be diminished in their budget priorities, strategic decisions, and events. These faith-based institutions have been influenced to a diminished degree by the sponsoring denomination's vision and ethos. Consequently, the people must keep the vision and ethos in the forefront of the institution's central activities, otherwise the relationship with the sponsoring body will not endure. Benne pointed out that if secularization continues, the legacy of the institution will be downgraded and eventually disappear, except when it is mentioned in the history of the institution's early years.

Organizational Culture in Higher Education

Maassen (1996) pointed out the concept of culture has been used to study the effectiveness of higher education institutions. Maassen (1996) said, "Since the early 1960's the concept of culture has gradually gained a prominent place in a number of social sciences, like organizational theory and management studies, other than its parent discipline, anthropology" (p. 153). Kuh and Whitt (1988) defined *culture* in higher education as:

the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus. (p. 153)

This definition has an emphasis on normative influences on behavior and the underlying system of assumptions and beliefs shared by culture bearers. A review of the literature yielded three works on organizational culture in higher education that are consistently referenced in scholarly work.

Robert Birnbaum's (1988) *How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership* has inspired and directed college administrators in improving their work and thinking about what they do from various perspectives. Birnbaum's work was related to culture based on the models of institutions he presented which showed the difference between institutions of higher education. Birnbaum accomplished this by using case studies of five fictitious institutions. He reviewed higher education administration by presenting how multidisciplinary management theories answer—or do not answer—the unique challenges of an institution. According to Birnbaum, an optimally run institution is led by college administrators who determine certain organizational structures or patterns, such as the language they use in the work setting. For example, the administrators of an institution who have an inferiority complex tend to weave that language into their institutional conversations such as, “When we’re good enough, when we get to that level, we do not want to build residence halls we cannot fill up.” These patterns or structures follow administrators as they lead and, over time, they create new patterns when situations arise that they have not yet encountered.

Birnbaum's book is divided into three parts: (a) the first part described concepts that define higher education institutions; (b) the second section reflects the models used to illuminate the organization and management of higher education (e.g., collegial, bureaucracy, political system and anarchical); and (c) the third part combines the models and includes the contention that an institution is continuously reinvented and established through structures and patterns.

Birnbaum (1988) identified consensus in decision making as a key attribute of the collegial model of higher education. *Collegial organizations* value individuals and their expertise, but they are structured to prevent one person from having ultimate decision-making authority. Therefore, the collegial model was designed to provide everyone the opportunity to participate in discussion and debate issues and decisions. Typically, major decisions in institutions are made by the entire group. This model's major weakness is that because no individual has the decision-making authority for guidance on future direction, critical issues can be challenging to resolve.

Birnbaum (1988) pointed out, in a *bureaucratic-model*, administrators are viewed as cogs in the wheel. Each department in these organizations defines boundaries and exists with written purposes. Job descriptions are used to create structures needed to achieve the purposes of the individual units in the institution. This type of model shows the valuing of process management principles and fosters a continuous improvement culture designed to increase efficiency by reducing redundancy. The leadership comes from the top, is evident throughout the organization, and causes the culture to be more authoritative than democratic. One of the major weaknesses of this model is that the processes are sometimes not clear enough, which leads to overlaps of the authoritative

management style. This creates a culture of significant issues falling through the cracks because individuals in units do not see it as their jobs to interpret who is responsible for the work.

Birnbaum (1988) explained the *political model* is similar to the bureaucratic model because units are organized into smaller departments. The two models are differentiated by how the individual units work in the institution as a whole. Groups in the units have different goals for the political model, as individuals compete with each other for what is at stake. The philosophy of this model is political because it has a focus on personal relationships senior leaders have with the groups throughout the institution. For example, resource allocation is often determined based on relationships leaders have in the organization, rather than policies to govern this process. Consensus is often achieved through personal relationships, so this type of culture promotes the “good old boy” system for making decisions and influences the strategies developed for where the organization would go in the future.

According to Birnbaum (1988), the *anarchical model* does not have a central authoritative figure, so individuals throughout the institution have greater autonomy. The major strength of this model is that decisions can be made quickly, so the process is not delayed by too many checks and balances. One of the major weaknesses of this model is that the resources of the institution can be used inefficiently because the goals of different departments overlap. This type of model creates greater autonomy and, as a result, the absence of structure causes a lack of continuity, as individuals do as they want rather than allowing the mission or leadership of the institution guide their decisions. This is problematic because there can be conflicting goals, keeping the organization from being

effective. In this type of model, the leaders can feel like they are herding cats. The leadership in this type of model strongly encourages communication and collaboration among the individuals as they pursue their goals rather than imposing a common direction from the administration.

The *cybernetic system* is regarded as a comprehensive model because it integrates aspects of each of the previous models. Birnbaum (1988) conveyed:

Practitioners or analysts who typically view an institution through the lens of a bureaucratic, collegial, political, anarchical or symbolic system are likely to see different organizational environments, select different elements as important or unimportant, and come to different conclusions about cause and effect. (p. 201)

Cybernetic systems are efficient when reasons are not known as to why something is not functioning the way it should be. They could be powerful because they are unlikely to fail but they can be difficult to improve. As a result, most college administrators need to understand the importance of being competent rather than being charismatic.

While Birnbaum presented models to help administrators understand organizational culture in higher education, a second source that was cited often used six cultures increased the understanding of culture in higher education institutions. The purpose of Bergquist and Pawlak's (2008) *Engaging the Six Cultures of the Academy* was to provide an analysis of academic institutions into six distinct organizational cultures. This book was written to provide faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and valued stakeholders opportunities to use the concepts of organizational culture to improve their daily lives. Higher education institutions are complex organizations, and they are becoming even more complex and will continue in this vein. Populations represented in

these institutions, such as the faculty, staff, and students, come from diverse cultures. Bergquist and Pawlak provided individuals a greater understanding of organizational behavior, as these diverse cultures were analyzed and studied. Their book can also be used as a tool to assist leaders in higher education for better understanding the complexity of these organizations.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) conveyed members in a *collegial culture* value faculty scholarship, research, the governance process, and academic disciplines, which the faculty represent in the institution. This culture holds assumptions about rationality in the organization and, as specific qualities and values of character are developed, young people in the institution are trained to be the future leaders of our society. In the collegial culture, faculty members are independent and focused on the pursuit of knowledge. Academic freedom guides their work, but they resist accountability or measurable outcomes. Cultural change happens at a deliberate pace and governance processes are driven and often controlled by the faculty. Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) stated, “For all its strengths—specifically, its encouragement of deliberation and open communication—the collegial culture suffers from a lack of organization and coherence” (p. 73).

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) pointed out effective supervisors value the *managerial culture* because it is purpose driven and directed toward specific goals. In this culture, there is an expectation the institution will measure and define its objectives and goals. The emphasis is on knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the students, so they can become successful and responsible citizens. The institution’s objectives are achieved through the managerial culture since it has a significant impact on human development and resource potential. In this culture, managers are empowered to lead the institution

and have clear strategies based on a compelling vision reflective of the organization's values and beliefs. The managerial culture and managerial vision are strongly connected. They have been revealed as its functions were performed and the institution evolved over time.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) explained in the *developmental culture*, faculty, staff, and students' affective, behavioral, and cognitive growth are valued. In this culture, professional and personal growth occur through the development of activities and programming provided by the institution. Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) went on to say, "It holds untested assumptions about the inherent desire of all men and women to attain their own personal maturation, while helping others in the institution become more mature" (p. 73). In this chapter, humans are considered adaptable and learned from changing circumstances. Consequently, they live rewarding lives all over the world. In this culture, learning occurs naturally without people needing to be driven to learn on their own. This type of culture prevents or inspires learning depending on the skills, assumptions, values, habits, and behaviors common to the majority of people in the organization.

The *advocacy culture's* origins may be rooted in student activism, which was dominant in the 1960s, but Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) argued academic freedom and faculty unions are at its original sources. Faculty life is better understood in this culture because their concerns and priorities are voiced and heard. In this culture, institutions promote advocacy. People in these organizations collaborate on ideas, debate policy at meetings, share differing viewpoints, and discuss strategies in informal settings so that various constituents can feel free to share their true opinions. There are institutions where

advocacy is not promoted and status quo is the norm. As a result, no one is encouraged to think without boundaries.

The most radical of the six cultures reviewed in Bergquist and Pawlak's book is the *virtual culture*. Higher education is substantially different because of the globalized world. As a result, digital technology has become a dominant force in people's lives around the world. Higher education institutions are positioned globally as a result of the virtual culture and:

values open, shared, responsive, educational systems; that holds assumptions about its ability to make sense of the fragmentation and ambiguity that exists in a postmodern world; and that conceives of the institution's enterprise as linking its educational resources to global and technological resources, thus broadening the global learning network. (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 147)

The virtual culture reflected the realities of working in higher education in this latest century. Faculty, staff, students, and administrators alike are deeply rooted in these technological advancements (e.g., cell phones, computers, and the Internet) that control our professional and individual lives. No longer are there just brick-and-mortar institutions; it is essential to understand higher education from the lens of technology because institutions are also online and virtual.

The *tangible culture* is a homecoming of sorts to the origins of higher education. As a direct reaction to the popularity of the virtual culture, the tangible culture:

values the predictability of a value-based, face-to-face education in an owned physical location; that holds assumptions about the ability of old systems and technologies being able to instill the institution's values; and that conceives of the

institution's enterprise as the honoring and reintegration of learning from a local perspective. (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 185)

The authors pointed out faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, and even parents are drawn to an institution's tangible environment because of their desire for community and greater knowledge that can be lost in virtual environments.

Although Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) used cultures for faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education to better understand organizational culture, Tierney (1988) was another prominent source found in the literature who used frameworks to increase the understanding of culture in academic institutions.

Tierney (1988) differed from the work of Birnbaum (1988) and Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) in that they proposed a framework to diagnose organizational culture where the previous sources described models or types of institutions to identify differing organizational cultures. Smerek (2010) pointed to Tierney's (1988) work on an integrated approach and framework to diagnosing organizational culture. This framework uses culture as an umbrella concept (Hirsch & Levin, 1999). Under the overarching umbrella of culture, six concepts of the framework were identified (see Table 1).

Tierney (1988) provided a framework to diagnose the culture of various higher education institutions into the following areas: (a) environment, (b) mission, (c) socialization, (d) information, (e) strategy, and (f) leadership. *Environment* is typically made up of rules, common understanding, and norms in a college or university. Researchers in higher education have studied how institutions define their environments. They have considered elements such as how faculty, staff, and administrators view the effects of the environment on the institution and how their environment is defined. These

Table 1

Tierney's (1988) Framework of Organizational Culture

Environment	How does the organization define its environment? What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)
Mission	How is it defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement is there?
Socialization	How do new members become socialized? How is it articulated? What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?
Information	What constitutes information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?
Strategy	How are decisions arrived at? Which strategy is used? Who makes decisions? What is the penalty for bad decisions?
Leadership	What does the organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders?

Source: Tierney (1988, p. 8).

researchers have also considered the mission of the institution and how it has been defined. They have reviewed how the mission of the organization effects decision making and processes in the college or university. Researchers have studied whether members were in agreement as to how the institution was defined. Researchers have considered how well new employees are socialized, how that has been expressed, and how they have comprehended what it took to survive and thrive in the institution. Information has been reviewed by these cultural researchers to determine what types of information was valued, how it has been used, and how it has been disseminated throughout the organization. Strategy has been considered in terms of how decisions have been made, what factors have been considered, how they affected the processes and the members in the institution. The last factor considered by researchers who have studied organizational

culture is who the leaders have been, how they have been chosen, what has been expected of them, and how they have determined who the leaders were at the various levels in the organization.

The role of organizational culture in higher education has been influenced by “powerful, external factors such as demographics, economic, and political conditions, yet they are also shaped by strong forces that emanate from within” (Tierney, 1988, p. 3). Administrators have related to or understood organizational culture through internal dynamics, which are derived from “values, processes, and goals held by those most intimately involved in the organization’s workings” (Tierney, 1998, p. 3). Tierney (1988) stated, “An organization’s culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it” (p. 3). Administrators focus on the main objective and gain a better understanding of their organizational culture to solve problems, rather than a tool to stereotype colleagues. An analysis of culture should be a resource to delve into why the culture causes people to react as they do and not be able to move beyond a critical point in their behavior and reasoning. While Tierney used frameworks to increase the understanding of culture in higher education, Kuh and Whitt (1988) are cited to explain how forms can be used to better comprehend organizational culture.

Forms of Studying Organizational Culture

Trice and Beyer (1993) defined cultural forms as “the observable entities, including actions, through which members of a culture express, affirm, and communicate the substance of their culture to one another” (p. 33). Many of the cultural forms could be studied from the joint venture by General Motors and Toyota in 1984 called the New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc. (The National Academies of Sciences Engineering

Medicine, 2017). The Japanese management practices and principles created a new culture at one of the worst plants in General Motor history because they incorporated positive relationships between the work force and management. Examples of cultural forms that changed the culture were consensus decision making, creating team meeting areas where work flows, attendance and defective record reports being posted, workers sharing a cafeteria with management, and no reserved parking spaces.

There are three studies where researchers have looked at organizational culture and its various forms. The University System of Georgia experienced 18 institutions merging with one another in 2018. Min (2017) studied how organizational culture, communication strategies, and conflict management strategies affected this merger in higher education in the state of Georgia. Dill (1982) explored organizational culture and identity while observing management processes in Japanese industries. The study focused on enhanced worker loyalty, productivity and increased worker interdependence. Kaufman (2013) studied whether organizational culture differs as a function of the various institutional types in higher education. It also compared and contrasted organizational culture type and leader behavior.

There are different forms of organizational culture that have been studied. Researchers have looked at what a rite, ceremony, and ritual are, among other cultural elements. Even though researchers have looked at multiple forms of organizational culture, I chose to look at organizational saga for this study. Table 2 reflects the frequently mentioned cultural forms.

Table 2

Definitions of Frequently Studied Cultural Forms

Rite	Relatively elaborate, dramatic, planned sets of activities that consolidate various forms of cultural expressions into one event (e.g., dissertation defense meeting); carried out through social interactions, usually for the benefit of an audience.
Ceremony	A system of several rites connected with a single occasion or event (e.g., commencement, orientation).
Ritual	A standardized, detailed set of techniques and behaviors that manage anxieties but seldom produce intended technical consequences of practical importance (e.g., freshman induction convocation, required chapel).
Myth	A dramatic narrative of imagined events, usually used to explain origins or transformations of something; also, an unquestioned belief about the practical benefits of certain techniques and behaviors that is not supported by demonstrated facts.
Saga	describing the unique accomplishments of a group and its leaders, usually in heroic terms (see Clark 1972).
Legend	A handed-down narrative of some wonderful event that is based in history but has been embellished with fictional details.
Story	A narrative based on true events, often a combination of truth and fiction.
Folktale	A completely fictional narrative.
Symbol	Any object, act, event, quality, or relation that serves as a vehicle for conveying meaning, usually by representing another thing (e.g., school mascot, campus statues, or other objects, such as the axe that symbolizes rivalry between the University of California at Berkeley and Stanford; Basu, 1984).
Language	A particular form or manner in which members of a group use vocal sounds and written signs to convey meanings to each other (e.g., an institution's fight song or alma mater).
Gesture	Movements of parts of the body used to express meanings.
Physical Setting	Those things that surround people physically and provide them with immediate sensory stimuli as they carry out culturally expressive activities.
Artifact	Material objects manufactured by people to facilitate culturally expressive activities.

Source: Adapted from Trice (1984) and Trice and Beyer (1984) as cited in Kuh and Whitt (1988).

Kuh and Whitt (1988) discussed how “culture is viewed as an interpretive framework for understanding and appreciating events and actions in colleges and universities rather than as a mechanism to influence or control behavior” (p. 3). Kuh and

Whitt (1988) talked about how “organizational theory developed to explain how that orderly universe asserted itself in the behavioral settings in which people live, work, and are educated. Organizational models are based on paradigms, on systems of epistemological and ontological assumptions” (p. 3).

Rituals are staged, public, and stylized versions of how things will be and beliefs about how things are, and are also eloquently described and shaped cultural patterns (Goody, 1977). Kuh and Whitt (1988) explained, “Although the possibilities for expression are endless, similar patterns are repeated over time and become part of, as well as reflect, a group’s history” (p. 17). These patterns teach cooperation, the importance of tradition, social relations and solidarity, tasks and goals of the group, and the place of authority (Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

Kuh and Whitt (1988) conveyed, “These guiding assumptions and beliefs, which are below the surface of conscious thought, are manifested in observable forms or artifacts” (p. 16). Kuh and Whitt (1988) explained, “Because artifacts are largely symbols of culture, they represent a multitude of meanings and emotions” (p. 16). Evidence of an institution’s culture are found in norms, mores, formal and informal rules, routine procedures, behaviors that are rewarded or punished, customs, folkways, myths, daily and periodic rituals, ceremonies, interaction patterns, signs, and a language system common to the culture bearers (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Schein, 1985; Tierney, 1985, 1987).

Identifying artifacts is relatively easy. It is much more difficult to determine how the nested patterns of assumptions and beliefs represented by artifacts influence the behavior of individuals and groups across time (Schein, 1985). Slogans, symbols, language patterns, stories, myths, ceremonials, and rituals provide clues to a deeper,

pervasive system of meaning. To understand the culture of a college or university is “to understand how this system, in its mundane and its more dramatic aspects, is created and sustained” (Morgan, 1986, p. 133). Such understanding is acquired by linking or contrasting artifacts with the values used in decision making (Schein, 1985).

Schein (1985) divided culture into a conceptual hierarchy comprised of three levels: artifacts, values, and basic assumptions and beliefs. Typically, artifacts are representative of culture and serve as symbols that represent emotions and meanings. Artifacts can be observed as one walks through an institution. Examples of artifacts include the layout of the space, how members dress, how individuals interact, the general feel of the organization, emotions expressed, and other identifiable expressions or physical elements that make up the institution. Artifacts also include more enduring archival examples, such as records of the institution, mission of the organization, annual reports, and statements on the philosophy of the college or university.

Schein (1985) argued the second level of culture was made up of *values*, which are widely held beliefs or sentiments about the importance of goals, activities, relationships, and feelings. As Kuh and Whitt (1988) pointed out, “some institutional values are conscious and explicitly articulated; they serve a normative or moral function by guiding members’ responses to situations” (p. 23). Most institutional values, however, are unconsciously expressed as themes (e.g., academic freedom, tradition of collegial governance) or are symbolic interpretations of reality that give meaning to social actions and established standards for social behavior (Clark & Trow, as cited in Kuh & Whitt, 1988). They often take the form of context-bound values directly related to a college’s vitality and wellbeing (Clark, 1970; Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

The third level, believed to be the core of culture, consists of basic but often unstated assumptions that undergird artifacts and values (Schein, 1985). These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to threats to institutional survival and exert a powerful influence over what people think, what they perceive to be important, how they feel about things, and what they do (Schein, 1985). Assumptions and beliefs determine the way reality is perceived and guide behavior, albeit unconsciously. These conceptions are so deeply ingrained that they are, by definition, taken for granted, “not confrontable or debatable” (Schein, 1985, p. 18); thus, such assumptions can be difficult to identify.

