

A REVIEW OF MARKET ORIENTATION PRACTICES FOR  
SELECTED PUBLIC CARNEGIE HIGH RESEARCH ACTIVITY  
INSTITUTIONS

by

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## ABSTRACT

While many authors (Washburn, 2005; Newman, Couturier, Scurry, 2004; Kirp, 2004; Bok, 2003; Wolff and Bryan, 1999) have written about their belief that American higher education is moving toward a market orientation, limited studies have been published citing the actual practice or success/failure of an institution(s) demonstrating market orientation qualities. The purpose of this study was to determine if two selected public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions were utilizing market orientation practices (Jaworksi and Kohli, 1993; Narver and Slater, 2000) as evidenced in their organizational culture, to enhance undergraduate recruitment and retention strategies.

Through case study research design the research questions queried whether a market orientation was present or emerging at two public Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions. Further, the study attempted to determine if an organizational culture could influence market orientation practices relevant to institutional recruitment and retention outcomes.

Based upon the findings and the resulting conclusions, it appeared a market orientation does positively affect retention outcomes at both institutions. Further, in these two instances, it does appear that an organizational culture can affect the “market orientation-ness” of the institution. The findings do not indicate there is conclusive evidence of a market oriented recruitment focus, with the exception of University B’s effort to recruit specific and targeted groups.

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In their book, *The Future of Higher Education: Rhetoric, Reality and the Risks of the Market*, Newman, Couturier and Scurry (2004) suggested higher education in the United States (and across the globe) has made an evolutionary shift “toward operating far more as a market, where universities and colleges are competing to supply the service of education, as opposed to the concept of higher education as a public sector good structured principally by government regulation” (p. 2). The premise of the book, which will be cited often during the course of this dissertation, postulates many forces (some anticipated and some not) are converging to position the future of American higher education into a landscape which is both new and untested. They cited the following list as evidence higher education is shifting toward greater competition and more dependence on market forces and away from government regulation:

- The emergence of new competition
  - Financial aid as a competitive weapon
  - Marketing to students
  - Recruiting by amenities
  - Climbing the ladder of prestige (in terms of rankings)
  - Chasing new sources of revenue (creating other ventures through the delivery of education – i.e. The Darden School of Business)
  - Targeting the student as consumer
- The emergence of the “new providers” (i.e. University of Phoenix)
- The use of technology in the classroom
- The globalization of higher education

The changes (Newman, Courtier and Scurry, 2004) are not new to enrollment managers. Beginning with its origins, the creation of the enrollment management function was tied to the “shock-waves of change” public and private institutions experienced with declining enrollments in the mid 1970’s (Kinzie, et al., 2004). At that time, enrollment management grew out of a push to survive the realities of declining birthrates eighteen years prior. Beyond declining numbers of potential traditional aged college students, Kinzie et al. suggested the origin of enrollment management emerged from a crisis, by noting:

As federal financial aid shifted from grants to loans, concerns were raised about the impact of this shift on student enrollment, college choice, and institutional financial assistance policies. As a result, a number of strategies were developed to understand and enhance student enrollments. These changes, along with new marketing techniques and a related focus on retaining students, formed the foundation for what would be called “enrollment management” (p. 18).

Since, according to Kenzie, et al., enrollment management’s origin emerged from the need to respond to changes in the higher education landscape, it is natural to use that institutional function to test the assertion of Newman, Courtier and Scurry (2004). The vast majority of this study will target the various offices that comprise an enrollment management division (Dennis, 1998) to query the degree of “market orientation-ness” of the institution. Kohli and Jaworski defined market orientation as “the organization wide generation of market intelligence, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization wide responsiveness to it” (1993, p. 53). Narver and Slater defined

market orientation as “the business culture that produces outstanding performance through its commitment to creating superior value for customers. The values and belief implicit in this culture encourage: 1) continuous cross functional learning about customers’ expressed and latent needs and about competitors’ capabilities and strategies; and 2) cross-functionally coordinated action to create and exploit the learning” (2000, p. 69). According to Slater and Narver (1990), market-oriented businesses seek to understand customers’ expressed and latent needs and develop superior solutions to meet those needs (e.g., Day, 1994; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Slater and Narver, 1995). Kohli and Jaworski further concluded that it is appropriate to “conceptualize the market orientation of an organization as one of degree, on a continuum, rather than as being either present or absent” (1990, p. 6).

### Problem

The problem addressed in this study is that there is limited evidence in the scholarly literature linking the practice of market orientation with the delivery of American public higher education. While many authors (Washburn, 2005; Newman, Couturier, Scurry, 2004; Kirp, 2004; Bok, 2003; Wolff & Bryan, 1999) have written about their belief that American higher education is moving toward a market orientation, limited studies have been published citing the actual practice or success/failure of an institution demonstrating market orientation qualities (DesJardins, 2003). Conversely, many studies have been published citing the effects of practicing a market orientation in a traditional business environment in terms of profitability, market share, employee

commitment, firm performance, the learning organization, etc. (Yoon & Lee , 2005; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Slater & Narver, 1995; Narver and Slater, 1990).

While the higher education literature does document a shift in the way universities ‘do business,’ the literature does not, with an odd exception, demonstrate if institutions of higher education are actually practicing a market orientation or if the reports of an “amenities arms race” are nothing more than an institutional or consultant public relations spin. Further, the literature published does not identify a quantifiable return on investment for institutions thought to practice a market orientation. After reading much of the market orientation literature, one cannot help but wonder “so what?” or “what is the point of the expense for an “amenities race?” many institutions are currently undertaking (Newman, Courtier, Scurry, 2004; Kirp 2004). Finally, the literature does not uncover the practice of market orientation as it may be related to an enrollment management plan of an institution. We do not know, for instance, if institutions are exploring and addressing: 1) their financial stability/survivability needs; 2) expressed needs of the consumer (primarily the student); 3) latent needs of the consumer; 4) some combination of all three; or 4) perhaps none of the above (Narver and Slater, 1990).

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if two selected public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions were utilizing market orientation practices (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Narver and Slater, 2000), as evidenced in their organizational culture, to enhance their undergraduate recruitment and retention strategies. The institutions invited

to participate in the study were identified through: 1) the results posted in the US News and World Report 2007 College Rankings; 2) their geographic location (convenience sampling); and 3) their agreement to participate.

The stated purpose of the study represented an attempt to examine the premise of Newman, Courtier and Scurry's (2004) argument that the evolution of higher education is moving away from a public sector good towards a market good. To that end, if enrollment managers are charged with finding, recruiting, retaining and graduating the type of students an institution wants (Dixon, 1996; Dennis, 1998), they must also consider the market forces asserted by Newman, Courtier and Scurry (2004). While the outcome for achieving the institution's goals may be the *same* (i.e. graduating students), the process for arriving at the optimum type and number in the student body may be different in a market oriented environment. The evolution of higher education addressed by Newman, Couturier and Scurry (2004), if true, presents new challenges for enrollment managers who must move their focus beyond finding, recruiting, retaining and graduating the type of student an institution wants to positioning the institution against its competition within their market niche in order to accomplish the aforementioned task while working to cultivate an organizational culture that embraces those goals. In short, if the agreement is true, enrollment managers may need to embrace a market orientation.

