

Bidirectional Influences of Decisions and Outcomes on Organizational Identity and Sustainable
Viability in Small, Private, Nonprofit, Mission-Focused Higher Education Institutions

by

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DEDICATION

For their patient and steadfast love, faithfulness, and sacrifice shown to me throughout this doctoral journey, I dedicate this work to my wife, my family, my colleagues, my students, and to all who give of their time, talent, and treasure for the highest ideals of education and service to others.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iii
List of Figures	iv
Abstract	v
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Higher Education in the United States	5
Thematic Review of Literature	8
Environmental Analysis – PESTL	11
Implications of PESTL Analysis	15
Adaptation Theory in the Literature	17
Summary of Literature Review	18
Conceptual Framework for Research	19
Chapter Three: Qualitative Exploratory Case Research Design	20
Multiple Case Replication Study	22
Site and Subject Selection	22
Interview Structure and Protocol	24
Thematic Data Analysis	24
Reliability	25
Construct Validity	25
Internal Validity	25
External Validity	26
Chapter Four: Research Findings	27
Environmental Influences	29
External Factors	29
Internal Factors	32
Organizational Identity	34
Stakeholders as Influencers	37
Decisions and Decision-Making	40
Outcomes	43
Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings	45
Theoretical and Practical Links	46
Problematic Finding	47
Implications for Research and Practice	48

Key Findings and Implications	48
Limitations of the Study.....	53
Directions for Future Research	53
References.....	55
Appendix A: Profile of U.S. Post-Secondary Education	61
Appendix B: Industry Analysis and Literature Review	63
Appendix C: Conceptual Framework – Influencers, Decisions, and Outcomes.....	75
Appendix D: Interview Protocol.....	76
Appendix E: Findings by Theme Across Sites, by Theme by Site.....	77

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Published and Net Tuition and Fees by Sector, 2009 – 2020	7
Table 2: Institutional Characteristics	27
Table 3: Subject Profiles	28
Table 1A: Sources, Themes, and Findings	63
Table 2A: Category and Indicator Group Findings	73
Table 3A: Interview Topics and Questions.....	76
Table 4A: Themes Across Sites	77
Table 5A: Themes by Site.....	78

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Research Model	21
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Decision-Making	49
Figure 1A: Profile of U.S. Post-Secondary Education	51
Figure 2A: IPEDS Data	72
Figure 3A: Decision Influences Dynamics	75

ABSTRACT

As educational leaders in small, private, nonprofit, mission-focused higher education institutions confront challenges, their decisions influence organizational identity, culture, and viability. Decision-making is informed in a complex environment of internal and external influences. The purpose of this research is engaged scholarship to inform practitioners of decision-making in mission-focused institutions with better understanding of why and how adaptation is occurring, and provide a conceptual framework for decision-making and further study of organizational leadership in this important sector of higher education.

Four-year private, nonprofit, degree-granting institutions represent 34% of all accredited institutions in the United States and serve over 5 million students. Most of these institutions are tuition-dependent and vulnerable to enrollment dynamics that threaten their long-term viability. This qualitative exploratory research studied four such institutions through a multiple case replication study utilizing semi-structured interviews of four to six leaders who participate in strategic and operational decision-making and represent key stakeholders at each site.

My findings suggest institutional outcomes are linked to competitive reputation, and that reputation is determined by perceived relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability.

Organizational adaptation in complex environments is at the center of decision-making and outcomes. Stakeholder experience drives decision-making to enhance stakeholder affinity for institutions. Stakeholder affinity determines engagement and engagement influences viability.

Outcomes influence decisions intended to produce relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability among present and future stakeholders.

Achieving institutional relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability among present and future stakeholders determines sustainable viability for small, private, nonprofit higher education institutions. Actionable findings are discussed and a conceptual framework for decision-making is presented.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Leaders of small, private, nonprofit higher education institutions in the United States are confronted by challenges that threaten their financial viability and ability to fulfill their mission. These institutions are a vital part of the complex landscape of higher education. Four-year private, nonprofit degree-granting institutions represent 34% of all accredited institutions and serve over 5 million students. Leaders of these institutions make strategic and operating decisions that influence organizational identity, culture, and future viability. Many of these institutions struggle to balance strategic and operating priorities. They tend to be vulnerable to enrollment fluctuation as they attempt to protect the corpus of endowments, maintain and improve facilities, and implement strategic plans to remain viable and relevant. Some of these institutions have closed while others have merged or partnered with other institutions to survive. All have adapted to environmental pressures and continue to face challenges to their institutional values, mission, and existence. The purpose of this research is engaged scholarship to inform the practitioners of decision-making in mission-focused institutions with better understanding of why and how adaptation is occurring, and provide a conceptual framework for further study of organizational leadership in this important sector of higher education.

Adaptation occurs because environmental factors, decisions, outcomes, and the influence of stakeholders in these organizations interact to conserve or to change institutional identity, culture, and mission (Palumbo & Manna, 2019; Zajac & Kraatz, 1993). Environmental factors

are both external and internal to the organizations, and influence stakeholders, decisions, and outcomes. Decisions are influenced by stakeholders and outcomes while influencing future outcomes and stakeholder behaviors (Freeman et al., 2010; Hörisch et al., 2014). The goal of this study is to investigate the interrelated influences of the decisions these organizations are making, the influences of outcomes, and the influences of the stakeholders, organizations, and agencies that are engaged with these institutions as they adapt to survive and sustain relevance and viability.

Prior research has explored student persistence, tuition-pricing strategies, institutional decline and turn-around, socio-demographic trends, and adaptation theory in implementation of competitive strategies (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [AGB], 2019; Barron, 2017; Bradfield, 2019; Brown, 2012; Brown, 2015; Cameron, 1984; Cameron et al., 1988; Cenczyk, 2016; Chatlani, 2018; Dickeson, 2010; Docking & Curton, 2015; Ehrenberg, 2012; Fessenden, 2017; Fletcher, 2013; Freeland, 2009; Grant Thornton LLP, 2016; Hanover Research, 2018; Hillman, 2012; Lytle, 2013; Maragakis et al., 2016a; Massa & Parker, 2007; Meyer, 2017; Neumann & Neumann, 1994; Neumann & Neumann, 1999; Palumbo & Manna, 2019; Porter & Ramirez, 2009; Stowe & Komasa, 2016; Stuart, 2016; Vitters et al., 2019; Zajac & Kraatz, 1993). Research of how and why decisions are made from the perspective of decision-makers engaged in adaptive responses to external and internal environmental influences is limited. Case research focuses on closure or turnaround (Brown, 2012; Brown, 2015; Cenczyk, 2016; Fletcher, 2013; Kolomitz, 2016; Neumann & Neumann, 1994; Stowe & Komasa, 2016; Weisbrod et al., 2008). My research investigates similarities and differences of decision-outcome dynamics across multiple sites to better understand the influences and consequences of organizational adaptation and the implications for practice in private, nonprofit organizations.

Two research questions guided this study: (1) How do decisions affect organizational outcomes in small, private, nonprofit, mission-focused colleges in the United States? (2) How do stakeholders affect organizational outcomes in small, private, nonprofit, mission-focused colleges in the United States? The findings suggest competitiveness and reputation are primary concerns for these institutions. Competitiveness relates to organizational viability and is influenced by perceived institutional relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability. Competitiveness is influenced by stakeholder perceptions of institutional reputation and stakeholder affinity to the organizational values, mission, and vision for the future. Decision-makers view the value proposition of the institution and stakeholder experience with the institution as determinants of decisions and outcomes. Value proposition is defined in terms of organizational identity, academic programs and program delivery, capital projects, and the perceived cost-benefit of decisions. Stakeholder experience is determined by the collective and individual experience of stakeholder classes. Students, alumni, donors, employees, employers, trustees, and society are viewed as stakeholders. Stakeholder affinity is determined by the direct and indirect experience these individuals and organizations have with the institution. Stakeholder affinity also influences perceived institutional reputation, relevance, distinctiveness, affordability.

This paper presents the research in chapters two through five. Chapter 2 presents an industry analysis of higher education in the United States. with a review of literature pertaining to postsecondary education, and specifically, small, private, nonprofit mission-focused institutions through the lens of environmental factors, influencers of decisions, decisions, and outcomes. Chapter 3 presents the research design, site and subject selection, interview structure and protocol, and analytical techniques used in this exploratory qualitative study. Chapter 4

presents the study findings in terms of environmental factors, decision influencers, decisions, and outcomes. This chapter presents profiles of the study sites and subjects, and the findings are presented as a comparative analysis identifying consistencies and inconsistencies across sites in the data. The findings are also presented across subjects by site in this chapter. Chapter 5 presents a discussion the findings, theoretical and practical links, a problematic finding, and implications for research and practice. Study conclusions are presented with a summary of key findings and implications, study limitations, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Industry analysis was performed to investigate literature with two guiding questions: (1) What do decision-makers in small, nonprofit liberal arts colleges believe about the effect of environmental factors and stakeholder influence on decisions and outcomes in their institutions? (2) How can decision-makers in small, nonprofit, tuition-dependent, mission-focused liberal arts colleges conserve organizational outcomes in challenging environments threatening institutional identity, culture, and survival?

Higher education in the United States serves 20 million students enrolled in more than 7,700 accredited institutions employing more than 3.5 million people. Expenditures exceed \$583 billion, representing 43% of total education expenditure and 7.2% of gross domestic product (GDP). Educational expenditure as a percent of GDP increased 15% from 2006-2017. Three percent of the service sector workforce in the U.S. is employed in higher education. Thirty-three percent of all employees in higher education are full-time equivalent faculty members in degree-granting institutions (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2019c).

Approximately 4,700 (61%) of accredited institutions are degree-granting. Among degree-granting institutions, 1,620 (34%) are public and 3,099 (66%) are private. The public sector is comprised of 690 (43%) four-year and 930 (57%) two-year institutions. The private sector is comprised of 1,587 (51%) four-year nonprofit, 88 (3%) two-year nonprofit, 663 (21%) two-year for-profit, and 761 (25%) four-year for-profit institutions. Expenditures in degree-

granting institutions increased 31% compared to 15% for all educational institutions from 2006-2017, indicating the cost of higher education has increased at twice the rate of increase for public and private elementary and secondary education in the United States. See Appendix A: Profile of U.S. Postsecondary Education.

Thirty-six million Americans left college with no degree – 58% under age thirty, 27% ages thirty to thirty-nine, 9% ages 40-49, and 6% ages 50 and older. Forty-eight percent of students who left college without a degree were enrolled in two-year public institutions. Thirty percent left four-year public institutions, 11% left four-year private nonprofit schools, and 11% left four-year for-profit schools (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Internationally, the United States ranked 8th behind Korea, Canada, Japan, Ireland, Australia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom for college degree completion in 2018, experiencing a 10.7% increase since 2003 versus an overall average increase for all countries of 14.6% (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020).

In 2017, 34% of all students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs were ages 25 and under. Thirty-six percent of all undergraduate students were ages 25-29. Nine percent of students ages 25 and older were enrolled in graduate degree programs and three percent were enrolled in post-graduate doctorate or professional degree programs (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020).

Student loan debt in the United States is \$1.54 trillion (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2019c). Almost 87% of all student loan debt was borrowed for a bachelor's degree (64%) or an associate degree (23%). Almost 20 million borrowers representing 31.4% of all student loan payments did not complete their degree (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020).

Published tuition and fees differ from net price paid by students. Net price is adjusted for an institution's average grant aid and tax benefits. Published and net tuition and fees are summarized by sector showing total and annualized increases from 2009 to 2020 in Table 1. This data indicates net tuition revenue growth in 2-year public and 4-year nonprofit institutions has lagged published tuition and fees in 4-year public institutions by 76% and 67% respectively. This reflects a substantial increase in grants and unfunded scholarships provided by 4-year nonprofit institutions to recruit and enroll students who would otherwise not be able to afford the cost attending those institutions.

Table 1. Published and Net Tuition and Fees by Sector, 2009 – 2020.*

Sector	Total Increase Published (%)	Annual Increase Published (%)	Total Increase Net (%)	Annual Increase Net (%)
2-year public	14.0	1.3	3.4	0.3
4-year public	27.6	2.5	28.1	2.6
4-year nonprofit	23.9	2.2	7.9	0.7

*Tabulated from *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac 2020-2021*.

For private nonprofits, unfunded grants and scholarships are paid through fundraising and draws against endowments, putting financial stress on institutions without large endowments from which to draw. Most institutions in the private nonprofit sector are vulnerable to financial distress caused by pricing and enrollment decision dynamics (Barron, 2017; Docking & Curton, 2015; Fessenden, 2017; Fletcher, 2013; Hillman, 2012; Massa & Parker, 2007; Soliday & Mann, 2018).

The focus of this analysis is a subset of the private, nonprofit post-secondary sector representing approximately 34% of all Title IV post-secondary institutions in the United States. This subset is defined by 1,024 religiously affiliated colleges and universities representing faiths espoused by 68.9% of all freshmen who attended 4-year colleges in the fall of 2018 (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). These organizations were chartered to serve constituents

seeking education based on core principles and values closely connected to their institutional missions. Small, private, nonprofit, mission-focused institutions represent compelling context for examination of how vulnerable organizations function to establish and sustain institutional viability through the lens of external influences, decision-making, and outcomes. A profile of postsecondary education in the United States, published by the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, is found in Appendix A: Profile of U.S. Postsecondary Higher Education.

Thematic Review of Literature

The investigator is a DBA candidate in the USF Muma College of Business. He holds a B.S. in Computer Science and Mathematics and M.B.A. with concentrations in Finance and Entrepreneurship. His professional experience includes operations and financial management roles in large, industry leading companies from 1984 to 2001. Since 2001 he has held instructional and leadership positions in public post-secondary and private higher education. The investigator conducting this study is informed from the perspective of a practitioner engaged in scholarship to inform practice with research.

Research for this analysis is informed by national education databases, census data, private research organizations, association and trade publications, conference proceedings, peer-reviewed academic journals, doctoral dissertations, and books authored by experienced industry practitioners. Three databases were searched for peer-reviewed journal articles with full text access through the University of South Florida library system. ABI/Inform Global search criteria “liberal arts colleges” AND “enrollment” with full text from peer-reviewed publications returned 255 articles. Results were scanned for relevant key words and citations. Thirty-one articles from this search were selected for full text review. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global search criteria “strategic management” AND “higher education” AND “small private liberal arts

colleges” from doctoral dissertations published after 2010 returned 435 results. Articles were scanned for relevant key words. Twenty-nine dissertations were selected for full text review. Nine documents were selected for further analysis. References found in these papers were assessed for inclusion based on relevance. Google Scholar search criteria “enrollment management” AND “higher education” AND “liberal arts colleges” for peer-reviewed published after 2016 returned 430 results. A second search for “enrollment marketing” and “higher education” AND “liberal arts colleges” returned 8 results. A third search for “why do colleges fail” returned 14 results. Search results abstracts were scanned for relevancy and 23 articles were selected for full text review.

The Chronicle of Higher Education published special reports and almanacs in 2019 and 2020. The Christian Chronicle, an international paper published for Churches of Christ reports data and analysis for associated higher education institutions. The August 2020 edition reported comparative data that is also included in this analysis.

Published books informing this analysis include works by university researchers, retired college presidents, and consulting firms pertaining to environmental forces confronting higher education, planning frameworks, and resource allocation strategies. *Crisis in Higher Education* by Docking and Curton (2015) posits strategies for achieving long-term viability of small liberal arts colleges in America. *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services* by Dickeson (2010) addresses allocation of institutional resources to achieve strategic balance. *Surviving to Thriving* by Soliday and Mann (2018) offers a planning framework for leaders of private colleges and universities. Each of these books identify environmental factors impacting small, private, nonprofit institutions and propose researched, practical frameworks and strategies for planning and decision-making in these organizations.

Data on tuition, fees, faculty, expenditures, pedagogy, technology, and enrollment trends exists in several governmental and industry databases. Searchable charts are produced by the Council of Independent Colleges (Council of Independent Colleges [CIC], 2018a). ATLAS provides interactive access to Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) data by U.S. congressional district (Dancy & Laitenin, 2015). IPEDS is maintained by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Ehrenberg (2012) examines transition in higher education in five dimensions: Tuition, faculty, expenditure allocation, pedagogy, technology. Hussar and Bailey (2019) provide national-level data on post-secondary enrollment trends and projections through 2027. The Chronicle of Higher Education (2020) publishes tuition and fees of 3,000 degree granting colleges in the U.S. across public and private sectors. Delen and Zolbanin (2018) propose enhancement of traditional research paradigms using enhanced analytics. Data from governmental and industry sources was used to support research in published sources.

The research protocol was an iterative search of published resources. The problem of practice relates to how small, private, nonprofit, mission-focused liberal arts colleges adapt and survive in challenging environments. Research is focused on the interrelationship of decision-making, outcomes, and the influences of environmental forces and stakeholders as these organizations pursue viability, purpose, and goals. Relevant theoretical frameworks include stakeholder theory, contingent theory, organizational identity, adaptation, culture, and climate. Articles were thematically categorized and summarized to identify industry characteristics, trends, and research focus areas in the literature with a view to informing my research questions.

PEST analysis and its derivatives are widely employed by organizations engaged in strategic planning. It is used as a framework to analyze environmental factors influencing industries and organizations. Broad factor analysis of political (P), economic (E), socio-

demographic (S), and technological (T) factors has been extended to include legal (L) factors because accreditation and federal funding tied to compliance are significant environmental factors also impacting higher education. PESTL analysis was employed in the review of literature informing this research to identify environmental influences impacting higher education institutions.

Environmental Analysis - PESTL

Two findings related to political and legal factors were identified in sources. Federal laws under Title IX, established in 1972, to protect sexual equality in higher education require colleges and universities to ensure that programs, funding, policies, and processes that address complaints are compliant with federal law. Compliance is linked to federal funding of higher education institutions. Institutional funding from the federal government in the form of grants and student loans depends upon compliance with Title IX regulation (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2019b; Barron, 2017). A second finding related to political and legal factors pertains to student grants and loans. The federal government promotes access to higher education through grants and student loan programs through financial intermediaries. This is a critical source of funding for higher education institutions, especially small, private nonprofit colleges without substantial endowments to fund institutional grants and scholarships (Hanover Research, 2018; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2019a).