After the forms of studying organizational culture have been reviewed, a closer inspection of organizational saga is necessary because it is the framework that guides this study. Clark’s (1972) organizational saga “presents some rational explanation of how certain means lead to certain ends, but it also includes affect that turns a formal place in to a beloved institution, to which participants may be passionately devoted” (p. 178). Taking the time to learn the sagas of an institution can lead to a better understanding of the foundational premises and the culture and values expressed through the life of the university.

Organizational Saga

Clark (1972) pointed out, “An organizational saga is a collective understanding of a unique accomplishment based on historical exploits of a formal organization, offering strong normative bonds within and outside the organization” (p. 178). Followers of an organization, such as alumni of a college or university, become loyal because of their educational experiences, particularly experiences with other students, faculty, and staff.

They display allegiance to the institution based on their connection to the saga that has been developed and cultivated for many years. As graduates, they succeed as the university succeeds because they are linked to the achievements of the institution; as they succeed, the university succeeds because organizations of higher learning are known by their graduates' accomplishments. Clark (1972) conveyed, "A saga begins as strong purpose, introduced by a man (or small group) with a mission, and is fulfilled as it is embodied in organizational practices and the values of dominant organizational cadres, usually taking decades to develop" (p. 178).

According to Clark (1972), "two stages can be distinguished in the development of an organizational saga, initiation and fulfillment" (p. 180). Clark explained, "Initiation takes place under varying conditions and occurs in a relatively short period of time; fulfillment is related to features of the organization that are enduring and more predictable" (p. 180).

There are three settings for initiation discussed by Clark (1972). The first setting "is the autonomous new organization, where there is no established structure, no rigid custom, especially if a deliberate effort has been made to establish initial autonomy and boarding outsiders are preoccupied" (Clark, 1972, p. 180). In this setting, a leader typically exhibits a top-down management style and recruits people below them who subscribe to their way of thinking.

Clark (1972) conveyed, "The second setting for initiation is the established organization in a crisis of decay" (p. 180). Those who lead the organization realize they must abandon the way it has always been done or risk the possibility that the institution will not succeed. Clark (1972) said, because the leader wants the organization to survive,

“they may relinquish the leadership to one proposing a plan that promises revival and later strength, or they may even accept a man of utopian intent” (p. 180). The new organization formed learned from the mistakes of the former group and establishes a new order with the intent to succeed.

Lastly, Clark (1972) explained, “The third context for initiation is the established organization that is not in crisis, not collapsing from long decline, yet ready for evolutionary change” (p. 180). This could be the hardest situation to forecast depending on the level of flexibility of the organization. It depends on denominational ties to which the university is associated and, consequently, the institution’s openness to change.

Even though the environments of initiation are less predictable, typically fulfillment is more reliable in terms of development. There are six areas to consider as fulfillment is explored. They are listed here, and I cover them in more detail in Chapter 3:

- Faculty buy-in
- Visible distinctiveness
- Alumni buy-in
- Student buy-in
- Generalized traditions
- Organizational belonging

According to Clark (1971), “the organizational self-conception heavily determines the degree of loyalty and trust, which in turn affects in a major way the problems and forms of governance” (p. 499). Clark (1971) said, “Sociologists commonly conceive of two broad dimensions of social bonding: the structural, consisting of patterns of relation and interaction of persons and groups, and the normative, consisting of shared

beliefs, attitudes, and values” (p. 499). Clark pointed out the “two dimensions appear in complex organizations as organizational structure, including informal patterns, and organizational culture” (p. 499).

Clark (1971) explained:

We trace the effects of an organizational saga on belief and trust and then on the problems of governance, we turn our attention away from such structural changes as bicameralism and altered representation on committees and focus instead on the size and scope and mission of the entity that is to be governed. (p. 515)

Clark (1971) said, “We return to the embodiment of goals in the historical development of an organization and what meaning is thus available to those who give so much of their lives there” (p. 515). Lastly, Clark (1971) relayed:

In raising explicitly the matter of whether and how academic groups come to have rewarding collective representations of themselves, we perhaps in the end can even link matters of governance to the quality of life within the modern college and university. (p. 515)

Organizational Saga as a Cultural Framework

Organizational saga has been one of the most used forms of studying organizational culture. There has been a breadth and depth of literature that adds much to the present day understanding of the topic. When I searched the term *organizational saga* online, there were thousands of dissertations. As I limited the search with the term *higher education*, there were hundreds of dissertations where the organizational saga has been examined from a number of different cultural aspects, such as (a) fraternities and sororities; (b) public and private institutions (2 and 4 year); (c) private academies; (d)

general education reform; (e) private, faith-based institutions; and (f) even a seminary. There were also dissertations focused on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). For example, Bailey (2011) examined three public HBCUs to determine the relationship between effectiveness and organizational culture at these higher education institutions. There were dissertations focused on the emergence of online higher education. For instance, Sheail (2015) studied the phenomenon of the digital university and the organizational change it has created at an institution that is more traditional in their academic offerings. There were dissertations that looked at organizational identity in higher education. As an example, Haynes (2010) explored the attributes that those affiliated with Sweet Briar College, an all-women institution in Virginia, believed sets them apart from other institutions and have endured through time.

I have thoroughly reviewed the following studies because they focused on faith-based institutions: (a) *A New Paradigm for Catholic Higher Education: The Intersection of Culture, Change, and Organizational Learning* (Sellman, 1998), (b) *Organizational Culture and Leadership at Berea College: An Historical Inquiry Into Saga Development and Underlying Cultural Assumptions* (Wood, 1998), (c) *The Application of Burton Clark's Organizational Saga to an Analysis of a Denver Seminary* (Borden, 1990), (d) *Saga and Socialization in Jesuit Institutions* (Puls, 2013), (e) *Types, Methods, and Sagas in Lutheran Higher Education: Learning from Childers* (Lambert, 2014), and (f) *Strategies for Creating a Unique Culture in Preparation for Campus Relocation: A Process Evaluation* (Ague, 2014). The studies contained in this section were significant to organizational saga because of the framework and case studies used in each.

Sellman (1998) focused on Mission College, an all-women Catholic college, founded by a group of religious women who were committed to improving the access of higher education for women. Sellman (1998) used organizational saga during a leadership change. During this time, a lay president was named and the institution experienced a severe decline in enrollment and a financial crisis.

Wood's (1998) study, like Sellman's (1998), used organizational saga during a leadership change, but organizational saga was also used as a central ingredient in the development of Berea College as a distinctive college. Organizational saga also helped shape the institution's role and mission, which elevated Berea's rank with other organizations.

Borden (1990) examined the Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary during a period of retrenchment. Organizational saga was used to improve the seminary's saga and organizational culture and provide a more promising future. Borden's study was similar to Sellman's (1998) work because both were conducted during a period of financial decline in the life of the institution. Something unique in this study was that Borden connected culture and organizational saga of an institution together.

Puls's (2013) study pointed out how Jesuit institutions have played a significant role in the history of higher education since the mid-16th century. These Jesuit institutions had always been committed to supporting higher education. A unique factor in this study involved the number of Jesuit institutions that used their membership to fill faculty, staff, and administrative roles in their colleges and universities. According to Puls, the membership of the Catholic denomination was in decline, and organizational saga was used to assist the leadership of the Jesuit faith in developing a greater

understanding of the history and culture of Jesuit higher education to integrate lay staff into these institutional roles.

Lambert (2014) explored Gettysburg College's Lutheran identity during a time of unrest with their president, who was hostile to church leadership. This work was different from the others in that this organizational change was led by the faculty in the Lutheran colleges. They understood and affiliated their faith with the sagas in *The Bible* and wanted to connect them to the various sagas in their institutions. Organizational saga was used for this purpose.

Ague (2014) explored how one institution wanted to change their culture as they were preparing for a campus relocation. Organizational saga was used for this situation. The college had been located on the same property of their founding church but the institution had expanded their academic offerings and enrollment, so the relocation was necessary. These factors made this study unique from the other studies.

As studies are conducted in the future, more research needs to be done on the weaknesses of strong sagas in an institution of higher education. While distinctiveness can be a positive to separate an institution from those organizations on the outside and cement strong sagas, they can also restrict an institution by decreasing flexibility on regarding the decision making and culture experienced by faculty, staff, students, and alumni. This lack of flexibility can cause tension as some traditions have a life cycle and institutions fall into the trap of being all things to all people.

Sellman (1998) pointed out there are three contexts for the initiation stage are evident from Clark's research. In the first condition, the organization was initiated by a strong leader or leaders "whose first task is to find a setting that is open, or can be

opened, to a special effort” (Sellman, 1998, p. 41). Sellman (1998) went on to say, “The second stage in the development of a saga is fulfillment” (p. 41).

Sellman (1998) connected Clark’s (1972) organizational saga by observing:

In some ways, the history of Mission College embraces all the elements in Clark’s initiation stage. Mission College was founded by a group of religious women who were committed to improving the availability of education for women. It was among the first Catholic colleges for women in the state to offer baccalaureate degrees. (p. 42)

The second setting for initiation, the organization in crisis, occurred when the lay president was named and the college encountered severe enrollment and financial instability. Although Mission College returned to the sponsoring religious community for leadership, the president inaugurated several practices that changed the organizational saga of the institution from an all-women’s college to one that welcomed nontraditional students and men to the campus. In the third context for initiation, the institution exhibited readiness for evolutionary change. The change in leadership in 1987 marked the beginning of a period of transformational leadership. The faculty and staff interviewed at Mission College acknowledged the president from 1977 to 1987 surrounded herself with relatively weak administrators because she made all the decisions (Professor A. Kline, interview, October 17, 1997). The current president had strong administrators because “She’s a delegator so she needs strong people to make good decisions” (Professor A. Kline, interview, October 17, 1997). According to Sellman (1998) this type of leadership permeated the organization and members of the institution

feel empowered to participate in decision-making processes (pp. 130-131). Sellman (1998) came to the conclusion:

Mission College had a strong organizational saga. The elements of fulfillment (personnel, program, external social base, student subculture, and imagery) have been the strength of the institution throughout its history. The College had experienced and been influenced by both internal and external changes that have transformed its culture while sustaining its founding mission. The saga has been one that embraces change, not for the sake of change but for the improvement and durability of the institution. (pp. 131-132)

Wood (1998) focused on the cultural lens on the culture developed within Berea College, observing both process and product while attempting to maintain a sensitivity to the actors' point of view. Burton Clark's pioneer work into the historical study of institutional culture and saga development in distinctive colleges and universities forms the broad conceptual framework of this inquiry. (p. 16)

Wood (1998) said Clark identified the tradition of the private liberal arts college as the oldest in the United States and the "romantic element in our educational system" (p. 16). In the contemporary era of multiversities and mass education, Wood lifted up private liberal arts institutions as they served a crucial function in U.S. society. Wood asserted, in the 20th century, broad social values are rarely preserved or guaranteed by a commitment in the greater society. Social stability and change, value development and perpetuation are bound up in the institutions and organizations of society, especially those of higher

learning. This was in contrast to the university with such varying functions as undergraduate education, graduate schools, and research.

Wood (1998) connected the significance and difference of an institution's saga with their role and mission by pointing out:

Late in Clark's study, the now well-known concept of organizational saga emerged as a central ingredient in the development of a distinctive college. This is related to, and yet distinguishable from, organizational role and mission. He demonstrates that this role includes the basic method or way of performing and the place held among related organizations. These roles can be relegated to organizations outside of the institution or actively sought by leaders in the college. When leaders actively pursue a role, which requires effort to define and establish a purpose for the college, then we can speak of the college mission. In this context, those institutions of higher learning with a more integrated culture and consequent distinctiveness, transform their mission into an embracing organizational saga over a period of time. (p. 19)

Borden (1990) conveyed, "Burton Clark has suggested that a knowledge of organizational saga provides clues about the way in which institutions are able to cope" (pp. 1-2). In Borden's study, the Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary was used as a case study. Borden summarized the study: "This study delineated the relationship between the seminary's saga, culture and future in a period of retrenchment" (p. 3).

Borden (1990) explained, "Strong sagas do not develop in organizations that are passive in that they are simply fulfilling the demands of the environment or being directed by higher authorities, as may occur in some state or religious institutions"

(Clark, 1970). Instead, sagas seem to develop in institutions where a single individual or small group of individuals are able to find a readiness by people in and around the institution for an effort of achieving uniqueness (Selznick, 1957). The three colleges studied by Clark (1972) were all perceived socially as successful and all had strong sagas, yet the saga had been developed in different ways.

Borden (1990) relayed

that a strong saga benefits the institution because it commits the individual to the organization since the organization becomes a model of what the individual wants to be, it enables organizations to resist the vicious circle of organizational decline and the development of a saga enables an organization to change for the better. (p. 40)

Different than the other studies, Borden (1990) pointed out Burton Clark

does write of certain weaknesses that a strong saga may contribute to an organization. The concept of distinctiveness puts different strains on an organization. Maintaining distinct commitments placed strains on curriculum decisions, student freedom, alumni support, and trustee comfort in all the institutions studied. A distinct organization cannot become all things to all people. (pp. 39-40)

Something unique about this study was that Borden (1990) connected the culture and organizational saga of an institution together. Borden (1990) conveyed:

Clark thought the concept of saga to be a fundamental part of an organization's culture. He did not view saga as equal to culture. He recognized that normative bonding (the cultural side of an organization) in organizations occurs in many

ways. However, the institutional story or saga was one fundamental way in which bonding happened. The role the saga played in relation to other parts of an organization's culture related to how strongly the saga was embraced and its durability. (pp. 44-45)

Another unique factor Borden (1990) mentioned in the study is that

Clark (1971) did view saga as a crucial ingredient in changing an organization. He recognized that organizations could be restructured. However, he chose to focus on an organization's fundamental beliefs rather than its fundamental structures. This meant that to change things for the better, specifically the governance of an organization, there must be an altering of the basic beliefs. (p. 45)

Finally, Borden (1990) explained:

Clark sees the study of saga as a way of producing change within an organization. Clark's emphasis on change was borne out in the research done by Ellen Chaffee. An understanding of saga has a direct relationship to the purpose or mission of an organization. This understanding is significant in developing and guiding change within the organization in the future. (pp. 47-48)

Puls (2013) pointed out, "Jesuit institutions have long played a role in the history of higher education, both in the U.S. and internationally" (p. 6). The first Jesuit institutions were founded in the mid-16th century and, from the very beginning, were committed to supporting education. Puls (2013) wrote, "In 2010, the presidents of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States joined together to issue The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities (hereinafter called The Jesuit, Catholic Mission)" (p. 6).

Puls (2013) discussed how “developing a greater understanding of the history and culture of Jesuit higher education is critical given the ever-changing nature of the field and the need to integrate lay staff into the administration of Jesuit institutions” (p. 6). For many years, Jesuit institutions relied on their membership to recruit faculty, staff, and administrators, but due to a decline of the actual number of Jesuits in the United States, this was no longer the case. Even the most devout Catholics could not meet this need because that group was also declining.

Puls (2013) explained, “The representation of saga and the role of socialization in The Jesuit, Catholic Mission presents an intriguing opportunity for review” (p. 7). Puls (2013) said:

The history of Jesuit institutions and the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) is briefly reviewed, followed by a discussion of the collective effort of the presidents of the AJCU institutions as they work to ensure the continued success of these institutions in an ever-changing society. (p. 7)

In the study, organizational culture was considered and the various organizational sagas were reviewed in greater detail. In particular, socialization was a possible solution to offsetting the reduction in the number of Jesuits who could help provide support for the administrative and academic concerns of the AJCU colleges and universities.

Puls (2013) used Clark’s (1972) work by pointing out, “Sagas bring unique benefits to an institution” (p. 10). Saga provided a firm foundation for the institution’s members in terms of guidance and comprehension. Puls (2013) pointed out, “A manifestation of the organization’s culture, the saga plays a core function in leadership of the organization” (p. 10). These leaders were sometimes the only people in the

organization that could clearly express the appropriate decisions and have the respect to address various constituent groups. It was crucial these leaders not only understand the saga, but also comprehend the significance of the ongoing nurturance of the myth.

According to Puls (2013), “Clark describes how initiations usually occur at the start of an institution, at a crisis point, or in an established organization that is ready for change” (p. 10). Ignatius started the first Jesuit educational institution in 1548. Puls (2013) conveyed how “Ignatius’s drive and inspiration led to the founding of hundreds of institutions, and he serves as the central figure in the creation of an educational saga that is still inspiring” (p. 10). Ignatius was bestowed sainthood because of his initial work starting Jesuit education in Rome.

Lastly, Puls (2013) connected Clark’s (1972) work regarding fulfillment, which centers on the personnel, the program, the external social base, the student subculture, and the imagery of the saga. Looking at the Jesuit institutions, the personnel are primarily represented by the faculty, almost 22,000 in number across the 28 Jesuit institutions. The program is represented by the curriculum and the nature of what makes the learning experience unique at Jesuit institutions. The external social base is the alumni and the support they provide even after leaving the institution. With a living alumni base totaling almost 2 million across the AJCU institutions, this external social base can have vast influence. The student subculture is represented by the students, totaling almost 220,000 across the U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities, and represents what they bring to support the ongoing strength of the saga. And, finally, imagery is the physical representations

of the saga, such as ceremonies, written accounts, buildings or statues, and other traditions that keep the saga in the forefront. (p. 11)

Lambert (2014) wrote:

In a series of annual presentations during the early 1970s, Lutheran college faculty in that era reflected on the current state of church-related higher education, offered an extensive bibliographic review of the subject, and sought to articulate for a new time what it meant to be engaged in Christian higher education. (p. 15)

Lambert (2014) said, “Pluralism was the resounding theme of the period, and these authors were keen to engage its ethnic, epistemic, religious, and ethical forms” (p. 15).

Lambert (2014) explained the concept of saga matches the Lutheran experience and one in which they value. The story of the institutions’ beginning created inspiration and warm feelings, as they remembered the saga of the church-related colleges. As Lambert (2014) pointed out, “the concept provides a ‘handle’ for diagnosing the current dilemmas of our institutions” (p. 15). The state of the story of an institution is a barometer of its health (Baepler, 1977).