The results of the study would reveal whether or not administrators at public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions are practicing a market orientation, and if so, to what degree. Rather than "finding" students, (as Dixon (1996), suggests), enrollment managers inclined toward market orientation should ask "how do we meet the

needs of our customer better than our competition?” or “how well are we anticipating the latent needs of our consumer?”

### Theoretical Framework

The following three areas of theoretical and scholarly work are reviewed in this dissertation: 1) classic and current enrollment management literature and pragmatic advances; 2) market orientation theory- emulating primarily from scholarly business literature; and 3) higher education literature that demonstrates a shift from a public to a market good. The three areas tie together since it is necessary to understand the origin and history of enrollment management before evaluating its practice toward the present and future. Scholars (Newman, Courtier, & Scurry, 2004; Kirp, 2004; Gould, 2004; Geiger, 2004) have posited higher education is moving toward a market good; it is therefore necessary to have a framework to reconcile and test their assertions with accepted scholarly work. The proposed reconciliation mechanism, in this case, is centered on the work and theory of the business literature encompassing the concept of market orientation. In particular, components of the market orientation model created by Jaworski and Kohli (1993) will be used to test their declarations.

Area I: Enrollment Management Literature. Dixon wrote “enrollment management is finding, enrolling and retaining enough of the kinds of students an institution wants” (1995, p. 5). Dolence defined strategic enrollment management as “a comprehensive approach requiring integration of related functions to achieve optimum

recruitment, retention, and graduation of students” (1988, p. 14). Perhaps Hossler (1986) summarized best by noting:

the common thread through all definitions of enrollment management is that it is a coordinated, institution-wide effort, it involves a wide variety of areas within the institution. In addition to admissions, marketing and financial aid, functions such as academic advising, retention, academic planning, career services, alumni relations and development are integral to successful enrollment management. Enrollment management incorporates all the components of marketing, teaching, evaluation, and research into a system that focuses on the institution in holistic terms (quoted in Penn, 1999, p. 16).

Area II- Higher Education - Evolution from Public Good to Market Good.

Newman, Couturier and Scurry’s (2004) book is a result of a three year effort known as the “Futures Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World” housed at Brown University. In the course of their analysis they give reason to believe the higher education landscape is changing by noting:

For the last several years the system has been shifting steadily toward greater competition, marked by less market segmentation, more dependence on market forces and less dependence on regulation. Colleges have been using a variety of strategies to compete, some creative and benign, others shocking in their intensity. Depending on how they are used, each of these strategies and competition as a whole can either serve or undercut public purpose (p. 9-10).

Others too, have come to the conclusion higher education is changing. For instance, Curs and Singell (2002) provided an evaluation of tuition discounting between public and private institutions. Jonas and Popovics (2000) evaluated the concept of competitive strategy for institutions. Washburn (2005) wrote, “in higher education today, a wholesale culture shift is transforming everything from the way universities educate their students to the language they use to define what they do. Academic administrators

increasingly refer to students as consumers and to education and research as products...”(p. ix) She continues with:

These developments are hardly a secret to university presidents, administrators, professors, and students, many of whom have watched their campuses take on the look and feel of shopping malls in recent years, replete with Starbucks, fast-food chains, and Barnes and Noble operated bookstores. Thus far, however their collective significance has yet to reverberate in popular consciousness. Ask the typical parent what are the big issues in higher education today, and you are likely to hear about the rising cost of tuition, or how competitive the admission process has become. Missing from their list of concerns is the single greatest threat to the future of American higher education: the intrusion of market ideology in to the heart of academic life (Washburn, p. x).

Perhaps illustrating Washburn’s point, the administration of DePaul University, believed the concept of enrollment management should be taken one step further. In a 2002 academic affairs report published on the DePaul website, Vice President for Enrollment Management, David Kalsbeek, wrote:

“Improving DePaul’s market position is a broader more strategic goal that focuses attention not on the size and profile of the freshman class, for example, but rather on improving the university’s competitive posture and presence in the traditional age college bound market – a market presence that in effect determines the freshman class profile.

He continued with:

Today’s EM, with its new models and structures has this mission: “To improve and enhance DePaul’s competitive market position and prominence.” ...By acknowledging that the key to successful enrollment development is working to improve market position and enhance market prominence, we see the strategic value and vision in redefining the scope of DePaul’s EM organization.” (DePaul University, Special Report 2002, p. 3).

Area III – Market Orientation. If the assertions of Newman, Courtier and Scurry and others are correct, then it is important to know if market orientation practices exists at American institutions of higher education, and if it does, to what effect. According to Kolhi and Jaworski (1990) market orientation consists of three behaviors: 1) customer orientation; 2) competitor orientation and 3) interfunctional coordination. In order to establish a successful market orientation, they believed each behavior must interact with intelligence generation, dissemination, and managerial action. Slater and Narver (1995) argued that a market orientation is valuable “because it focuses the organization on continuously collecting information about targeting customers’ needs and competitors capabilities and using this information to create continuously superior customer value” (p. 63).

Narver and Slater (1994) suggested an organization that applies “significant resources to understanding their customers and competitors and coordinate the activities of all functions of the business for an integrated value –creation effort, achieve higher relative profitability, sales growth and new product success” (p. 53). This assertion may cause discomfort, since the traditional premise of public higher education was not to be profitable, enhance sales growth, or new product success. In this instance, *profitability* in public higher education may equate to balanced budgets, comfortable cash reserves, and capital to invest in emerging programs even with decreasing legislative support; *Sales growth* may be equated to recruiting, retaining and graduating the types of students an institution wants; and finally *new product success* might equate to developing a degree

and academic portfolios that meets the needs of employers and society while further advancing the credibility of the institution.

To a certain extent, we know that enrollment managers are responsible for the activity that Narver and Slater describe. What we do not know is how effective institutions are in realizing their market orientation potential through the work of enrollment managers. To that end, Slater and Narver (1995) suggested that an organization can not be “market oriented” unless it is committed to the principles of a learning organization. They, along with others (i.e. Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Huber, 1991; Simon, 1969) asserted that “at its most basic level, organizational learning is the development of new knowledge or insights that have the potential to influence behaviors....presumably, learning facilitates behavior change that leads to improved performance. All businesses competing in dynamic and turbulent environments must pursue the processes of learning behavior change and performance improvement” (p. 63-64).

Porter (1998) suggested that in order to be competitive, an organization must understand and formulate the difference between operational effectiveness and competitive strategy. He noted: “operational effectiveness means performing similar activities better than rivals perform them. Operational effectiveness includes but is not limited to efficiency” (p. 40). Porter described strategy as “performing different activities from rivals or performing similar activities in different ways...competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value” (p. 40 & 42).

If the concept of a market driven higher education as posited by Newman, Courtier, Scurry (2004), Kirp (2004) and others is true, then clearly an institution must work harder to recruit, enroll, and graduate a student because the level of competition and expectation (on the part of the student) has increased. Further, if the conjecture of a market orientation in higher education is true, the work of Narver and Slater (1990); Kohli and Jaworoski (1990); Porter (1998); and others, becomes particularly relevant in the discussion of the future of higher education.