Findings related to economic factors vary, but relate to decisions, outcomes, and influences of decision-makers and stakeholders. One theme in the literature indicates students are increasingly concerned with pathways to employment after graduation and institutions respond by developing new programs and degrees (Docking & Curton, 2015; Fessenden, 2017; Freeland, 2009; Hanover Research, 2018). Cost of higher education and affordability also influence student

enrollment choices (Brown, 2015; Docking & Curton, 2015; Ehrenberg, 2012; Lytle, 2013; Hanover Research, 2018; Maragakis et al., 2016b; Meyer, 2017; Neumann & Neumann, 1994). Institutions pursue tuition discount strategies to improve affordability and compete for students (Barron, 2017; Hillman, 2012). Tuition discounting has had an increasingly detrimental long-term effect on institutions (Barron, 2017; Hillman, 2012). Findings suggest economic factors are influencing decision-makers and decisions in higher education to influence outcomes related to enrollment and retention of students (Chatlani, 2018; Hanover Research, 2018; Hunter, 2012; McGowan, 2016; Soliday & Mann, 2018; Stowe & Komasara, 2016). Outcomes related to economic factors are measured by financial metrics as indicators of institutional viability (Hillman, 2012; Hunter, 2012; Massa & Parker, 2007; Meyer, 2017). The Composite Financial Index (CFI) is comprised of four key ratios used by the federal government to determine the viability of institutions. These ratios influence decisions by organizational leaders to maintain or grow enrollment, manage capital expense, and pursue donors (Dickeson, 2010; Hunter, 2012; Kolomitz, 2016; Lytle, 2013; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Economic factors influence institutional leaders to prioritize enrollment, fundraising, academic programs, program delivery, and co-operative arrangements with other institutions among their primary concerns (Dickeson, 2010; Fessenden, 2017; Grant Thornton LLP, 2016). Vulnerable institutions close, merge, or change in response to economic factors and stakeholder expectations (Bradfield, 2019; Cameron, 1984; Cameron et al., 1988; Fessenden, 2017; Freeland, 2009; Grant Thornton LLP, 2016; Lytle, 2013; Massa & Parker, 2007; Porter & Ramirez, 2009; Prager, McCarthy, Seally LLC, 2018; Zajac & Kraatz, 1993). School closures have been studied for the past 40 years as economic cycles have influenced institutional outcomes (Porter & Ramirez, 2009). Contradictory findings indicate religiously affiliated institutions may or may not be less likely to close

(Fessenden, 2017). One study found they are less likely to close because stakeholders are organizationally bound to the mission and identity of these institutions (Ehrenberg, 2012). Another study suggested decision-making is deeply rooted in institutional culture and history, and culture is a limiting factor for leaders in their ability to make change (Zenk, 2014). Vulnerability is attributed to institutional size and endowment (Ehrenberg, 2012). Operating expense growth has been outpacing revenue growth in higher education (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). The economic environment for higher education is challenging institutional leaders to make decisions that ensure viability of their organizations.

Socio-demographic factors have further complicated the context in which higher education institutions operate. Findings indicate public distrust of higher education as a pathway to employment (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Household income growth has been slight while student debt has increased steadily as costs of higher education have increased (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Projected numbers of high school graduates peak in 2024 and decline rapidly thereafter foretelling an alarming enrollment challenge on the horizon (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2019b). Society is moving toward urbanization, threatening viability of small colleges in America due to their proximity to urban centers and ability to attract prospective students (Barron, 2017; Bradfield, 2019; Chatlani, 2018; Ehrenberg, 2012). As competition for new students is intensifying, outcomes are increasingly important to institutional viability (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2019b; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Student retention, success, and attainment are important for higher education (AGB, 2019; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020; Ehrenberg, 2012; Grant Thornton LLP, 2016; Hanover Research, 2018; Hunter, 2012).

Competitive pressure is coming from technology. Program delivery models are adapting to serve distance learners (Bradfield, 2019; Chatlani, 2018; Hunter, 2012). One delivery model threatening traditional academic institutions is massive open online courses (MOOCs). Findings show that student persistence in massive open online courses drops off after the first year (McPherson & Bacow, 2015). While growth in online learning is likely to be slower than expected, online and hybrid program delivery offerings are expanding (McPherson & Bacow, 2015). College presidents surveyed by the Chronicle of Higher Education indicated one of their primary concerns is upgrading current technology systems and eliminating siloed systems (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Technological factors are influencing decisions and outcomes in higher education.

Prior research has identified additional major global trends also impacting U.S. colleges and universities. Labor market shifts, economic shifts to emerging markets, gaps between employer demands and college experience, increasing urbanization, restricted immigration policies and student mobility, and a rise in non-traditional students are driving adaptive responses (Chatlani, 2018). Hanover Research (2018) identifies enrollment shortfalls, online learning, value proposition of higher education, tuition strategies, rebuilding donor bases, and marketing to Generation Z as six trends confronting higher education today. Economic and demographic forces impacting colleges and universities are amplified in effect on smaller schools (Stowe & Komasara, 2016). Data security, culture, mission, and organizational structure are the greatest institutional challenges confronting small, private liberal arts colleges (Bradfield, 2019; Docking & Curton, 2015). While the historical legacy of an institution is particularly important in decision-making and organizational mission is deeply embedded in culture and history, culture is a limiting factor for leaders in their ability to make change (Zenk, 2014).

Implications of PESTL Analysis

Private, nonprofit institutions represent 34% of an industry where effective governance, leadership, and management are becoming increasingly critical to organizational survival.

Political, economic, socio-demographic, and technology factors are driving adaptive organizational responses challenging institutional identity and viability. Dimensions of these factors include geographic proximity and reach of institutions, perceived value of degrees and programs, price sensitivity of demand and affordability, and governmental regulatory and funding activity. Organizational responses include adaptive strategies and operational actions defining mission, plans, and outcomes.

Influenced by environmental factors, decision-makers employ strategic and operational tools to influence institutional outcomes. Strategic balance and the outcomes of decision-making are described by Dickeson (2010) in twelve dimensions. Neumann and Neumann (1994) link organizational growth and decline to competitive strategy, strategy-making process, and personal characteristics of executive leadership. Analysis of school closures indicate school size and endowment per student are significant factors (Porter & Ramirez, 2009). Fessenden (2017) identified tuition dependency and sudden substantial jumps in unfunded tuition discounts as characteristics among closed institutions. Hillman (2012) found potential diminishing returns at unfunded discount levels above 13%. Financial metrics including student occupational outcomes proposed for assessing economic sustainability, and four financial ratios including Primary Reserve, Return on Net Assets, Net Operating Revenues, and Viability (Maragakis et al., 2016b). (Prager, McCarthy, Seally LLC, 2018) describe accounting and longitudinal measurements as a way of assessing organizational sustainability. Terkla (2011) identifies categorical performance indicators including financial, admissions, enrollment, faculty, student outcomes, student

engagement, academics, physical plant, satisfaction, research, and external ratings.

Organizational restructuring is a predictable, common, and performance enhancing response to changing environmental conditions (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993).

Innovative characteristics of executive leadership are associated with institutional growth and decline (Dickeson, 2010; Kolomitz, 2016; Neumann & Neumann, 1994; Neumann & Neumann, 1999). Leadership style is associated with institutional outcomes (Neumann & Neumann, 1999). Effective leadership requires championing a clarified mission and guiding a prioritization process to achieve strategic balance under strong environmental influences (Dickeson, 2010). Governing boards, principal decision-makers, staff, and policy makers are associated through formal and informal networks (AGB, 2019).

Organizations in decline have been characterized by centralized decision-making, short-term focus, less innovative, politicized, embattled when resources diminish, and limited in communication (Cameron et al., 1988). Dickeson (2010) argues for tighter focus and restored public trust in cost management through clarified mission, forcefield analysis, and strategic balance. Weisbrod et al. (2008) proposes the TWO-GOOD framework for balancing mission financing activities. Strategies used most frequently among small, private liberal arts colleges to grow enrollment include new marketing recruitment procedures, new undergraduate programs, tuition discounting increases, debt restructuring, and new or renovated facilities (Barron, 2017). Least frequently used strategies include outsourcing athletic functions, lower admission standards, competency-based crediting, outsourcing academic functions, and outsourcing student services (Barron, 2017). Brown (2015) and Fletcher (2013) identified elements present in successful institutional turnaround. Among them, greater involvement of governance, frequent policy evaluation, decentralized decision-making, program adaptation, and resource allocation

prioritization (Brown, 2015; Fletcher, 2013). Brown (2012), Cenczyk (2016), Docking and Curton (2015), and Massa (2007) describe successful strategic marketing implementation leading to enrollment growth through better understanding of demand and value proposition to students. Easy access to resources is extremely important to enrollment management (Stuart, 2016). Five categories of brand and financially damaging events affecting decision-making include business model risks, enrollment supply risks, reputation risks, operating model risks, and compliance risks (Vitters et al., 2019).

Adaptation Theory in the Literature

Organizational adaptation theory in higher education has been studied since 1976 (Brown, 2012). According to Brown (2012), adaptive strategies depend on site-specific analysis of changing external economic, social, political, technical, and legal forces acting upon an organization. Adaptation in higher education was studied by Cameron (1984) and Cameron et al. (1988). According to Cameron (1984), organizational adaptation in higher education requires a strong sense of institutional history, but organizational identity and history must be ignored in some circumstances. A study by Cameron et al. (1988) identified 12 issues present in a study of adaptation in declining higher education institutions. Zajac and Kraatz (1993) found restructuring is a predictable, common, and performance-enhancing response to changing environmental conditions. Lytle (2013) argued that structural changes in cost and revenue of business models are needed, and that institutions must be aware of the changing nature of cultural attitudes toward information and its dissemination. Zenk (2014) argued that contemporary study of leadership ignores the role of organizational culture on institutional change and suggests that culture is a limiting factor for leaders in their ability to make change in higher education institutions. Palumbo and Manna (2019) argue that educational organizations must continuously adapt their

structures, processes, and practices to meet the evolving institutional and social challenges raised by the external environment. Vitters et al. (2019) found that the higher education sector has been steadily investing in people, systems, and capabilities to survive. Organizational adaptation is the institutional response to external and internal environments of higher education.

Summary of Literature Review

Much research has addressed higher education in the United States. Political, economic, socio-demographic, technological, and legal factors have influenced higher education, producing inquiry and a body of research. Publicly available data describes metrics and outcomes shaped by institutional accountability to accrediting and funding entities. Demographic institutional characteristics pertaining to size, funding, student enrollment and retention, faculty composition, and other vital statistics are widely cited and reported. Literature has focused on enrollment, student retention and persistence, financial indicators, strategy, leadership, and institutional response to challenging environments. Understanding why and how small, private, nonprofit liberal arts colleges remain viable is limited, inviting an exploration of how decision-makers in these organizations perceive environmental challenges, make decisions, influence and are informed by outcomes, and influence organizational identity.

Recent trends in higher education are dissimilar to previous cycles of growth and decline among small private liberal arts colleges (Barron, 2017; Chatlani, 2018; Ehrenberg, 2012; Fessenden, 2017; Fletcher, 2013; Freeland, 2009; Lytle, 2013; Maragakis et al., 2016a; Porter & Ramirez, 2009). The environmental forces effecting institutions are recognized. Vulnerability of small, private, non-profit liberal arts colleges is greater than for other higher education institutions (Ehrenberg, 2012; Hunter, 2012). Governance and leadership are important (American Council on Education [ACE], 2019; AGB, 2019; Brown, 2015; Cameron, 1988;

Grant Thornton LLP, 2016; Kolomitz, 2016; Neumann & Neumann, 1994; Soliday & Mann, 2018; Stowe & Komasara, 2016). Culture is important (Weisbrod et al., 2008; Zenk, 2014). Research has focused on case studies examining successful turnaround, or surveys of strategies and patterns among institutions (Barron, 2017; Bradfield, 2019; Brown, 2012; Cenczyk, 2016; Docking & Curton, 2015; Ehrenberg, 2012; Fletcher, 2013; Freeland, 2009; Maragakis et al., 2016a; Massa & Parker, 2007; Vitters et al., 2019; Weisbrod et al., 2008; Zajac & Kraatz, 1993; Zenk, 2014). Some research points to contradictory results, indicating environmental variation over time. This is noted in findings related to determinants of closure in small, private liberal arts colleges (Ehrenberg, 2012; Fessenden, 2017). Religiously affiliated institutions are experiencing distress and closure at higher rates not experienced in previous cycles. A listing of sources, themes, and key findings is provided in Appendix B: Industry Analysis and Literature Review.

Conceptual Framework for Research

Literature does not yet seem to address the focus of interest here. What do decision-makers in these institutions believe about organizational climate, culture, decision-making, and institutional outcomes? Who are the stakeholders influencing decision-making? To what extent are organizational identity and culture impacting outcomes? Conversely, how are outcomes and environmental factors impacting institutional identity and culture? How are perceived value and quality of education in these institutions influencing decision-making? And how are decisions influencing perceived value and quality? A conceptual framework for research of influencers, decisions, and outcomes is presented in Appendix C: Conceptual Framework for Research of Influencers, Decisions, and Outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE:

QUALITATIVE EXPLORATORY CASE RESEARCH DESIGN

“The objective of case method research is the development of conceptual schemes and determination of relevant boundaries so as to allow a client improved control over activities or prediction of behaviors within a complex environment.” (Gill, 2011)

Exploratory qualitative research was conducted by interviewing leaders at four private, nonprofit higher education institutions. The research model emerged from industry analysis and review of literature. Higher education is a complex environment of external and internal factors influencing stakeholders, decisions, and outcomes (Barron, 2017; Chatlani, 2018; Delen & Zolbanin, 2018; Dickeson, 2010; Ehrenberg, 2012; Fessenden, 2017; Fletcher, 2013; Freeland, 2009; Hunter, 2012; Palumbo & Manna, 2019; Soliday & Mann, 2018; Stowe & Komasara, 2016). Decisions in higher education institutions are either strategic or operational. They are influenced by environmental factors, stakeholders, and outcomes. Stakeholders in higher education institutions include clients, funders, advocates, service providers, and trustees. Clients include students, parents, employers, and other higher education institutions that may be associated by organization or partnership. Funders include federal, state, and local agencies providing financial aid or regulatory oversight. Advocates include alumni, donors, or friends who support the institution with time, talent, or money. Operators include faculty, and staff who operate and manage institutions. Operators may also be institutional leaders. Leaders are decision-makers engaged in decision-making. Trustees serve on governing boards of institutions and are decision-makers engaged in decision-making. Outcomes are defined by measures of

institutional effectiveness, financial viability, organizational identity, and organizational mission-adherence (AGB, 2019; Hunter, 2012; Prager, McCarthy, Seally LLC, 2018; Soliday & Mann, 2018; Terkla, 2011). The research model is represented in Figure 1.

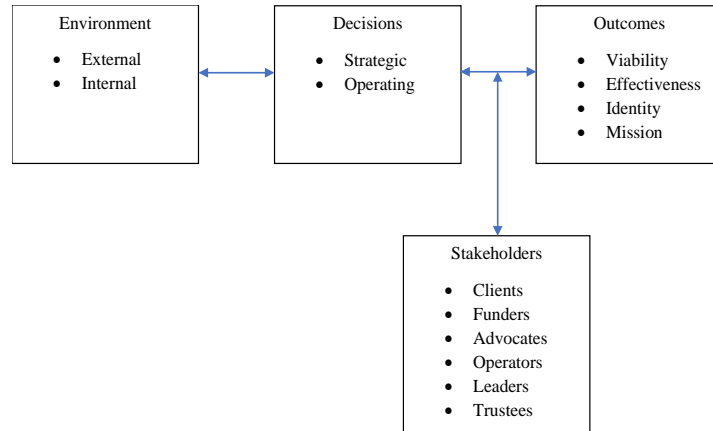


Figure 1. Research Model.

My research explores the interrelationship of environment, decisions, stakeholders, and outcomes in small, private, non-profit, mission-driven liberal arts colleges and universities in the United States. Specifically, I explore how these interrelationships influence institutional viability, sustainability, and institutional identity in the context of organizational challenges and adaptation. As one interview subject observed, “You are approaching this from an inside perspective, which is different.” This study is focused on development of an insider’s description and analysis of four higher education institutions through interviews of key institutional leaders who are members of each institution’s leadership team. The qualitative research explores lived experiences and perceptions of leaders within these organizations through semi-structured interviews, informing replicated case studies and cross-case analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of South Florida reviewed and approved this study, and determined it is exempt from IRB criteria for

human subject research. All research methods and practices employed in this study comply with the IRB-reviewed study proposal.

Multiple Case Replication Study

Site and Subject Selection

Study sites represent similar and dissimilar institutions claiming heritage, tradition, and mission based on Christian values and beliefs. Initial site recruitment began with an invitation to eight colleges and universities who identify themselves with conservative church heritage. Each was founded independently by church members seeking to establish liberal arts colleges for education based on a biblical world view. Each was founded without financial obligations to any religious organization, but was supported, governed, and operated by individuals professing shared religious views regarding biblical principles and doctrine. Each site collaborates informally with the others by sharing financial data among their financial officers at various times. The researcher in this study is employed by one of these institutions and was informed by confidentially shared financial data pertaining to enrollment, endowment, revenue, and expenses reported for eight similar institutions.

Site selection criteria considered mission, enrollment, endowment, and the ratio of endowment size to annual operating expenses as indicators of similarity. Institutional mission is an indicator of values and identity. The study explored the influence of decisions and stakeholders on mission and identity over time. Similarity of mission yields potential insight into adaptation over time. Enrollment is an indicator of size and complexity. Similarity of size and complexity yields potential insight into operational and strategic contexts as they may relate to stakeholders and outcomes. Similarity of endowment and associated ratios are indicators of tuition-dependency, which relates to potentially similar tensions between tuition discounting and

endowment dependency. Industry analysis and review of literature suggest these are characteristic challenges influencing decisions and outcomes in small, private, nonprofit colleges and universities. Selection criteria focused on these characteristics rather than student characteristics, faculty-to-student ratios, or other institutional characteristics to approach the research from an inside perspective of decision-making around the perceived values, mission, and identity of institutions and the influence of decisions and outcomes on values, mission, and identity, which will reflect student characteristics, operating ratios, and other institutional characteristics. Geographical location was also considered with preference for sites from different regions of the United States.

Initial invitations were extended to presidents of these colleges. Three committed their colleges to participate. A second recruitment phase targeted dissimilar organizations seeking an institution to contrast the three identified study sites. Dissimilarity of mission, enrollment, and endowment yields comparative insight into whether findings are exclusive to similar institutions, or potentially generalizable across other types of institutions. An invitation to participate was extended to the Christian College Librarians (CCL) association, a network of over 200 college librarians, through the researcher's institutional membership in CCL. A fourth site responded from this group and committed to participate, completing site selection. The fourth site provides comparatively different identity, enrollment, endowment, and location while it is in the process of re-defining organizational identity, decision-making, and pursuing institutional outcomes in a context of present distress and future uncertainty. Organizational identity and culture are important to why and how organizations adapt (Zenk, 2014). Enrollment and endowment are determinants of viability (Fessenden, 2017; Prager, McCarthy, Seally LLC, 2018). The interrelationship of decisions, stakeholders, and outcomes in challenging environments was

researched to explore what small, private, nonprofit organizations do to adapt and how they define and pursue outcomes.

Study subjects are identified by functional roles and include chief executive, financial management, enrollment management, academic programs, institutional advancement, and student administration. Specific titles of individuals fulfilling these roles vary across study sites, but responsibilities within each role are consistent. Some study subjects fulfill multiple roles in related functions, but they do not cross over among the six identified functional areas selected for this study. All subjects are considered experts in their leadership roles. Though their time in roles and experience vary, each subject participates in decision-making that both influences and is influenced by organizational environment, priorities, and dynamics.