Lambert (2014) conveyed they learned from Clark “that the college saga must be told and because the Biblical saga was never far from their minds” (p. 16). These Lutherans leaders understood the significance of sagas in the Bible, so they could see why they were important to the Lutheran church. Lambert (2014) explained:

the reference to Exodus is especially interesting because the Association did not see the college’s saga as something to slavishly follow and measure disobedience against as much as it is (or should be) the way a college’s character and ethos is formed and lived amidst rapid change. (p. 16)

According to Lambert (2014), “As the oldest of the Lutheran institutions, Gettysburg is an obvious choice for almost any study” (p. 17). The institution did not do well as it was compared to Burtchaell’s (1998) judgmental barometer in the book, *The Dying of the Light*. Lambert (2014) discussed, “The Gettysburg saga begins with Samuel Schmucker and a vision for a Lutheran college that was nonsectarian from the start, and this is the founding story that Childers hears repeatedly from his informants” (p. 17). Consequently, the faculty and staff who worked for Gettysburg found it somewhat easy to affiliate with the college’s Lutheran identity. Lambert (2014) mentioned the “historic relationship that can only be seen in a few formal rituals (prayer and faculty meetings and official college events) and the presence of a Lutheran campus minister” (p. 17). Lambert (2014) explained there were:

three critical events in the diminishing of Gettysburg’s Lutheran identity: a president with an open hostility to the church, a thrust to be a nationally recognized liberal arts college, and a decision to form a Center for Public Service and, in so doing, separate the service program from campus ministry. (pp. 17-18)

Lambert (2014) conveyed, “With much talk about being both ‘mission-driven’ and ‘distinctive’ in higher education today, a renewed interest in ‘saga’ by church-related colleges makes great sense” (p. 18). The Association of Lutheran College leaders had a great deal of foresight in the 1960s and 1970s by understanding that church-related higher education was in a state of flux. Lambert (2014) pointed out:

While some change is to be welcomed and some to be resisted, we would also be wise to follow their lead and approach both with a spirit of hope, for it is only hope that makes a faith-based saga truly viable. (p. 19)

Ague (2014) explained, “The purpose of this study was to access how one institution was creating a change in culture to prepare for campus relocation” (p. 1). Ague (2014) further pointed out:

A long standing relationship between the higher education institution and a local religious organization was no longer sustainable in its current form; therefore, the college needed to find a new base of operation on which to establish an independent identity for itself and a culture separate from the church. (p. 1)

The strategies that campus leaders were using at a single institution produced the culture change, as they prepared for the transition to the new location and the aftermath once the transition had occurred. While the relationship between the church and college had worked for almost 40 years, the college had grown beyond its capacity on the campus with the church. Conversely, the church needed additional space, particularly for the facilities to expand their ministry opportunities.

According to Ague (2014), “The college continues to grow, building record enrollments each year, mandating that it find additional space for dormitories, classrooms, and other support facilities including an expanded library, bookstore, and its own athletic venue” (p. 3). Both entities had outgrown their support services, such as food and technology services. Also, the college had moved beyond its affiliation with the church and desired to create its own unique identity so the institution could continue to grow and prosper.

Ague (2014) used “organizational saga in this study to assess cultural change as the college evolved from emergent change theory” (p. 21). Ague (2014) pointed out “how organizations make decisions on the idea that it was more important to understand that all

institutions have a saga or culture that has developed over time than to know all of the details of its history” (p. 21). The saga for both the church and college had become intertwined, but some of the stakeholders viewed the two institutions differently because of the interpretation of various events. In some respects, the history of these two entities had caused them to grow together even though they were going separate ways.

Ague (2014) explained, “Sagas emerged in stages and institutional members realized their appearance with different characterizations” (p. 22). According to Clark (1972), sagas tend to manifest themselves in two stages: (a) initiation, a relatively short time period characterized by the need for a specific change itself; and (b) fulfillment, the more enduring and predictable element in the change process. Ague (2014) conveyed, “The natural process of time and evolution dictated the formation of this type of saga” (p. 22). When swift and immediate changes occurred, these particular sagas were born out of chaos. Sometimes change that happened over a long period of time fails, and the organization began to decay. Typically, this was when organizations found themselves at an impasse where they were forced to make changes or completely fail.

Ague (2014) pointed out, “In many cases, this deep crisis opened the institution to new leadership structures reevaluated the current context while forcing institutional participants to remove past failures and move toward new opportunities” (p. 23). Ague (2014) explained:

For leaders to succeed in making necessary change, the leader had to understand the elements of the saga—both factual and emotional—to influence the way participants received, understood, and accepted communication in the

organization while tailoring communications about what happened within that framework. (p. 23)

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a review of the literature and present how the literature was used to support this study. The literature reviewed dealt with key issues pertinent to this study, and the information was divided into seven distinct areas. In the results and analysis portions of this study, the literature was used as a reference point, and was used to develop questions for interviews with participants. It was my intent to focus on the literature that would bring depth to the dissertation topic and that the literature presented would provide the theoretical framework and rationale for this research study.

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015. I selected Anderson University because, during this time, the institution successfully transitioned to a 4-year university, expanded degree opportunities through the doctorate degree, enhanced existing and developed new campus facilities, and earned recognition at regional and national levels. Many other faith-based institutions struggled or closed during this same time period. Anderson University in Anderson, South Carolina, is listed as a master's college and university in the Carnegie Foundations Basic Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2015).

The specific method selected for this qualitative dissertation was an intrinsic case study (Stake, 2000). Stake conveyed, "Research for an intrinsic case study is not undertaken because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest" (p. 437). Typically, a qualitative approach is used when the research questions require exploration (Stake, 1995). Qualitative research questions usually begin with "how" or "why," so the researcher could explore with a great depth of understanding of the topic (Patton, 1987; Seidman, 1991). For this particular study, the central research question explored Anderson University's organizational saga from 1995 to 2015: How can the organizational saga of Anderson University between 1995 and 2015 be described and defined?

As noted in the previous chapter, the concept of organizational saga includes two distinct stages. To answer the central research question, I developed two subquestions to investigate these respective stages of an organizational saga:

- To consider the initiation stage of the organizational saga, why did Anderson University undertake steps leading to significant organizational change/transformation?
- To consider the fulfillment stage of the organizational saga, how have faculty, students, and alumni adopted the values and traditions that represent the current sense of organizational belonging at Anderson University?

The Case

There are demographic, economic, and financial challenges pressing on faith-based colleges. St. Joseph's College in Indiana, St. Catharine College in Kentucky, St. Gregory's College in Oklahoma, Grace University in Nebraska, and Marygrove College in Michigan are five faith-based institutions that have closed in the past 2 years. According to Seltzer (2017), "Nearly one-third of the small private colleges rated by Moody's Investors Service generated operating deficits in 2016, an increase from 20% in 2013." Seltzer (2017) said tuition discounting was at record levels for these institutions and was a major reason for their decline. McConkey and Lawler (2003) and Sterk (2002) questioned the long-term viability of faith-based institutions because of their failure to find niche markets for their academic programs and because they have been slow to develop more highly refined business practices. These issues, along with record levels of tuition discounting, have contributed to financial challenges and enrollment declines at many faith-based colleges and universities. However, Anderson University, an institution that has described itself as having a Christian identity, has flourished while many other faith-based institutions have struggled or closed. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015.

Anderson has flourished in terms of rankings, enrollment growth, endowment progression, additions and improvements of facilities, the overall appearance of the campus, online offerings, and the expansion of academic programs while maintaining its identity as a Christian liberal arts institution during the period from 1995 to 2015. The institution completed the transition from a junior college to 4-year status in 1992, transitioned from NAIA in athletics to NCAA Division II in 1998, and changed from a college to a university in 2006. The campus acreage grew from 32 acres in 1995 to 271 in 2012, and the enrollment increased from 919 students in 1995 to 3212 in 2015. Major campus enhancements have included: (a) five new residence halls, which raised the number of beds on campus from 700 in 1995 to 1527 in 2015 (Anderson University, 2018h); (b) an \$8.2 million, 53,000-square-foot library built in 2007; (c) a \$26 million, 90,000-square-foot student center, the construction of which began in 2014 and concluded in 2016; (d) an old library that was renovated to house the College of Education and School of Interior Design in 2007; (e) the old White Gym that was upgraded to accommodate a new School of Nursing in 2013; and (f) new athletic complexes for softball, soccer, tennis, swimming, and intramurals that were constructed in 2015 (Anderson University, 2018d). In 2015, the freshman class had an average ACT score of 24 and SAT score of 1100, and the honors program participants had an average score of 32 on the ACT and 1340 on the SAT. The average ACT score for the 1995 freshman class was an 18. As Anderson transitioned from a 2-year to a 4-year college, the institution offered 12 new majors starting in 1992. By the end of the period for this study, Anderson offered 84 majors and minors (Anderson University, 2018f). The first graduate program, a master of education degree, started in 2006 (ISSUU, 2015). Since that time,

Anderson has added 25 master's and doctoral programs while also adding an offsite location in Greenville, South Carolina, called the University Center (Anderson University, 2018g), where 20 undergraduate and graduate programs are offered to students. Anderson has also offered nearly 30 online or hybrid academic programs, as the university sought to be more comprehensive in attracting nontraditional students.

According to the institution's magazine, promotional materials and website, Anderson University has moved from the fourth tier in *U.S. News and World Report* 20 years ago to the top tier. Presently, the institution has moved up to number 16 among regional colleges in the South in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings (Anderson University, 2018b). The institution has been selected as one of America's Best Christian Colleges and recognized as one of America's 100 Best College Buys, as calculated by Institutional Research and Evaluation (Anderson University, 2018a). Anderson has built a reputation as one of the fastest rising schools in private higher education in the South, and was recently recognized as the 18th fastest growing baccalaureate college in the nation from 2003 to 2013 (*Chronicle of Higher Education 2015 Almanac*).

Theoretical Framework

One of the more common approaches to studying higher education as an organization is Clark's (1972) organizational saga, which was used as the framework for this study. Taking the time to learn the various sagas of an institution led to a better understanding of the foundational premises and the culture and values that were expressed through the life of the university. To illustrate the framework, Clark (1972) drew on research of three liberal arts colleges—Antioch College, Reed College, and Swarthmore College—and determined “two stages can be distinguished in the

development of an organizational saga, initiation and fulfillment” (p. 180). Clark explained, “Initiation takes place under varying conditions and occurs in a relatively short period of time; fulfillment is related to features of the organization that are enduring and more predictable” (p. 180).

There are three settings for initiation. The first setting “is the autonomous new organization, where there is no established structure, no rigid custom, especially if a deliberate effort has been made to establish initial autonomy and boarding outsiders are preoccupied” (Clark, 1972, p. 180). In this setting, a leader typically exhibited a top-down management style and recruited people below them in leadership roles that subscribed to their way of thinking.

Clark (1972) conveyed, “The second setting for initiation is the established organization in a crisis of decay” (p. 180). Those who are leading the organization realize they must abandon the way things have been or risk the possibility the institution will not succeed. Clark said, because the leader wants the organization to survive, “they may relinquish the leadership to one proposing a plan that promises revival and later strength, or they may even accept a man of utopian intent” (p. 180). The new organization learns from the mistakes of the former group and establishes a new order with the intent to succeed.

Clark (1972) explained, “The third context for initiation is the established organization that is not in crisis, not collapsing from long decline, yet ready for evolutionary change” (p. 180). This can be the hardest situation to forecast depending on the level of flexibility of the particular organization. It simply depended on the

denominational ties the university was associated with and, consequently, the institution's openness to change.

Even though the environments of initiation were less predictable, typically fulfillment was more reliable in terms of development. There were six areas to consider as fulfillment was explored at a deeper level.

The first area is faculty buy-in. In the university setting, a significant group of supporters considered is the faculty. Clark (1972) discussed:

A single leader, a college president, can initiate the change, but the organizational idea will not be expanded over the years and expressed in performance unless ranking and powerful members of the faculty become committed to it and remain committed even after the initiator is gone. (p. 181)

As faculty take ownership of the idea, the chances of change standing the test of time are much greater, even as new leadership replace the old leaders who originated the idea.

The second area is visible distinctiveness. Clark (1972) relayed, "For a college to transform purpose in to a credible story of unique accomplishment, there must be visible practices with which claims of distinctiveness can be supported; that is, unusual courses, noteworthy accomplishments, or special methods of teaching" (p. 181). The program becomes a set of exceptional practices that produce signs and rites that are advanced with meaning.

The third area is alumni buy-in. Clark (1972) conveyed, "The saga also becomes fixed in the minds of outside believers devoted to the organization, usually the alumni" (p. 182). Alumni would be one of the best groups associated with the institution because they hold enduring beliefs of the saga but are not affected by organizational change in the

same way as current administrators, students, faculty, and staff. Their thoughts are warmly entrenched in the past as they remember the set of exceptional happenings in the campus community.

The fourth area is student buy-in. Clark (1972) pointed out, “The study body is the third group of believers, not overwhelmingly important but still a necessary support of the saga” (p. 182). For the saga to endure, the students must support this change over a long period of time as they connect with beliefs administrators and faculty hold dear. For organizational saga to have structure, it must eventually take the form of a design, and students must take ownership as they reflect on the image of the institution.

The fifth area is generalized traditions. Clark (1972) explained the saga is: upheld by faculty, alumni, and students, expressed in teaching practices, the saga is even more widely expressed as a generalized tradition in statues and ceremonies, written histories and current catalogues, even in an “air about the place” felt by participants and some outsiders. (p. 182)

The institution marks its place in time, both by how unique the history of the organization is and how well it nurtures the memories and symbols of the institution. As the image is more fully developed through time, the populations the institution desires would be attracted to the organization, and individuals who do not relate to the image the school portrays would find other options.

The sixth and last area is organizational belonging. Clark (1972) relayed that organizational saga was layered “with deep emotional commitment, believers define themselves by their organizational affiliation, and in their bond to other believers they share an intense sense of the unique” (p. 183). When an institution has a strong

organizational saga, there is a group of individuals who believe they are a select group of people. There is a great deal of emotional engagement in this group, which causes them to be a close community. Clark shared:

Such bonds give the organization a competitive edge in recruiting and maintaining personnel and helps it to avoid the vicious circle in which some actual or anticipated erosion of organizational strength leads to the loss of some personnel, which leads to further decline or loss. (p. 183).

There is a strong sense of devotion among this group so that, even if everything is not perfect, they would rather stay than leave for another opportunity. Being a part of their group with shared beliefs is more significant to them in the long run than personal gain would be in the short run.

Epistemological Paradigm

Stake (1995) conveyed the epistemology of qualitative researchers as constructivism and existentialism (nondeterminism). Stake (1995) pointed out:

These two views are common accompanists to an expectation that phenomena are intricately related through many coincidental actions and that understanding them requires looking at a wide sweep of contexts: temporal and spatial, historical, political, economic, cultural, social, and personal. (p. 43)

In this study, I was interested in understanding the organizational saga of Anderson University between 1995 and 2015. This approach fits in the constructivist paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), meaning is created “and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents” (p. 111). The constructivist paradigm was used to guide methodology in this study, such as the use of interviews,

because they provided understanding from the participants as to what they made of the phenomenon.

Rationale for Qualitative Methods

A qualitative approach was used for this study. A qualitative study allowed for the exploration of phenomena through, for example, feelings or thought processes, which could be difficult to extract from conventional research methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this study, participants' perceptions and lived experiences (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006) were crucial to the outcomes of the research. Qualitative research methods are the best approach when studying phenomena in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) and when striving to understand culture and processes in context (Esterberg, 2002). Qualitative methods also stress the significance of the researcher's role as an active participant in the study (Creswell, 2005). In this study, I was an active participant in data collection and the key interpreter of data collected (Stake, 1995).

I desired to gain a deeper understanding of the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015. The study focused on Anderson University because it has prospered during a time when many similar institutions have struggled to survive. I conducted a qualitative study because it allowed for a deeper inspection and was more open ended as a certain issue, population, or situation was explored inductively (Creswell, 2011; Merriam, 1998). A qualitative approach was the best option given the need to review one institution at a deeper level, and this methodology produced a more holistic understanding of this institution's identity.

Rationale for Case Study Methodology

Stake (2006) classified cases into three categories: (a) intrinsic, (b) instrumental, and (c) collective. Stake (2006) relayed, “The *intrinsic case* is often exploratory in nature, and the researcher is guided by his or her interest in the case itself rather than in extending theory or generalizing across cases” (p. 499). Stake (2006) pointed out, “In an *instrumental case study* the case is secondary to the exploration of a specific issue, building theory or redrawing generalizations” (p. 499). In an instrumental case study, the case becomes a tool to better comprehend something else. Stake (2006) conveyed, “A *collective case study* involves the exploration of multiple instrumental case studies” (p. 499). The category that best fits this study was intrinsic because of the uniqueness of the case of Anderson University.

According to Stake (1995), a case should be “a specific, a complex, functioning thing,” (p. 2) more specifically an integrated system that “has a boundary and working parts” (p. 2) and is purposive (in relation to the social sciences and human services). Stake said a qualitative case study is “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi).

Stake (1995) pointed out there are four special characteristics of a qualitative case study. The first characteristic is *holistic* “its contextuality is well developed; it is case oriented; it resists reductionism and elementalism; and it is relatively noncomparative, seeking to understand its object more than to understand how it differs from others” (p. 47). The second characteristic is *empirical* “it is field oriented; its emphasis is on observables, including the observations by informants; it strives to be naturalistic, noninterventionistic; and there is a relative preference for natural language description,

sometimes disdaining grand constructs” (p. 47). The third characteristic is *interpretive* “its researchers rely more on intuition, with many important criteria not specified; its on-site observers work to keep attention free to recognize problem-relevant events; and it is attuned to the fact that research is a researcher-subject interaction” (p. 47). The fourth characteristic is *emphatic* “it attends to actor intentionality; it seeks actor frames of reference, value commitments; although planned, its design is emergent, responsive; its issues are emic issues, progressively focused; and its reporting provides vicarious experience” (p. 48).

Stake (1995) relayed researchers may like the flexible design of case study methodology because it allows for major changes even after they move from the design to the research. The researcher usually starts with two or three issues or research questions that “help structure the observation, interviews, and document review” (p. 20). Stake pointed to Parlett and Hamilton’s (1972, as cited in Stake, 1998) work on *progressive focusing*, which builds upon the assumption that “the course of the study cannot be charted in advance” (p. 22).

Researcher Reflexivity

While there are three possible research approaches—quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods—I gravitated toward a qualitative approach because it was more in line with my professional and personal background, and I felt more comfortable with this approach given my learning style and the study to be conducted. Consequently, I agreed with the following statement given my worldview: “Knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality . . . is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of

interacting between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 52).