#### Summary of Theoretical Framework.

Based upon the review of higher education literature, it seems apparent that institutions of higher education are focusing most of their energy on “institutional operational effectiveness” (meeting customer/client expressed needs) and not competitive advantage in terms of monitoring and strategizing against other institutions or anticipating latent needs of the customer/client. The review of the literature may not, however, be indicative of what really is occurring at institutions across the United States. Newman, Couturier and Scurry (2004) suggested *something* is changing with respect to market forces and competition in higher education. Other authors, from a more refined viewpoint, have also documented the advent of market positioning in terms of tuition discounting, recruitment, and retention strategies (Kirp, 2004; Grieger, 2004; Washburn, 2005). Finally, DePaul’s 2002 report citing the importance of “improving and enhancing their competitive market position and prominence” leads one to believe that change may indeed be occurring and should be studied through the lens of market orientation.

Through case research, the questions below attempted to probe if, and the degree to which, a market orientation is present or emerging at two public Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions. Further, the questions were designed to query if an institutional culture can influence market orientation practices relevant to institutional recruitment, retention and graduation outcomes.

### Research Questions

- RQ1: What market orientation practices influence institutional recruitment and retention outcomes the most?
- RQ2: What market orientation practices influence institutional recruitment and retention outcomes the least?
- RQ3: How does the institutional culture promote or hinder a market orientation?

### Significance of the Study

This study was exploratory in nature and used case study methods. If the results provide evidence that link a culture of a market orientation with effective strategic enrollment management then the study is significant because it attempts to broaden the enrollment management dialogue to answer the question “what works” and perhaps just as important “what does not work” in terms of market orientation in public institutions of higher education. If the results reveal that a market orientation did not exist at the two institutions studied, Newman Courtier and Scurry’s (2004) claims would be placed into question, and perceived changes in American public higher education should further be explored.

Since the study was exploratory and case oriented, the intended outcome was to use the results as a heuristic to provide a framework from which to further probe effective public higher education organizational cultures. Public higher education cultures that are nimble, thoughtful and can respond to change while improving their overall strategic position will fair better than those institutions that cannot (in light of decreasing public funding). Understanding the role of market orientation in American public higher education is important because administrators, governing and coordinating boards, legislators, governors, and others must look beyond the institutional dataset to determine how successful (or unsuccessful) the institutional culture is in creating an atmosphere to recruit, retain and graduate the types of students the institution wants. Further, as a heuristic, the results of the study may advance additional discussion and research of the practice of market orientation at public institutions of higher education. As previously noted, much of the enrollment management literature focuses on the “student.” Equal weight should also be focused on other variables that can influence the enrollment management function in terms of a market orientation strategy (i.e. customer orientation, competitor orientation, organizational learning, and interfunctional coordination).

Beyond anecdotal information shared between colleagues from competing institutions, governing boards, presidents, vice-presidents, and others may have difficulty determining if their creative tactics add value to the institution’s position. Those governing an institution may never understand the impact of a market orientation, as there are often too many parts to coordinate or too many dependant variables that have been adjusted at any one time. It is however important to know if an institution can

motivate a prospective student to apply, enroll, and graduate because the institution does something different (competitive strategy) or the same thing better than the *other* institution (operational effectiveness) because of their market orientation strategy.

### Definitions

Competitive Strategy – “performing different activities from rivals or performing similar activities in different ways...competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value” (Porter, p. 40 & 42).

Enrollment Management – “comprehensive approach requiring integration of related functions to achieve optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation of students” (Dolance, 1988, p. 14).

Market Orientation – According to Kolhi and Jaworski (1990) market orientation consists of three behaviors: 1) customer orientation, 2) competitor orientation, and 3) interfunctional coordination. In order to establish a successful market orientation, they posited that each behavior must interact with intelligence generation, dissemination, and managerial action. Narver and Slater (1995) argued that a market orientation is valuable “because it focuses the organization on continuously collecting information about targeting customers’ needs and competitors capabilities and using this information to create continuously superior customer value” (p. 63).

Enrollment Management Practitioners - Depending on the size and type of organization, Dennis (1998) and Penn (1999) suggest the following could be enrollment management practitioners - President, Provost, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Student Affairs, Academic Deans, Associate/Assistant Deans, Dean of Students, Departmental Chairpersons, Registrar, and various Directors, including but not limited to: Admissions, International Programs, Minority Programs/Retention, Freshman Seminar, First Year Experience, Retention, Housing, Orientation, Disability Services, Facility Services, Public Affairs/University Relations, Information Technology, University Marketing, Alumni, Career Services, Foundation, Business Office/Controller. For the purposes of this study, enrollment management practitioners will be identified through either the institutional website or directory and may include individuals who hold the positions listed above.

Operational Effectiveness -“Operational effectiveness means performing similar activities better than rivals perform them. Operational effectiveness includes but is not limited to efficiency” (Porter, 1998, p. 40).

### Assumptions

A major assumption of the study was that a tendency towards market orientation was occurring or was at the development stage (but was not readily documented by the literature) at public Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions. The premise of the study also assumes institutions that are practicing market orientation have better enrollment management outcomes than those who are not. A second significant assumption is that public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions are the best

institutional type category to select for this study since the practice of market orientation should have an identifiable impact (especially when compared to public Carnegie Very High Research Activity Institutions which, generally speaking, have more competitive admission policies, larger endowments, greater brand recognition, research portfolio's, etc.). A third major assumption was that the data collected through quantitative means (US News & World Report) represented the institution for which the respondent is representing. This assumption was therefore easily transferred into a limitation, since no one person can know or measure all of the '*ins*' and '*outs*' of an institution and the US News & World Report rankings have been reviewed with some controversy.

A fourth assumption of the study rests on the acceptability of using of a business model to test the market orientation of higher education. While the model has been well-vetted and reviewed by business scholars, it has not been used or accepted in the field of higher education.

The fifth and perhaps most significant assumption of this study was that the concepts of market orientation can be defined, surveyed and correlated into meaningful results in terms of an institution's recruitment, retention and graduation outcomes. Assuming this exercise was possible and a strong relationship can be found between institutional success and a market orientation, the study cannot eliminate the possibility of spuriousness. It is quite possible that a third variable not identified in the study, (i.e. location, world renown research center, exceptional athletics, campus tradition, etc.) can

impact institutional outcomes and the appearance and/or presence of a successful market orientation strategy.

### Limitations/Delimitations

The study is limited by its generalizability (external validity) to other institutional types (i.e. private, 2-year colleges, and other Carnegie classifications). The results identified in this work were relevant only to Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions. The study was also limited by the number of participating institutions. It will be difficult to create broad sweeping generalizations about market orientation practices (or lack thereof) by studying two public Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions. However, since the study is intended to be exploratory and case-oriented in nature, no broad generalizations were to be implied. The results or conclusions drawn from this project will provide a useful framework from which to advance additional research.