Interview Structure and Protocol

Interviews were semi-structured, seeking to identify relevant, emergent topics. Questions were open-ended and sequenced consistently for all subjects across all sites to triangulate within and across sites. See Appendix D: Interview Protocol.

Subjects participating in this study consented to interviews conducted via Zoom with video and audio recording enabled. Interviews were 60-90 minutes in duration, converted to mp4 files, and transcribed using Rev.com services. Twenty-five interviews were conducted producing 600 transcribed pages and remain viewable media.

Thematic Data Analysis

Creswell's template for coding a case study using multiple or collective case approaches describes structure for data analysis and representation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case context, case description, and within-case theme analysis is completed using an iterative coding process for each study site. Manual coding techniques were employed in three stages: open, axial, and

thematic. Cross-case analysis identified similarities and differences among the site cases. Finally, assertions and generalizations conclude the analysis. Interrelationships within sites and across roles, across sites and within roles, and across sites and across roles were investigated.

Reliability

Interview questions were developed to promote reliability by structuring and sequencing questions to approach topics of interest in multiple ways. Interview questions focused on position, relational history, philosophy of education, description of organizational challenges, culture, climate, decision-making, outcomes, metrics, critical success factors, and emergent topics that surfaced during interviews. Interview questions were developed from a review of the existing literature in the focus areas. Subject responses tended to converge around consistent phrases, concepts, practices, and assumptions within site studies. Variation did occur when subjects expressed role-specific responses, and was often self-identified as subjects acknowledged perspectives differing from others in the organization, or acknowledged role-specific contexts.

Construct Validity

The four study sites represent divergent strategies in different geographic, demographic, and environmental contexts. Data from interviews, databases, and publications suggest convergence around the conceptual framework under study. This study does not probe construct boundaries but identifies how and why these organizations perceive and pursue stated outcomes.

Internal Validity

Internal validity within and across study sites is supported by the triangulation of perspectives in each site. Each case study herein represents individual and collective perceptions of all leadership team members across each site. There is strong organizational interaction among

respondents and shared understanding of organizational characteristics, practices, and decision-making. While the study focuses on institutional leaders, perceptions and understanding of others in the organization are excluded, limiting the extent to which perceptions and understanding are shared throughout the organization. Data reveals leader assumptions and decision-making, limited by leader perception and awareness of what others think, say, and do.

External Validity

This research may be generalizable beyond the study sites, not only in similar institutions, but in other types of nonprofit organizations. Findings from this research may be common to nonprofit organizations serving different clients and operating with different values and missions but functioning in similar ways. Concepts and interrelationships emerging from this study may be shared by organizations limited by size and resources, dependent upon fundraising, confronting environmental forces, and adapting to sustain a viable mission, culture, and identity.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The four colleges that participated in this study were from geographically diverse regions, namely the metropolitan southwest, industrial northeast, agricultural plains, and suburban southeast. However, the colleges were similar in the length of their commitment to providing education. Three were founded over the past 100 years by members of churches to provide liberal arts education with charters based on shared values, beliefs, and purpose (S01, S02, S04). The fourth site was founded as a religiously affiliated graduate school established to train clergy for ministry and has evolved through mergers over the past 200 years while continuing to prepare students for ministry (S03). Institutional enrollment, endowment, location, regional population, and constituency characteristics are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Institutional Characteristics.

Site	Enrollment	Endowment (millions)	Location	Regional Population	Constituency
606-S01	500	\$18.0	Suburban Southeast	400,000	U-grad
606-S02	450	\$15.6	Agricultural Plains	8,000	U-grad/Grad
606-S03	100	\$20.0	Industrial Northeast	200,000	Grad/Cert
606-S04	5,200	\$439.1	Metropolitan Southwest	120,000	U-grad/Grad

All interview subjects are institutional leaders involved with planning and implementation of strategic and operating decisions. Five to seven interviews were conducted at each site. Each interview opened with questions related to current position, history with the institution, professional experience, related roles, and personal philosophy of education. Subject profiles are provided in Table 2.

Table 3. Subject Profiles.

Site-Subject	Role	Years	History	Philosophy of Education
S01-R01	Executive	11	Multi-generational	Mission statement
S01-R02	Finance	8	No prior HEI	Experiential, holistic formation
S01-R03	Academic	0.5	Prior HEIs - 3	Transform
S01-R04	Advancement	1.5	Alum-Admin 6 yrs.	Holistic, mutual responsibility
S01-R05	Admissions	1	Alum-Admin 7 yrs.	Empowerment, transferrable
S01-R06	Students	6	Alum-Admin 10 yrs.	Relational, help students see
S02-R01	Executive	12	Alum-Admin 30 yrs.	Transform, Christian ideals
S02-R02	Finance	17	Multi-generational	Supportive, purposeful, serve
S02-R03	Academic	6	Prof.-Admin 3	Transform, Liberal Arts, life
S02-R04	Advancement	13	Alum-Admin S04	Egalitarian, transform, impact
S02-R05	Enrollment	6	Alum-Admin 15 yrs.	Relational, meaningful, mentor
S02-R06	Students	2	Alum-Admin 9 yrs.	Passion, formative, improves
S03-R01	Executive	1	Corp-HEI 17 yrs.	Inform, engage, collective
S03-R02	Finance	1	Temp to VP 19 yrs.	Discern, every part important
S03-R03	Academic	0.1	Corp-HEI	Caught and taught, integrity
S03-R04	Advancement	1	Recruited from HEI	Privileged, learn/reflect love
S03-R05	Admissions	9	Admin 15 yrs.	Reach learner, control environ.
S03-R06	Students	1	Professor 13 yrs.	Host/guest, entertain, careful
S03-R07	Effectiveness	0.7	Other HEI – 1	Foundational, informed/inform
S04-R01	Executive	10	Multi-generational	Inform, challenge, expose
S04-R02	Finance	2	Alum-Admin 19 yrs.	HEI values, influence, loyalty
S04-R03	Academic	8	Other HEI – 1	Holistic, faith, service, unique
S04-R04	Advancement	6	Multi-gen / Trustee	Transform, honor the Lord
S04-R05	Admissions	6	Alum-Admin 17 yrs.	Classical, pursue, discern truth

The interviews solicited perceptions on seven categories corresponding to elements of the research model: external environment, internal environment, organizational identity, influencers, decisions, outcomes, and key indicators. My analysis of the findings across sites and subjects identified consistencies and inconsistencies in these categories and are discussed here by category and summarized in the first table of Appendix E: Findings. The findings by site are also provided in Appendix E thematically arranged by category. The findings are listed in the order in which they sequentially surfaced during interviews and include words, phrases, and statements identified during the coding protocol. Relative frequency of each mentioned item in the findings was not strictly measured. However, relative frequency of themes derived from examples,

stories, and explanations given in responses were compiled across each site. Some responses were uniformly consistent across all interviews. Other responses were specific to roles in the organizations. They are not listed in order of frequency in Appendix E.

Environmental Influences

External Factors

Consistent findings across all study sites relate to global environmental factors affecting higher education institutions in general, factors unique to their constituencies, and factors that are local. Constituents are the stakeholders each institution serves. Core constituents are a subset of those stakeholders who share values and beliefs in common with the values and mission of the institution. Each of these organizations were founded for the expressed purpose of providing education for students in an environment that reinforces the shared values and beliefs of the core constituency. One key finding was that a diminishing core constituency has impacted each institution. Though their values and missions differ, each institution has been confronted by a shrinking constituency in the general population of prospective students. They attribute this trend to social and demographic shifts away from participation in constituent organizations, churches mainly. This factor compounds environmental pressures confronting all higher education institutions in the United States, particularly small, private, nonprofit colleges providing liberal education as opposed to programs and degrees leading to specific occupational fields requiring technical or practical knowledge.

Findings also suggest that geographical location is a significant factor in shrinking enrollments, but for different reasons. For example, while S01 enjoys an attractive location, it is negatively impacted by prospective student preferences to remain closer to home. S02 is more remotely located in an agricultural region and more isolated in a small-town atmosphere. S03 is

in an area that has been impacted by the closure of major industrial corporations, changing the socio-economic strength and vitality of the region. Finally, S04 is in a metropolitan area, far removed from significantly more robust economic regions, and is constrained from physical expansion because the local tax base will decrease as land is allocated to use by a nonprofit institution. This suggests a political dimension for the S04 environment which is not mentioned by the other three sites.

Each institution also cited affordability for students as another contributing factor. Cost to attend is influencing institutional pricing decisions that impact net tuition revenue and endowment dependence while placing pressure on these institutions to execute effective fundraising efforts. Consequently, these schools are attempting to alleviate this pressure through financial discipline, growth plans, and strategic capital spending.

Three colleges consistently stated that projected numbers of high school graduates over the next 15 years will intensify pressures on enrollment and financial viability. S03 serves an older clientele and is less impacted by the population of high school graduates entering college. S02 and S03 have developed programs serving adult learners. These revenue diversification strategies are intended to strengthen the institutions financially.

Each institution fosters and maintains community relationships. Community relationships are viewed by these colleges on local, national, and international levels through individuals and organizations that value their influence. Relationships with the community pertains to recruitment, reputation, outreach, service, and influence for the advancement of institutional values and mission. Community relationships are viewed as critical to institutional relevance and reliability.

While there are common global and local environmental factors that influence a complex landscape, inconsistencies are evident in site-specific context and consequence. For example, S02 is uniquely impacted in the timeline of its recruiting cycle. Consequently, its recruiting model requires an accelerated approach that commits the institution to a short-cycle limitation. S02 must hit its recruiting targets early in the typical industry cycle and therefore it is more difficult to recover from shortfalls. S02 makes pricing decisions on a student by student basis without a pool of prospects to draw from when a prospective student declines an offer to enroll. A second example is experienced by S03. The factor was described as ambiguity in the recruiting pipeline. S01, S02, and S04 expressed clear understanding of their recruiting pipelines. The recruiting channels for S01, S02, and S04 are well established and have been in place for many years. S01 has maintained stable channels to core constituents. S02 has diversified channels to recruit students with no connection to the core constituency, implying a change in culture, climate, and the mission. The institution describes itself as “financially sound, on the edge.” S04 has enjoyed well-established recruiting channels but has also experienced a decrease in core constituency attributed to decisions motivated by survival. The leadership team embraces and pushes organizational change with intentionality and urgency. Organizational policies and culture have changed, and the organization describes itself as one of only four or five universities excelling at both academic and spiritual education. S04 has aspirational goals that focus on maintaining existing pipelines while expanding new ones. In contrast, S03 attributes ambiguity in the recruiting pipeline to the college’s fall from prominence and relevance among core constituents to the point that enrollment has fallen below 100. The institution is in early stages of turn-around, with new leadership and a “start-up” approach to re-invent itself.

In summary, findings represent both consistent and inconsistent external environmental factors. These colleges are vulnerable to similar social and demographic influences. Their institutional value is questioned by shrinking core constituencies who are deterred from liberal education without a path to practical vocation. Future pressure is expected to intensify. Adaptive responses have influenced internal environments in these organizations.

Internal Factors

Several consistencies emerged among study sites. Focus is given to relationships among stakeholders throughout the institutions. Core values, mission, and sacrificial service are characteristic of espoused, expected, and practiced behaviors. Each institution considers itself flexible to pivot quickly in an environment characterized by tension with time allocated to operating priorities hindering strategic priorities. Each college recognizes an influence on culture, climate, and community by constituents who have changed over time.

Relationships among stakeholders are interrelated and considered vital to institutional identity. Connections to the institutions are formed among constituents through student experience, alumni engagement, donor engagement, and networking through social and volunteer activities. Multi-generational connections are common, and family names and extended families are recognized among core constituents. Recruiting and fundraising activities are relationship oriented. Key donors, board members, institutional leaders, and advocates are connected through an abiding interest in the college values, mission, and direction. Their influence is expressed through gifts of “time, talent, and treasure.”

However, time, talent, and resources are limited, and organizational needs often exceed their availability. Operating requirements consume most of the attention demanded from leaders and planning time is constrained. Operating environments were described as lean and nimble.

Small institutional size is considered both a strength and a weakness. Agility and ability to quickly pivot on a decision were described as advantages.

While operating decisions consume most of the time and attention of leaders, strategic focus is simultaneously also being prioritized. With a view to discern the future impact of current decisions, leaders are weighing the potential influence of the present choices on future outcomes, given the uncertainties in the assumptions. Enrollment, student experience, and institutional reputation are the topics of most strategic conversations. The focus of these centers on constituents and their influence. Serving constituent interests is of paramount importance. Segmentation of the constituent group impacts college decisions, and those decisions impact the constituents, which in turn impacts enrollment, student experience, and institutional reputation.

Inconsistencies in these environments pertain to process and priorities in complex environments. Each college employs different processes. For example, S01 produced a 15-year strategic plan after a board restructuring and more active engagement by board committees. The plan development was collaborative, with team building over time, that led team members to feel included, connected, and “energized.” Decision-making is hierarchical. Harmonious relationships are a factor in the perceived effectiveness among leaders. Leadership is working through a process of consensus. On the other hand, S02 is at the conclusion of a long-term strategic plan with a transition to a new president in progress. A new planning cycle will begin when the new president is in place. Decision-making is “delegated.” In this setting, leadership does not work toward consensus. S03 has recently rolled out a 4-year strategic plan under a new president with a newly formed leadership team. The plan was developed over an 11-month period with substantial board engagement, strong presidential influence, and leadership team activities to build capacity within their new team as they developed the plan together. Leadership

described a sense of energy and urgency fueled by respect for the president's experience, reputation, high expectations, trust, and passion for the mission. Leadership shares a sense of ownership for the plan with responsibility for implementation. S03 is re-inventing itself through a process of trauma, grief, intervention, restructuring, and pursuit of relevance. S04 is focusing on strategies to diversify revenue, change instructional delivery, increase national reputation, and institutionalize financial discipline while addressing competing priorities and internal agency challenges characterized by tension with culture, identity, and direction. S04 functions in a complex internal environment shaped by size and organizational structure.

Internal and external environmental factors are influencing decision-making and decisions at all these institutions. The organizations are uniquely different, but are experiencing common influences. Inconsistencies among them pertain to institutional characteristics and responses.

Organizational Identity

Each institution believes identity is defined by alignment of core values with mission, mission focus, and shared understanding of values and mission. Each institution connects its identity to purpose, culture, and reputation. Links between identity, physical location, and facilities differ, but these institutions are connected by how their identities are perceived. Inconsistencies among institutions relate to organizational adaptation – influences driving adaptation, organizational objectives of adaptation, the nature and extent of adaptation, and outcomes perceived to have resulted from adaptation.

All the interviewees at the various study sites believe core institutional values have not changed since chartered formation, although mission statements have changed at three of the four sites (S02, S03, S04). All sites refer to their mission statements when describing their

identities. Duality of purpose was referred to by S01, S02, S03, and S04 explicitly. These institutions focus on academic preparation and spiritual formation to prepare students for Christian service. S01 characterizes their purpose as formative. S02 and S04 characterize their purpose as transformative. S04 cites purpose from the stipulated charter – education to prepare students for Christian ministry and Christian service. Culture and identity are linked by slogans, sayings, and quotes. For example, phrases such as “say what you do, and do what you say, or “live into the mission,” or “school of choice,” or “life changing transformation.” Reputation is perceived in various contexts but was mentioned uniformly to describe identity. S01 pursues reputation among core constituents, students, and donors. S02 pursues reputation among student athletes, employers, and donors. S03 pursues reputation among ordaining bodies, partners, guilds, and communities (local, national, and international), and donors. S04 pursues reputation among core constituents, scholar-athletes, research faculty, employers, and donors. S02 and S04 speak to “increasing our footprint” in terms of national reach. S01 speaks of nationally dispersed core constituency. S03 speaks of peace, service, and justice locally, nationally, and globally. S04 speaks of making an impact globally. Physical setting is linked to identity by proximity to constituents, landmarks associated with student experience, community symbolism and engagement, alumni and donor affinity, and institutional pride. S01, S02, S03, and S04 locations and landmark buildings evoke emotion among leaders, students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors, and communities. The relocation of S03 has impacted institutional culture and reputation symbolically and practically. It was described as part of the trauma, grief, and re-invention process of the institution. Identity is closely linked to location and facilities.

Institutional identities have changed due to external and internal influences, intentional objectives, the nature of decisions, and perceived outcomes in these organizations. S01 exists to

provide a “comprehensive college experience designed to develop students spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially; to integrate into the students’ lives the Bible as the revealed will of God; and to prepare students for lives of service to their Creator and to humanity.” S01 is struggling with development of new academic programs and instructional delivery, attributed to differing perspectives and lack of consensus to distinction between mission and method in the context of future impact to student experience, enrollment, alumni engagement, and donor engagement. S02 attributes an identity shift occurring “unnoticed over a 20-year period” to a strategic focus on expansion of athletic programs through which enrollment, student experience, mission, and identity influenced by a declining presence of core constituents on campus. Intentional shifts to athletic programs, graduate degree programs, and professional training have enhanced reputation among prospective students, but has resulted in a challenge to the institutional culture. Decision-makers at S02 attribute decision-making to a distinction between mission and methods and a collective commitment to change the culture to “live into the mission.” S02 now serves a socially and demographically different population of students, reflecting a new mission statement based on consistent core values. They have shifted from a “college for Christian students” to a “Christian college for students.” The new mission of S02 is to “transform lives through Christ-centered education and to equip students for lifelong service to God, family, and society.” S03 has redefined identity in their new strategic plan. It is in the process of “living into the mission – forming students in theological and multi-religious studies to serve, care, and advocate for all peoples and the earth.” Their vision statement calls out faithfulness to a “distinctive Christian identity ... of and for the community, committed to practices of peace, service, and justice.” S04 has responded to social and demographic shifts among core constituents to broaden institutional reach and reputation. Campus culture and reputation reflect a greater diversity of religious

backgrounds among students and a greater percent of students with no religious background at all. The mission of S04 is to “educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.” The mission statements of S01, S02, S03, and S04 signal shifts in strategies, policies, processes, and decisions intended to promote student experience, alumni and donor engagement, reputation, and promote growth to sustain financial viability. They reflect identities that have changed over time. These changes have been driven by external and internal influences, organizational objectives, decisions, and outcomes.

Stakeholders as Influencers

Stakeholders are people and organizations who have an interest and influence in the institution, or are served by the institution (S01, S02, S03, S04). They are linked to external and internal environments and are integral to institutional identity (S01, S02, S03, S04). They are decision-makers within the organization and are affected by institutional outcomes (S01, S02, S03, S04). The individuals and organizations considered to be stakeholders are diverse and connect to each other and to the institutions in complex ways. Relationships are often multi-generational and reputational. Stakeholders often have multiple links to the institution as students, alumni, advocates, donors, trustees, employees, volunteers, and employers of students and alumni (S01, S02, S03, S04). Motivations and connections focus on student recruitment, student experience, student success, student retention, faculty and staff experience, institutional reputation, promotion of mission, and conservation of core values, heritage, and legacy (S01, S02, S03, S04). Stakeholder influence is manifest in decision-making dynamics and adaptive responses to organizational challenges (S01, S02, S03, S04).