I was made aware of the different research methodologies, statistical analyses, research designs, and hypothesis testing through doctoral-level courses and prescribed readings associated with qualitative theories. I have been in the field of private, Christian higher education for nearly 30 years, served at three different Baptist institutions as the chief enrollment officer, and completed a master’s degree in human resource development and a bachelor’s degree in administrative management from Clemson University. I also hold an associate of arts degree from Anderson College. Research has been an active ingredient in my professional maturation, roles and responsibilities, committee assignments, and presentations.

My experiences impact my reflexivity and, consequently, result in potential biases. Because I attended the institution included in this study and have worked at three faith-based institutions, I had familiarity with this type of higher education institution. A strength I have is that I was familiar with the culture. I have tended to favor the type of institution studied because I attended Anderson and have worked in that environment. A weakness is that previous exposure to the setting could have impacted the study and the findings, although I have reflected on my positionality to minimize the risk. Later in this chapter, I discuss how I reduced these biases and their influence.

I recognized that by interviewing people who were working at the institution, they might be biased. I purposely interviewed people who no longer worked at the institution to verify the accuracy of the research gathered and to reduce bias. I also used peer

reviewers to consider not only my potential bias, but those of individuals working at the institution.

Case study research is prone to substantiations based on preconceived notions, particularly because the researcher has to understand issues pertaining to the case before the data collection begins (Yin, 2009). The role of the researcher is to remain as objective as possible and not to draw conclusions too early in the study. According to Norris (1997), “Research whether quantitative or qualitative, experimental or naturalistic, is a human activity subject to the same kinds of failings as other human activities” (pp. 172-173). I collected and analyzed data, conducted interviews, stored information, and chronicled evidence while operating under the guidelines of case study research design and the Institutional Review Board. Later in this chapter, I discuss how I increased the trustworthiness of the findings for this study.

Data Collection

Because this was a qualitative study, my experience was one of “knowing what leads to significant understanding, recognizing good sources of data, and consciously and unconsciously testing out the veracity of their eyes and robustness of their interpretations. It requires sensitivity and skepticism” (Stake, 1995, pp. 49-50). In this study, I used the essential parts of gathering data, such as a “definition of case, list of research questions, identification of helpers, data sources, allocation of time, expenses, intended reporting” (Stake, 1995, p. 51).

To ensure this case study research was thorough, evidence was gathered from multiple sources (Yin, 2009). The information for this study was collected from the following three sources: (a) interviews, (b) documents, and (c) observations. I established

a protocol for each of these three sources to increase the trustworthiness of the research by ensuring the same data collection steps were followed in each case source.

Documents Review

As an initial stage of the study, I examined the content of documents I had identified. These documents primarily consisted of public records, such as the website of the university, mission statements, annual reports, catalogs, student handbooks, and publications sent to prospective students, alumni, and donors (Triad3, 2016).

There were two stages in the document analyses. In the first stage, I used protocol coding. Protocol coding “is the coding of qualitative data according to a preestablished, recommended, standardized, or prescribed system” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 78). Protocol coding was used for the document review because Clark’s (1972) framework is a standardized system. In the second stage, I used pattern coding to (a) develop categories or themes that occurred in the content of the documents that aligned with the fulfillment stage of the organizational saga framework, (b) consider how this information explained the context of the initiation stage of the organizational saga, and (c) identify relationships that existed among and between faculty, students, and alumni of the institution. This document analysis stage assisted in the development of specific questions for the second stage of the study, which included interviews with selected individuals at Anderson University.

In addition to the documents reviewed prior to the interviews, during the interviews I asked participants to identify any relevant documents, such as institutional reports or minutes of meetings that were not publicly accessible, as a means of triangulating data. A complete listing of the documents I reviewed is found in Appendix

A. In addition, I used observation as described later in this section that occurred during my visit to the campus. Flyers, posters, and other physical objects were also considered as documents of analysis. I anticipated that document analyses would reveal the distinctive aspects of Anderson—the traditions and values held by faculty, students, and alumni that comprised the fulfillment stage of an organizational saga. What the analyses would not identify, however, was why the culture of Anderson changed and developed along these lines—the initiation stage of an organizational saga. Moreover, I examined how Anderson developed its distinctiveness, traditions, and culture called for interviews as follow-up to document analyses.

Interviews

Interviews have been defined as “a qualitative research technique which involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation” (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Interviews allowed me the flexibility to change the direction of a discussion to capitalize on information that might surface that I did not expect to discover.

I began the interview process by selecting a group of senior administrators who would be aware of the obvious major changes at Anderson. These individuals possessed knowledge of the setting that resulted in the initiation stages of the organizational saga and efforts to continue the fulfillment stages of the saga for future stakeholders. All of these individuals were asked to read and sign an informed consent form to participate in the study (see Appendix B). The administrators interviewed included the president, provost, senior vice president for development and presidential affairs, and the senior vice president for student development. These administrators represented the

organizational structure of the institution which allowed me to connect with the desired organizational community (e.g., president, faculty, students, and alumni). I allowed for the possibility of interviewing some of the administrators' direct reports to acquire further information to describe the initiation and fulfillment stages and, thus, the organizational saga of the institution. These initial interviews lasted approximately 1 hour, were primarily conducted on campus, and involved a protocol specifically from research questions for the study that focused on the experiences of the administrators. The questions these administrators were asked are in the interview guide in Appendix C. All of the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Follow up interviews were also conducted as a part of this study with these administrators and some of their direct reports. For instance, I had to interview the president six times to acquire the information necessary for my research. These follow up interviews were to ensure accuracy of the sequence and details in the research. They were also used to clarify information gathered that was unclear. Each of these follow up interviews were less than 1 hour.

There were two stages in analyzing the interviews. In the first stage, I used protocol coding to determine where and how information from the interviews supported the document analyses and also identified additional aspects of Clark's (1972) protocol in the initiation and fulfillment stages that were not identified in the document analyses. I anticipated the interviews would bring clarity for the categories and themes identified through the pattern coding of the document analyses and further explained the development of the relationships that bind the faculty, student, and alumni constituencies of Anderson.

Observations

Observation was a strategy incorporated to provide evidence, triangulate findings, and identify “living documents” of the traditions, distinctiveness, and sense of belonging that represented the continuation of Anderson’s organizational saga. Observations involved a campus tour, where I reviewed the route a tour guide took of the campus; the buildings presented; messaging displayed, such as statues and banners; and the stories. The tour guide worked for the admission’s office, and I was a part of a regularly scheduled tour with prospective families. The campus tour guide indicated which facilities, programs, traditions, and aspects of distinctiveness the institution held in high regard. After the tour concluded, I conducted a self-guided tour to see parts of campus that were not included in the tour. During both tours, I took pictures to remember the impressions of the campus and consider how they connected to the saga. I used memos to capture initial thoughts and reflections after the tours had concluded.

I also observed participants during the interviews. For example, if a participant mentioned a book, document, or tradition that pointed to the answer of the question presented, I inquired if that information was readily accessible. This insight provided me information as to whether it was a living, working document. Stake (2006) relayed, “There are times when the best answers come from observing the participants in their daily activities” (p. 27).

Data Analyses

According to Stake (1995), data analysis was “a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations” (p. 71). Stake (1995) said, “The search for meaning often is a search for patterns, for consistency, for consistency within certain

conditions, which we call correspondence” (p. 78). Stake (1995) discussed two strategic ways to analyze data, which are categorical aggregation and direct interpretation. Stake (1995) pointed out, “Each researcher needs, through experience and reflection, to find the forms of analysis that work for him or her” (p. 77).

I coded the data as they were collected to organize the information for this case study. Coding was defined as “assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 164). I believed the interviews provided explanation for the categories and themes identified through the pattern coding of the document analyses.

The process of gathering data started with the institutional documents, continued with the interviews, and was ongoing throughout the case study. According to Merriam (1998), “Data that have been analyzed while being collected are both parsimonious and illuminating” (p. 162). To ensure accuracy as data were gathered, I used memo writing. This process was defined as “the narrated records of a theorist’s analytical conversations with him/herself about the research data” (Lempert, 2007, p. 247). Memos were chronicled during the collection of the data process, as data were analyzed and at the conclusion of each interview. Memo writing was a method for collecting my thoughts and recording emerging themes during the research process (Charmaz, 2006).

I ensured the data collected and analyzed throughout the research process and were organized and stored in a case study database (Yin, 2009). I secured a Dropbox account, which was password protected and served as the repository for the documents, memos, interview transcriptions, and any other information related to the case study. The information was stored in the Dropbox as it was collected from the various sources. This

storage system made it convenient to reference information as needed during the research process and ensured the research documents remained confidential.

Trustworthiness

Validity is viewed as a strength of qualitative research and is used to determine the accuracy of the findings in the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Terms such as *trustworthiness*, *authenticity*, and *credibility* are commonly used in qualitative literature (Creswell & Miller, 2000). According to Creswell (2007), there are eight different strategies to increase trustworthiness: (a) prolonged engagement in the field, (b) triangulation, (c) peer review, (d) negative case analysis, (e) clarifying researcher bias, (f) member checking, (g) rich, thick description, and (h) external audits. Triangulation, peer review, and member checking were used to validate the trustworthiness of this research.

Stake (1995) relayed the significance of triangulation to validating data. As mentioned earlier, I used observations to support interviews and interviews to support data analyses and triangulate the data. Because my background is exclusively in private, Christian higher education institutions, administrators from other public and private institutions were asked to review key data points, working conclusions, and implications of the study. During the peer-review process, administrators were asked to report their interpretations of the information, offer rebuttals to reduce bias, and ensure critical information was reflected accurately to offset biases of myself.

To incorporate member checking, documents were sent to the participants to verify the accuracy of the findings, themes, descriptions, and the final report (Charmaz, 2006). I emailed each participant a copy of the appropriate documents and asked them to review the information, provide their feedback, and clarify or add details to make sure the

research was accurate. After interviews were completed, a complete draft of Anderson's saga was sent to interview participants to receive their feedback. I asked the participants from the interviews, "Does what I came up with match what you told me"? This was done to ensure the accuracy of the findings. If any participant did not feel comfortable responding by email, I offered to schedule a time to meet with them individually to record their feedback. Because this study was of interest to the president of Anderson University, he agreed to assist me in encouraging participants to respond.

Ethical Considerations

This study involved some possible risks to participants in the sense that if they were employed they might be biased. I interviewed people who were employed at the institution, but they knew they could withdraw from the study if their participation made them feel uncomfortable. All information was kept strictly confidential. No FERPA, institutional guidelines, or policies were violated. I received an exemption from Institutional Review Board review at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and requested Anderson University accept UNL's review.

CHAPTER 4—FINDINGS

This chapter includes a presentation of the results of the analyses of the central research question and subquestions. The findings are presented without any interpretation, which will be reserved for greater discussion in Chapter 5. The central research question provided greater understanding of Anderson University's organizational saga from 1995 to 2015: How can the organizational saga of Anderson University between 1995 and 2015 be described and defined? To answer the central research question, two subquestions revealed the two distinct stages of an organizational saga: (a) To consider the initiation stage of the organizational saga, what conditions resulted in Anderson University undertaking steps that resulted in significant organizational change/transformation? and (b) To consider the fulfillment stage of the organizational saga, how have faculty, students, and alumni adopted the values and traditions that represent the current sense of organizational belonging at Anderson University?

The Initiation Phase of the Organizational Saga

One common approach to studying higher education as an organization is Clark's (1972) organizational saga, which was used as the framework for this study. This study provided a greater understanding for the saga of an institution, which led to a deeper consideration of the foundational premises and the culture and values that were articulated through the life of the university. Clark's (1972) framework determined "two stages can be distinguished in the development of an organizational saga, initiation and fulfillment" (p. 180). He pointed out, "initiation takes place under varying conditions and

occurs in a relatively short period of time; fulfillment is related to features of the organization that are enduring and more predictable” (p. 180).

Clark (1972) described three settings, or conditions, that initiate significant change in an organization, thus leading to the fulfillment of an organizational saga. At Anderson University, the first and second settings of initiation are reflected. However, the responses of the participants, evidence in institutional documents, and direct observation at the campus pointed to the third setting of initiation, the visionary leader, as the primary factor in the initiation stage of the organization saga. For these reasons, the first two settings are briefly discussed later in this chapter, followed by a thorough examination of the third setting of initiation, the visionary leader.

The first setting of an initiation phase “is the autonomous new organization, where there is no established structure, no rigid custom, especially if a deliberate effort has been made to establish initial autonomy” (Clark, 1972, p. 180). In 1994, Anderson had just made the transition from a junior college to a senior institution. Although not a new institution, the offering of bachelor’s degrees could be viewed as a new organization. The initial application to move to baccalaureate status filed with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools indicated the initial majors would be offered only in areas where existing faculty held appropriate credentials and where the institution already held sufficient resources to meet the requirements of the accrediting body. In addition, existing department chairs were identified to eventually become deans. New offerings were established, but no new expenditures were made. The move from 2- to 4-year status did not initiate the fulfillment stage of the saga but resulted in what Clark (1972) described as

the second setting for initiation, “the established organization in a crisis of decay” (p. 180).

Interviews with the individuals holding the positions of vice president of finance and administration and controller during the mid-1990s revealed President Hopkins believed the change to 4-year status would result in more students. According to these senior-level administrators, the site visit of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools resulted in the requirements to hire additional faculty and to dedicate additional resources for facilities and equipment to receive formal authorization from the regional accrediting agency to offer bachelor’s degrees. Even with these moves, the anticipated enrollment increase was not realized, and without a line of credit provided and extended by a local bank, Anderson would likely have closed (B. Keasler, personal communication, February 14, 2019, & K. Darnell, personal communication, August 21, 2019). As a result of the financial issues, the faculty forwarded a vote of “no confidence” to the Board of Trustees, who terminated President Hopkins (S. Wooten, personal communication, November 15, 2018).

From 1995 to 2002, Anderson was led by a new President, Dr. Lee Royce. The Royce presidency was a time when Anderson was able to stabilize financially and begin the period of transitional growth. During an interview, the individual holding the position of vice president of finance and administration during the Royce presidency stressed that at that time, approximately 90% of the institution’s revenue came from increased enrollment (B. Keasler, personal communication, February 14, 2019). During President Royce’s tenure, the headcount for enrollment increased from 700 to 1631 (Anderson University Magazine, 2010). Keasler also recalled major enhancements to the physical

plant, a new residence hall, irrigation systems, upgraded technology in the classrooms and residence halls, and additional parking. During President Royce's tenure, the campus physical plant was extended from 32 to 68 acres (Anderson University Magazine, 2010). Keasler summarized, "a primary reason that Anderson realized financial stability was due to increases in enrollment, most of which were full-time students and filling empty residential capacity during this time." Although the institution stabilized during Royce's presidency, he did not remain in office to guide the continued development of the institution.

Clark (1972) explained, "The third context for initiation is the established organization that is not in crisis, not collapsing from long decline, yet ready for evolutionary change" (p. 180). According to the Board of Trustee minutes from April 2002, Dr. Royce informed the Board of Trustees he was leaving Anderson to become the President of Mississippi College, an institution with almost twice the number of students (3,200) and with more comprehensive undergraduate and graduate academic programs. The Board of Trustees began the search for a new president in May 2002, desiring to hire a new president who would continue the enrollment growth and financial stability the Royce presidency had provided (Board of Trustee minutes, April 2002). In late 2002, a new president was appointed, one who in numerous interviews with senior administrators was described as the visionary leader who would help transform Anderson.

For the organization to become ready for evolutionary change after Anderson moved from a 2-year to a 4-year institution, a less-than-optimal transition, the institution needed a period of stabilization. It was the hiring of President Evans Whitaker in 2002 that launched the third context of initiation phase of Anderson's saga.

In interviews with administrators, faculty, staff, and alumni, President Whitaker was credited with creating the vision that led to organizational change at Anderson. During one interview, the senior vice president for development and presidential affairs emphasized, “The success that Anderson has enjoyed can be directly tied to the transformational leadership of Dr. Whitaker and his ability as an exceptional strategic planner” (W. Landrith, personal communication, November 15, 2018). In interviewing the senior vice president for development and presidential affairs, and from the interviews with the senior administration of the institution, including the provost, the senior vice president for student development, the vice provost of academic affairs, the vice president of enrollment management, and the executive assistant to the president, the dominant aspect of establishing a vision was described as the hedgehog concept, which will be explained later in this section. The statements of the senior administrators have been supported by President Whitaker, who explained he purposefully implemented the hedgehog concept at the beginning of his administration as a framework to developing a strategic planning process that would result in organizational change (E. Whitaker, personal communication, September 16, 2019).

The hedgehog concept comes from the work of Jim Collins (2001) in the book *Good to Great*. Collins shared the idea that any organization needed this concept to move from good to great and how most organizations fail to make the transition. Their hedgehog concept is determined by answering three questions:

- What are we passionate about?
- What can we conceivably be best in the world at doing?

- What drives our economic engine or how do we pay for the mission of the organization?

An institution's hedgehog concept is formed by the answers to these three questions. The hedgehog concept is conceptualized by thinking of the guiding questions as three circles that intersect (see Figure 2).

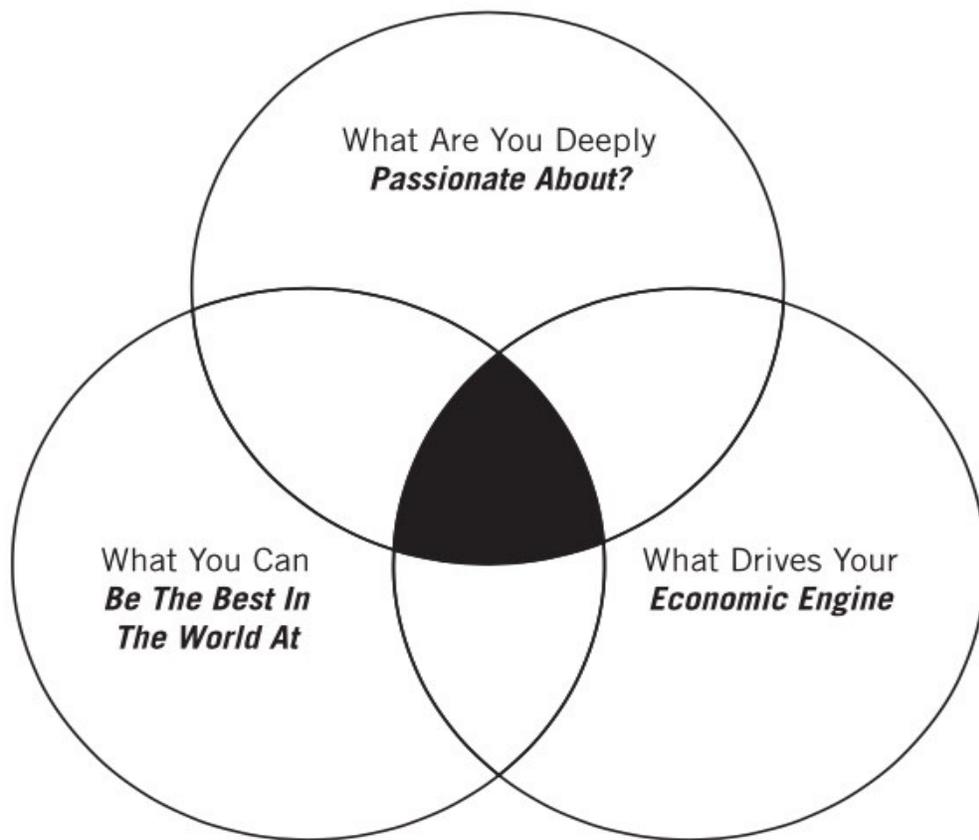


Figure 2. Three circles of the hedgehog concept.