A third limitation of the study was a reality that Newman, Courtier and Scurry (2004) and the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement (2002) noted in terms of data collection: “the Department of Education is the major source of information about higher education, supplemented by the states and some nonprofit agencies. Even before the advent of the changes now happening, the current federal effort at data collection has been too limited and too slow. Given higher education’s movement toward a market, the lack of broader data on a timely basis is a serious problem” (Newman, Courtier, and Scurry, p. 86). It was for this reason that *US & World Report* data/rankings are being used to narrow the population group from sixty-eight to two institutions, since a similar

methodology and data parameters are used by the news conglomerate to collect data for all institutions. Generally speaking, the lack of uniform quantitative data was a limitation since it was difficult (outside of the US News & World Report Rankings) to triangulate the qualitative results with other independent quantitative data.

The study was also limited by the diverse practice of enrollment management. The concept and practice of “enrollment management” to one person at institution “A” could be completely different to another person at institution “B.” Similarly the practice of market orientation and relative components (i.e. anticipating expressed and latent needs, competitor orientation, customer orientation and interfunctional coordination) and the degree of success or failure of that practice is subjective in nature. While an attempt was made to collect information from a wide variety of people, it is unrealistic to assume a full understanding of an institution’s market orientation strategy will occur through a limited interview set.

#### Research Structure/Positionality

The study was completed through a two step process beginning with the analysis of US News & World Report 2007 Rankings for National Universities. From an initial population group of 68 public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions, two universities were selected for the study using a combination of criteria and convenience sampling. Interviews were conducted with administrators who are involved in the enrollment management function of the institution. In an attempt to ground theory, Glaser’s constant comparison method was used to extract similarities and differences between the institution in terms of any identifiable market orientation.

In terms of researcher positionality, the researcher has worked as a mid-level administrator in public higher education for eleven years within two offices at the same institution that meet Dennis's (1998) criteria of departments that should be involved in the enrollment management process. The researcher has an academic background in organizational culture and marketing and is interested in understanding the interplay (if any) between public higher education and market orientation.

### Chapter Summary

The intention of this chapter was to highlight three areas of scholarly literature and research: 1) enrollment management; 2) market orientation; 3) market oriented higher education. Enrollment management emerged as a topic in higher education during the 1970's. Discussion of a market orientated American higher education system materialized as a topic during the first part of this decade. The study of market orientation in the scholarly business journals emerged in the 1990's. The intention of this dissertation is to fuse information from the three areas into an exploratory (grounded theory) case study to determine if and the degree to which public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions of higher education are practicing a market orientation in terms of the classic business definition (Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993).

## CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter is comprised of three sections that begin with examining the origins of enrollment management and conclude with a fusion of the practice of enrollment management and market orientation. The three sections and corresponding sub-sections of this chapter are as follows:

- 1) Enrollment Management
  - a. The enrollment management catalyst – major historical events
  - b. External determinants effecting enrollment management
  - c. Enrollment management scholarly research and writing
  - d. A discussion of enrollment management within the institutional structure
  - e. Required information and reports to manage an enrollment management organization.
  - f. Characteristic enrollment management goals and tactics
- 2) Market Orientation
  - a. Market orientation roots and definitions
  - b. Measures of market orientation
  - c. Barriers to developing a market orientation
  - d. Diffusion of innovation
  - e. Competition theory
  - f. Market orientation and the learning organization
- 3) Market Orientation of Higher Education
  - a. Review of sections I and II
  - b. Market orientation in higher education
  - c. Indices of change
  - d. Evidence of market orientation in the practice of enrollment management
  - e. Catering to customers expressed and latent needs in higher education
  - f. Financial consideration of a market orientation.
  - g. Learning organizations

The first section of this chapter begins with an examination of historical events that helped shape the origins of enrollment management and ends with a review of strategic enrollment management. The enrollment management literature varies in scope and complexity from early and simplistic definitions of the role and purpose of enrollment management to more multifaceted analysis which includes but is not limited to developing econometric portfolio investment models which attempt to forecast student enrollment or departure (Whiteside, 2005; DesJardins, 2003; Martin, 2000; Penn, 1999; Dennis, 1998, McIntyre, 1997).

Next, the concept of market orientation emanating from scholarly business journals was reviewed. According to Narver, Slater, and MacLachlan (2004), the “*marketing concept* holds that the key to achieving organizational goals is to be more effective and efficient than competitors in identifying and in satisfying the needs of target markets” (p. 334). Vazques, Santos and Alvarez (2001) provided an alternative definition by stating: “market orientation promotes the satisfaction of market needs with a higher degree of excellence than competitors” (p. 69). For the purposes of this chapter, market orientation was reviewed in terms of the following subsets: 1) responsive market orientation or “customer led” where the organization attempts to discover, understand and satisfy the express needs of the customer; 2) proactive market orientation or “business led” where the latent needs of customers are identified and attempted to be met, even though at the time the customer may not recognize that s/he needs the product or service (Narver, Slater, and MacLachlan, 2004, p. 335). While the theory used in this section primarily evolved from the private-for-profit sector, the concepts may be applicable to

the field of enrollment management. For instance, Bean, Hossler & Associates (1990)

work reflected a market orientation with the following paragraph:

“Many campus administrators fail to recognize the strategic importance that student enrollments play in defining the image and the perceived effectiveness of an institution. For many reasons, the students who attend a college or university not only determine its financial health but also shape the image and future of the institution. Enrollment managers need to be able to influence student enrollments, but they also need to articulate the strategic role that student enrollments play in defining institutional character.” (1990, p. 14).

Dolance (1997), also considered the role that market orientation plays in strategic enrollment management, although he did not specifically reference the term “market orientation.” His writing is also reflective of a strategic orientation in higher education: “The curriculum and resultant degrees are higher education’s principal product. It is, therefore, the curriculum, academic policy and the corresponding choices students make to attend, persist, or drop out that drive the planning, implementation and evaluation of an institution’s recruitment and retention programs” (p. 9).

The final section in this chapter will review the body of literature targeting changes in the delivery and landscape of higher education. The findings of Newman, Couturier and Scurry (2004) were explored in addition to other scholarly and popular articles (Washburn, 2005; Kirp, 2004; Geiger, 2004; Vedder, 2004; Bok, 2004) that suggested that American higher education is becoming a market good.

### Section I: Enrollment Management

This section begins by examining the origins of enrollment management through societal, legislative and higher education initiatives that helped shape and establish the practice. The history and origins of enrollment management are probably best understood by reviewing the evolution of higher education retrospectively. For instance, the Civil Rights Amendment was an important first step to admission and eventually growing an institutional orientation toward minority recruitment and enrollment. While the list of historical events are not exhaustive, the intention is to demonstrate how the practice of enrollment management was and will continue to be influenced by events and initiatives that stem far beyond offices on college campuses that are charged with its practice.