The interests and priorities of stakeholders vary by which group or groups they belong to, but there are consistent priorities among them in all study sites. Organizational decisions are

focused on enrollment, endowment, expense management, and reputation as key determinants of institutional health (S01, S02, S03, S04). Consequently, stakeholder consideration and influence impact every aspect of strategic and operational decisions. Expressed priorities articulated by organizational leaders identified students, donors, faculty, and alumni as foci of every decision.

Presidents uniformly stated accountability to the board of trustees and governing entities is a primary guiding influence. The nature and extent of board involvement varies across sites from “hands-off” to actively managing operations during a crisis. Board engagement seems to be linked to financial health, institutional leadership, board structure, and board leadership. S01, S02, S03, and S04 attribute good outcomes in part to the structure and leadership of the board, particularly the leadership of the board chairman and appropriate engagement of board committees. Boards consistently place a high level of trust in institutional leadership. Good working relationships between presidents and board members are a contributing factor to favorable outcomes in planning and operating decisions.

Presidential decision-making style is influenced by stakeholders and varies from institution to institution. For example, S01 is a top-down, consensus-oriented process facilitated by the president. Leadership informs decisions, but few are delegated through a hierarchical process controlled by the president as principle decision-maker. However, S02 is a delegated process where decisions are made at the lowest possible level of ownership. The president acts as facilitator, referee, and final decision-maker. S03 is about building capacity in leaders, under the mentorship and guidance of the president, and where decisions are discussed and made as a team. Finally, S04 is formally structured on multiple levels where the leadership team functions as a steering committee for planning and implementation, guided by executive cohesion.

While decision-making style varied across study sites, all the sites consider listening to stakeholders to be very important. How stakeholders influence decision-makers and decisions also varied across institutions. Students are represented primarily through their interactions with administrators through their activities in clubs and student organizations at S01. Students participate on leadership and board committees at S02. Students interact informally with faculty, staff, and leadership at S03. Students are represented on institutional committees at S04. All sites conduct surveys and interviews in varying ways. Faculty representation at S01 is done through the academic administrator and a faculty representative on the leadership team. Faculty representation at S02 is accomplished through the academic administrator. Faculty representation at S03 is accomplished through formal and informal meetings and discussions. S04 has formal and informal faculty representation through committees and councils. S04 credits successful organizational change with faculty representation in discussions and visible incremental improvement.

All the sites direct extensive effort toward donor development and donor engagement. Students are viewed as future donors and the progression from student to advocate, recruiter, and donor is considered the lifeblood of S01, S02, and S04. Developing community connections and rebuilding donor base is a strategic priority at S03. Innovation and new ideas leading to decisions and outcomes is attributed to donor engagement by S01, S02, and S04. S03 is developing channels of communication with community and donor bases to open this conduit. Large dollar donors are diminishing in number and donation sizes are shrinking among all donors. Therefore, pursuit of donors by understanding their interests and affinities is a priority for all sites.

Core constituent influence also varies across sites, seeming to correspond to size of the core constituent enrollment and the institutional willingness to implement policies and practices

that may not be embraced by this group. S01 is strongly influenced by core constituent voices from the board level to the student level. S01 considers serving core constituency to be the primary reason for its existence. S02 is influenced to a great extent by non-core constituents and has implemented policies and practices that have challenged core constituent influence. S03 is focused on rebuilding core constituency from virtual start-up. One strategic priority is to attract and retain this group. S04 is also influenced by non-core constituents to the point of planning the alignment of board and faculty members to match student characteristics and backgrounds.

Decisions are influenced by stakeholders in an arena of priorities concentrated around financial viability and long-term sustainability. Key influencers of decisions are stakeholders who impact enrollment, endowment, and reputation. Decision-making focuses on influencing stakeholders to embrace institutional values, mission, and vision, to engage with time, talent, and resources, and to ensure institutional viability.

Decisions and Decision-Making

The findings indicate that financial viability objectives have precipitated challenges to core values and mission while institutional culture and climate have changed over time.

Fiscal conservatism prevails at all four institutions while financial discipline precipitates tension at each of them. Balancing the budget, good stewardship, and sacrifice were mentioned as important aspects of financial discipline to ensure viability (S01, S02, S03, S04). Tensions were attributed to enrollment levels, tuition discounting, restricted endowment, endowment draw rates, and conflicting stakeholder agendas.

Under challenging environmental circumstances, each institution has experienced tension with staying true to their core values and mission. S01 has “doubled down” on established values and mission, seeking to conserve identity and increase perceived value to core constituents and

grow to survive. S02 has maintained core values, but has changed mission and strategies to change identity and grow and survive. S03 has returned to its chartered purpose to re-identify values, mission, and strategy to re-invent identity, to grow and to survive. S04 has maintained its core values, but changed its mission and strategies to change identity to grow and to survive.

Institutional cultures and climates have changed over time. Each institution is proud of their respective histories and legacies. Decisions are shaped by heritage, tradition, perceived realities of present circumstances, and assumptions about future outcomes.

Decision-making toward measured goals occurs across each organization. S01, S02, S03, and S04 use enrollment, endowment, and budget goals to inform decisions. However, decision-making is accomplished differently from site to site. S01 uses periodic budget reports, accreditation self-study metrics, and periodic board reviews to plan, monitor, and make decisions. Enrollment progress throughout the year is carefully monitored and managed. S02 uses internally developed tracking instruments to plan, monitor, and carefully manage enrollment and fundraising progress toward goals. S03 is establishing goals and metrics for each strategic priority in its new 4-year plan. Former dashboards prepared for institutional leaders are being aligned with the new strategic plan. Leaders are currently working through what to measure and how to use actionable information. S04 uses an internally developed collection of nine profiles tracking multiple metrics for each profile spanning critical areas of focus for the institution. Leadership is actively engaged in planning, monitoring, and managing progress toward specific goals.

All four organizations pursue student experience, donor engagement, and faculty experience as critical focus areas. Methods vary across sites, but all methods concentrate on relationship building and personal connection to the institution.

Decision-making processes and structures vary with institutional size and culture. Granularity of goals and metrics vary across institutions. Distinctions between mission and method arise in controversial conversations around heritage, values, and mission. Programs, degrees, program delivery, and faculty agency are controversial topics of conversation, which are considered critical to relevance and sustainable viability.

Key decisions that surfaced during interviews were offered by interviewees as examples to illustrate their perception of links between decisions, stakeholders, and outcomes. S01 repeatedly stated that adherence to core values and mission are essential. Professional and pre-professional program development is underway to add programs in nursing, business, communications, and pre-health sciences. Computer science or technology is on the horizon. Feasibility studies in business and communications are in progress. Face-to-face recruitment and donor development are considered critical. National travel by several college advocates is ongoing constantly. Capital expenditures must be strategic and be justified in the context of enrollment, student experience, alumni engagement, and reputation enhancement because “optics matter.” The current capital campaign emphasizes expenditures for new programs and student experience projects. S02 is concluding two renovation projects with direct assistance from key donors when the capital campaign was suspended due to Covid-19. All planning and fundraising efforts will be led by the new president as they transition this year. Decisions mentioned during interviews included expansion of online programs which have not produced expected enrollment results. S03 experienced a windfall of donations when the new president began to reach out to donors. The capital campaign was suspended, and donors received personal calls and letters expressing concern and care for them during Covid-19. Annual fundraising targets had been exceeded during the first quarter. All decisions over the past year were related to development of

the strategic plan. As one leader explained, “in-reach before out-reach.” S04 has made a succession of decisions related to faculty tenure and promotion, women roles in chapel, a satellite campus delivering online instruction, and new programs. They are currently working through a partnership agreement with four other universities to cross-utilize courses and professors in transferrable credit hours toward degrees.

Linkages between decisions and outcomes vary from site to site. S01 decisions are driven by enrollment, student experience, retention, and fundraising maximization strategies. Brand marketing has been hindered by organizational structure and fiscal challenges, but is emerging as an area of focus. S02 decisions are driven by enrollment, student experience, retention, and fundraising maximization strategies with emphasis on brand marketing. S03 decisions are driven by brand identity and development, enrollment, student experience, retention, and fundraising strategies. S04 is driven by rapid and innovative change to enhance brand reputation. Entrepreneurial risk-taking is encouraged to incubate new ideas to improve enrollment, student experience, retention, and fundraising. Diversifying revenue streams is a high priority. Decisions across all sites are uniformly goal related, but how those goals are defined, communicated, monitored, reported, and impacting outcomes through decisions vary.

Outcomes

All the sites linked outcomes to their decision-making. The following factors were mentioned during interviews as direct influencers of outcomes: (1) environmental factors, (2) organizational identity, (3) organizational structure, (4) stakeholders, (5) learning from the past, (6) organizational mindset, (7) organizational culture, (8) leadership, (9) governance, (10) brand and brand marketing, (11) the decision-making process. S01 attributed enrollment success to stakeholders, organizational culture, brand, and brand marketing. Endowment growth was

attributed to identity, culture, stakeholders, leadership, brand, and brand marketing. Student experience outcomes were attributed to identity, culture, stakeholders, and structure.

S02 attributed enrollment growth to identity, structure, stakeholders, learning from the past, mindset, culture, leadership, brand and brand marketing, and the decision-making process. However, enrollment targets for online programs has not materialized and they do not know why. Expectations are to enroll 500 students per year in online programs. They are experiencing far fewer. Endowment growth was attributed to identity, culture, stakeholders, and leadership.

Policy changes are intentionally changing the culture on campus. A gap between student development and spiritual development functions was identified as a challenge hindering improvement in student success and retention. Stakeholders, structure, culture, learning from the past, mindset, leadership, and governance were identified factors in the link between policies and student experience outcomes. S03 attributed leadership, decision-making, environmental, stakeholder, culture, mindset, identity, and governance factors to the decline of outcomes leading up to a failed merger, asset sale, relocation, and re-organization of the institution. They attribute governance, leadership, decision-making, stakeholders, mindset, identity, culture, learning from the past, and structure as factors in the turn-around of the institution. S04 attributes successful implementation of controversial decisions to leadership, decision process, structure, identity, culture, stakeholders, governance, and learning from the past.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The goal of this study was to investigate the influences of decision-making, stakeholders, and outcomes in small, private, nonprofit, mission-focused colleges, and universities in the United States as they confront several challenges threatening sustainable viability. These institutions represent 34% of all higher education institutions and historically have been considered vital to the national interests, both socially and economically. Within this sector of higher education, many institutions were established to serve religiously affiliated constituents. Consequently, the sustainable viability of these organizations is important not only to associated stakeholders, but to higher education's influence on the perceived social and economic vitality of our nation. The issue pertains to philosophical and pedagogical assumptions about the purpose and value of higher education in America. Understanding perceptions, experiences, and priorities of decision-makers within the private nonprofit sector provides insight into how and why decisions, stakeholders, and outcomes may be influencing organizational identity and viability in challenging circumstances.

My findings suggest that outcomes are linked to competitive reputation, and that reputation is determined by relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability. The literature does not address relevance and distinctiveness in the terms described by interviewees in this study. While the literature discusses reputation in terms of selectivity and student characteristics, my findings suggest these factors appear to be related to stakeholder expectations and experience in a way not

addressed in the literature (Fessenden, 2017; Meyer, 2017; Porter & Ramirez, 2009). My research found stakeholder expectations and experience seem to influence stakeholder affinity for institutions which relates to enrollment and endowment because the stakeholders assert influence upon present and future viability through their advocacy, or lack thereof. My findings also suggest that perceived institutional value by stakeholders is determined by organizational identity, programs, projects, and cost-benefit analysis of the decisions made by institutional leaders. Perceived value seems to relate back to stakeholder affinity and institutional reputation, which determine relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability outcomes. Organizational viability and competitive sustainability seem to depend on stakeholder responses to organizational decisions. These decisions reflect the nature and extent of adaptation organizations make to define, protect, and project their reputation among present and future stakeholders.

Theoretical and Practical Links

Organizational adaptation in complex environments is at the center of decision-making and outcomes in the small, private, nonprofit sector of higher education (Brown, 2012; Cameron, 1984; Cameron et al., 1988; Lytle, 2013; Palumbo & Manna, 2019; Vitters et al., 2019; Zajac & Kraatz, 1993; Zenk, 2014). Decision-makers are wrestling with decisions that reflect the tension between heritage, tradition, external and internal environments, values, mission, strategies, and stakeholder perceptions. My research found decisions signal institutional responses to these factors and reflect the nature and extent of perceived adaptive intentions. Outcomes reflect the perceived value of organizational changes to stakeholders and stakeholder relationships with the institution.

My findings highlight several key findings. First, decision-makers are deeply connected to their organizations. While leader characteristics are associated with institutional outcomes

(sources), the relationship between decision-makers and stakeholder values is central to decision-making and how outcomes are perceived. This relationship does not seem to be addressed in the literature. My research found that personal and organizational values are closely aligned among decision-makers and institutions, reflecting deep personal connections to the institutions and their stakeholders. Consequently, decision-makers are focused on organizational mission and influenced by outcomes in deeply personal ways. Another finding suggests that institutional identity is strongly related to reputation. Literature connects reputation to measures of institutional effectiveness as measured by accreditation criteria (Brown, 2015; Fletcher, 2013).

My research found reputation seems to be linked to heritage, culture, and stakeholder experience. Decision-making is focused on reputation in these terms. Decision-making processes are shaped by these factors, and outcomes are defined in these terms by decision-makers. Within the realms of institutional heritage, culture, and stakeholder experience, interrelationships among stakeholders inside and outside of organizations are vitally important. The interrelationships among stakeholders reflect organizational outcomes and outcomes reflect those relationships. Decision-makers believe sustainable viability depends upon organizational reputation and stakeholder engagement. Therefore, decision-makers see their successes and failures in terms of institutional reputation and stakeholder experience in every facet of these complex organizations.

Problematic Finding

My research also revealed an ongoing challenge for these institutions that is not found in the body of literature. There is difficulty in linking specific strategies to qualitative outcomes. The organizations uniformly expressed difficulty in measuring outcomes that are most missionally important to them. Each considers stakeholder experience, especially student and donor experience to be critical indicators of viability. Missions are related to a formational or

transformational process of education producing lifelong influences because of transformational spiritual experiences at the institutions. Each organization struggles with how to measure that outcome. They consider engagement of alumni as advocates and donors to be indicators of the transformational outcome, for which they have developed metrics. What they cannot yet measure with confidence relates to the influence of spiritual experience at the institution to lifelong persistence in faith and the influence those experiences have in society. Stories and sentiments expressed by alumni as advocates and donors are celebrated and projected. As the constituency has changed over time, perceived impact upon students is becoming more challenging to assess and the future implications for the institutions are increasingly important.

Implications for Research and Practice

Because of the way institutions function and adapt in challenging circumstances, my research found the study of higher education institutions in the nonprofit space is an open frontier. Several unanswered questions remain. For example, are these institutions going to be dismissed from the landscape of higher education because their value has diminished in a society moving away from their institutional values? Are they going to vanish because academic programs and delivery models are inconsistent with needs and wants of current and prospective students? Will institutions adapt in ways that change their identity, culture, and the experience of stakeholders to ensure future viability? Will they be relevant, distinct, and affordable in the future? Answers will emerge from interactions and influences of environment, decisions, stakeholders, and outcomes on the organizations.

Key Findings and Implications

My research focused on how vulnerable nonprofit organizations have been adapting to survive in challenging environments. The research investigated how strategic decisions affect

stakeholders and organizational outcomes, how stakeholders affect decisions and organizational outcomes, and how outcomes affect decisions and stakeholders in small, private, nonprofit colleges in the United States.

The key findings indicate decisions influence institutional reputation. Stakeholders are influenced by perceived relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability. Stakeholder experience drives decision-making to enhance stakeholder affinity for the institution. Stakeholder affinity for the institution determines stakeholder engagement and stakeholder engagement determines institutional viability. Organizational outcomes influence decisions intended to produce perceived relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability among present and future stakeholders. These findings are illustrated in Figure 2.

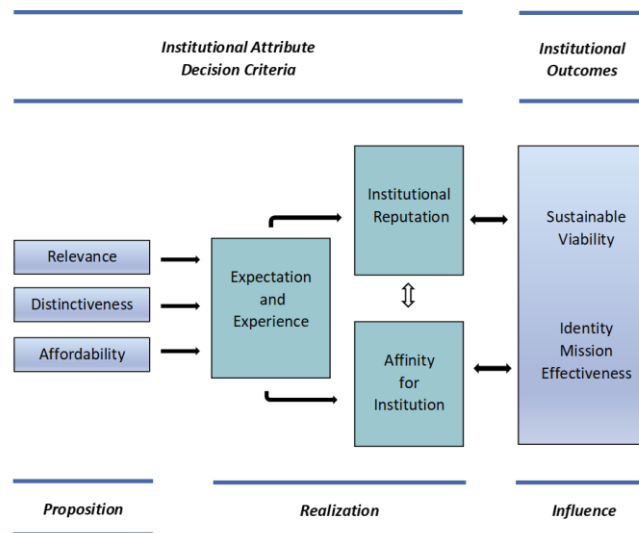


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework for Decision-Making.

Five key findings are discussed here. First, it is imperative for organizations to understand how stakeholders perceive an institution’s relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability. That is to say, stakeholders define value and quality in higher education based on the extent to which they believe it will benefit their lives, why any particular institution is the

institution of choice for them, and whether they believe the benefit of engaging is worth the cost. The literature has addressed what institutions have done to influence financial outcomes and institutional effectiveness as measured by accreditation and federal funding requirements. My research has identified qualitative factors that influence those outcomes. For example, the second key finding suggests institutions must define relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability in terms of stakeholder expectations and experience. The congruence between expectations and experience is reflected in stakeholder choices pertaining to engagement, advocacy, and influence. Therefore, organizational decision-making must be informed by stakeholder engagement, advocacy, and influence through the lens of stakeholder experience. Third, stakeholder affinity is determined by their experience with the institution. It is critical to focus on stakeholder experience in decision processes and outcomes because their affinity for an institution is reflected in their giving of time, talent, and financial resources. Stakeholder affinity is a determinant of long-term commitment to advocacy for the institution. In fact, it is viewed by organizations as their “life-blood.” Stakeholder affinity reflects admiration, respect, and loyalty for the institutional identity and causes stakeholders to advocate, especially when institutions are challenged in difficult circumstances. Fourth, institutional viability is measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Literature focuses on quantitative measures of viability and decision-making. My research suggests these institutions view financial viability as a means rather than an end, which is to fulfill their purpose and mission. Institutions may make decisions and accept outcomes that are fiscally detrimental in the short-term if the perceived benefit serves the organizational purpose and mission as a conservation of its core values in the future. Similarly, institutions may make decisions and accept outcomes that are fiscally beneficial even if the perceived benefit somehow re-directs their purpose and mission, potentially re-defining

their identities in the future. The interactions among core values, purpose, mission, identity, and outcomes is a vortex of decision-making in which adaptation occurs. Institutions are viable because their values and missions are supported by stakeholders who engage with and advocate for them.