For this study, the three questions used by Anderson in designing and fulfilling their strategy of the hedgehog concept were summarized as:

- What was it that the administration, faculty, staff and students were really passionate about at Anderson University (initiation stage)?

- What could Anderson University conceivably be really, really good at, to the extent that they could arguably be considered as the best in the world (fulfillment stage)?
- How would Anderson secure the human and financial resources necessary to achieve that passion and the goals of the organization (fulfillment stage)?

The hedgehog concept was a tool President Whitaker used to launch a strategic plan. The strategic plan was the initiation phase of Anderson's saga, during which the administration, faculty, staff, alumni, and key external stakeholders identified what they were passionate about at Anderson University. The saga was then fulfilled through what the Anderson community determined they could be the best at, while securing financial resources to mobilize that passion and enable continuous improvement toward their selected goals.

During interviews with Dr. Whitaker, it became apparent he was aware that Anderson was ready for change, and he realized time was of the essence because he was new in his presidency. As was stated earlier, Dr. Whitaker was aware of Clark's work on organizational saga and had conferred with college presidents who had also told him this type of organizational change needed to take place early in his administration. Whitaker knew the administrators, faculty, staff, and alumni had not previously been asked to participate in long-term strategic planning. Because of the institution's past anemic financial resources, previous administrations had only planned 1 year at a time (E. Whitaker, personal communication, October 16, 2019). According to Dr. Whitaker, there was a feeling on campus that since the institution had stabilized under Dr. Royce's

leadership, everyone was ready for and believed the institution was situated for a period of change and sustained growth.

Dr. Bob Hanley, the vice president of student development and dean of students at that time, agreed with Dr. Whitaker and recalled that after a period of progress at Anderson, no one wanted to go back to a period of destabilization (B. Hanley, personal communication, October 21, 2019). Consequently faculty, staff, and alumni were willing to become actively involved as “this long term planning moved the institution away from an inferiority complex and gave people a sense of we’re going to be here for a while” (B. Hanley, personal communication, October 21, 2019). Dr. Hanley also indicated that previous to the Whitaker presidency, senior administrators did most of the planning, and many members of the Anderson community did not believe their input would be considered and was not valued.

Developing the Strategic Plan

Dr. Hanley conveyed his belief that an important key in the strategic planning process was that Dr. Whitaker specifically encouraged the participation of multiple constituencies in the strategic planning process. The strategic planning group was comprised of the president, vice presidents, deans, and directors throughout the institution. He recalled that various groups of internal and external stakeholders were randomly assigned to focus groups. Each group was comprised of faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, and trustees.

The strategic planning group was charged with reading *Good to Great* to stimulate discussion about the hedgehog question: What could we be passionate about? Members of the strategic planning group then facilitated focus groups, leading to

consensus on what the institution could be best at doing. The strategic planning group decided to define where these two questions overlapped as *pillars*. According to Dr. Hanley, the strategic planning group discovered the pillars provided insight about which institutional distinctions would be worth the economic investment, which connected the last question of the hedgehog concept (B. Hanley, personal communication, October 21, 2019). This group realized they had to find a way for the economic engine to “fund” the institution’s passions which would allow them to be the best. He went on to say that it took about 3 months to reach consensus on the four pillars, and the development of the strategic plan initiated the changes that describe the fulfillment stage and represent the saga of Anderson University.

I was unable to find specific information about the strategic planning process in any of the reports, minutes, or my initial interview transcripts. Because of the importance of the hedgehog to the pillars and the strategic plan initiating the saga of Anderson, I asked for a follow-up interview with President Whitaker (E. Whitaker, personal communication, January 17, 2020). This was the sixth time I followed up with him during the study. In addition, we also exchanged emails and text messages. The following description of the strategic planning process is drawn from President Whitaker’s memory of the events around developing the plan. During this follow-up interview, he pointed out that he emphasized to the Anderson community the strategic plan would serve as a guide to what Anderson was going to prioritize, what the institution collectively would strive to achieve, and an identification as to where budget resources would be dedicated. He recalled the four pillars were initially single words—academics, faith, hospitality, and

purpose. Later, the committee decided to add the word *great* in front of each of these guiding principles to connect the *Good to Great* concepts by Collins.

The strategic planning group met biweekly to develop the strategic plan. During the process of drafting the plan, the committee solicited and received feedback from internal and external stakeholders which included faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members. Their participation was solicited by the president through memos, emails, various institutional committees, campus news, newsletters, the institutional magazine, promotional materials, and website. President Whitaker received regular updates as the strategic plan was developed by this committee. Drafts of the plan were shared with internal and external stakeholders at faculty and staff meetings to gather feedback. At these meetings faculty and staff were asked to complete a form to assist the committee in developing the respective strategies for the plan. Some of the faculty and staff who attended these meetings were part of the focus groups at the beginning of the strategic planning process. A draft of the plan was posted on Anderson's website and in alumni magazines to obtain feedback from both internal and external constituencies. The final draft of the plan was formally endorsed by the faculty and then submitted to the Board of Trustees for their approval. It was critical to Dr. Whitaker that faculty were engaged in the planning process through the focus groups and then were also given the responsibility and authority to carry out the strategic initiatives. In short, the faculty knew they mattered.

The minutes from the October 2004 meeting with the Board of Trustees indicate endorsement of the strategic plan, Vision 2014, by the faculty and approval by the board (Board of Trustee minutes, October 2004). A copy of the strategic plan, Vision 2014, that

was distributed can be viewed in Appendix D. As a verification of President Whitaker's memory of the process, I shared the description of the process with the director of marketing and the executive assistant to the president, both of whom were employed at the institution during the time the strategic plan was developed. Both also remembered the plan being distributed via email, newsletter, and on the website, the solicitation of input, and the sharing of drafts at faculty and staff meetings. I spoke with several members of the strategic planning group that were employed at Anderson during this same time period who verified the description of the strategic planning process and the plan being distributed as described. Those members include the vice president of Christian life, the vice president of enrollment management, the vice president of finance, and the provost.

Following approval of the plan, Dr. Whitaker established a policy that required each administrator to cite specific points in the strategic plan when submitting budget requests to assure the plan was fulfilled. According to Dr. Bob Hanley, who was the vice president of student development and on the strategic planning group, the plan was evaluated on an annual basis by the strategic planning group to determine progress and to make any necessary updates or revisions to the strategies in the plan (B. Hanley, personal communication, January 23, 2020). Hanley also indicated that progress reports on accomplishing the initiatives of the plan were provided to faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni and community members on an ongoing basis. The first strategic plan was a 10-year plan (2004-2014), called Vision 2014. A new 6-year plan (2015-2021) has since been developed and adopted which reaches beyond the period of this study. This new strategic plan is called Forward 2021.

The Four Pillars

The four pillars of great academics, great faith, great hospitality, and great purpose were developed by the strategic planning group based on the work they did with the Anderson community and constituents. In conducting the case study, I found the four pillars were used as a guide during the strategic planning process but not diffused in the culture of the Anderson community.

The pillars were cited regularly in the interviews I conducted. As part of the study, I participated in a preview day and at the opening session the pillars were described in detail by Pam Ross, the Vice President of Enrollment Management. As a part of the preview day, I participated in a campus tour for prospective students led by student tour guides, during which the respective pillars were mentioned but not covered in as much detail. This would indicate the student tour guides are aware of the pillars, but I could not find evidence they permeate the culture on the campus, which did not surprise me. The pillars were mentioned in several institutional documents, such as the alumni magazines and recruitment materials, and were also mentioned by preview day speakers, admissions staff, and tour guides.

According to the people who were interviewed, these pillars are ingrained within their culture but when I looked for examples they are only described in the admission's process, in the opening session of preview day and on the campus tour. I asked the President in a follow up interview where I might find references to the pillars other than in the admissions process, after some thought he agreed that the pillars are emphasized in recruiting and admissions, but not as evident in other aspects of the college culture and indicated they need to do a better job of referencing the pillars throughout the campus

and the entire educational experience (E. Whitaker, personal communication, January 17, 2020).

Findings

The primary analysis of the saga of Anderson University is that the saga was initiated by an evolutionary leader through a strategic planning process and the planning process and the resulting expansion, which fueled the economic engine, were key factors in the fulfillment stage of the saga. In simple terms, the saga of Anderson was not so much the realization of the plan, rather it was the process of going through the planning process, identifying aspirations for the institution, reaching consensus on the pillars, and then developing an economic engine that provided the necessary resources. Since the strategic plan was mostly accomplished that would indicate the planning process allowed for the creation of the economic engine which funded the initiatives. This would explain why the plan was accomplished at such a high completion rate. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was a World War II leader and U.S. President made two paradoxical statements on planning to prove this point. He said, “Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable” and also said “Plans are worthless, but planning is essential” (Quote Investigator, 2017). Again, it is not the plan, it is the process of planning. Henri Fayol who was a parent of organizational theory, introduced the notion of intentionality in planning (Dooris, Kelley, & Trainer, 2002). He described planning as “assessing the future, setting goals, and devising ways to bring about these goals” (Dooris, Kelley, & Trainer, 2002, p. 5).

What Drives Anderson’s Economic Engine?

As mentioned earlier, the saga of Anderson University is centered on an intentional process of using the hedgehog approach to develop a strategic plan. Dr.

Whitaker used the Collins (2001) work on great organizations to guide the development of the strategic plan. This work requires an economic engine, the third circle of the hedgehog plan, and a description of how the resources would be secured to achieve the strategic plan.

Anderson fueled their hedgehog plan through expanding the enrollment of the university which generated additional tuition and room and board revenue. The enrollment increased from 919 students in 1995 to 3,212 in 2015. To grow the enrollment the physical plant had to expand, so the campus acreage grew from 32 acres in 1995 to 271 acres in 2012. There were two major capital campaigns which raised nearly \$40 million. The first capital campaign *Foundations for the Future* funded an \$8.2 million, 53,000-square-foot library that was built in 2007 (D. Sutherland, personal communication, January 3, 2020). The second capital campaign *Keeping the Promise* funded a \$26 million, 90,000-square-foot student center, the construction of which began in 2014 and concluded in 2016, positioned Anderson to build five new residence halls, which increased the number of beds on campus from 700 in 1995 to 1,527 in 2015. The campaign also allowed Anderson to build new athletic complexes for softball, soccer, tennis, swimming, and intramurals that were constructed in 2015 (Anderson University, 2018d). Additionally, the old library was renovated to house the College of Education and School of Interior Design in 2007, and the old White Gym was upgraded to accommodate a new School of Nursing in 2013 (Anderson University, 2018d). From 1995 to 2015, the expansion included 30 new undergraduate programs and 25 new masters and doctoral programs that were added so the university would be more comprehensive in its academic offerings (Anderson University, 2018f).

Prior to President Whitaker initiating the hedgehog concept, Anderson expanded from a 2-year to a 4-year institution. This expansion was a necessary precursor, even though it created a period of decline. The expansion did position the institution for the Royce presidency, which was a period of stabilizing growth. Again, not the initiation of the saga but important to allowing an evolutionary leader, Dr. Whitaker, to prioritize the significance of strategic planning, community building, and resource expansion to create a time of unprecedented growth. During the period of this study, key components of expansion at the institution included: (a) transitioning from a college to a university; (b) adding undergraduate and graduate programs (including online and offsite); (c) acquiring additional land adjacent to the campus to move the athletic fields from the main campus to make room for the physical plant expansion; (d) renovating and constructing new facilities and acquiring substantial increase in acreage; and (e) drastically increasing the curb appeal of the university with new signage, irrigation, and enhancing grounds management.

Analysis of Strategic Initiatives

The strategic plan, Vision 2014, covered a 10-year period, from 2004 to 2014. Prior to this ten-year plan, the institution's strategic plans were only 1 year at a time and were developed by the administrators. The four pillars—great academics, great faith, great hospitality and great purpose—provided guidance to this strategic plan and to the strategic planning process. For each pillar there were a small number of strategic priorities developed with a larger number of strategic initiatives identified to realize the respective priorities.

I focused my analysis on the initiatives in the strategic plan because the initiatives accomplish the priorities. As I considered the strategic initiatives, it struck me that many could be grouped into similar broad categories and many overlapped the different pillars. Sorting through the initiatives I found that all could be grouped in three categories: (a) expansion, (b) faculty, staff, and students, and (c) organization and programs. After completing this grouping, I asked Dr. Whitaker and two external reviewers to review the initiatives and my grouping of the initiatives in the three respective categories. Both Dr. Whitaker and the external reviewers confirmed the groupings. I then asked Dr. Whitaker and the external reviewers to consider whether the initiatives were related to only one pillar, or could be linked or contribute to the accomplishment of other pillars. There was agreement from all that the initiatives crossed purposes. Listed below are the three categories: (a) expansion, (b) faculty, staff, and students, (c) organization and programs with the respective initiatives grouped under each category.

Strategic initiatives focused on the expansion (economic engine) included:

- Develop high quality, self-supporting graduate programs that make sense for Anderson
- Expand parking
- Design new facilities to support and foster learning, research, and teaching, including a new library
- Install new aesthetically pleasing signage to enhance campus beauty and facilitate better visitor navigation
- Restore the prayer garden at the Sullivan Building

- Enhance the beauty of the campus with additional plantings, outdoor art, gazebos, water features, flower gardens, etc.
- Professionally design all new and replacement landscaping
- Where cost economies can be gained, add environmentally conscious features to facilities
- Create more gathering spaces, both inside facilities and on the grounds

Strategic initiatives that were focused on faculty, staff, and students (people) included:

- Increase faculty salaries to median levels for comparative aspirant institutions
- Increase faculty development funding to competitive levels
- Implement a compensation management program for staff designed to keep staff salaries competitive
- Enhance student-centered services to enable academic success, such as exceptional advising and user-friendly administrative and academic processes
- Make curricular enhancements to foster the development of students' communication (verbal, written, and technological) and reasoning skills
- Establish a center for teaching to encourage, assist, and support faculty in their efforts to continuously improve as teachers
- Establish exceptional co-curricular learning opportunities designed to set AU undergraduates apart, such as extraordinary internships, original research projects, international educational travel, and Christian missions
- Enhance institutional focus on service to others and Kingdom growth
- Place a new, stronger emphasis on the creation and facilitation of extraordinary mission opportunities for students, faculty and staff

- Develop learning opportunities (e.g., speakers, conferences, peer-to-peer learning, etc.) for faculty to develop greater understanding of and practice in the integration of faith and learning. That is, to help students explore and discuss the natural intersections of the Christian faith and the disciplines
- Create and organize out of class opportunities for faculty and students to discuss the implications of the Christian faith in the disciplines and professions
- Create opportunities for juniors and seniors to reflect on their Anderson learning experience to facilitate synthesis of faith and learning and its implications for life after college
- Recruit faculty and staff who are committed to the integration of faith and learning
- Increase percentage of full-time faculty with terminal degrees from 65% to 80-85%

Strategic initiatives that were focused on the organization and programs (structure) included:

- Maintain an overall student to faculty ratio between 13 students to 1 faculty member and 17 students to 1 faculty member
- Enhance chapel with an increased budget to attract more speakers that emphasize the Christian foundations of life, work, and intellectual activity
- Provide enhanced generation-specific Christian growth and evangelism activities

- Remove concrete and asphalt from the inner campus to create additional green space
- Develop a long-term plan to remove the tower from the campus
- Designate smoking areas away from public traffic and develop a proposal for a smoke-free campus
- Establish Anderson University as the single largest contributor of community service hours in the area
- Restructure academic units to reflect the maturity and quality of the academic programs

In a follow up interview with Dr. Whitaker, he indicated that 30 out of 31 strategic initiatives in the plan were accomplished (E. Whitaker, personal communication, January 17, 2020). That represents a remarkable 96.77% completion rate. This completion rate was confirmed by Dr. Bob Hanley who, as indicated earlier, was the vice president of student development at the time and was on the strategic planning group (B. Hanley, personal communication, January 23, 2020).

The expansion of Anderson University created the economic engine that fueled the saga over the last 10 years and provided the funding to enable the institution to realize virtually all of the strategic initiatives identified in the plan. This economic engine has laid a firm foundation for the new strategic plan. It is a new 6-year plan (2015-2021) called Forward 2021. In the same interview where he verified the strategic initiatives in the plan were accomplished, I asked Dr. Whitaker why the new strategic plan was shorter than the first plan (E. Whitaker, personal communication, January 17, 2020). He indicated they had further to go as an organization when the first strategic plan was

created, and now the significance of the economic engine is more ingrained in their culture.

Findings by Pillars

The saga of Anderson was a purposeful, intentional effort to transform an institution. The systematic approach based on the hedgehog concept that established an economic engine provided the necessary resources to enable the accomplishment of virtually all of the strategic initiatives related to the respective pillars. In this section, I explain the findings by the pillars in greater detail.

Great Academics

A major component of expansion at Anderson can be included in the great academics pillar through the addition of undergraduate majors and later the addition of graduate programs at both the master's and doctoral levels. By the end of the period for this study, Anderson offered 84 undergraduate majors and minors, an increase of 72 new majors and minors from 1995 (Anderson University, 2018f). The first graduate program, a master of education degree, started in 2006 (ISSUU, 2015). The first doctoral program was a doctor of ministry in biblical preaching, which started in 2014 (G. Allgood, personal communication, January 3, 2020). Since that time, Anderson has added 25 master's and doctoral programs. Anderson also added an offsite location in Greenville, South Carolina in 2010, called the University Center (Anderson University, 2018g), where 20 undergraduate and graduate programs are offered to students. Anderson also offers nearly 30 online or hybrid undergraduate and graduate programs, as the university has sought to attract nontraditional students. The first online programs were offered in 2010 (B. Deaton, personal communication, May 3, 2019).