#### The Enrollment Management Catalyst: Major Historical Events

In his book, *The Uses of the University*, Clark Kerr (2003), suggested the American Research University has experienced four ages to date:

1. Origins (1810-1870) - The German model of institution became a viable form of a university -- acceptance was bolstered by the creation of the Land Grant (1862) and Johns Hopkins (1876).
2. Slow Growth (1870-1940) – A handful of universities began paying more attention to research, but the primary focus was on teaching.
3. Rapid Expansion and Extension of Activity (1940-1990) - Research and student growth occurred due to effects from wars (cold and engaged), a rapid growth in population, and a healthy increase in federal dollars.

4. Constrained Resources (1990-2015, and perhaps beyond) - This period reflects the drying-up of state resources, increases in student tuition and increases in federal research dollars (for the institutions that position themselves to compete for federal money). This period also witnessed variability in student enrollment due to demographic fluctuations in states; where some institutions reaped the benefits of a high number of traditional college age students in their state – and others did not.

It is Kerr's last two phases that may have set the stage for a historical analysis of factors that drove public institutions of higher education to adopt enrollment management systems or processes.

According to Thelin (1996), the *golden age* in American public higher education occurred in the period following the World War II through the 1980's. During this period, unprecedented expansion occurred both in terms of actual building infrastructure and student enrollment. Three historical milestones are likely responsible for much of the growth in the student body.

First, the Serviceman Readjustment Act of 1944 or more colloquially known GI Bill, ushered in the "Era of Mass Higher Education" (Cohen, 1998; Kinzie, et al, 2004). The bill was passed by the United States Congress during WWII to ensure mass unemployment did not occur for the servicemen and women who returned after the war. The bill provided educational and living expenses for four years to veterans who served at least two years. Over seven million veterans participated in this program. This bill is

also credited with advancing the “middle class” by providing educational access to many who otherwise would not pursue higher education (Cohen, 1998).

The GI Bill also marshaled in a period of increased involvement by the federal government into the funding and support of higher education. Residence halls and family housing apartments were constructed with the 1950’s Housing Act. The 1958 National Defense Act provided loan monies and fellowships for students to study foreign languages (Cohen, 1998).

Second and third on Thelin’s list are The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and The Higher Education Act of 1965 as they are frequently cited as seminal pieces of legislation that increased college enrollment for the middle class. More than half of all high school graduates were accepted into college by the end of the 1960’s (Kinzie et al., 2004). The Higher Education Act of 1965 was a broad sweeping act that transferred accountability and governance to the states and developed financial aid packages. The act was reflective of President Johnson’s desire to create a "Great Society" in order to end poverty, promote equality, improve education, rejuvenate cities, and protect the environment. President Johnson stated “this act ensures that a high school senior anywhere in this great land of ours can apply to any college or any university in any of the 50 states and not be turned away because his family is poor” (quoted in Wolanin, 2003 p. 40). Financial aid, in particular the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and the guaranteed student loan program, were established with this legislation.

The outcome of these three major events in higher education history increased student access for women and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

#### The Emergence of Enrollment Management Tendencies on College Campuses

Coomes (2000) posited that the growth of the financial aid industry, particularly during and after President Johnson's "Great Society" initiative, was the precursor for the need to track and compete for student enrollment (since many of the government grants were directed toward the student and not the institution). To that end, Coomes (2000) believed that major elements (i.e. Pell grants) and subsequent alterations of financial aid (i.e. Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Credits) assisted with the emergence and growth of higher education enrollment management divisions/offices across the country. His chapter ends by noting that a new age of tuition discounting and student bargaining may replace the ideological concept of *access* and *choice* created through the intervention of federal government grants and loans that students were able to capitalize on by paying for most of their education through the 1990's.

Coomes' noted the emergence of enrollment management as an administrative function on campus (2000, p. 12) with:

"The early to mid-1970's were a period of considerable unease in campus admissions offices. Projects of enrollment shortages, driven by declining numbers of high school graduates were cause for concern...Total college enrollment in 1970 was 120 percent higher than enrollment levels in 1960, but from 1970 to 1980 enrollment only increased by 45 percent. Nevertheless, concern over declining high school graduate rates prompted many colleges to look carefully at the role of the admission office and to consider how better to attract

and keep students. One approach was the development of enrollment management as an organization function.”

Hossler (1996) credited Jack McGuire with coining the term enrollment management to explain administrative functions that were put in place at Boston College in the late 1970s to support institutional enrollment goals. Other colleges including Bradley University, Carnegie-Mellon University, and Northwestern University, are “generally credited as being the first institutions to develop comprehensive enrollment management systems” (Hossler, 1996, p. 66).

#### Enrollment Management Scholarly Research & Writing

One of the earliest definitions of enrollment management described it as a process that “leads to issues of mission and goals clarification and budgetary decision making” (Kemerer, Baldrige, and Green, 1982, p. 21). Later, Dixon (1995) stated “enrollment management is finding, enrolling and retaining enough of the kinds of students an institution wants” (p. 5). Dolence (1997) defined strategic enrollment management as “a comprehensive approach requiring integration of related functions to achieve optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation of students” (1988, p. 14). Perhaps Hossler (1986) summarized best by noting, “the common thread through all definitions of enrollment management is that it is a coordinated, institution-wide effort, it involves a wide variety of areas within the institution. In addition to admissions marketing and financial aid, functions such as academic advising, retention, academic planning, career services, alumni relations and development are integral to successful enrollment management. Enrollment management incorporates all the components of marketing, teaching,

evaluation, and research into a system that focuses on the institution in holistic terms” (quoted in Penn, 1999, p. 16) Finally, Kalsebeek (2005) suggested “enrollment management becomes Strategic Enrollment Management when it actively integrates planning and strategies and structures in the formal enrollment management units with the institution’s evolving strategic planning, its academic vision, and its fundamental mission” (Beck - Conference Notes, 2005). At the same conference, Kalsebeek suggested the ‘S’ in *Strategic Enrollment Management & Marketing* (SEM&M) should “focus our attention to competitive and comparative market position” (Beck - Conference Notes, 2005).

#### A Selected Chronological Summary of Enrollment Management Scholarly Writings.

In addition to outside influences and occurrences that have shaped the history of enrollment management, the field is also tied to scholarly research and writing. Kemerer, Baldrige and Green’s (1982) *Strategies for Effective Enrollment Management* is frequently cited as the first book dedicated to the concept of enrollment management in higher education (Huddleston, 2000). Their work acted as the foundation and in many ways a heuristic for the continued advancement of theory, research and practice in enrollment management. In particular, they discussed: 1) the organizational structure and function of an enrollment management office; 2) revitalizing the admissions office; 3) linking recruitment and marketing; 4) improving student retention; 5) strategic planning; and 6) institutional quality (Kemerer, et al., 1982).

Others have followed with equally important work that expands the premise of the 1982 seminal piece. Hossler, Bean & Associates (1990) compiled a book that reviewed four key areas: 1) enrollment management in academic settings; 2) the marketing dimension of enrollment management; 3) student retention in enrollment management; and 4) building comprehensive enrollment management systems. Their book took the concept of enrollment management beyond the role of the admissions office and placed the responsibility central to the mission of the university.