Finally, effectiveness is also measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Accreditation of higher education institutions is related partially to financial viability.

Accreditation is also a means to an end. There are specific quantitative measures of institutional effectiveness monitored and reported externally by institutions. Literature focuses on how institutions improve these quantitative measures. My research found institutions are qualitatively assessing effectiveness and searching for appropriate measures to better understand and improve their effectiveness. The qualitative factors pertain to the life-long impact of institutional experience on stakeholders, especially constituents who are not among the core constituency. Institutional missions represent duality of purpose: Academic preparation of students for future success and spiritual formation or transformation for life-long influence in society. Academic preparation and occupational outcomes are easier to measure than life-changing formative and transformative spiritual experience. The literature is limited in this area, as studies of life-long spiritual persistence are beginning to emerge. This is the primary focus expressed by institutional leaders when they discuss their organizational identity and decision-making – forming or transforming students to influence others in the future. My research found it is perhaps the least understood. Institutions know who their key stakeholders are. They know who their key donors are. They know who their vocal stakeholders are. They are not sure how their decisions in present circumstances are connecting current stakeholders with their heritage while establishing

a foundation for the future. Institutional leaders believe this is important and their decisions are informed by this goal.

My research identified three actionable findings institutional leaders can and should implement to promote sustainable viability and organizational identity in challenging circumstances. First, establish and strengthen impactful relationships with prospective and current stakeholders to promote and ensure life-long association between the institution and its present and future stakeholders. This process is both immediate and multi-generational. Engaging them in conversations, involving them in exploratory phases of decision-making, and being aware of their perceptions and experiences is critical to informed decisions and favorable outcomes. Second, establish a compelling identity and persuasively communicate it consistently, broadly, and frequently through all stakeholders in a variety of channels to actively advocate for the institutional reputation and its viability. Finally, implement decision-making processes that explicitly link decisions and outcomes with stakeholder perceptions and experiences as they relate to institutional relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability. Favorable outcomes tend to result from good decisions and good decisions are informed by the stakeholders who are influenced by those decisions. Understanding how to align institutional values, mission, identity, and culture with plans, goals, and decisions in a way that resonates with stakeholders and connects them emotionally to the reputation and future influence of the institution is perhaps the single most impactful insight institutional leaders can possess. Achieving institutional relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability among present and future stakeholders is sustainable viability for small, private, nonprofit higher education institutions. See Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Decision-Making.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to four institutions and respective leadership teams who are primary decision-makers in these organizations. Institutions were geographically diverse. Three sites (S01, S02, S04) were similar in missional values and beliefs. One of the three (S04) was organizationally more complex than the others. The fourth site (S03) was included as a contrasting organization - missionally, programmatically, and demographically. Data collection was exploratory and qualitative, bound by 60-90-minute interviews of 5-7 leadership team members from each site. Perceptions of other stakeholders were not part of the study. Data collection accomplished triangulation through semi-structured interview protocols. Interrater reliability of findings was not practically possible. Investigator bias was mitigated by triangulation of subjects and questions. Saturation was satisfied through consistency of responses. It is assumed consistency of responses across subjects within sites reflected cohesive relationships of subjects in their respective leadership teams.

Directions for Future Research

There are several possible directions for future research based on findings from this study. First, the relationship between institutions as sources of value and outcomes seems to depend on stakeholder experience, organizational reputation, and affinity of clients, advocates, and donors to the institutions. Future research could explore these factors further to better understand institutional value to stakeholders and organizational outcomes. Second, institutions with missional objectives that include life changing influence and transformation struggle with knowing and understanding the lifelong impact their institutions have had on the lives of constituents. Further research could investigate the long-term impact of stakeholder experience with the institutions and stakeholder persistence in the missional values of the organizations.

Third, the study of institutional viability with respect to donor development and engagement offers opportunity to explore how institutions resolve the inherent tensions between cost, tuition-dependence, and endowment growth. Finally, the adaptation strategies employed by institutions are related to institutional characteristics. Further research could investigate how adaptation strategies impact outcomes. The conceptual framework from this study can be used to better understand why and how institutions survive to inform the practice of organizational leadership.

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APPENDIX A:
PROFILE OF U.S. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

PROFILE OF U.S. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

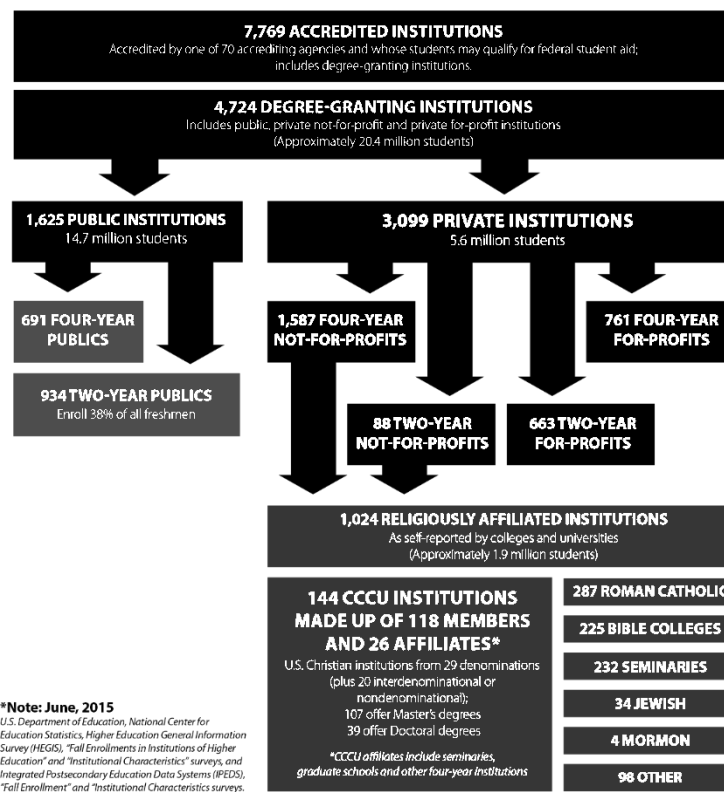


Figure 1A. Profile of U.S. Post-Secondary Education.*

*Reprinted from Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. (2020). *About CCCU*. <https://www.cccu.org/about/> Reprinted with permission (below).

From: Brian Gilliam <GilliamB@floridacollege.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 7:41 PM
To: Council <Council@cccu.org>
Subject: Permission to use image from CCCU website

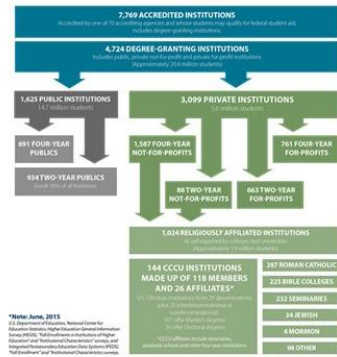
Good morning,

My name is Brian Gilliam. I am a teaching professor at Florida College in Temple Terrace, FL. I am also a doctoral candidate at the University of South Florida in the Muma College of Business. I am seeking permission to incorporate a graphic I found on your website in my dissertation. Upon successful defense in October or November this year, my dissertation will be submitted to the ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database.

The focus of my research is viability and sustainability of small, private, nonprofit mission-focused liberal arts colleges. Three of the institutions in my study are members of CCCU. I would like to include the graphic below as an Appendix item as part of the Industry Analysis section. This graphic is an outstanding adaptation of the graphic originally created by NCES. May I use your graphic with permission?

With respect and kind regards,
Brian Gilliam

PROFILE OF U.S. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION



Source: <https://www.cccu.org/about/>

Brian Gilliam, M.B.A.
Professor, Business Administration

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Learning, Living, Leading His Way

From: Greta Hays <ghays@cccu.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 5:11 PM
To: Brian Gilliam <GilliamB@floridacollege.edu>
Subject: RE: Permission to use image from CCCU website

Hi Brian, I can't guarantee that this graphic is entirely up to date (I believe this was from a few years ago), but you are welcome to use it.

Best,
Greta Hays

Greta Hays
Senior Director of Communications & Public Affairs
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
321 Eighth Street NE | Washington, D.C. 20002
(p) 202.546.8713 ext. 301



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APPENDIX B:

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Descriptive Research Question: What do strategic decision-makers in small, non-profit liberal arts colleges believe about the effect of organizational climate and culture on enrollment and financial outcomes?

Prescriptive research question: How can strategic decision makers in small, non-profit, tuition-dependent, mission-driven liberal arts colleges conserve organizational outcomes in challenging environments threatening organizational climate and culture?

Table 1A. Sources, Themes, and Findings.

Sources	Theme	Findings
American Council on Education. (2019). <i>American college president study</i> . https://www.aceacps.org/?source=secondary	Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary profile of college presidents • Demographics • Path to the presidency • Experience • Internal and external influences
Barron, T. A., Jr. (2017). <i>Competitive strategies and financial performance of small colleges</i> (Publication No. 10605688). [Doctoral dissertation, Johnson & Wales University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	Decision-making Environment – external Value proposition of HE Socio-demographic shifts Economic Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial pressures (Moody’s Investor Services, 2015). • Brand and mission (Moody’s Investor Services, 2016). • Declining NTR influenced by demographics, student debt, job prospects, value proposition. • Enrollment growth projections for future public and private enrollments (15%), down from growth from 1996 to 2010 (46%). More significant for private - higher growth rate from 1996 to 2010 (81%) than public (36%). • Demographic shift in student population - Hispanic (42%) and African American (25%) white (4%). Median household incomes for Hispanic and African American families (-58%) compared to white families. • Slowing growth greatest for 18-24-year-old students - least for students aged 35 years or older; small colleges are particularly dependent on traditional-age students (Schoebelen, 2013). • Weak economy, stagnant incomes - 2015 median household income was \$55,775. Tuition as a percentage of median household income in states where more than 20% of the students enroll in private, four-year institutions ranged from 16% to 45% of median household income. The College Board (2016) reported inflation-adjusted published tuition rates and fees for non-profit, four-year institutions increased 229% between 1986-87 and 2016-17; while during the same period, median household income rose only 10% (Proctor, Semega, & Kollar, 2016). As the costs of higher education have risen, so has the level of student debt; the total national student loan debt surpassed \$1.3 trillion dollars in 2016 (Kane, 2016) • Increasing tuition discount rates, which reached a high of 47% in 2015-16 (McBain, 2016) • 39 competitive strategies - 10 categories: Enrollment Management, Faculty, Student, Instruction, Facilities, Outsourcing, Financial, Leadership, Economic Development, and Other • CFI - weighted averages of a set of core ratios that represent several components of financial risk: Primary Reserve Ratio, Net Income Ratio, Return on Net Assets Ratio, and Viability Ratio (Tahey, Salluzzo, Prager, Mezzina, & Cowen, 2010). The index evolved from efforts of the U.S. Department of Education to assess institutional financial position, as the

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
		<p>basis for determining eligibility for receiving college student aid funds (Townsend, 2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental factors continually have significant effects on the strategies employed and the financial performance of colleges (AGB, 2016b). • Almost half (46%) of the sampled small colleges ($N = 251$) suffered from serious or severe financial underperformance, as measured by five-year CFI means: FY2010 to FY2014. • Poor financial performance can place colleges in jeopardy of losing access to federal student aid funds (Federal Student Aid, 2016) • The most frequently used strategies for one or more years cited by the inventory respondents ($N = 51$) were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New marketing recruitment procedures (90%) ○ New undergraduate programs (88%) ○ Tuition discounting levels increased (78%) ○ Organizational debt restructured (76%) ○ New or renovate academic facilities (76%) • Among the least frequently used strategies identified by the inventory respondents ($N = 51$) were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outsourcing athletic functions (2%) ○ Admission standards lowered (6%) ○ Competency-based crediting (8%) ○ Outsourcing academic functions (10%) • Outsourcing student services (12%)
Bradfield, J. (2019, February 19). <i>2019 Higher education industry outlook: Trends in change and modernization in higher education</i> . Deloitte. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/public-sector/articles/higher-education-industry-outlook.html	<p>Environment –</p> <p>Technology</p> <p>Economic</p> <p>Socio-demographic</p> <p>Mission-focus and fit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloud migration • Identity and security management • Economic pressure and financial distress • Understanding culture, mission • Merger and acquisition – fit • Shifting student demographic
Brown, S. K. (2015). <i>Back from the brink: The process of revitalization at a small, private, religious institution</i> . [Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee]. Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange.	<p>Decision-making</p> <p>Decision-makers</p> <p>Outcomes –</p> <p>Decline</p> <p>Turnaround</p>	<p>Factors leading to decline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining enrollment • Financial • Institutional effectiveness • Ineffective leadership <p>Factors precipitating turnaround:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process - management change, evaluation, action and, finally, stabilization • Role of Board of Trustees • Collaborative decision-making involving faculty • Martin and Samels (2009) seven focused strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen the board of trustees and increase volunteer involvement – regular policy and outcome evaluation ○ Ensure perceived academic quality. ○ Decentralized decision making. ○ Maintain morale – retention, communication ○ Broaden the resource base. ○ Plan strategically - adapt program choices - stabilize institutional revenues ○ Prioritize spending allocation
Brown, S. M. (2012). <i>Organizational adaptation to the rapidly changing external environment: A case study of strategic marketing at notre dame college in Ohio</i> (Publication No. 3525742) [Doctoral dissertation, Northeastern University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	<p>Theory –</p> <p>Contingency, Systems, Open systems</p> <p>Decision-making</p> <p>Marketing strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapidly changing and competitive environment. • Contingency theory applies to the examination of organizational adaptation at IHEs (Clark, 1998; Peterson, 1995; Sporn, 1999). Against the backdrop of systems theory, Weick (1976) developed the concept of loosely coupled systems at educational organizations, a precursor to Rubin's (1979) loose coupling study in higher education. These are among the earliest studies of contingency theory in higher education. IHEs as loosely coupled systems have relatively autonomous departments where linkages occur both with each other and with the environment (Dill & Sporn, 1995). Clark (1998) used contingency theory in a case study of innovative and entrepreneurial IHEs. Peterson (1995) used contingency theory to study the effects of

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national and state policies on the structure and decision making of IHEs. Sporn (1999) used contingency theory as the conceptual framework for case study and grounded theory research in adaptation at IHEs in the U.S., Italy, Switzerland, and Austria. • “The seminal work in the field linking the biological concept of general systems theory to the social sciences and organizational behavior is Katz and Kahn’s (1966) <i>The Social Psychology of Organizations</i>. Katz and Kahn (1966) proposed an alternative to Weber’s (1924) bureaucracy and Taylor’s (1911) scientific management in organizational behavior, neither of which dealt adequately with changes in the external environment and the introduction of new inputs from the external environment. Katz and Kahn (1966) bridged the psychological view of the individual (which often ignored groups) and the economic view of organizations (which often ignored individuals). By linking these concepts, Katz and Kahn (1966) developed open-systems theory that recognized that organizations are not self-contained, whereby researchers and organizational leaders could more adequately deal with changes in the environment by using a biological lens to view organizations as organisms.” • Instructive to practitioners – environment forcing small private colleges to either change or close (Grasgreen, 2012; Jaschik, 2012; Kiley, 2012) • The adaptive strategy depends on a site-specific analysis of changing external economic, social, political, technical, and legal forces acting upon an organization • No “one best way” to organize (Bess & Dee, 2008; Daft, 2007; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006) • Environment continued to change even while the institution was adapting to it • Practices that are successful in one setting are not guaranteed to work in another
<p>Cameron, K. S. (1984). Organizational adaptation and higher education. <i>The Journal of Higher Education</i>, 55(2), 122-144.</p>	<p>Theory-Adaptation</p>	<p>Four approaches to adaptation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population ecology – environmental influence • Life cycle – single subject of study • Strategic choice – managerial influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incremental ○ Revolutionary • Symbolic action – managerial influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interpreting history and current events ○ Using rituals or ceremonies ○ Using time and measurement ○ Redesigning physical space ○ Introducing doubt <p>A large variety of sometimes contradictory characteristics must be present to make adaptation effective on the institutional level.</p> <p>Institutions will need to be both stable (i.e., maintain a strong identity and a common interpretation of the environment) and at the same time be flexible (i.e., have a high degree of experimentation, trial-and-error learning, detours, randomness, and improvisation) as they encounter environmental elements that they have never before experienced.</p> <p>To achieve these two contradictory states simultaneously, institutions will need to rely on new kinds of computer decision support systems that allow preferences and interests to be instantaneously aggregated and compared [28], new varieties of consensus-building group decision processes [60], formalized diffusion mechanisms that gather preferences and build commitment among institutional members when adaptation is required, redundant structures and process mechanisms that function independently, and so on.</p> <p>A strong identity and sense of institutional history is needed, but that identity and history must be systematically ignored in some circumstances.</p> <p>The intent of this article, then, has been not only to review and provide a framework for the organizational adaptation literature but to propose how adaptation might be best facilitated in institutions of higher education. Liberal arts</p>

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
		colleges, like other types of colleges and universities, will survive and prosper as they become adept at implementing adaptive strategies in the required ways and as they develop characteristics that match with the demands of the postindustrial environment
Cameron, K. S., Sutton, R. I., & Whetten, D. A. (1988). Issues in organizational decline. <i>Systems Research</i> , 7(2).	Environment – Internal Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralization of decision-making • Short-term focus versus long-term planning • Less innovative thinking and less tolerance for risk or creative activity. • Resistance to change • Declining morale • Politicized interest groups • Unilateral cutbacks without known rationale • Loss of trust among followers of leadership • Increasing conflict over diminishing resources • Limited communication due to lack of trust • Lack of teamwork with resistant cooperation and involvement. • Scapegoating of leaders as priorities are unclear
Cenczyk, R. E. (2016). <i>Isomorphism in liberal arts colleges: Comparative case studies on marketing initiatives</i> (Publication No. 10127705). [Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	Decision-making	<p>Three themes common to both institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are diverse challenges of defining liberal arts education in both traditional and professional schools • These institutions engage in several different initiatives to establish brand awareness • Administrators at both colleges understand the importance of bringing students to campus as a way of making the college more personal and familiar.
Chatlani, S. (2018, January 24). 8 global trends impacting higher ed. https://www.educationdive.com/news/8-global-trends-impacting-higher-ed/515272/	Environment – External Global Data Socio-demographic Economic Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • StudyPortals —online education choice platform - research organization - 3,000 education partnerships worldwide — eight mega trends impacting the future of universities and colleges around the globe. • Labor market shifts and the rise of automation • Economic shifts and moves toward emerging markets • Growing disconnect between employer demands and college experience • The growth in urbanization and a shift toward cities • Restricted immigration policies and student mobility • Lack of supply but growth in demand • The rise in non-traditional students • Dwindling budgets for institutions – value proposition
Council of Independent Colleges. (2018a). <i>Charts and data</i> . https://www.cic.edu/resources-research/charts-data .	Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional effectiveness
Dancy, K., & Laitenin, A. (2015, October 14). Visualizing the higher education industry. <i>New America</i> . https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/the-higher-education-industry/	Data Political	<p>ATLAS – data visualization tool – IPEDS data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. data by congressional district • Segmented by public, for-profit, private not-for-profit • Congressional representatives, senators • FTE enrolled students • Pell grant awards and number of recipients • Total expenditures • Small and closed institutions excluded
Delen, D., & Zolbanin, H. M. (2018). The analytics paradigm in business research. <i>Journal of Business Research</i> , 90, 186-195. https://doi-g.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.05.013	Decision-making Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytics in business research questions to complement traditional empirical research
Dickeson, R. C. (2010). <i>Prioritizing academic programs and services: Reallocating resources to achieve strategic balance</i> . Jossey-Bass.	Decision-making Culture Climate Strategy	<p>Tighter focus and restored public trust in cost management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leader clarifying mission • Forcefield analysis for academic program prioritization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External forces (education communicators and socializers) ○ Internal forces (culture and values unique to the institution)