A particular emphasis in expanding the academic offerings was securing additional accreditations and academic affiliations to strengthen the academic programs (E. Whitaker, personal communication, October 16, 2019). Beginning with the 2003-2004 academic year, Anderson University (2020b) has achieved specialized accreditation by the following agencies:

- National Association of Schools of Music
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
- South Carolina State Board of Education (teacher education)
- South Carolina Board of Nursing
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
- Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs

Anderson has also maintained the following affiliations:

- Association of American Colleges and Universities
- International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities
- Council for the Advancement and Support of Education
- The Council of Independent Colleges
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- South Carolina Association of Colleges and Universities
- South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities
- South Carolina College Personnel Association
- North American Coalition for Christian Admissions Professionals
- National Association of College Admission Counseling

- Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

An outcome of realizing the strategic initiatives related to academics has been increased recognition in external rankings. According to the institution's magazine (Anderson University, 2020c) and website (Anderson University, 2020a), Anderson University was ranked in the fourth tier of regional colleges in *U.S. News & World Report* in September 1996. In Fall 2010, the institution had risen to the top tier (Anderson University Magazine, 2010). In the most recent rankings, Anderson was number 16 among regional colleges in the South in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings (Anderson University, 2018a). Anderson has been listed as one of the best universities in the southeastern part of the United States by the Princeton Review in 2015 (Anderson University, 2020a). Apple, Inc. recognized Anderson University as an Apple Distinguished School in 2011—an honor that places the institution among only 200 other schools of all types in the world and at the forefront of educational institutions for the use of mobile technology as a teaching and learning tool (Anderson University, 2018c).

Great Faith

Anderson University's faith component is evident on the website through the mission statement:

Anderson University is an academic community affiliated with the South Carolina Baptist Convention. It provides a competitive education in the liberal arts, professional, and graduate disciplines, and a co-curricular focus on the development of character, servant leadership, and cultural engagement. This is a diverse community that is intentionally Christ-centered, people-focused, student-oriented, quality-driven, and future-directed. (Anderson University, 2020e)

It is further evident through the vision statement:

For God and humanity, Anderson University seeks to be an *innovative, entrepreneurial, premier* comprehensive university where liberal arts, professional studies, and graduate studies thrive within an uplifting, welcoming, and distinctively Christian community of diverse faculty, staff and students dedicated to intellectually rigorous learning, a caring and hospitable campus culture, and personal transformation. (Anderson University, 2020e)

The faith component is evident in the two most recent strategic plans, Vision 2014 and Forward 2021. It is listed prominently in the recruitment materials and the Anderson magazine. The Christian flag is displayed on a flagpole in front of the main administration building which is in the center of campus. The students on the campus tour were intentional in mentioning the faith component during preview day. These students discussed openly the opportunities for Bible studies and mission trips and shared how much they enjoyed attending chapel, which is required. All faculty and staff are required to complete an employment application and certify they are a Christian as a condition for employment.

During an interview, Provost Dr. Neal indicated that Anderson's commitment to faith was not based on a claim that they "are doing it right while other faith-based institutions are doing it wrong" (R. Neal, personal communication, November 18, 2018). Rather, Dr. Neal described most faculty and staff as genuine and sincere about the faith-based component, without appearing sectarian because people of the Southern Baptist faith strive to be inclusive of other people from different faith backgrounds, not just focused on their own denomination. According to Dr. Neal, it was a priority to Dr.

Whitaker to be a top-tier university academically and to have a robust, faith-based identity. Dr. Whitaker's aspiration is for Anderson to be recognized for both top notched academics and strong faith identity with both academics and faith lifted up together in harmony and promoted as equally significant.

One piece of evidence I found on the desire to link academics and faith that I found was in symbolism. During my visits to the campus, I noticed a prominent seal, which was decided on by President Whitaker, of an acorn, oak leaf, and cross. The seal is visible as you enter the main administration building in a stained glass window and in various locations around campus, such as the new student center in the cafeteria, on the podium during graduation ceremonies, and embossed on each graduate's diploma. When asked to share what the symbols represented, the president responded:

This interlinked imagery conveys the significance of the acorn as a new beginning. If nurtured, eventually grows into a large oak with deep roots, while being influenced by the cross, which reflects the importance of their relationship with Christ. This powerful seal captures two of the physical attributes, the acorn and oak tree, of the campus and when influenced by the mission held dear by the faculty, staff, students, administrators produces what makes Anderson unique in terms of community, graduates and alumni. (E. Whitaker, personal interview, November 16, 2018)

Great Hospitality

According to Mr. Landrith, senior vice president for development and presidential affairs, there are six acres on the front of Anderson's campus that were renamed Alumni Lawn in 2014. President Whitaker wanted to name this special and majestic area to

recognize alumni and to honor their service to the institution. Mr. Landrith went on to say this space is used as the location of their outdoor graduation and is also used for homecoming and other special events when alumni are invited back to campus. He also said this area has large oak trees, green spaces, and park benches (W. Landrith, personal communication, November 15, 2018). I saw this area as a part of the campus tour for prospective students on preview day and verified Mr. Landrith's claims.

One event that promotes hospitality occurs each fall in late October, when alumni and family weekend take place on Anderson's campus (Anderson University, 2020d). In addition to a themed t-shirt and the traditional barbeque luncheon prepared on smokers, there are several activities, including:

- The Annual Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- The Annual Trojan BBQ Cook-Off
- Visits with faculty
- Homecoming court
- Athletic events (soccer and volleyball)
- Games and fun activities for all ages
- Alumni and family worship service

According to the senior vice president for development and presidential affairs (W. Landrith, personal communication, November 15, 2018), 700 to 800 alumni have attended alumni and family weekend, in addition to over 1,000 students. In addition to students, the Anderson community is also invited to attend this event which includes faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, business leaders, donors and friends of the university. Mr. Landrith said while these other groups attend this event, they only track student and

alumni attendance. One of the special ceremonies that all in attendance enjoy is the induction of the Golden Anchor Society, which is a celebration of the 50th anniversary class. This remains one of the highlights of the weekend.

Hospitality was also evident through the condition of the buildings, grounds and signage. As I toured the campus, I noticed no deferred maintenance issues. Each time I visited the campus, there were ground crews working, physical plant staff attending to the buildings, the lawns were irrigated and well kept, and the flower beds were immaculate and filled with mulch. According to Dr. Whitaker, the campus is divided into zones which are designated to various ground crews and they ensure maintenance is completed each day (E. Whitaker, personal communication, January 17, 2020). The campus signage and banners caught my eye because they are consistent with the branding of the university. A visitor would have no difficulty navigating the campus because the signage directs you to your desired location. The lettering on the buildings is the same and even the signage in the buildings is uniform. The bathrooms are maintained throughout the day and I noticed most were renovated recently. The trash cans, light poles, benches, swings, etc. are black and match in terms of style. Even the sidewalks are well designed to easily navigate around campus. Lastly, I noticed the parking had all been moved to the perimeter of the campus so the campus is pedestrian friendly.

Great Purpose

In talking with Dr. Whitaker, he said Anderson is passionate about helping people, particularly their students, understand that they have a purpose in life and helping them to discover that purpose. He communicated what we know about purpose is:

that as human beings we don't just have one purpose for our lives, but that it may be our calling or our vocation or our God-given charge in life to do some things for one season in our life and do something totally different for another part of life. But how do you equip people to be able to do what it is that they are purposed to do and give them the tools and the knowledge that they need to be able to make that shift and that transition when it comes. And so that ties in very well with the liberal arts ethos of Anderson University. Even though we're comprehensive, we very much believe in the liberal arts and we believe that liberal arts help people become good problem solvers, and people who can work together. And so we said we're about all those things. We're passionate about helping people find their purpose in life. If they're a theater major, whether they actually go into theater or not, if being a good theater major helped them become a good salesman then that's great. If that's what they want to do and that's what they're purposed to do. They may discover later on in their college career that hey, I'm in theater but what I'd really like to do is be in sales. Well, they can use that liberal arts background to do that. (E. Whitaker, personal interview, November 16, 2018)

Mr. Landrith, senior vice president for development and presidential affairs, said members of the Golden Anchor Society, which is a group of alumni from 50 years ago, talk about how much their time at Anderson shaped their lives (W. Landrith, personal communication, January 17, 2020). Mr. Landrith is the chief administrator over alumni and fundraising at Anderson so he spends a great deal of this time at alumni events, family weekends, conducting fund raising activities and committee meetings with this

group. According to Mr. Landrith, this is the time when their passions were stirred about what God was calling them to do. He said they are endeared to Anderson because they feel like they have lived rewarding lives. Their fondness of Anderson causes them to volunteer for alumni committees, they serve on the board of visitors, some of them are trustees and others are regular contributors to the annual fund and capital campaign or they willingly enlist others to give back. Some of them are major contributors and offer their time to cultivate other donors because they desire for current students to have the opportunities they enjoyed. Lastly, Mr. Landrith said they talk about how Anderson made them better citizens and they feel because of their time at Anderson, both inside and outside the classroom, they found their purpose in life.

In reviewing the Anderson magazine for the period of this study there is evidence from many alumni of all ages that share these sentiments about their time at Anderson. One of the stories was about how Kip and Kim Miller met at Anderson in the beautiful white swings on the front of campus. Kip recalled, “as the swings swung so was our relationship” (Anderson Magazine, 2015). He attributes his marriage to his wife, Kim, and their purpose in life to the time they spent at Anderson, both inside and outside the classroom.

Summary

Through multiple data sources I identified how the saga of Anderson was initiated. One president’s decisions did not set the stage for the initiation phase, but without the decision to move to a senior institution there would not be a saga of Anderson from 1995 to 2015. The next president stabilized the institution financially, an important part of setting the stage for an evolutionary leader. This evolutionary leader established

an intentional process resulting in the development of a strategic plan and consequently, initiating the saga of Anderson. Through a period of substantial expansion in curriculum, programs and degrees, and in the physical plant, Anderson fueled the economic engine necessary to fund the initiatives in the strategic plan through increased enrollment. I reorganized the initiatives listed for the respective pillars into categories that illustrate the primary emphases in the plan. Evidence of the four pillars being realized or achieved was also presented. Chapter 5 moves to discussion of my findings in relation to Clark's framework and the findings from previous studies of organizational saga.

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the study in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and Clark's framework of the organizational saga.

Suggestions for future research studies on the saga of higher education organizations are presented. As the study is about one specific institution, generalization to broader practice is not possible, but implications specific to Anderson University are offered.

Studying Higher Education From an Organizational Perspective

As was mentioned in previous chapters, colleges and universities have been studied as organizations in a number of ways. One approach has been the utilization of the organizational saga (Clark, 1972). I incorporated Clark's framework in the examination of a single case study, Anderson University. As with all qualitative research, the findings are not broadly generalizable, yet the "type" of institution studied, a private, faith-based university, is of interest due to the number of institutions of this type struggling financially, seeking "niche markets" for their academic programs to be competitive, and adapting more highly refined business practices. The guiding question for this study was, "How can the organizational saga of Anderson University between 1995 and 2015 be described and defined?"

The findings of Chapter 4 revealed the saga of Anderson was a purposeful, intentional effort to transform an institution. Collins' (2001) hedgehog concept established an economic engine that provided the necessary resources to enable the accomplishment of virtually all of the strategic initiatives related to the respective pillars identified in the strategic plan: (a) great academics, (b) great faith, (c) great hospitality, and (d) great purpose. The development of the economic engine and linking the

budgeting processes to the strategic initiatives ensured the resources were available and the plan was accomplished. The primary finding of this study is that the saga of Anderson University was initiated through a strategic planning process, and the planning process and the resulting expansion of the institution were key factors in the fulfillment stage of the saga. In simple terms, the saga of Anderson was not so much the realization of the plan, rather the saga of Anderson was the process of planning, the identification of aspirations for the institution, reaching consensus on the pillars, and then developing an economic engine that provided the necessary resources to fulfill the plan.

A review of the literature revealed six dissertation studies that used Clark's organizational saga as the framework for case studies of faith-based higher education institutions. As noted earlier, the initiation phase of the saga of Anderson developed through a sequence of years with evidence of each of the respective settings of initiation identified by Clark (1972). Also as mentioned earlier, the evolutionary leader was a part of the initiation of the saga. The third setting only happened because of the contributions of the leaders who came before Dr. Whitaker. Anderson was at a unique point for a great leader—if Anderson was not yet at that unique point, their story would likely be very different. Sellman's study (1998) on Mission College also found evidence of each of the three stages of initiation. It is not clear, however, whether the first setting of initiation led to the second, which allowed the third. This "build up" within the initiation stages makes Anderson's saga unique from the other studies reviewed in Chapter 2. The setting that initiated Anderson's saga involved a change in leadership. Two of the dissertations (Sellman, 1998; Woods, 1998) also had sagas that were initiated after a leadership change.

I found evidence in Anderson's saga for all six stages of fulfillment identified in Clark's framework. It is important to note, however, that my evidence for two stages, specifically student and alumni buy-in, are primarily through descriptions from the Anderson administration about programs, activities, and efforts to engender buy in. A limitation of this study is that I did not interview or observe students or alumni to verify that these efforts to engender belonging had been realized. The other dissertation studies were similar to Anderson as they all had faculty buy-in. Spellman (1988) and Puls (2013) found evidence for five of the six fulfillment stages. Both of these studies found the same five fulfillment stages and both did not represent evidence of the last stage: organizational belonging. The other studies reflected three stages of fulfillment. Wood's (1998), Borden's (1990) and Ague's (2014) studies reflected faculty, student, and alumni buy-in while there was evidence in Lambert's (2014) study of faculty and student buy-in and generalized traditions regarding the fulfillment stages.

Borden's (1990) study is unique because it connected culture and organizational saga of an institution together. Puls's (2013) study is unique because it involved a number of Jesuit institutions that used their membership to fill faculty, staff, and administrative roles in their colleges and universities. Lambert's study (2014) on Gettysburg College is different from the others in that this organizational change was led by the faculty in the Lutheran colleges. Ague's (2014) study was different from the others as the college wanted to change their culture during a campus relocation. Anderson was unique from these other dissertation studies in that a for profit technique called the hedgehog concept was a key factor in the organizational saga and was used to guide the strategic planning process. In addition, none of the other studies involved the

development of a 10-year strategic plan, and through the process of planning developed an economic engine to accomplish the plan.

The findings of the fulfillment stage of this case study closely followed the six areas included in Clark's (1972) framework. The first area of fulfillment is faculty buy-in. This stage is the most important because without faculty buy-in, the other stages in fulfillment will not be achieved. In the university setting, faculty are essential as a significant group of supporters in order for a saga to be fulfilled. Clark (1972) discussed:

A single leader, a college president, can initiate the change, but the organizational idea will not be expanded over the years and expressed in performance unless ranking and powerful members of the faculty become committed to it and remain committed even after the initiator is gone. (p. 181)

As faculty take ownership of the idea, the chances of change standing the test of time are much greater, even as new leadership replaces the older leaders who originated the idea.

As identified in Chapter 4, the strategic planning process was a key factor in achieving faculty buy-in, since faculty were asked to be involved throughout the process and previously had perceived that their input was not sought or considered. In fact, the faculty were asked to approve the final plan before it was submitted to the Board of Trustees for their consideration. It was critical to Dr. Whitaker that faculty were engaged in the planning process through the focus groups and then were also given the responsibility and authority to carry out the strategic initiatives. In short, the faculty knew they mattered. During an interview, the chief academic officer emphasized that the faculty took ownership of transitioning Anderson from a college to university status with graduate programs (R. Neal, personal communication, November 15, 2018). Dr. Neal

also stressed that the faculty were closely involved in developing the organizational structure at Anderson as academic departments became schools or colleges and department heads/chair's titles were changed to deans.

Lambert's (2014) study of Gettysburg College also found faculty buy-in as a crucial component in the fulfillment stage. Gettysburg faced a time of unrest when their president was in a contentious situation with church leadership. Lambert found that the organizational change at the institution was led by the faculty of this Lutheran college. The findings of Sellman's (1988) study also indicated that the fulfillment stage of the organizational saga was strongly influenced by their faculty. As with Lambert's study (2014) and Sellman's (1988) study, organizational change was led by the faculty. With both of these studies, the faculty were active in stabilizing their institutions during a period of financial instability. They provided leadership in the absence of presidential leadership so the institutions could continue to function, and students could continue to learn both inside and outside the classroom. They were also involved in stabilizing the institution's relationship with their denomination. Lambert's study (2014) revealed the faculty cared so deeply for their students they were willing to provide services outside their traditional faculty roles.

Dr. Whitaker knew faculty buy-in at Anderson was important to successful strategic planning, so he asked the faculty to be engaged in the strategic planning process. To support his conclusion, a common finding in studies focused on strategic planning is the importance of developing consensus for the plan by gaining broad-based support and participation by both faculty and administrators (Bryson & Bromley, 1993; Dyson & Foster, 1982; Hurst & Peterson, 1992). Faculty support of the planning process and the

resulting plan has been found as a critical factor to institutional success (Garmon, 1984; Peterson & White, 1992; Rhoades, 2000; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). The level of faculty involvement in the strategic planning process at Anderson supports previous findings on the importance of encouraging faculty involvement in the planning process (Garmon, 1984; Peterson & White, 1992; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). In addition to participation in the planning process, the integration of the plan into the budgeting process at Anderson supports the research literature on the importance of integrating the plan into the activities of the institution, thus increasing faculty buy-in (Larson, Milton, & Schmidtlein, 1988; Peterson & White, 1992; Waters, 1996; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). To further increase faculty buy-in, Dr. Whitaker lowered the number of hours faculty taught per semester from 15 to 12, actively pursued a plan to raise faculty salaries to the level of benchmark institutions, and established a teaching center to provide professional development and support for faculty.

The second area of fulfillment is visible distinctiveness. Clark (1972) relayed, “For a college to transform purpose in to a credible story of unique accomplishment, there must be visible practices with which claims of distinctiveness can be supported; that is, unusual courses, noteworthy accomplishments, or special methods of teaching” (p. 181). The program becomes a set of exceptional practices that produce signs and rites that are advanced with meaning. When I asked Dr. Whitaker about Anderson in regard to visible distinctiveness he responded by saying:

We've also developed some programs and taken some risks that other institutions like ours have not taken. We're highly technological. We've been recognized as an Apple distinguished school three times. We led in the mobile learning revolution.

We didn't get recognized for it by the higher education community as much as we've been recognized for it by Apple, because we employed iPads here on our campus very early on. It was actually the year that iPads came out; we provided them to every student. And our faculty became very engaged in how to use the technology that the iPad and similar devices provide and maximize that for teaching and learning. And so we've stayed competitive, we've been risk takers.