John Bean (1990, p. 22) stressed the importance of planning in the field of enrollment management. He believed the following elements are central to the concept of planning: 1) “Planning is planning for change. There is no need to plan to remain the same or to evolve slowly; 2) Planning is future oriented, unlike decision making which is focused towards the present; 3) Planning attempts to be rational but is often not; 4) Planning can be viewed as a process or a product – both have merit and “place” dependant upon the type of organizational culture; 5) Planning is initiated “formally by the organization and informally by organizational participants as a means to sense the future, understand the present and rationalize the past” (Clark, 1980); and 7) “Planning is undertaken to achieve symbolic, advertisable, rationalistic, political, procedural and futuristic ends”” (Clark, 1980).

Bean suggested that in the context of strategic planning at a university, an enrollment manager should take into special consideration trends, values, power, stakeholders and constraints (1990, p. 26). He cautioned that enrollment managers must

pay attention to the elements and contextual factors to have a “sensible approach to planning” (p. 27).

Bean provided the following table adapted from Cope (1981, p. 7) that contrasts conventional long term planning with his strategic planning elements:

Table 2.1. A Comparison of Planning Procedures

| Conventional Long Range Planning | Strategic Planning                                             |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus on goals                   | Focus on issues                                                |
| Identify objects to reach goals  | Identify vision of success to shape work                       |
| Closed system                    | Open system                                                    |
| Internal organization            | Internal and external organization (environmental) orientation |
| Consensus-oriented (talk)        | Action oriented (do)                                           |
| Plan (blueprinting)              | Stream of decisions (process)                                  |

Townsley (1993) proposed a strategic model for enrollment-driven private colleges. His model “rests squarely on four legs: an active, creative admissions office; a flexible, market sensitive academic program; a financial buffer; and a disciplined budget system” (p. 58). Townsley noted the importance of recognizing the competition and marketplace by stating “for a small private college, an academic program that ignores the market does so at its own risk” (p. 58).

Dolence’s (1997) *Strategic Enrollment Management: A Primer for Campus Administrators*, introduced the concept of “strategy” into the management of enrollments. According to Dolence, the primary goals of strategic enrollment management (SEM) should include: 1) stabilized enrollments – stop declining enrollment, control growth, smooth out fluctuations; 2) link academic programs and SEM - align the principles of

SEM with those of the academic department; 3) stabilize finances – eliminate deficits, pay off debts, reinvest strategically; 4) optimize resources – contain growth in number of employees and redirect, refocus employees; 5) improve services – shorten response time, increase satisfaction, and reduce paperwork; 6) improve quality – eliminate errors, and increase student quality ratings; 7) improve access to information – put information systems online; 8) reduce vulnerability to environmental forces – mitigate the negative impact of local and regional events, and expand the pool of qualified prospects; and 9) evaluate strategies and tactics – track what works and change what does not. Dolence posited it will take approximately three years to institute a strategic enrollment management process, noting “it is not a quick fix” (p. 8).

Dolence (1997) continued by highlighting necessary institutional SEM strategies: “1) recruitment; 2) prospects and yield – using a SEM prospect funnel; 3) marketing; 4) retention; 5) intervention; 6) information systems; and 7) reengineering – using a modern information system to radically redesign administrative processes to dramatically increase productivity and performance using a client driven mentality” (p. 22).

Finally, Dolence submitted eight critical success factors that must be included in the SEM plan to bring the objectives and strategies to fruition. They include: 1) leadership; 2) strategic planning; 3) comprehensiveness; 4) key performance indicators; 5) research – or “field intelligence” - including but not limited to demographics, societal trends, price sensitivity to student behavior, enrollment sensitivity to financial aid, etc.; 6) academic foundation; 7) information technology; and 8) evaluation.

Marguerite Dennis (1998), Vice President for Enrollment Management and International Programs at Suffolk University, wrote *A Practical Guide to Enrollment and Retention Management in Higher Education*. The book is highly pragmatic in nature and was written to be a *how-to-guide* for enrollment and retention managers. Dennis reviewed several key areas of enrollment management that include: 1) the role of research in enrollment management – with detailed suggestions for reports; 2) marketing – with a review of the “P’s” of marketing (price, product, promotion, and position); 3) tele-counseling; 4) publications – maintaining a consistent look and message; 5) advertising; 6) the role of faculty in enrollment management; 7) financial aid; 8) retention management; and 9) evaluating outcomes.

Dennis’ book bridges the concept between the traditional and competitive (market orientation) enrollment management literature. While much of her writing is focused on the relationship between the institution and the student, she does posit the importance of competition between institutions of higher education. For instance, Dennis recommended conducting a: 1) competitor analysis; 2) market share analysis; 3) and a comparative analysis of competitor institutions (1998, p. 29). She also provided a recommended reading list of scholarly, statistical and popular journals that an enrollment manager should read in order to stay current in the field.

Penn (1999) contributed to the literature with a publication titled, *Enrollment Management for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Her work summarized thoughts and practice of enrollment management prior to 1999. In addition to providing a summary of the

practice and a comprehensive list of relevant publications, Penn also surveyed twelve public institutions to determine if and to the degree which enrollment management was present. Her findings were summarized in ten distinct areas: 1) organizational definition; 2) mission; 3) structure; 4) evaluation; 5) key indicators of success; 6) communication of results; 7) duration and durability; 8) success and adjustments; 9) ethical concerns; and 10) advice to the novice. Through her work, it is learned all twelve institutions included admissions in the EM portfolio, ten included financial aid, six reported a research function and only two institutions cited a formal retention office as a part of their enrollment management plan. Half of the respondents indicated the enrolment management function is comprised by a division and suggested that enrollment management functions that report to a provost or vice provost tended to be more successful than those who were rooted in student affairs. The definition of “success” at most of the institutions included: 1) the bottom-line enrollment number; 2) enrollment by geographic area, program and academic quality; and 3) diversity. Retention was sited as the hardest goal to measure accurately. Penn’s work is important since very few published works actually surveyed practitioners of enrollment management at institutions of higher education.

Wolff and Bryan’s (1999) work published by Noel Levitz, targeted the top ten trends in enrollment management. They posited that “higher education has become a buyers market for today’s prospective students. Because competition for students has increased, college and university enrollment officials must now move beyond the limited practices of the past and aggressively pursue the right mix of students, becoming not only

promoters and statisticians, but also visionaries.” They continued with, “savvy schools are taking fresh approaches and making better use of the high-tech tools now available. Successful solutions include: 1) using more advanced tracking, research and analysis systems to determine which outreach methods are working; 2) employing more sophisticated outreach techniques; and 3) determining the cost of recruiting and enrolling a specific size of class” (p. 3). Wolff and Bryan’s top ten list of trends in enrollment management is comprised of the following assertions: 1) declining yield rates for enrollment; 2) increased planning for change – in particular developing a higher degree of enrollment planning; 3) shifting internal reporting relationships – an increase number reporting to the president or chief academic officer and a decrease in reporting to the chief student affairs officer; 4) bigger enrollment budgets and salaries – resources were expended upon data process, marketing, more staff and higher salaries topped the list; 5) increasing tuition discount rates – the overall tuition discount rate for public’s was 4.1 percent and private’s reported 26 percent for all class standings; 6) More targeted outreach strategies – high school campus visit days versus traditional high school visits; 7) more strategic use of financial aid; 8) increasing use of websites – including on-line web applications; tracking web visits and email communication; 9) expanding use of direct mail – institutions are purchasing lists from The College Board, National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA), American College Testing Program (ACT) and other national and state vendors; and 10) the use of tele-counseling to reach prospects.