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritization process (academic and nonacademic programs, mission, criteria) ● 12 dimensions of strategic balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Functions (teaching, research, service) ○ Purposes (career preparation, thinking skills, liberating) ○ Fiscal expectations ○ Congruence ○ Affordability and accessibility ○ Stability and flexibility ○ Institutional interest and public interest ○ Tradition and future-focus ○ Competing expectations ○ Integrating liberal arts and career preparation ○ Planning top down and bottom up <p>Authority and responsibility</p>
Docking, J., Curton, C. (2015). <i>Crisis in higher education</i> . East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.	Environment – External Decision-making Economic Legal Technology Decision-making Strategies	Challenges facing higher education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pricing trend ● Competition for students from declining pools ● Demographic shifts ● Reductions in state funding ● Increased government regulations ● Securement of philanthropic dollars ● Infrastructure upgrades, including technology ● Relevance of higher education ● Replicable enrollment growth model ● Failed strategies - rebranding, satellite campuses, online education, pre-professional and “trade school” certification programs, building new academic facilities, increasing library holdings, publicizing faculty research, student experience beyond classroom ● Successful Enrollment growth – athletic programs with recruiting goals; focus on ROI holding recruiters accountable; redirect new income to academic facilities and programs
Ehrenberg, R. G. (2012). American higher education in transition. <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , 26(1), 193-216. http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/jep.26.1.193	Environment – External Economic Technology Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 30-year trend at private four-year academic institutions - undergraduate tuition levels increased each year on average by 3.5 percent more than the rate of inflation; the comparable increases for public four-year and public two-year institutions were 5.1 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively ● Resource allocation – decline in full-time faculty – most without Ph.D. - % allocated to faculty salary and benefits declined relative to student services, academic support, institutional support ● Instructional delivery – use of technology – lecture versus experiential ● Differentiated tuition discounting
Fessenden, H. (2017). Too small to succeed? <i>Econ Focus</i> , (1), 16-20.	Environment – External Socio-demographic Legal Economic Political Challenges Risk factors for small, private, nonprofits Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Urbanization shift detrimental to small colleges ● Slowing revenue growth ● Financial stress among private, nonprofit institutions ● Public schools rarely close - state and federal support. ● Highly selective private schools tend to be less sensitive to enrollment decline due to endowment income, and higher retention, graduation rates ● Legal challenges and federal policy changes increased closure of for-profits ● Majority of small nonprofit private colleges are not highly selective and tuition-dependent – average tuition dependency ratio (revenue from tuition/total revenue) is 75% for smallest colleges – 30-40% for private nonprofit ● Women's colleges and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are vulnerable – a shrinking pool of prospective students as educational opportunities have expanded ● Need to survive mainly from tuition revenue – can maintain – cannot absorb revenue decline ● Student body size, endowment per student greatest risk factors ● Selectivity is a risk factor ● Single-sex institution is not a risk factor ● Tuition dependency for schools with enrollment decline or major capital expense

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious affiliation may be a more recent risk factor – contradicts research suggesting financial strength due to more dedicated students – explained by economic influence on school choice Sudden and substantial jump in tuition discounting from 35% to 43%, as high as 50% New programs – graduate-professional – health sciences, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician’s assistant – revenue stream to supplement student services and tuition affordability
Fletcher, W. L. (2013). <i>Strategic planning in the business enterprise of Christian colleges and universities: A multi-case study approach</i> (Publication No. 3565504) [Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	Data – college closures Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2000 and 2010, 49 Christian colleges and universities closed (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010) Drivers of positive net income Links between operational decisions and Strategic planning framework to ensure fiscal viability Mission effect on strategies Strategic planning using different models Intentional process with aligned mission Timely and accurate financial information. Decisions based on consensus – president with final decision Effective cost control for balanced budget Efficiency and effectiveness considered in evaluation of academic and nonacademic programs Living within the institutions’ means – capital spending, debt, staffing.
Freeland, R. M. (2009). Liberal education and the necessary revolution in undergraduate education. <i>Liberal Education, Winter, 95</i> (1).	Decision-making Environment – External Environment - Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiential education Shift in liberal education from intellectual qualities to connecting ideas with action Challenge to traditional liberal education’s historical place higher education Civic engagement movement - off-campus community service Off-campus work placements related to career interests Undergraduate research Study abroad Applied and professional subjects Advocates have deep roots in the liberal arts and sciences. Enrich liberal learning by linking it with lives students will live after college Student focus on vocation after college Student focus on community service – social entrepreneurship Some faculty drawn to engaged learning Some faculty see civic engagement as path to counter diminished interest in political and social sciences Institutional leaders seeking to address governmental, political, and business criticism of contribution to community, state, and national interests of global competition Accelerating diversification of the student body Focus on learning experiences Urbanization of population attending college Association of American Colleges and Universities championing argument that liberal arts form effective people, problem solvers, and disciplined thinkers Skepticism on both sides of scholarly liberal arts education and practical application advocates Institutions tend to be deeply committed to the intellectually focused version of the liberal Most institutions will follow the lead of the top-ranked schools The effort to connect liberal education with action and practice is at a crossroads. <p>“The basic point that success in institutional, professional, and social contexts requires qualities of character, personality, and mind that go far beyond “academic intelligence” is widely accepted as a matter of folk wisdom (even among professors) and is also supported by scholarly research. If this is true, and if the most important mission of liberal education is to nurture individuals who will make important contributions to society, then shouldn’t we take account of these realities in designing undergraduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences?”</p>

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
Freeman, R. E., Parmar, B. L., Harrison, J. S., Wicks, A. C., Purnell, L., & De Colle, S. (2010). Stakeholder Theory: The state of the art. <i>The Academy of Management Annals</i> , 4(1), 403-445. doi: 10.1080/19416520.2010.495581	Theory – Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-frame capitalism - business creating value for stakeholders
Grant Thornton LLP. (2016). <i>The state of higher education in 2016: Fifth annual report</i> . https://www.granthornton.com/~media/content-page-files/nfp/pdfs/2016/State-of-Higher-Ed-GT-spreads.ashx	Decision-making Practitioner consulting report	<p>Elements of growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visionary leadership Sufficient base of support Growth strategy Business and academic plan Resources in place to implement strategy Grit and determination <p>Prepare for disruption - global trade, government policy, technology – 6.4M students (30%+) took at least one distance learning course in 2015/16</p> <p>Outsourcing via shared services consortia</p> <p>Using public-private partnerships</p> <p>Recent and pending mergers</p>
Hanover Research. (2018). <i>Financial reporting in higher education</i> . https://www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Financial-Reporting-in-Higher-Education.pdf	Decision-making	<p>Six trends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment management – brace for continued shortfalls Academic development – online learning going mainstream Student experience – value proposition of higher education Finance – tuition strategies need to change Advancement – rebuilding the donor base Marketing – reaching generation Z
Hillman, N. W. (2012). Tuition discounting for revenue management. <i>Research in Higher Education – New York</i> , (3), 263. http://ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsbl&AN=RN309818889&site=eds-live	Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be leveraged for revenue generation Diminishing revenue returns beyond 13% unfunded tuition discount rate
Hörisch, J., Freeman, R. E., & Schaltegger, S. (2014). Applying Stakeholder Theory in sustainability management: Links, similarities, dissimilarities, and a conceptual framework. <i>Organization & Environment</i> , 27(4), 328-346.	Theory – Stakeholder Decision-making	<p>Three challenges of managing stakeholder relationships for sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening interests of stakeholders Creating mutual sustainability interests based on these interests Empowering stakeholders to act as intermediaries for nature and sustainable development. To address these challenges three interrelated mechanisms are suggested: education, regulation, and sustainability-based value creation for stakeholders.
Hunter, J. M. (2012). <i>An integrated framework for understanding the financial health of small, private colleges</i> (Publication No. 3540903). [Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	Outcomes – Financial health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger operating and cash reserves, larger undergraduate enrollments, deeper donor bases as measured by unrestricted giving, longer presidential tenures, higher costs to attend, stronger retention rates and institutions more dependent on tuition, positively impacted the Department of Education Test of Financial Strength score. Larger undergraduate enrollments, stronger cash reserves, deeper donor bases as measured by unrestricted giving, score significantly better on the Department of Education Test of Financial Strength score. Institutions with innovative online programs, stronger retention rates, lower discount rates and NCAA and NAIA athletic affiliations negatively impact the Test of Financial Strength score.
Hussar, W. J., & Bailey, T. M. (2019). <i>Projections of Education Statistics to 2027</i> . National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubinfo.asp?pubid=2019001	Data Enrollment projections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National-level data on enrollment and degrees at the postsecondary level for the past 15 years and projections to the year 2027.

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. (2019). <i>Inside AGB</i> . https://agb.org/about-us/	Data – Decision-makers, Governance	Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premier organization centered on governance in higher education • Promotes central missions while running institutions effectively • Reinforce the value of higher education • Innovate through smart use of technology • Serve the needs of a shifting demographic. • Provide leadership and counsel to member boards, chief executives, organizational staff, policy makers, and other key industry leaders
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. (2019). <i>Your primary source for information on U.S. colleges, universities, and technical and vocational institutions</i> . https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/	Data	National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) – Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Trend generator enables data analysis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postsecondary institutions • Student enrollment • Degrees and certificates awarded • Graduation and retention rates • Financial aid • Institutional revenues • Institutional expenses • Employees and instructional staff
Kolomitz, K. (2016). <i>The new college president: A study of leadership in challenging times</i> (Publication No. 10252939). [Doctoral dissertation, Johnson & Wales University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	Decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diminishing pool of experienced candidates qualified or willing to lead • Dedicated to work and not merely seeking prestige • Not ‘saviors’ of their institutions • Bear significant burdens - both institutionally and personally • Leading toward sustainability amidst turbulent conditions • Aware that they, alone, cannot render their institutions successful
Lytle, J. H. (2013). A love note to liberal arts colleges: Don’t fear the market. <i>Journal of College Admission</i> . www.nacanet.org .	Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty of U.S. universities to increase admission through educational quality • Structural changes in cost and revenue of business models are needed by universities to achieve financial goals
Maragakis, A., Dobbstein, A., & Maragakis, A. (2016a). Is higher education economically unsustainable? An exploration of factors that undermine sustainability assessments of higher education. <i>Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Development</i> , 7(2), 5-16. doi: 10.1515/dcse-2016-0012	Outcomes – Value, Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic returns of degrees as a function of a sustainable institution.
Massa, R. J., & Parker, A. S. (2007). Fixing the net tuition revenue dilemma: The Dickinson College story. <i>New Directions in Higher Education</i> , 140, 87-98.	Decision-making Successful turnaround Outcomes – Net Tuition Revenue (NTR) Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfulfilled planning document • Reserves consumed by deficits • 50% tuition discount rate • 6% annual endowment draw • Mission-drift • Complacent personnel • Reorganized leadership • Generate momentum and sense of purpose with • Develop and execute comprehensive strategic plan • Disciplined urgent focus on enrollment • Longitudinal data – prospect, applicant, student, alumnus • Technology less important than data analysis of student attendance and financial aid on enrollment and retention • Enrollment projection model – diversity, academic, and financial characteristics at aggregate level – academic ability, contact activity, student interests, demographic, financial aid profile • Analysis of trends, college selection, post-enrollment experience, external demographics, operational resources to achieve objectives <p>Critical success factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand and value proposition to prospective students with diverse backgrounds and interests • Consider financial value of student during admission process • Recruit, admit, and enroll for fit

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
McPherson, M. S., & Bacow, L. S. (2015). Online higher education: Beyond the hype cycle. <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , 29(4), 135-154. http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/jep.29.4.135	Decision-making Political Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massively Open Online Course (MOOC) conceptualized in 2012 Asynchronous, partially asynchronous, the flipped classroom, and others Spread of online education through higher education is likely to be slower than expected Benefits unknown Cost reductions at the expense of student experience
Meyer, T. (2017). <i>A quantitative study of enrollment changes during the Great Recession at non-selective small private colleges and universities</i> (Publication No. 10753343). [Doctoral dissertation, University of St. Thomas]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	Outcomes – Enrollment Theory – Political Frame, Oligopoly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factors related to enrollment in higher education during the 2008-2009 economic downturn Small private colleges and universities without historic prestige Non-selective and tuition-dependent Average enrollment increased during recession in 2008-2009 Institutions with specific business programs outperformed those without Graduation rate positively correlated to enrollment Negative correlation between acceptance rate and enrollment Nursing programs not correlated with enrollment Tradeoff between long-run and short-run success Student enrollment not viewed as a luxury good
Neumann, Y., & Finaly-Neumann, E. (1994). Management strategy, the CEO's cognitive style and organizational growth/decline: A framework for understanding enrolment change in private colleges. <i>Journal of Educational Administration</i> , 32(4), 66. https://search.proquest.com/docview/220425276?accountid=14745	Outcomes – Enrollment, Decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational growth and decline linked to strategy, decision-making process, and characteristics of leader Private liberal arts colleges – tuition-dependent Enrollment growth is associated with a focused strategy, CEO innovation style, differentiation, and assertive strategy-making process focused strategy and CEO innovator cognitive style are major factors
Neumann, Y., & Neumann, E. F. (1999). The president and the college bottom line: The role of strategic leadership styles. <i>The International Journal of Educational Management</i> , 13(2), 73-79. https://search.proquest.com/docview/229190141?accountid=14745	Decision-making Decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic leadership style is associated with financial outcomes Maintainers are associated with declining institutions Integrators and net casters are associated with successful institutions
Palumbo, R., & Manna, R. (2019). Making educational organizations able to change: A literature review. <i>International Journal of Educational Management</i> , 33(4), 734-752. https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/10.1108/IJEM-02-2018-0051	Adaptation – Environment, Decision-making, Outcomes Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific strategies should be implemented to overcome the barriers to organizational change, including ambiguity and uncertainty Side effects of organizational change should be recognized, to attenuate their drawbacks on employees' working conditions Organizational change should be understood as an iterative process Educational managers should design specific approaches and deploy ad hoc tools to effectively implement organizational change
Porter, M. E. (1991). Towards a dynamic theory of strategy. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> , 12, 95-117.	Theory – Strategic management	
Porter, S. R., & Ramirez, T. J. (2009). Why do colleges fail? An analysis of college and university closings and mergers, 1975-2005. <i>Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.</i>	Outcomes – Closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of closures and mergers during the past thirty years may be incomplete Much of the literature refers to a shift in student preferences from liberal arts colleges to other types of institutions as a major issue for liberal arts colleges as they struggle to survive Our models suggest that an emphasis on baccalaureate education was not a significant factor - over two-thirds of schools that self-identify as liberal arts colleges graduate at least 60% of their students with degrees in professional fields. Single-sex enrollment is not a factor Selectivity and religious affiliation, both have positive effects on survival.

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly selective institutions have little risk of closure Less selective institutions face a high risk of closure. It is not entirely clear why religious affiliation confers a survival advantage to schools. Schools with a religious affiliation may have greater access to resources, in terms of donative resources from members of the affiliated religion. In addition, rather than being limited to a pool of students with the same religious outlook, this pool of potential students may confer an advantage, as they may be more likely to attend than other students. Schools with religious affiliation may thus have a constrained source of student enrollment in terms of size, but a more stable source of enrollment due to the religious preferences of these students. Tuition and research grant dependence appear to have little effect on closure Endowment per student positively affects school survival. Wealth appears to have the more modest effect on survival 11% of the schools in existence in 1975 had closed or merged by 2005. Selectivity has a strong effect on the probability of closure, with non-selective institutions most at risk of closure. Only student body size and endowment per student had statistically significant effects on closure, with larger and wealthier institutions at less risk of closure
Prager, McCarthy, Seally, LLC. (2018). <i>Ratio analysis in higher education: New insights for leaders of public higher education</i> . Washington, DC: KPMG.	Outcomes – Financial measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are resources sufficient and flexible enough to support the mission? Does financial asset performance support the strategic direction? Do operating results indicate the institution is living within available resources? Is debt managed strategically to advance the mission? <p>Four strategic ratios that help answer these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Primary Reserve Ratio</i> measures the financial strength of the institution by comparing expendable net assets to total expenses. <i>Return on Net Assets Ratio</i> determines whether the institution is financially better off than in previous years by measuring total economic return. <i>Net Operating Revenues Ratio</i> indicates whether total operating activities resulted in a surplus or deficit, answering the question posed earlier, “Do operating results indicate the institution is living within available resources?” <i>The Viability Ratio</i> measures one of the most basic determinants of clear financial health: the availability of expendable net assets to cover debt should the institution need to settle its obligations as of the balance sheet date.
Council of Independent Colleges. (2018b). <i>Private nonprofit enrollment by race and ethnicity over time</i> . https://www.cic.edu/r/cd/Pages/Private-Enrollment-by-Ethnicity-over-Time.aspx	Data – Enrollment by race ethnicity	<p>Figure 2A. IPEDS Data.*</p>
Soliday, J., & Mann, R. (2018). <i>Surviving to thriving: A planning framework for leaders of private colleges & universities</i> . Whitsett, NC.: Credo, Advantage Press.	Culture Climate	<p>Thriving college framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courageous and collaborative leadership Vision Institutional self-esteem Institutional story Habit of reflection and intentionality Culture of planning and innovation Net revenue and strategic finance Student learning success Transformative environments