We have said that we wanted to be at a time when we didn't know exactly how we were going to do it, part of our strategic plan at the very beginning of 2004 was that we wanted to become a leader in the field of technology in higher education. Not just Christian higher education, but higher education period. We had no idea how we were going to do that. But we had that as a goal. And with the mobile learning technology we saw the opportunity to become a leader, and we have become a leader, and we're continuing to be a leader in that field. Other institutions continue to turn to us for counsel and advice. So we've done some things like that. We've been forward thinking. We have given not only the impression but we have the substance to back it up that we are a fast moving, nimble organization (E. Whitaker, personal interview, November 16, 2018).

The efforts of blending the pillars of great academics and great faith also stand as a distinctiveness of Anderson University. This blending is reflected in the strategic plan, recruitment materials, on the university website, and in the Anderson magazine. The combination of these pillars was evident as student tour guides highlighted opportunities such as Bible studies and mission trips, and shared how much they enjoyed attending chapel, but they also mentioned being challenged in the classroom and being prepared for

their careers. The integration of faith and learning is reflected in CHR 105-Introduction to the Bible, which is a required course for graduation. Students are also required to attend campus worship and be a part of community service opportunities. Dr. Whitaker is committed to Anderson being recognized as a top-tier university academically and to having a robust, faith-based identity. It is his desire for these two pillars to be promoted as equally significant.

Puls (2013) connected Clark's (1972) work around visible distinctiveness by pointing out the academic program is represented by the curriculum and the nature of what makes the learning experience unique at Jesuit institutions. Jesuit education was unique because it reflected a "willingness to change traditional approaches in order to accomplish their goals" (Puls, 2013, p. 58). As mentioned above, Anderson was also willing "to change traditional approaches" by focusing on being more highly technological. Apple recognized Anderson because they decided to employ the use of iPads which caused the faculty to embrace technology and its application. This innovation deepened the academic learning experience and created a visible distinctiveness. The curriculum was broad but "had respect for the physical world both as understood in science and in the arts" (Puls, 2013, p. 58). There was a ministry component that focused on community service and educating the poor. The Jesuits invested in faculty development to ensure their faculty were highly skilled both inside and outside the classroom.

The third area of the fulfillment stage is alumni buy-in. Clark (1972) conveyed, The saga also becomes fixed in the minds of outside believers devoted to the organization, usually the alumni. Alumni would be one of the best groups

associated with the institution because they hold enduring beliefs of the saga but are not affected by organizational change as current administrators, students, faculty, and staff are. Their thoughts are warmly entrenched in the past as they remember the set of exceptional happenings in the campus community. (p. 182)

One event that alumni enjoy occurs each fall in late October, when alumni and family weekend takes place on Anderson's campus (Anderson University, 2020d). In Chapter 4, the alumni and family weekend is described under the great hospitality pillar. The annual attendance of between 700 and 800 alumni is evidence of alumni buy-in to the expansion of Anderson University. Contributions to the fund raising initiatives to expand the physical plant of the institution is an additional piece of evidence that indicates alumni support to the saga of Anderson.

Pul's (2013) study pointed out the external social base is the alumni and the support they provide even after leaving the institution is meaningful. With a living alumni base totaling almost 2 million across the AJCU institutions, this external social base can have vast influence. A unique factor in this study involved the number of Jesuit institutions that used their alumni and membership to fill faculty, staff, and administrative roles in their colleges and universities. According to Puls (2013), the membership of the Catholic denomination was in decline, and organizational saga was used to assist the leadership of the Jesuit faith in developing a greater understanding of the history and culture of Jesuit higher education to integrate lay staff into these institutional roles.

While Anderson's external social base may not have almost 2 million alumni, they are passionate and as mentioned earlier their fondness causes them to volunteer for alumni committees, serve on various boards, serve as trustees, give to the annual fund

and capital campaigns, and actively recruit others to give back to Anderson. Some of them are major donors and are willing to recruit other donors.

The fourth area is student buy-in. Clark (1972) pointed out, “The study body is the third group of believers, not overwhelmingly important but still a necessary support of the saga” (p. 182). For the saga to endure, the students must support this change over a long period of time as they connect with beliefs administrators and faculty hold dear. For organizational saga to have structure, it must eventually take the form of a design, and students must take ownership as they reflect on the image of the institution. Dr. Whitaker relayed traditions he has spearheaded to build buy-in from students. He said,

We have a beautiful gateway on the front of our campus, or a beautiful archway rather, on the front of our campus that leads up through the middle of the campus to the administration building across Alumni Lawn, which is six acres of lush green grass and hundred year old plus oak trees. And so we thought that it would be good to use the archway and the front of the campus for a ceremony that we have incorporated into a matriculation service. And we call it the Archway Walk. Freshman check in on Saturday and the next day is Sunday and we have a family worship service on campus with parents and students. Part of that worship service is also a matriculation service. So one of the things that we do after the actual gathering and observation of the worship service, we then move students to the walkway so that every freshman can walk under the walkway and symbolize their entrance into the university. My wife and I shake hands with all of the students, we welcome them officially into the university. We present them with a sprig of ivy that we have clipped from the university grounds. We instruct the students

that they are to give their sprig of ivy to their parents so that they can go home and if they choose to root the ivy and then plant it somewhere at their home so it can be a constant reminder of their sons and daughters and their journey at Anderson University. So that's been very symbolic. We have mothers who cry at that ceremony. (E. Whitaker, personal interview, November 16, 2018)

Student tour guides also served as evidence to the distinctiveness of Anderson as a faith-based institution. During the campus tour, tour guides discussed co-curricular opportunities that were available, which include Bible study and mission trips. I was also struck by the student statement that the required attendance at chapel was something the student population appreciated.

Wood's (1998) study identified a student work program that created a strong sense of student buy-in at Berea College. The purpose of the student work program was "to promote learning and serving in community through the Student Labor Program, honoring the dignity and utility of all work, mental and manual, and taking pride in work well done" (Berea College, 2020b, para. 1). Also, at Berea no student pays tuition; each student receives a Tuition Promise Scholarship worth about \$100,000 over four years. Berea provides these scholarships to each student through its endowment and the generous support of alumni, friends, organizations and others who believe that family incomes should not dictate students' outcomes (Berea College, 2020a).

Just as the Student Labor Program at Berea has a purpose in the lives of students by providing meaningful work opportunities, it was apparent Anderson is passionate about helping people, particularly their students, understand that they have a purpose in life and helping them to discover that purpose. From Dr. Whitaker to each administrator,

faculty or staff member and the students I met on the campus tour, it was evident that Anderson is student centered. Even Anderson's tagline "Knowledge for the Journey" is found on the website and promotional materials. This tagline represents the integration of faith and learning and is communicated to prospective students as how Anderson is different from other college choices. According to Dr. Whitaker, it was designed with the intent to create student buy-in as they are being recruited to Anderson and as a differentiator in attracting mission fit students. This buy-in continues as they participate in walking through the arches as they enter Anderson as new students, and then symbolically walking out of the same arches as they leave Anderson prepared for purpose driven work.

The fifth area in the fulfillment stage is generalized traditions. Clark (1972) explained the saga is, "even more widely expressed as a generalized tradition in statues and ceremonies, written histories and current catalogues, even in an 'air about the place' felt by participants and some outsiders" (p. 182).

These are significant, generalized traditions in the saga of Anderson because, according to Dr. Whitaker, "These traditions were more than a ritual, they are a purposive way to create a community" (personal interview, November 16, 2018). Some of the traditions have been around for a long time. One generalized tradition is an event called Christmas First Night. This is a concert at the beginning of the Christmas season, in either late November or early December, where faculty, staff, students, and alumni come together. As a part of this tradition, the music faculty provide a concert for the community. After the concert, the lighting of the yule log occurs as a part of Christmas First Night tradition.

Another tradition involves Diane Whitaker, the president's wife, who bakes homemade chocolate chip cookies for each student during the exam period, twice a year. She wanted each student at Anderson to know how deeply she cared for their wellbeing and wanted them to feel at home during this stressful time. This tradition started in the president's house but quickly caught on, and now the cookies are delivered to each student's room in their residence hall by the president and his wife. The cookies are delivered in a bag with a note attached from Diane Whitaker that says, "Good luck on your exams. Personally baked with love" (E. Whitaker, personal interview, November 16, 2018).

Puls (2013) pointed to Jesuit institutions use of imagery as physical representations of traditions, including the imagery involved in ceremonies, expressed through written accounts, and visible in buildings and statues. These symbols are part of worship services, weddings, classroom settings and everyday life. They are reminders of oaths, commitments, and remembrances that provide "core strength for an institution, allowing for greater stability and enduring support from a variety of key constituencies: faculty, alumni, students, etc." (p. 20). Lambert (2014) discussed the concept of saga as it is reflected in the Lutheran experience. The story of the institutions' beginning created inspiration that is captured through symbols and traditions. Perhaps the most recognizable symbols are the "Luther Rose" or "Luther Seal" which was designed by Martin Luther. Some of the other symbols include an anchor, monograms, crosses, scallop shell, lamb and fish. All of these are linked to Greek words, symbols and phrases in addition to scriptures from the Bible (Markey, 2017).

Anderson is connected to the studies of Puls (2013) and Lambert (2014) through imagery and the symbol of the institutional seal of an acorn, oak leaf, and cross as it represents the faith-based tradition of Anderson. Appearing in daily life on campus, at important ceremonies, and included on diplomas and class rings, this symbol appears from the start of the educational experience and extends beyond graduation.

The sixth and last area of the fulfillment stage is organizational belonging. Clark (1972) relayed that organizational saga was layered “with deep emotional commitment, believers define themselves by their organizational affiliation, and in their bond to other believers they share an intense sense of the unique” (p. 183). When an institution has a strong organizational saga, there is a group of individuals who believe they are a select group of people. There is a great deal of emotional engagement in this group, which causes them to be a close community. Clark shared:

Such bonds give the organization a competitive edge in recruiting and maintaining personnel and helps it to avoid the vicious circle in which some actual or anticipated erosion of organizational strength leads to the loss of some personnel, which leads to further decline or loss. There is a strong sense of devotion among this group so that, even if everything is not perfect, they would rather stay than leave for another opportunity. Being a part of their group with shared beliefs is more significant to them in the long run than personal gain would be in the short run. (p. 183)

When I asked President Whitaker about the significance of organizational belonging, he said:

Organizational belonging creates community. It brings people together. When people experience the same things and when people understand organizational belonging they begin to understand for lack of a better term, emotional deposits. They deposit a lot of emotions into organizational belonging. Memories are very powerful. We all know what it's like to hear an old song that we grew up with that we haven't heard for years and think about the images that stirs up in our minds and in our hearts. I think the same thing is true of the organizational belonging that we observe and experience on our campus. (E. Whitaker, personal interview, November 16, 2018)

I also asked Mr. Wayne Landrith to share an example of organizational belonging. According to the Senior Vice President for Development and Presidential Affairs, the ring ceremony is a formal gathering held each February to honor May graduates and their families. Mr. Landrith said,

Class rings are not just a special piece of jewelry but a symbol of all that the University stands for and a reminder of each student's journey. When students receive their rings, they accept a token of Anderson University tradition. It's a mark that links alumni together generation after generation. Each small image emblazoned on the traditional ring holds meaning: the cross represents Anderson as an intentionally Christ-centered institution, the oak leaf stands for the knowledge gained in its halls, the acorn signifies students' future possibilities, the white swings symbolize the special relationships formed and the sketch of Merritt Hall (main administration building) honors the heart and history of campus. As students leave Anderson University, they leave with this story fastened on their

hand and an enduring sense of Trojan pride. (W. Landrith, personal communication, February 28, 2020)

The literature review also included a number of sources that examined higher education organizations from a cultural perspective (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Birnbaum, 1988; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1988; Trice & Beyer, 1993). A commonality of each of these works is that cultural forms can serve as a method to study an organization, especially attempts to create positive change or strengthen organizational belonging. The saga of Anderson University does not focus on culture or cultural change during this 20-year period. Rather, the saga focuses on the impact of planning on identifying common organizational goals and organizational develop to realize these common goals.

Implications for Anderson University

A key goal for Anderson University is Dr. Whitaker's aspiration to be recognized for both top notched academics and strong faith identity. This goal is supported in two of the four pillars—great academics and great faith. As outlined in the literature review, Hughes and Adrian (2002) contended that Christian higher education institutions can be first rate academic institutions that maintain a commitment to faith. As with the institutions Hughes and Adrian reviewed, Anderson has been intentional about great academics and great faith. The institution clearly celebrates academics in terms of promoting institutional rankings, accreditations, and other recognition. Most of the evidence I found regarding faith, however, came from interviews or was found in recruitment materials. An implication for Anderson University is determining how the commitment to faith is broadly articulated. Benne (2001) points to ethos as a key

component of Christian tradition. Included in his description of ethos are two co-curricular activities that were related to prospective Anderson students by student tour guides—chapel and religious formation. Had I not participated in a tour for prospective students, however, I would not have learned of the importance the current students place on these opportunities.

The four pillars of Anderson University—great academics, great faith, great hospitality, and great purpose—emerged through the strategic planning process. My study revealed that these pillars are clearly shared with potential students and their families during the recruitment and admission process. Specific examples of the pillars during the subsequent academic years, however, are not as evident. This may be because of the relatively short period of time since the end of the saga. As time goes on, the pillars will be even more evident in the day-to-day life of the institution. My contention, however, is that the pillars may not be as evident because the saga is more about the impact of the process for strategic planning, not necessarily the plan. A second primary implication for Anderson University is how the pillars become more evident in the day-to-day activities of the institution and do not have to be described by the administration.

I have discussed the work of Collins' (2001) *Good to Great* and outlined the hedgehog concept and its importance to Anderson's success. Another one of the characteristics of companies identified in Collins' work is "first who, then what?" (p. 41). Many people describe this as "getting the right people on the bus (p. 42)." In Anderson's saga, an emphasis was placed on the importance of involving the faculty in planning. The saga of Anderson University, in large part, depended on whether or not the faculty as a whole would "get on the bus." A primary step was the invitation for faculty to become

active participants in the planning process. I am not able to claim that all faculty were on board, but it is obvious that sufficient numbers of faculty participated in planning and in carrying out the necessary activities of expansion and growth.

The strategic plan developed at Anderson demonstrates the “flywheel effect” (Collins, 2001, pp. 164-165). The hedgehog approach resulted in the identification of four pillars. The strategic plan established a small number of priorities for each pillar, with larger numbers of strategic initiatives aligned to the priorities. As part of the analysis, I focused on the initiatives since the accomplishment of the smaller initiatives resulted in the accomplishment of the larger goals. This was significant because too often in higher education leaders tend to focus on the big picture rather than the smaller initiatives which accomplish the broader priorities. Collins pointed out, “Good to great comes about by a cumulative process—step by step, action by action, decision by decision, turn by turn of the flywheel—that adds up to sustained and spectacular results” (Collins, 2001, p. 165).

Lastly, Collins (2001) mentioned disciplined action which means understanding what is important to achieve and what is not important to achieve. In Anderson’s case, the strategic planning group focused on developing their economic engine, which funded their expansion and accomplished their plan. According to Collins (2001), the key to going from good to great is to get the right people on board, engaging them in critical thinking, then taking disciplined action aligned with the hedgehog concept. As I mentioned earlier in the study, Dr. Whitaker was aware of this book and purposefully introduced the hedgehog concept at Anderson. As a result, other leaders in higher education can be more successful by getting the right people on board, engaging them in critical thinking, and then taking disciplined action in line with their institutional values.

The guiding question of this study was “How can the organizational saga of Anderson University between 1995 and 2015 be described and defined?” Another way of stating the question is “How has Anderson flourished?” It all started with the development of the pillars. As I conducted the study, the pillars were most obvious in the admissions processes, but not so obvious in the day to day activities of the institution. In researching how the pillars were developed, I was not able to find much information on the actual planning process, so I had to rely on interviews to learn more. I also discovered the institution did not collect information to support the accomplishment of the pillars. For example, great hospitality is a pillar that extends to anyone visiting the campus. Although Anderson keeps track of attendance of the number of students who come to particular events, they do not keep track of all constituencies such as alumni, members of the community, and representatives of business and industry. There are two points here: (a) how can Anderson demonstrate the four pillars in the everyday life of the institution, and (b) how can Anderson share its story so that it is more obvious or transparent to external communities—which might influence grants, fundraising, community support, and institutional reputation. I recommend the administration at Anderson examine potential barriers to integrating the pillars more completely in the day-to-day culture of the university. My recommendation to the administration of Anderson is that they (a) display the pillars in prominent locations around campus; (b) ensure they are in promotional materials, social media, and on the website; (c) make sure they are visible at university events; and (d) ensure the pillars are included in formal speeches. I would recommend the pillars be the guiding principles in telling the story of Anderson, not just to prospective students but in orientations for new administrators, faculty, and staff. I

would recommend the pillars be described on each job description and in all announcements of administrative, faculty, and staff openings. I recommend the pillars be included in job vacancies. Rather than just listing the pillars in the vacancy statement, each applicant should be asked to indicate how they would contribute to the pillars as a part of the interview/application process. The pillars should be evident on the employment application and, where appropriate, should be incorporated into the evaluation process of every employee. Further, efforts to identify “where” and “how” the institution is fulfilling the pillars—in academics, student life, and co- or extra-curricular activities—should be plainly stated in syllabi, on websites related to the functional area, and used as part of the process of continuous institutional improvement.

I also recommend a campaign to share the saga of Anderson with external constituencies. Developing a series of videos around each of the respective pillars that include the perspectives of the president, senior administrators, board of trustee members, community leaders, donors, alumni, students, faculty, and staff would greatly expand the telling of the Anderson story. I recommend promoting the pillars at welcome week as students arrive and other student programming, and in an introductory course and capstone course. The pillars were used to guide the strategic planning process and they answer the questions “Why Anderson?” and “How is Anderson different?”

Areas for Future Research

A key limitation to this study was that I had little interaction with students and alumni. This limitation results from the choice of organizational saga as the framework, a framework designed to examine the organization and not the individuals who are members of the organization. The purpose of the study was to look at organizational

functioning and not the perceptions of individuals about their preferences, likes, or dislikes. Evidence of buy-in from these respective student and alumni constituencies exists primarily through interviews with administration and review of documents such as the alumni magazine. This reflection points to the need for additional research on factors that impact student and alumni buy-in.

The key finding of this study is that the process of developing a strategic plan led to the expansion of an institution in order to secure the financial resources necessary to realize the plan. A follow-up study of Anderson, one that examines whether the economic engine was maintained over a period of years, would provide a longitudinal examination of an organization that is not found in the literature. It may be that the saga of Anderson I uncovered is only the beginning of the story.

Most certainly, the organization saga of other institutions and other institutional types is warranted given current criticisms of higher education and the anticipated enrollment crisis that is projected to occur with shifting demographics, declining numbers of potential students, and questions about the worth of higher education.