Smith (2001) attempted to answer the question, “which enrollment management factors are perceived by enrollment managers to be most related to enrollment performance?” (p. 369). Smith surveyed enrollment managers at accredited postsecondary institutions, registered in the *Higher Education Directory* (1996), and then stratified the respondent group (52%) into four unique sub-groups: 1) two-year public; 2) two-year private; 3) four-year public; and 4) four-year private. The results of his study targeting four year public institutions suggested enrollment management effectiveness factors with the strongest relationship to performance were assessment, evaluation, participation/integration, strategies and timing. Four of the five factors had a relatively small effect size. Only participation/integration had a change in *R* squared greater than 0.10.

#### Enrollment Management within the Institutional Structure

Enrollment management functions range in complexity from a committee with relatively low authority to a division that maintains a high level of authority and influence within the institution (Penn, 1999). Dennis suggested “institutional strategy, not one or two specific activities, is needed to insure the success of the program to effectively develop a division of enrollment management, a coordinated system – one that cuts across the traditional boundaries of specific job and office functions” (Dennis, 1998, p. 9). Dolance (1996, quoted in Penn) noted that enrollment management can and regularly does report to either the vice president for student or academic affairs, however the

|                       |                               |                                                                              |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Admissions Management | >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>              | Enrollment Management Strategic Planning                                     |
| Marketing             |                               | Student Services                                                             |
|                       | Marketing and Choice Research |                                                                              |
| Recruitment           |                               | Institutional Research and Evaluation                                        |
|                       | Financial Aid                 | Marketing Recruitment                                                        |
|                       |                               | Financial Aid                                                                |
|                       |                               | Academic Advising and Counseling Placement Orientations                      |
|                       |                               | Student Retention Programs Learning Assistance Career Planning and Placement |

Penn (1999) argued that “an enrollment management program should include strong links with, at a minimum, academic programming, institutional wide recruitment and retention programs, admissions, financial aid, advising, institutional research and alumni relations – as well as a variety of other seemingly unrelated operations” (p. 18). Penn cited and modified a table generated by Hossler (1986) that details an enrollment management continuum which exclusively targets the *student – institution* transactional experience. For instance, she noted that the concept of admissions management has evolved from a marketing and recruitment function to enrollment management which should ideally include an element of strategic planning within student services (not just the admission function). Penn’s table does not, readily look outside the

classic student affairs organization, with the exception of academic advising, for the enrollment management function.

**Table 2.3: The Enrollment Management Organization (Jonas & Popvics, 2000)**

|                                                               | Effectiveness                                                                                                                   |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 | Process/Service                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Outcomes</b>                                       | <b>Cyclical Self Assessment</b>                                                                                                 | <b>Organizational Climate</b>                                                  | <b>Environmental Scanning</b>                                                                                   | <b>EM Divisions</b>                                                                                                                              |
| Assessment of Major Programs                                  | 3-5 year review and 3-5 year projections                                                                                        | Assessment of students, faculty, Staff                                         | Assessment of social, economic, legislative and technological changes that may affect the college in the future | Coordination of efforts among areas of the institution to assure effectiveness, efficiency and customer satisfaction in the delivery of services |
| General Education Core                                        | Long term history                                                                                                               | levels of satisfaction with college or university                              |                                                                                                                 | Assure continuing professional development in all areas of EM                                                                                    |
| Attitudinal Values Change                                     | Support of Mission                                                                                                              |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 | CQI                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                               | Academic Performance Reviews                                                                                                    |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Market Assessment                                                                                                               |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Enrollment history, projections, and recruitment/retention strategies                                                           |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Program factors and operation review                                                                                            |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Goals                                                                                                                           |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Resources                                                                                                                       |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Personnel                                                                                                                       |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Budget                                                                                                                          |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Operational Capital                                                                                                             |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                               | Strategic Master Plan                                                                                                           |                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
| Assure attention to quality and provide marketing information | Answer question: "How big do we want to be?" and promotes longer term departmental budgeting & commitment to enrollment efforts | Enhance retention by helping to assure a healthy environment and higher morale | Assure that the future works <b>for</b> the institution rather than happens <b>to</b> the institution           | Assure EM division component of the EMO is operating effectively                                                                                 |
| Marketing & Retention                                         | Budgeting, Planning and Recruiting                                                                                              | Recruiting/ Retention                                                          | Planning                                                                                                        | Marketing, Recruiting, Retention                                                                                                                 |

In their missive titled, "Beyond the Enrollment Management Division: The Enrollment Management Organization," Jonas and Popvics (2000) suggested that an enrollment management organization should focus on a systems approach to establish optimum enrollment at a college or university. Their plan called for moving beyond the "massive campaign blitzes" of the 1980's and reacting to declining enrollments of the 1990's to an organization that "integrates assessment, planning, and budgeting on an institution-wide basis to achieve enrollment goals" (p. 5). They continued with "...the

Enrollment Management Organization is a more comprehensive concept than the enrollment management division because it not only addresses recruitment, marketing, retention and the advising processes of students, but also involves the entire institution in those processes specifically targeting graduation and goal achievement by the student” (p. 5). To illustrate, table 2.3 reviewed Jonas and Popvics concept of the enrollment management organization.

Kalsbeek described DePaul University’s enrollment management mission and model in a special report published by that institution (DePaul Press, 2002). His model is particularly valuable to this literature review since it demonstrated the latest enrollment management innovations. The DePaul plan required the institution restructure reporting lines to create the enrollment management organization. The DePaul example is valuable since the model is in practice and is attributable to an institution (i.e. the model is more that theoretical).

Table 2.4: DePaul University’s Enrollment Management Model (by office).

| <b>Marketing &amp; University Relations</b> | <b>Enrollment Services</b>       | <b>Alumni &amp; Career Networks</b> | <b>Enrollment &amp; Marketing Research</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Marketing Communication                     | Financial Aid                    | Career Center                       | Student Systems & Services (PeopleSoft)    |
| Media Relations                             | First Generation Students        | Alumni Mentoring Program            |                                            |
| Integrated Marketing & Brand Strategy       | Partners in Minority Recruitment | Alumni Giving                       |                                            |
| Recruitment Advertising                     |                                  |                                     |                                            |
| Web Communication                           | Barat Experience*                |                                     |                                            |
| Internal Communication                      |                                  |                                     |                                            |

\* Note: Barat College is no longer associated with DePaul University.

### Enrollment Management Stakeholders and Required Information

Within any theoretic or pragmatic model, it is important to understand the role of enrollment management players and the information that they need to make well-informed decisions. The following two sections fuse highly pragmatic ideas written by enrollment management practitioners. As much of the literature review has noted thus far, the function and practice of enrollment management has grown out of the admissions and recruitment office into a much broader and more comprehensive institutional priority which in some cases, encompass an entire division. Next, stakeholders and necessary information required to support the enrollment management organization will be highlighted.