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings																																																																																										
Stowe, K., & Komasa, D. (2016). An analysis of closed colleges and universities. <i>Planning for Higher Education</i> , 44(4), 79-89. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1838982155?accountid=14745	Data – Closures Environment – External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 96 closed schools 2000-2015 - Public institutions were excluded Nonprofit - 10 percent closed schools and 23 percent of open schools Economic and demographic forces on colleges and universities - relatively unexplored in academic literature - often discussed within the higher education community No correlation between the surrounding population and failure rates Median FTE enrollment was 171 for closed schools and 858 for open schools Small schools closed or struggled at a higher rate. Special-focus schools (seminaries) were hit hard. If there is a demand shift in their limited customer base, these schools are at risk of closure Management has the greatest control over the fate of an institution Location and demographics have little connection to a school’s closure Schools with small enrollments are particularly at risk. Schools need to be willing to adapt if they want to survive. A board of trustees that is willing to make bold choices will be able to have an impact on the future of private higher education. 																																																																																										
Stuart, F. M. (2016). <i>Sustainable enrollment management: A dynamic network analysis</i> (Publication No. 10151981). [Doctoral dissertation, Clemson University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.	Decision-making Theory – Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment management (EM) as a complex adaptive system (CAS) Sustainable EM system from a Dynamic Network Analysis (DNA) perspective Easy access to resources (a high level of social capital)—regardless of the level of adaptive leadership (closeness centrality) or clique structure (clustering coefficient)—was extremely important for the EM system to sustain itself (and ultimately, the institution) regardless of changes and pressures from within and from outside of the current environment 																																																																																										
Terkla, D. (2011). The most common performance indicators for institutions and their boards. <i>Trusteeship Magazine</i> , 19(1).	Outcomes – Measures	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Indicator Group</th> <th>Number of Dashboards Using (N=66)</th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Financial</td> <td>Endowment & Expenses Data</td> <td>53</td> <td>80.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advancement</td> <td>48</td> <td>72.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Financial Aid Figures</td> <td>42</td> <td>63.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fees/Tuition Data</td> <td>31</td> <td>47.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Admissions</td> <td>Admissions Scores</td> <td>52</td> <td>78.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Admissions Data</td> <td>47</td> <td>71.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Graduate Admissions</td> <td>14</td> <td>21.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Enrollment</td> <td>Enrollment Figures</td> <td>51</td> <td>77.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Enrollment Figures (Special Population)</td> <td>47</td> <td>71.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Faculty</td> <td>Faculty – General</td> <td>51</td> <td>77.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Faculty Composition - Special Population</td> <td>22</td> <td>33.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="5">Student Outcomes</td> <td>Graduation Rates</td> <td>48</td> <td>72.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retention Rate</td> <td>47</td> <td>71.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Measures of Success</td> <td>27</td> <td>40.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Enrollment Awards</td> <td>15</td> <td>22.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Graduation Rates - Special Population</td> <td>10</td> <td>15.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Engagement</td> <td>Student Body – Engagement</td> <td>38</td> <td>57.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Academics</td> <td>Student Faculty contact</td> <td>36</td> <td>54.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Academic Information</td> <td>31</td> <td>47.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical Plant</td> <td>Physical Plant</td> <td>25</td> <td>37.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Satisfaction</td> <td>Student Satisfaction</td> <td>23</td> <td>34.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employer/Staff, Other Satisfaction</td> <td>7</td> <td>10.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Faculty Satisfaction</td> <td>3</td> <td>4.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Research</td> <td>Research</td> <td>23</td> <td>34.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>External Ratings</td> <td>Peer Assessment Data</td> <td>14</td> <td>21.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Table 2A. Category and Indicator Group Findings.* *Source: (Terkla, 2011).</p>	Category	Indicator Group	Number of Dashboards Using (N=66)	Percent	Financial	Endowment & Expenses Data	53	80.3	Advancement	48	72.7	Financial Aid Figures	42	63.6	Fees/Tuition Data	31	47.0	Admissions	Admissions Scores	52	78.8	General Admissions Data	47	71.2	Graduate Admissions	14	21.2	Enrollment	Enrollment Figures	51	77.3	Enrollment Figures (Special Population)	47	71.2	Faculty	Faculty – General	51	77.3	Faculty Composition - Special Population	22	33.3	Student Outcomes	Graduation Rates	48	72.7	Retention Rate	47	71.2	Measures of Success	27	40.9	Enrollment Awards	15	22.7	Graduation Rates - Special Population	10	15.2	Student Engagement	Student Body – Engagement	38	57.6	Academics	Student Faculty contact	36	54.5	Academic Information	31	47.0	Physical Plant	Physical Plant	25	37.9	Satisfaction	Student Satisfaction	23	34.8	Employer/Staff, Other Satisfaction	7	10.6	Faculty Satisfaction	3	4.5	Research	Research	23	34.8	External Ratings	Peer Assessment Data	14	21.2
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The Chronicle of Higher Education. (2018). <i>Tuition and fees, 1998-99 through 2018-19</i> . https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/tuition-and-fees?cid=wcontentgrid	Data – Tuition, Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,000 degree-granting colleges in the U.S. across public and private sectors Institution type, state, tuition, and fees for in state and out-of-state students 																																																																																										
Vitters, C., Ford, M., & Clark, C. (2019). Top risks and enterprise risk management in higher education. <i>Deloitte</i> . https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/public-sector/articles/higher-education-issues-and-enterprise-risk-management.html	Environment – External Internal Decision-making	<p>Threats to brand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business model risks Reputation risks Operating model risks Enrollment supply risks Compliance risks <p>Higher education sector has been steadily investing in people, systems, and capabilities to survive</p>																																																																																										

Table 1A (Continued)

Sources	Theme	Findings
<p>Weisbrod, B. A., Ballou, J. P., & Asch, E. D. (2008). <i>Mission and Money: Understanding the University</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p>	<p>Decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TWO-GOOD Framework • Balancing revenue and mission • Higher education is a large, complex, and changing industry. There is no single measure of the industry’s size, but it enrolls some 19 million students and employs 3.4 million people, 3 percent of the entire U.S. service-sector labor force. A small number of schools are very well known, but the industry includes 4,314 degree-granting institutions (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2007b). The higher education industry consists of public colleges and universities, private nonprofit schools, and a small but very rapidly growing number of private for-profit educational firms. About 39 percent of all U.S. degree granting colleges and universities are public – four-year state universities and two-year community colleges – but as of fall 2006 they enrolled the large majority, 74 percent of all (undergraduate and graduate) students. There are as many nonprofit colleges and universities, about 38 percent of all schools, but their enrollments tend to be smaller than the public ones, accounting for 20 percent of all enrolled students. For-profit degree-granting schools are only 23 percent of the mix, enrolling over 6 percent of all students (see Tables A2.1 and A2.2 in the Appendix). The for-profit sector is vastly larger, though, when postsecondary schools that do not grant degrees are included. Nearly three-fourths of the 2,200 non-degree-granting schools in 2006 were for-profit, and this segment of postsecondary education is growing rapidly; its 330,000 students – an average of only some 160 students per school – is up from 189,000 as recently as 1997 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2001, 2007b).
<p>Zajac, E. J., & Kraatz, M. S. (1993). A diatremic forces model of strategic change: Assessing the antecedents and consequences of restructuring in the higher education industry. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i>, 14(1), 83-102. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250140908</p>	<p>Environment Adaptation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring is a predictable, common, and performance-enhancing response to changing environmental conditions • Applicability for research on corporate restructuring and strategic change
<p>Zenk, L. R. (2014). <i>Past, present, future: The role of mission and culture in higher education institutions</i> (Publication No. 10185141). [Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.</p>	<p>Environment - Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical component of an institution is particularly important in decision making • Mission is deeply embedded in institutional culture and history • Culture, history, and mission may be less connected in younger institutions • Culture is a limiting factor for leaders in their ability to make change • Culture is one of the least “malleable” aspects of organization and can be a barrier to change (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Schein, 2004).

APPENDIX C:
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH OF INFLUENCERS, DECISIONS,
AND OUTCOMES

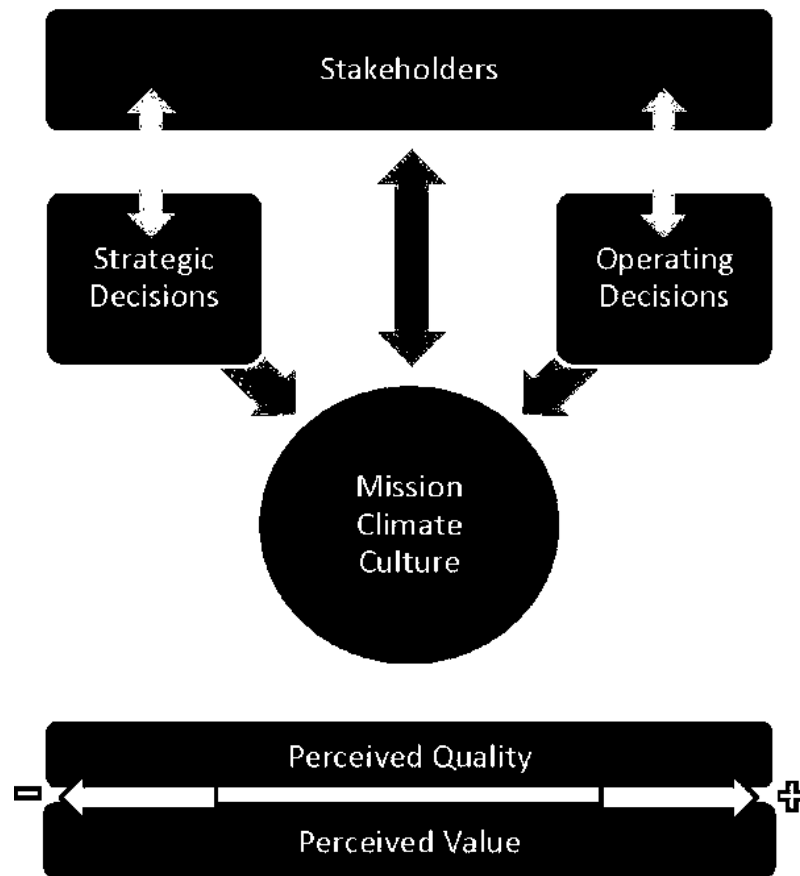


Figure 3A. Decision Influences Dynamics.*

*Source: Created by investigator

APPENDIX D:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview questions served as guides for semi-structured interviews. Based upon responses, interview subjects were asked questions that clarified or explored topics brought up during interviews.

Table 3A. Interview Topics and Questions.

Topics	Questions
Personal background	Q1. What is your current position and how long have you held it? Q2. What is your previous experience in higher education? Q 3. How would you describe your personal philosophy of education?
Drivers of change	Q4. What challenges are threatening the long-term viability of your institution?
Organizational values and mission	Q5. How would you describe the values and mission of the school today? Q6. How have institutional values and mission changed since the school was founded? Q7. What pressures do you believe are challenging these values and the mission today?
Organizational culture	Q8. How would you describe your school culture today to a prospective student? Q9. How would you describe your school culture today to a prospective donor?
Organizational climate	Q11. To what extent do you believe the policies, practices, encouraged and discouraged behaviors, and rewards influence your school culture and identity?
Direction <i>Goals, decisions, influencers</i>	Q12. What is your planning horizon? Q13. What priorities are being addressed by the leadership team? Q14. How much time does the leadership team spend developing plans and making decisions? Q15. Are there challenges you believe the leadership team is not adequately addressing? Q16. Who do you consider to be stakeholders in your school? <i>Clients (students, parents, employers, HEIs); Funders (federal, state, local agencies); Advocates (donors, alumni, friends); Service Providers (admin, faculty, staff); Other</i> Q17. How are stakeholders influencing goals and decisions in your planning and operating activities?
Outcomes	Q18. How would you describe the overall health of your school? <i>(Optimal, Sub-optimal, Pre-crisis, In-crisis, Post-crisis)</i> Q19. What do you believe are important institutional outcomes? Q20. What important measures of performance are reported and managed? Q21. How are these outcomes influencing your decision making? Q22. How has your decision making influenced these outcomes?

APPENDIX E:

FINDINGS BY THEME ACROSS SITES, BY THEME BY SITE

Table 4A. Themes Across Sites.

Theme	Consistencies (S01, S02, S03, S04)	Inconsistencies (S01, S02, S03, S04)
Environment – external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diminishing core constituency • Cost of HE is problematic • Expected pressure of demographic shifts • Expected pressure of societal shifts • Geographic location a challenge • Institutional focus on community • Environmental complexity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment schedule impact • Ambiguity in recruiting pipeline • Expected pressure of political shifts
Environment – internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on relationships • Flexibility to pivot • Constituency characteristics have changed • Tension with time allocated to operating and strategic priorities • Focus on core values and mission • Sacrificial service for values and mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning process • Operating priorities • Strategic priorities • Decision-making process • Organizational complexity • Environmental complexity
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission focus • Alignment of core values with mission • Shared understanding of values and mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duality of purpose • Link to location and facility • Nature and extent of adaptation • Internal consensus about adaptation • Influences driving adaptation • Objectives of adaptation
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidents as final decision-makers and owners of decisions • Student focus in decision-making • Donor focus in decision-making • Faculty focuses in decision-making • Donor connection to values, mission, and vision • Student connection to vocational value • Alumni connection to student experience • Intersection of student, alumni, volunteer, donor relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and extent of board involvement • Delegated decision-making • Decision-making style • Core constituency representation • Faculty representation • Student representation • Alumni representation • Donor representation
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal conservatism • Financial discipline tensions • Student experience is high priority • Donor engagement is high priority • Measured goals • Data-driven decision-making • Influence culture and climate • Tension with values and mission • Duality of perspective – present and present future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational structure • Granularity of goals • Granularity of metrics • Link between identity and methods • Donor development strategies • Student experience strategies • Faculty engagement strategies • Linked to outcomes • Program development and delivery
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to environmental factors • Linked to organizational identity • Linked to decision-making process • Linked to organizational structure • Linked to stakeholder engagement • Linked to decisions • Linked to learning from past • Linked to organizational mindset • Linked to organizational culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to operating and planning time allocation • Linked to separation of mission and methods • Constituency segmentation • Mission adherence • Attributed drivers • Restricted endowment • Endowment dependence • Donor engagement campaign • Student recruitment channels

Table 4A (Continued)

Theme	Consistencies (S01, S02, S03, S04)	Inconsistencies (S01, S02, S03, S04)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to leadership • Linked to governance • Linked to brand and brand marketing 	
Key Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation • Enrollment • Retention • Net tuition revenue • Tuition dependence • Student Experience • Alumni engagement • Donor engagement • Volunteer engagement • Community engagement • Alignment of institutional characteristics with values and mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community influence beyond institution • Nature and extent of metrics • Student transformation • Employee development • Program quality

Table 5A. Themes by Site.

Theme	Suburban Southeast College
Environment – external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title IX – civil rights to diversity rights • Declining core constituency • Post-Christian society • Post-Christian legislation • Dual enrollment programs degrading college readiness • Dual enrollment programs threatening enrollment and retention • Free college movement threatening enrollment • Commoditization of HE de-valuing liberal arts education • Affordability of private HE • Perceived value of liberal arts education • Perceived value of Christian HE • Demographic shifts in constituency • Cultural shifts in constituency
Environment – internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unified core beliefs • Technology shift with instructional delivery • Personnel costs influencing budget allocation • Perceptions of programs and identity differ • Institutional focus • Flexibility to pivot quickly • Free college opportunities oppose liberal arts breadth and depth • Constituency characteristics have changed • Constituency expectations have changed • Retention challenged by dual enrollment – accelerated matriculation
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential community • Counter to social trends • Mission statement focus • Relationships among students, families, faculty, alumni, volunteers, donors, trustees • Shaped by religious, political, and economic policies • Spiritual egalitarianism • Willing to live on less with gratitude • Emotionally connected to product and service • Linked to physical landmarks • Boutique versus factory orientation • Duality of purpose: academic and spiritual • Build faith at the core • Sacrificial service
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of institution as guardian of students (control) • Pushback against policies and rules (control) • Perception of effective instructional delivery (conflict) • Policies and rules (conflict)

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Suburban Southeast College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple levels of connection among service providers, clients, and advocates • President is decision-maker • Leadership informs, supports, serves • Decisions are influenced by the board • Board role engaged and appropriate • New board president • New academic dean • Generational differences within multi-generational culture • Perceptions among core constituency hard to assess • Honor and please alumni • Students first • Alumni organized well • Camp system throughout U.S. organized and operated by volunteers • Alumni speak loudly • Faculty need more voice • Shifted assumptions about biblical literacy • Shifted assumptions about spirituality • International reach through alumni and advocates • Enrollment blamed without understanding drivers • Leadership team sometimes has limited view of whole picture • Students viewed as future alumni, volunteers, recruiters, donors • Trust linked to transparency and honesty
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus-driven decision process • Hierarchical decision-making • Restructured board – 11 committees to 3 • President is “chief fundraiser” • Face-to-face recruitment around U.S. • New program – nursing • Expand programs – business, health sciences, technology • Tuition discounting • Protect policies and practices critical to identity (chapel, dress code, curfew) • Student experience focus • Student success focus • Student reach focus • Staff up to grow endowment • Offer quality program with dual enrollment • 15-year plan with specific goals • Flexible methods - less focus on methods driving decisions • Multiple perspectives without consensus around instruction • Multiple perspectives without consensus around policies • More intentional than before board and leadership changes • 20-year wealth transfer linked to student experience today
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness linked to relationships • Effectiveness linked to awareness • Need shared goals pursued proactively • Need to rethink chapel and dorm policies • Pressure on identity from tension between money-driven and mission-driven decisions • How are we going to structure ourselves? • Pain-point: face-to-face versus online instructional delivery • Need recognition of necessary changes • Survive by “hook or crook” • Mission adherence • Solvency • Operational priorities interfere with planning priorities • Large dollar donors have not shaped institution • How do we develop people who are here? • Effectiveness linked to energy • Some outcomes are unintentional • Student success interventions are sometimes too late • Consistency in reputation and message • Alumni pride linked to change • Donors linked to identity and aspirational goals

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Suburban Southeast College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged culture linked to inaccurate enforcement of policies • Retention linked to dual enrollment • Retention linked to program limitations
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solvency • Student success • Student experience • Endowment growth • Program strength • Employee development • Volunteer hours • Enrollment • Net Tuition Revenue • Stakeholder loyalty • Stakeholder experience • Stakeholder engagement • Stakeholder satisfaction
Theme	Agricultural Plains College
Environment – external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived value by core constituency • Commoditization of HE • Declining HE enrollment • Geographic location a hinderance • Societal expectations of HE – transactional versus personal growth • Declining population of high school graduates • Stable local community in declining region attributed to college presence • Value proposition is tough sell • Affordability • Short recruiting cycle • Donor development is challenging
Environment – internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of school a strength and weakness • Declining core constituency changing campus culture (25-28%) • Lean • Rapid decision dynamics • Online and residential program delivery • Short-term focus – end of long-range planning cycle • President transition creating uncertainty • Student motivations have changed – “it’s all about the sport” • Circular decision-culture dynamic • Nimble • Responsive • Iterative • Diverse longevity among employees • Help students learn to learn • Entire organization engaged • Informal structure • Strong emphasis on identity and culture • Structure enables collaboration • President plans independently • Decisions made at the lowest possible level by owner of impact • Meetings are informational – assignments are delegated • Shared direction, focus, concerns • Dynamic structure for decision-making • Differences are elevated
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to be known • Life changing transformation • Christian not in college name • Chapel creates community • National reputation in sports • Structure may appear disorganized • Structure is highly efficient • Coaches are not members of the churches • Faculty are members of the churches • Unique and special school