Conclusion

The question that I began with was how can the organizational saga of Anderson University between 1995 and 2015 be described and defined? To examine this question, I used the framework of the organizational saga, to learn the story of the institution during a specific time period. The saga I uncovered revolved around a progression of incidents. An attempt to remain viable by moving from Anderson Junior College to Anderson College, and less than good results in that attempt, led to the importance of a time to stabilize. After a period of stabilization, an evolutionary leader comes along at what

appeared to be just the right time in terms of an institution willing to change. Because of the willingness to change and the engagement of faculty in the process leading to change, there was significant buy-in to a strategic planning process. This process incorporated the systematic approach of the hedgehog concept, resulting in an expansion of the institution in order to provide the necessary resources to enable the accomplishment of virtually all of the strategic initiatives related to the respective pillars identified in the strategic plan. I am indebted to the individuals at Anderson University who were willing to share their time in multiple interviews and to locate various institution documents and archives for my review. My sincere thanks for your willingness to be the case I studied. Most importantly, I am indebted to Burton Clark as the organizational saga framework enabled me to gain a clear understanding of how Anderson University thrived.

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APPENDIX A
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1) Anderson University Website - the following pages were reviewed:

History

<http://catalog.andersonuniversity.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=466#history>, n.d.

About AU

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/about-au>, n.d.

Mission, Vision and Values Statement

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/about-au/mission-vision-values-statement>, n.d.

Colleges and Schools

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/colleges-schools>, n.d.

Academics at AU

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/colleges-schools/academics>, n.d.

Degree Programs

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/colleges-schools/programs>, n.d.

Academic Catalog

<http://catalog.andersonuniversity.edu/>, n.d.

Athletics

<http://autrojans.com/landing/index>, n.d.

Giving

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/giving>, n.d.

Donors

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/giving/donor-recognition>, n.d.

Parent Association

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/giving/parent-association>, n.d.

Board of Visitors

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/giving/board-of-visitors>, n.d.

Accreditation and Affiliations

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/colleges-schools/accreditations-affiliations>, n.d.

Quality Enhancement Plan

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/sites/default/files/about/president/qep.pdf>, n.d.

Events

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/events>, n.d.

News

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/news>, n.d.

Campus Enhancements

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/campus/enhancements>, n.d.

Student Activities

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/campus/student-activities>, n.d.

Anderson University Magazine

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/about-au/anderson-university-magazine>, n.d.

Anderson University Newsletter

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/alumni/anderson-university-newsletter>, n.d.

Homecoming and Family Weekend

<https://andersonuniversity.edu/alumni/homecoming>, n.d.

Admission and Financial Aid

<https://www.andersonuniversity.edu/admission>, n.d.

Marketing and Communications

<https://www.andersonuniversity.edu/marketing>, n.d.

- 2) The Campus History Series – book chronicling the history of the institution
- 3) Fund Raising Materials
- 4) Alumni Materials
- 5) Marketing Materials
- 6) Recruiting Materials
- 7) Athletic Materials
- 8) Strategic Plans
- 9) Planning Documents
- 10) Events and Activities
- 11) Accreditation Reports

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

Informed Consent Letter

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am currently conducting a study to contribute to research on the organizational saga of Anderson University and how the institution remains true to their faith-based mission. This research is for a dissertation proposal in EDAD 988. You have been selected to participate in this survey because of your unique background and experience.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few moments to look over several questions and allow me to make an appointment to interview you. I would like to request that we complete the interview by the end of the week, if possible.

Your opinions are a valuable contribution to this project. I thank you in advance for your time and feedback. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Pertinent information describing the project is included below.

Purpose of the Research:

This study seeks to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University and how

the institution remains true to their faith-based mission. The purpose of this study is to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015.

Procedures:

Participation in this study will consist of interviews. The responses will remain anonymous, as the data will only be evaluated cumulatively. The interviews are based on your own opinions and experiences on your work at a private, faith-based institution.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

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

Benefits:

The reason this study is so critical to private, faith-based institutions relates to their longevity in higher education as a viable choice for prospective students and the greater good they will have on society in the future. This information may be used to benefit students, faculty, staff, alumni and senior administrators in Christian higher education for the future.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's office and will only be seen by the investigator during the study and for 3 years after the study is complete. The information obtained in this study may be published in journals or presented at meetings but the data will be reported as aggregated data. The audiotapes will be erased after transcription.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before or during the study. You may call the investigator at (864) 958-1610.

Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making the decision to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Name and phone number of investigator

Mark Hughes, Doctoral Candidate, Principal Investigator

Cell: (864) 958-1610

I appreciate your contribution to this study. Thank you so much, once again, for your time and opinions on this important research topic.

Sincerely,

Mark Hughes, Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C

THE INTERVIEW GUIDE



 COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
 Department of Educational Administration

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

I would like to thank you for your participation in this project. I will be recording and later transcribing what we say today. I will be taking notes that reflect my interpretations of your comments and I will present these notes to you for your review. It is important the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase with incorrect interpretations.

The purpose of this study is to understand the organizational saga of Anderson University from 1995 to 2015.

- 1) There have been significant changes to Anderson University as an organization from 1995 until 2015. Some examples of organizational change include moving from a junior college to a senior institution, transitioning from a college to a university and the addition of graduate programs. When you think of organizational changes like these, what in your opinion have been the most significant changes during the past 20 years from the organizational perspective?
- 2) I noticed that Anderson has acquired a great deal of acreage, made renovations and campus improvements and added new facilities during the last 20 years. Why are these acquisitions significant in Anderson's programming, positioning and growth?

- 3) What traditions, symbols, statues, ceremonies, etc. would you say faculty, staff, students, alumni and constituents of Anderson value and hold dear? Why are these things dear? Why have these traditions been accepted by the faculty, staff, students and alumni? What stories do they tell? Are there examples of activities, programs and events that you have attempted that did not work? Why did some attempts not work out—why was there not buy-in?
- 4) What are the reasons Anderson is distinctive compared to other institutions of higher education? How is Anderson unique when compared to other faith-based institutions?
- 5) Why does a student decide to attend Anderson? What about Anderson makes a student feel like they belong to a community?
- 6) How have institutional rankings improved Anderson's reputation and success? How have they been used in recruiting and marketing efforts to promote Anderson's visibility?

APPENDIX D

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY
VISION 2014

Vision Statement

Anderson University seeks to be a premier place of learning that combines the best of the liberal arts and professional education in a distinctly Christian community.

To achieve our vision, Anderson University will:

- Increase enrollment to a total headcount of 2000+ students
- Initiate carefully selected graduate programs and additional undergraduate majors
- Enrich the undergraduate learning experience
- Continuously create value throughout the organization
- Emphasize the integration of faith and learning, and uphold the teachings of Jesus Christ
- Be viewed as a leading Christian comprehensive university with top tier ranking among Southern colleges and universities

Vision 2014 is an aggressive agenda for accomplishment to be pursued over the next 10 years. It consists of 14 broad strategies that will lead to unprecedented progress at Anderson University, placing the institution in the front ranks of Christian higher education and allowing AU to enlarge its service to and impact on individuals, the local region, society, and the church.

Strategy One: Create an exceptional, future-driven Christian learning environment that emphasizes values, high standards of scholarship, mutual respect, and nurturing support for all members of the Anderson University community

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Priorities

1. Make student learning - the education of the whole student - our top priority
2. Attract and retain outstanding Christian scholars and staff
3. Support staff in continuously expanding their professional knowledge and skills
4. Create a climate that encourages AU undergraduates to pursue graduate study, distinguished fellowships, and careers of life-impacting significance
5. Keeping excellent teaching our primary focus, embrace a broad view of scholarship that includes teaching, discovery, application, and integration;

develop discipline-specific standards for quality scholarly and creative faculty contributions

Strategic Initiatives

6. Maintain an overall student to faculty ratio between 13:1 and 17:1
7. Increase percentage of full-time faculty with terminal degrees from 65% to 80-85%
8. Restructure academic units (currently divisions) to reflect the maturity and quality of the academic programs
9. Establish a center for teaching to encourage, assist, and support faculty in their efforts to continuously improve as teachers
10. Increase faculty salaries to median levels for comparative aspirant institutions
11. Increase faculty development funding to competitive levels
12. Implement a compensation management program for staff designed to keep staff salaries competitive
13. Establish exceptional co-curricular learning opportunities designed to set AU undergraduates apart – such as extraordinary internships, original research projects, international educational travel, and Christian missions
14. Develop high quality, self-supporting graduate programs that make sense for AU
15. Design new facilities to support and foster learning, research and teaching including a new library
16. Enhance student-centered services to enable academic success such as exceptional advising and user-friendly administrative and academic processes
17. Make curricular enhancements to foster the development of students' communication (verbal, written, and technological) and reasoning skills

Strategy Two: Create robust, engaging student development and residence life programs that support retention goals, foster relationship-building, create community, emphasize Christian growth and character development, and create extraordinary student satisfaction

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Priorities

1. Seek to continuously improve student development programs to enhance Christian life and develop leadership and character development among students

Strategic Initiatives

2. Provide campus housing for at least 75% of the traditional student population
3. Incrementally refurbish residence halls with new furnishings and décor
4. Fully embrace the “residence life” philosophy wherein residence halls are nurturing living and learning environments

5. Embrace a view of student life that values and programs for various student sub cultures such as athletes, commuters, adult ACCEL learners, minorities, etc.
6. Enhance “community building” activities in residence halls
7. Enhance weekend student activities
8. Construct a new student center
9. Add full-time residence life staff qualified at the masters degree level
10. Expand the role and responsibilities of residence hall supervisors and resident assistants for enhanced supervision, community building and greater residence life effectiveness
11. Enhance food service facilities and food variety
12. Create a senior year experience program that ensures that the end of the student’s undergraduate career is as promising as the beginning
13. Create services and a total campus atmosphere that is affirming and supportive of ACCEL students

Strategy Three: Create within the context of our distinct Christian mission, an environment that welcomes and extends Christian hospitality to people from diverse backgrounds, recognizes the dignity and worth of each individual, and seeks to foster greater understanding.

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Initiatives

1. Make a budgetary commitment to hire minority faculty
2. Seek a representation of minorities on the faculty and professional staff that equals the racial diversity of the campus; an initial goal of 12%
3. Increase minority representation in the student body; an initial goal of 17%
4. Initiate a “minority fellows” program designed to recruit promising minority faculty members early in their academic career
5. Develop community partnerships to support minority programming
6. Develop an ambassador program for minority recruitment
7. Increase the campus presence of visiting Christian scholars from other countries and cultures who understand and appreciate our Christian mission and Baptist tradition
8. Add curricular emphases of interest to minority students
9. Increase the presence of artwork, speakers, and performances that reflect the racial diversity of our campus and society
10. With the Christian faith (see Romans 12:2) and our Baptist tradition as our compass, foster student understanding and discussion of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity issues in the context of learning settings

Strategy Four: Build on our present commitment to the integration of faith and learning, cultivate and nurture an institution-wide passion for integration.

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Priorities

1. Affirm the teachings of Jesus Christ, with special emphasis on the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, Christian civility and the Golden Rule
2. Integrate 'Great Commission' emphasis into selected service/study programs

Strategic Initiatives

3. Develop learning opportunities (speakers, conferences, peer-to-peer learning, etc.) for faculty to develop greater understanding of and practice in the integration of faith and learning - that is, to help students explore and discuss the natural intersections of the Christian faith and the disciplines
4. Recruit faculty and staff who are committed to the integration of faith and learning
5. Create and organize out of class opportunities for faculty and students to discuss the implications of the Christian faith in the disciplines and professions
6. Create opportunities for juniors and seniors to reflect on their AU learning experience to facilitate synthesis of faith and learning and its implications for life after college

Strategy Five: Educate students for global citizenry

Strategies and Priorities

Strategic Initiatives

1. Require a foreign language in all traditional undergraduate programs
2. Create additional study abroad opportunities and international university partnerships for faculty and students
3. Develop a viable model for financial accessibility to study abroad for full-time traditional students
4. Seek to increase the enrollment of international students

Strategy Six: Attract and support a student body that is academically talented, motivated to succeed, and desirous of membership in an academically challenging Christian learning environment

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Initiatives

1. Achieve a headcount enrollment of 2,000-2,200 students; 1,400 traditional, 600 adult students, 200 graduate students

2. Achieve a freshman retention rate of 80%
3. Achieve a 6-year graduation rate of 55%
4. Apply selective admissions standards with the goal of increasing minimum entrance scores, grade point averages, and the percentage of students in the top 25% of their high school class
5. Initiate an “opportunity summer admissions program” for a maximum of 10% of the freshman class who do not meet minimum admissions standards
6. Target for recruitment the top 10 to 25% of Hispanic students
7. Develop admissions marketing plans for each academic division
8. Reduce the traditional student discount rate from 40% to 30%
9. Design into Freshman Programs a presentation that will help students understand and appreciate their sources of financial assistance (SC Baptists, the State of South Carolina, the Federal government, individual donors, and Anderson University)
10. Create exceptional academic services to support and maximize the academic success of our students (registration, financial aid, business office, etc.)
11. Develop within the Master the Art of Living Program a social skills series that will ensure that students develop the social skills (etiquette/protocol, dress, etc.) they will need to positive reflections of Anderson University, upwardly mobile in their careers, and successful in life

Strategy Seven: Pursue additional programmatic distinctions that will set Anderson University further apart from other Southern comprehensive universities

Initiatives and Priorities:

Strategic Initiatives

1. Conduct an audit of current “distinctives”
2. Create an enhanced Travel-Research-Internships-Missions program that will allow each AU student that persists past 90 semester hours with a 2.5 GPA to engage in one of the options
3. Develop quality indicators
4. Be known in the region as “the quality provider of adult education”
5. Seek additional affordable specialized accreditation for appropriate academic programs
6. Pursue a goal of AU graduates scoring in the 75th percentile on all disciplinary competency and knowledge assessments
7. Cultivate and nurture true excellence in academic programs
8. Investigate nontraditional day scheduling

Strategy Eight: Guide all AU students in academic and student life programs to understand the Christian perspective of life, embody the attitudes of leadership and stewardship, and view work as vocation

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Priorities

1. Affirm the teachings of Jesus Christ with special emphasis on the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, Christian civility and the Golden Rule
2. In both academic and student life programs, help students understand life as a gift over which they are to be stewards of their talents, abilities, and all God has given them and understand they have a responsibility to serve others as an expression of gratitude
3. Encourage and support student leadership of campus spiritual life through a wide variety of religious activities

Strategic Initiatives

4. Enhance institutional focus on service to others and Kingdom growth
5. Enhance chapel with an increased budget to attract more speakers that emphasize the Christian foundations of life, work, and intellectual activity
6. Provide enhanced generation-specific Christian growth and evangelism activities
7. Place a new, stronger emphasis on the creation and facilitation of extraordinary mission opportunities for students, faculty and staff

Strategy Nine: View the campus as a precious resource and continuously enhance its beauty

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Priorities

1. Establish a community value of viewing the campus as a precious resource that enhances campus living, student recruitment and retention, and regional pride
2. Faculty and staff will model stewardship and campus pride
3. Maintain high standards for safety across campus and high standards for health inspections in the residence halls

Strategic Initiatives

4. Remove concrete and asphalt from the inner campus to create additional green space
5. Develop a long-term plan to remove the tower from the campus
6. Expand parking
7. Install new aesthetically pleasing signage to enhance campus beauty and facilitate better visitor navigation
8. Create more gathering spaces, both inside facilities and on the grounds

9. Designate smoking areas away from public traffic and develop a proposal for a smoke-free campus
10. Restore the prayer garden at the Sullivan Building
11. Enhance the beauty of the campus with additional plantings, outdoor art, gazebos, water features, flower gardens, etc.
12. Professionally design all new and replacement landscaping
13. Where cost economies can be gained, add environmentally conscious features to facilities

Strategy Ten: Further build an athletics program that is characterized by a winning tradition, academic achievement, sportsmanship, and character development

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Priorities

1. Promote and value a winning tradition in all sports

Strategic Initiatives

2. Increase the 6-year student-athlete graduation rate to 60%
3. Consistently lead the Carolinas Virginia Athletic Conference Honor Roll
4. AU athletes will be the conference model for sportsmanship in all sports
5. AU athletics will emphasize character development among all student-athletes
6. AU student-athletes will promote character development to children and youth in schools, churches, and youth organizations
7. Develop a master plan for athletic facilities

Strategy Eleven: Establish an integrated marketing program that will communicate Anderson University's identity as a leading Christian comprehensive university

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Initiatives

1. Be perceived by the local community and the region as a premier private university
2. Be perceived by prospective students as an academically serious, intentionally Christian, caring university that produces successful graduates
3. Ascend to the top tier of *US News and World Report's* Southern Comprehensive Colleges and Universities
4. Establish and adequately fund an office of marketing and communications
5. Establish within each academic division a marketing and outreach plan for student recruitment and the development of stronger ties with disciplinary peers in the schools

6. Increase the presence of Anderson University faculty presentations at scholarly/professional conferences, symposia, and colloquia, and increase the hosting of such meetings on the AU campus
7. Increase the participation and presence of AU faculty and staff in local and regional decision making, nonprofit organizations, etc.

Strategy Twelve: Further enhance service, service learning, and community engagement of the entire campus community

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Priorities

1. Continue to build our community service programs to involve more students, faculty, and staff

Strategic Initiatives

2. Establish Anderson University as the single largest contributor of community service hours in the area
3. Establish a formal process to identify and track community service and service learning participation
4. Increase publicity about community service

Strategy Thirteen: Ensure a sound financial future

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Initiatives

1. Seek annual revenue growth of 10%
2. Increase the endowment to exceed the annual operating budget
3. Achieve a financial viability ratio of 1:1
4. Establish and fund a development effort that can realistically achieve our fund raising goals

Strategy Fourteen: Significantly strengthen the technological infrastructure of the campus and the use of technology in all areas of the University.

Initiatives and Priorities

Strategic Initiatives

1. Provide ongoing instruction to faculty in the use of technology as a powerful tool that enhances access to learning, ignites the discovery of new knowledge, and inspires collaborative thinking.

2. Complete infrastructure additions to become a totally wireless campus
3. Seek to be a leader in technology among small campuses
4. Consolidate widely used individual software into site licenses for greater efficiency and broader campus accessibility
5. Eliminate unnecessary IT staff responsibilities by better equipping faculty, staff, and students to be more self-sufficient
6. Purchase and migrate to a new administrative software system for greater functionality and efficiencies
7. Fully develop distance learning software capabilities and ongoing training
8. Institute a technology replacement budget for the systematic replacement of instructional technology and software for computer laboratories, and computers for faculty and staff offices
9. Establish three multimedia lecture halls
10. Increase technology in all classrooms

Approved by members of the Board of Trustees at their meeting October 22, 2004
Revised – November 2005 (college to university)