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Agricultural Plains College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equip students for service • Shifted from community focus to student focus • Process focus • Loving, caring, welcoming home • Students connected to environment • Make a difference in turning lives around • Live within means • Small • Community • Walk alongside students • Mission statement has changed • Mission has not changed • Sacrificial service
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student experience expectation has changed • Interaction with students has changed • Good coaches • Impose only what is required by accreditation • Adult learner population • President listens to students • President listens to leadership team • Project strength to promote student confidence • Value proposition is close relationships in home atmosphere • View students as alumni and donors • Cautious transparency during ideation and innovation • Faculty not involved in online program decisions • President settles impasse • Prayer for clarity, wisdom, and patience • Dream big enough • President not a consensus builder • Provide parameters and goals • “never fix ugly” • Mission focus • Move beyond financial stability • Improve employee compensation • Endowment growth • Quality employees • Compelling story • Fight program bloat • Stewardship is privilege • Adapt channels for communication • Reduce year over year enrollment volatility • Constrict tuition discounting without de-valuing students • Balance cost and student experience to reach affordability • Support what students love • Choose battles wisely • Prove concept before investing • Create an environment • Controversial decisions based on hope for student transformations • Align espoused and practiced behaviors • Create structure to prevent repeat mistakes • Donation size is decreasing • Giving is targeted • Unified on direction and tactics • Alumni surveys • Student surveys • Faculty involved in student lives • Students unaware of policies and issues of church tradition • President – “hire me if you trust me and get out of the way” • Leadership to prevent infighting and disagreement • Self-sustaining leadership • People empowered to make decisions • Keep board informed

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Agricultural Plains College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator of stakeholder voices • Face-to-face with alumni and friends nationally • Receive all input • VP of Spiritual Development in every decision • Influence linked to respect of faculty • Leadership evolved over time • Shared governance • Raise vision of people to see possibilities of influence • Few hierarchical roadblocks • Reserve thoughts – listen to inform decisions • Generational bridging • Institutional views versus individual views • Team support and intervention • Engaged disenfranchised faculty • Faculty mindset is philosophical • Pushing actionable practices • Shift from authoritarian to more pragmatic • Defined by veteran faculty • Need committed donor base • Alumni are differentiators in recruiting • Donor influence must be moderated • Understand changing landscape • Understand workflows and timing needs • Students resent policies and rules • Meet students where they are at – help them move forward • Need to be better listeners • Need greater connection between student development and spiritual development
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All challenges linked to finance • Relevant delivery systems a priority • Expanding professional programs • Coaches are recruiters • Character focus and protocols • Tuition discounting – heavy • Protect corpus of endowment • Residential capacity is a priority • Grow online programs • Develop and promote internally • Chaplain for every team • Decisions made at lowest possible level • Start with yes and back down if necessary • Shifted from consensus to delegated decision-making • Align position, title, and strengths • Reputation more important than revenue • Process focus • Outcomes factored into decisions • Student experience more important than budget goals • Renovations are in progress • Student-centered resource team active weekly • Teach principles through athletics and chapel • Change in concert with social change • Targeted recruiting for culture fit • Tuition discounting case by case • Fiscally conservative • Academic success coaches for conditionally accepted students • Policies changed to be less legalistic and promote honesty among students • Athletic department reviews – “Champions of Character”
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment driven by athletics • Mission drift unrecognized when it was happening • Coaches are admissions recruiters • Short-term versus long-term horizon in conflict • Cost-benefit trade-off a constant dilemma • Faculty rewarded for engagement outside classroom

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Agricultural Plains College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting model shifted from geographical to activity “buckets” • Core constituency 25-28% of students • 40% of students with no faith background are changing culture • Coaches create culture • Hallmark liberal arts programs are declining • Previous leadership transition linked to enrollment, deficits, board intervention • Low pay for employees • Probation versus dismissal in disciplinary action • Assessment day informs decisions • Employee voices not always heard • Coach turnover impedes recruiting • Low turnover linked to good fit • Cannot survive on tuition • Intrinsic rewards • Overspending scholarship budget • Mission has changed over 20 years • Financially sound “on the edge” • Enrollment growth has not materialized • Debt reduction is healthy • 47% alumni giving • 10% of local community are alumni • Record enrollment • All-American athletes • Program of choice for OPTA – continuing education • Program of choice for NCSA – continuing education • Targeted giving • Goal attainment linked to delegated decision-making structure • Emergent strengths • Donation size decreasing • Single high dollar donor gift \$14 mi over 9 years because of perceived quality of one student – unexpected gift
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “increase footprint” – reach, reputation, influence • Enrollment • Retention • Fundraising • Endowment • Teams near capacity • Competitive in athletic conference • Compete with class and character • Student exposure to spirituality • Participation in spiritual activities • Coaches understand identity • Student experience stories reflect transformation • Success not defined by wins and losses • Enrollment tracked by activity “bucket” • GPAs • Graduation rates • Service projects • Alumni engagement • Institutional impact on trajectory of students’ lives (not measured) • Donor trends • CFI – federal measures of financial health
Theme	Industrial Northeast College
Environment – external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenged by geographical location • Relevance to the world • Electronic season • Church demographics have changed • Social trends have changed • Pricing pressure in HE • Ambiguity in recruiting pipeline • Shifting accreditation guidelines
Environment – internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal realities - budget is grave concern

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Industrial Northeast College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of policies and procedures • Sense of urgency • Inherited decisions • Traumatic moment • Unforeseen restructuring • Exodus of people during reorganization • Uncertainty prior to and during reorganization • Shift from siloed to cohesion • Program delivery modality changing • Shift in religious education traditions • Work in process • Leadership circle of control
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical tradition of social justice • Independent of large liberal arts colleges • “Lost our way” • No longer school of choice • Broken pipelines • Lost touch with mission, calling, and the world • Relocation is symbolic of new identity • New identity – in and for the community • Community level transformation • Financial discipline • Student base not as diverse as it used to be • Seeking relevance • Shared community of learning • Live the mission • Tolerance • Wesleyan tradition • Chartered purpose unchanged • Mission has changed • Multi-religious formation • Service • Compassion • Community • Respect • Shared life internally and externally • Living into mission • Social justice • Project outward • Passive activism • Evolved from civil rights to diversity rights • Peaceful protesting • No ethos agreement • Strong president • Progressive theological education • Committed to peace and justice • Transformational • Critical thinking, nuance, arguments • Grasp of history • Ethical • Courage to speak • Legacy of alumni influence in global transformation • Care for the world, earth, and humanity • Advocacy through intra-religious study • Honor sacred texts • Embrace newness • Inclusive • Protest without a center point • Understand how to message in all parts of an uprising • Reach the hurting and tired • Unique • Intentional

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Industrial Northeast College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational • Non-residential • Affirming • Diverse • Authentic • Proud • Live into branding • “Say what you do, do what you say” • Consistent mission, changed methods • 200-year history defined by social change • Robust dialogue beyond boundaries of the bible and western church traditions • Host and Hospitality-Guest model • Shaped by tradition • “new clothes, old shoes” • Different level of pride and ownership • Shift from property managers to mission focused • Link rich history with current relevance and meaning
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate relationships • Attend to donor care • President as chief fundraiser • President makes and owns final decisions • Informed governance • Informed staff • Unified voice • Shared decision-making • Ideas come from different areas of community • Every idea can be heard • ATS – Association of Theological Seminaries • Board development and education – ATS • Community leaders • Business leaders • Associations and Guilds • Local, National, and Global community • Draw from what we believe in • Mission focus – honor and believe in it • Project what we believe • Government guidance • Everyone is an advocate • Rebuild resilient communities • Specific action toward transformation • Limited awareness of vulnerabilities • Shifting board role • Sense of agency and ownership • Mixed buy-in • New President is more democratic – strong sense of self • People in the moment versus people not currently invested • Comfortable with conflict • Vocal, respectful, diplomatic • Say what is needed to be heard, not what is wanted • Age and vulnerability of second career students • Shift from dysfunction to linkage to outcomes • Live up to trust of President • Optics are important • Ask but do not argue after decisions are made • Shift from tasks to goals • Life-long connections • Alumni show up in different ways • Multiple levels of connection – family, alumni, board – school becomes their lifeblood • All female executive leadership team • Silence feels like isolation • Student voices are limited • Ordaining bodies are partners

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Industrial Northeast College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran staff feeling heard • Donors connected to belief in institution, messaging, new leadership • Fierce stakeholders defending name and reputation
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganization of college following failed merger • Relocation of physical residential college to non-residential space without articulating vision, direction, or plan • Onboard new executive leader • Establish new leadership team • Publish strategic plan within one year • March forward without punishing or constraint Open to feedback • Fundraising focus • Informed staff • Intolerant of foolishness • Expression of ideas • Appropriate inclusion • Moving forward to be transformative leaders • Serving older population – second career • Clear direction with measurable outcomes • Clear sense of vision • Clear outcomes • Good decisions • Flexibility • Conviction • Clarity • Recognize staff contribution • Focus on operational infrastructure • Focus on accountability • Link faculty with practitioners • Work in process • Grow resources to award 50% student scholarships • New programs – women and gender studies, black religious thought • Develop faculty and staff • Develop advocates • Review curriculum – first review in 12 years • Cultivate new partnerships • Strengthen partnerships • Analytics, not regurgitation of information • Student fit with liberal thought • Compliance focus • Accreditation focus • Weighing future impact of current decisions • Evolving procedures • Double enrollment over next three years • Grow through programs • Grow through student engagement • Don't do fundraising, do friend-raising • Ensure visibility with policies and procedures • Everything is on the table • Duality of perspective – “zoom in, zoom out” • Mixed remote and residential instruction • Pivot to new technology • Grow capacity and agency to build community • Decentralize institution – facilitate reflection and skill • Create systems and analyze metrics • Succinct implementation • Relevant curriculum connected to social trends • Goals drive decisions • Campaign for unrestricted donations • Faculty interactions with prospects and recruits • Top-down accountability • Prospect engagement • Tailored curriculum for needs of students

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Industrial Northeast College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with follow-up • Outreach • Inform • Process: Recognition of need – ideation – pitch – empowerment – collaboration – resources – be prepared to execute • Agility • Responsibility • In-reach before out-reach • Develop faculty and staff • Informed community team • Faithful to identity • Bring solution when expressing concerns • Espoused transparency • Accountable to ourselves • Try new things and re-evaluate • Overcome fear • Learn from failure • Return to place of leadership in theological education
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion of different narratives and rumors • Two years of uncertainty • Declining enrollment • Asset sale provided near-term relief • Traumatized • Momentum shift with new leadership • Revived • Students who honor and project mission • Enrollment dependence a concern – false sense of security • Advocacy linked to student experience • Endowment draw must be managed • Enrollment linked to referrals • Working to release restricted funds • No longer school of choice • Broken pipelines • Lost touch with mission, calling, and the world • Financial discipline • Reputation not in competition, but in contribution • Affordable education linked to better society • How can we become the school of choice? • Evaluation day projects • Knowledge of Christian history, theology, foundations, ethics for 21st century needs • Give students a voice for reading, applying, and practicing beyond the classroom • Evolving traditions • No residential students • Radical change
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New metrics being developed for new strategic plan • Benchmarking similar schools – ATS • Endowment dependence • Degree outcomes • Student learning outcomes • Employment outcomes • Donor consistency • Donor contact and timing • Correlation between tuition revenue and program offerings • Correlation of local tuition hours and increase in annual fund contribution • No optimal enrollment goals • Monthly dashboards • New metrics mapping to goals of strategic plan • Lapse donors • New donors • Need dashboard for social media and marketing • People who come back • Alumni involvement

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Metropolitan Southwest College
Environment – external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability • HE lacks innovation and change – prohibits adoption of new ideas and strategies • Perception of HE • Declining core constituency • Sub-cultures within Christianity • Geographic reach • Denominational reach • Political focus on public universities • Greater student debt • Diminishing esteem of spiritual formation • Declining brand loyalty • National trend in religious participation • Erosion of church membership • Increasing gap between some of our beliefs and societal view • Pressure within market segment • Faceless pressures • De-valuation of independent religious thinking • Core values challenged
Environment – internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate • Constant measurement and assessment • Intervention • Staged-gate process – creativity and innovation • Flexibility – freedom from constrained budgets • Energy linked to climate • Lead through mistakes • Entrenched faculty • Less homogeneous • Mismatched faculty/student demographics • Spiritual formation • Mutually exclusive student metrics • Programs/degrees viewed as profit centers • Hidden facility costs • Tension between mom & pop governance and complex system • Fun • Challenged • Uncomfortable sometimes • Cannot shut down • Balance relationships with benefits to the institution • Tension between NTR and scholarships • Measure, analyze, act • Moderately conservative and moderately progressive • Tension between accelerating distancing vs diminishing core • Tension between reality and perception of nine profiles • Endowed or extinct • Diversified cash flow • Meeting needs of diverse students
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ-centered faith • Top 100 research agenda • Unique, significant reputation • Positive relationships • Open community • Transform • 30-35% core constituency • 15-17% no faith background • Preserve Christian HE • Protect Christian HE • Faculty 12% diverse • Students 4-% diverse • Church of Christ tradition • Collective spirit • Less shared understanding of identity • Leadership throughout the world

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Metropolitan Southwest College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outward focused • Passion • Purpose • Gritty • Authentic • Radical candor • Not limited by belief or conviction • Constant change • Nimble • Understand faith • Recognition of mistakes • Agility • Overcome fear • Thrive on change • Institutional bold and courageous • Mission has not changed • Expect more • Less denominationally protective • Foundational identity unchanged • Celebrate who you are • Push and challenge • Expect more from you • Teach faith • Culture linked to policy and conversation • Students are safe to wrestle with identity in the world • Faculty feeling overworked, underappreciated, commoditized
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step out, commit resources • Resilience • Close to the thoughts of constituents • Critical mass is 80% or more with faith • Donors are segmented based on affinities • Meta-message: formation, preparation, skills, relationships • Agency issues among some departments • Science faculty pushing for autonomy • Faculty resistance to strategic partnership • Tension between territorial ownership and capital stewardship • Alumni – advocates, donor base, potential employers • Community need, relationships • Pressure to add value • Local tax base decreases with physical expansion • Faculty relationships with bigger picture – represented on every board committee • Gap between functioning leadership and rank/file • Collective effort to help things progress • Student backgrounds influencing progressive/conservative decisions • Fragmented core constituency • Do not signal separation • Influence broadly • Expand influence • Duality of growing influence without giving up core product • Tension between hiring talented people and mission fit • Process: speakers, conversations about heritage, faculty decision • Privately championed – publicly discussed – like moving through breakers in the surf to become effective • Gap between university expectations and individual expectations • Faculty support in controversial shifts is tenuous • Everyone must see context – lean in now – move forward – right thing to do • Decentralized constituency in churches of Christ • Training for ministry • Board • University Council • Donor development – alumni, advocates, donor base, potential employers • Parents

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Metropolitan Southwest College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attorney General • Position as point of connection, not point of control • More conversation than control • Transformative relationships • Shifts in thinking among donors • Push back against core values, mission • Answer to God • Varying levels of influence – “tricky dance” • Alumni stories • Student links to institutional heroes • Cadence of listening and communicating
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tension between reality and perceptions of nine profiles • Allocation tensions between institution and departments • Competing priorities • Tension between critical metrics and loud voices • President’s Venture Council • Goal focus • Checks and balances • Questioning • Change • Relevance • Aggressive • Women speaking in chapel • Spiritual diversity • Relaxed hiring policy – Church of Christ requirement • Alignment of board and alumni religious backgrounds • Transition away from corporate worship traditions – chapel policy shift to small group reflections • Allocations are funnel-like • Faculty must demonstrate value • Strategic partnership in online space • Enter new markets to diversify income • Reduce cost of education • Deferred capital is a priority • Faculty representation in governance • Elimination of tenured positions • New branch campus • New athletic division • Centralized advising • Faculty are mentoring more than advising • Focused conversation around goals, successes • Focused conversation around progress, challenges • Focused conversation around barriers, hurdles • Brand is categorical priority • Program adaptation – Baptist seminary closure • Rigid hiring – progressive programming encapsulates identity • Prescient – clearly see present and future • Non-monolithic problems require non-monolithic approaches – seeking equilibrium • Disentangling flexibility with timely and inflexibility with timeless • Heritage versus pedagogical history • Risk – people-dependent relationships bridging college-based approach • Strategic shift 93% u-grad to 80% u-grad • Satellite campus – high impact residential shifted to online only • Different modalities, approaches, goals, new campus, next play all enabled by strategic view, incremental success, sound approach, working within the culture, consistent approach • Tension between sustaining mission at expense of size and growth – size and growth at expense of mission • Faculty tenure and promotion policies to promote quality • Balanced budget • Delayed comprehensive campaign due to Covid • What is creating successful students on campus?

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Metropolitan Southwest College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to core constituency, academic profile, racial diversity, civil justice, women speaking in chapel – filtered through lens of legacy, heritage, past, present, future present, footprint
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining revenue • Shift from paralysis of controversial programs to rapid transition • Survival linked to policy changes • Tuition dependence • Scholarly activity linked to rigor and research • Validated by national rankings • Expectations in our community • Build community • Create confidence, comfort, energy, boldness • Mobile learning • Satellite campus • Adult online program • NCAA revenue from academic performance • Fun • Failure with mid-level donor development venture • Discipline linked to recognition, assessment, evaluation • Capacity linked to working out of messes and learning • Making a difference linked to fear, resistance, rigidity • Making a difference linked to willing to take risk, bold steps • Making a difference linked to confidence, change-makers • Student experience linked to faculty recognition and response to needs • Tension between heritage, tradition, relevance, and connecting • Large donations are usually restricted – impacting allocations • Gifts favor professional and pre-professional programs • Cross-subsidization • Pressure on value proposition • Stronger brand and story • Relevance • Prominence • Inefficiencies in hidden facility costs • Tension between • Leadership is trusted more by faculty • Tension between theological and philosophical orientation and stakeholder concerns • Threat of mission drift and quality erosion • Donor giving linked to resolve and vision • Effective outcomes linked to sound approach • Opposition overcome with incremental improvement with net benefit • Success linked to visibility, sacrifice, living out mission • Sustainability linked to structural substance • Capital linked to trust, merit, missional programs • Transformation linked to preparation, relationships, living into opportunities, intentionality • Advancement outcomes linked to touching lives, giving events, engagement opportunities • Primary constituents and key families stepped in to keep two major projects moving forward • Donor engagement linked to confidence, belief, compelling mission, and vision • Alumni connections shifted to mobile platform • Fit linked to rigorous academic community and faith in Christian education • Getting things done linked to front-line voices at the table
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student experience • Spiritual persistence • Enrollment • Grad rate • Student quality • Retention • Grad school • Employment • Nine profiles – Academic programs, Brand and brand marketing, Diversity, Employee compensation, enrollment, financial, experiential learning, spiritual formation, student success • Drive price-point down • Web traffic

Table 5A (Continued)

Theme	Metropolitan Southwest College
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="521 296 704 317">• Tuition revenue<li data-bbox="521 321 732 342">• Missional thinking<li data-bbox="521 346 704 367">• Global thinking