A number of stakeholders must be included in the conceptual development of an enrollment management organization: President, Provost, Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Student Affairs, Academic Deans, Associate/Assistant Deans, Dean of Students, Departmental Chairpersons, Registrar, and various Directors, including but not limited to: Admissions, International Programs, Minority Programs/Retention, Freshman Seminar, First Year Experience, Retention, Housing, Orientation, Disability Services, Facility Services, Public Affairs/University Relations, Information Technology, University Marketing, Alumni, Career Services, Foundation, Business Office/Controller (Kalsbeek, 2002; Dennis, 1998; Penn, 1999).

Understanding information about various internal and external variables is central to developing an effective enrollment management program. Dennis (1998) suggested that at a minimum the enrollment management office must: 1) know why a student enrolls at a school; 2) understand the relationship between a student who persists and a student that withdraws; 3) know how students pay for their education; 4) know the institution's system for maintaining enrollment in the past; 5) know the school's competitive edge and what sets it apart from others; 6) understand what processes to increase enrollment in the past have failed and why; 7) understand the school's retention and attrition rates; 8) know the profile of the "persister" and the "stop-out"; 9) know the role of enrollment management in the budget process; 10) know if the school is poised for change; 11) believe there can be coordination between the academic program, retention and enrollment management; and 12) have good data/reports (p. 8).

One could request and use multiple reports to manage the enrollment of an institution, Dennis (1998) recommended at minimum the following reports: 1) enrollment in each student cohort; 2) retention in each student cohort compared with enrollment; 3) the financial aid program and its impact on enrollment; 4) international recruitment program; 5) tele-counseling program and its impact on enrollment; 6) national and international educational collaborations; 7) minority outreach program; 8) publications, advertising, and direct mail program and impact on enrollment; 9) alumni recruitment program; 10) analysis of synergy between school's enrollment management and retention management program; 11) review of corporate outreach, distance learning and continuing education programs; 12) analysis of the school's enrollment management program in

meeting the overall strategic plan for the college or university; 13) demographic and socio-economic student profile analysis; 14) application to enrollment yield report; 15) SAT, ACT, GPA score analysis; 16) FTE v.s head-count analysis; 17) advising and tutoring effectiveness; 18) financial aid award and estimated need report for enrolled and non-enrolled applicants, 19) attrition follow up report; etc. (p. 10 and p. 106).

### Enrollment Management Goals and Tactics

As noted above, several authors and practitioners have written about various tactics and goals related to enrollment management and strategic enrollment management. For the purposes of this section, a theoretical discussion will preface a review of the strategic enrollment practices of DePaul University since the institution and its administrators are well regarded in the field and practice of strategic enrollment management (Beck - Conference Notes, 2005).

According to Hossler and Bean (1980), enrollment management offices should attempt to:

“1) position the campus in the marketplace; 2) examine the correlates to student persistence; 3) develop appropriate marketing and pricing strategies through research; 4) monitor student interests and academic program demand; 5) match student demand with curricular offerings that are consistent with the institutional mission; 6) pay attention to academic, social and institutional factors that can affect student retention” ( p. 5).

To that end, Bean (1990) suggested that an effective enrollment management strategy must answer several questions relevant to the student body and sub groups of the student body that are important to the institution. These questions include:

1. Size: How many students are in each group?
2. Quality: What is the scholastic quality of each group?
3. Trends: How have the numbers of students in each group changed over time?
  - a. Do their reasons for attending differ?
  - b. Are there changes in enrollment patterns in target groups because of new enrollment management practices?
4. Retention: Have retention rates changed for each group of students?
5. Graduation rates: Have program completion and graduation rates changed for each group of students?
6. How successful has this school been against its competitors?
7. How well has the school been able to segment its market?
8. How well has the school been able to match faculty and curricular resources with students' or potential students' needs and interests?

Dixon (1995) suggested the goals of enrollment management are four-fold and should include the following tactics: 1) define the institution's nature and characteristics through the use of objective and subjective methods and market them both appropriately and aggressively; 2) bring all relevant campus parties together to understand marketing plans and activities around the core institutional goals; 3) make strategic decisions about the role and amount of financial aid needed to bring and retain the desired student body; and 4) make substantial commitments to people, money and technology to enable the plans to be implemented.

Jonas and Popovics (2000) posited the concept of the enrollment management organization, where the university should move beyond recruitment and retention as exercised through the enrollment management division and link "assessment, planning, budgeting and enrollment management into a system that can be applied, evaluated, and updated on a regular basis" (p. 3). They further noted, "The term *enrollment management organization* is used to identify a system's approach to establishing an optimum level of students at a college or university." They held that the enrollment management

organization should be based upon the following corner-stones: “outcomes assessment, cyclical program self-assessment, organizational health, and environmental scanning.”

Jonas and Popovics (2000) noted that competition has increased among colleges due to the decline in traditional aged college students in the 1990’s, thus creating a older and more diverse study profile. They argued that in the 1980’s recruitment offices were solely tapped with the responsibility of marketing to prospective students. The 1990’s pushed institutions to develop a more cooperative and integrated approach between departments and offices that moved beyond sales and marketing. Therefore higher education institutions had to modify their service offerings to fit a profile(s) where “age was no limit, cultural and ethnic diversity became a driving force and students demanded more services, along with a quality education” (p. 4). Jonas and Popovics wrote that for institutions to accommodate “changing demographics, systems, academic environment, and student achievement profiles, the enrollment management concept needs to reinvent itself once again, it needs to move beyond the enrollment management division” (p. 4, 2000).

They concluded an institution-wide systematic approach is best when recruiting and retaining students in a highly competitive market. According to Jonas and Popovics, the following steps of information gathering are important when developing the systematic approach across all departments: 1) benchmarking the institution against the competition; 2) analysis of student satisfaction; and 3) analysis of how economic and employment trends are likely to affect demand for specific program offerings. They also

suggested the enrollment management organization must address the following focal points in order to maintain effectiveness: 1) review general outcomes; 2) perform cyclical-self assessment; 3) monitor the organizational climate; and 4) regularly perform environmental scanning.

In his book, *Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom Line*, Kirp (2004) provided a variety of institutional tactics to enhance the recruitment and retention functions at several institutions around the country, such tactics include: 1) changing an institution's name to promote a better brand and institutional image (i.e. Beaver College to Acadia University); 2) rename and greatly adjust the content of the University of Chicago's view book (i.e. *Dreams and Choices* to *The Life of the Mind*); 3) actively recruit Jewish students to Vanderbilt University by opening a Hillel House and reviving a Jewish studies program since Jewish students "by culture and ability ...make a university a much more habitable place in terms of intellectual life (Gee as quoted in Kirp, 2004 p. 16); 4) developing personalized videos where the first twenty second clip featured a student welcoming the prospect by name and academic interest; 5) offering virtual tours and an online spread sheet that allows students interested in the California State University System to make cross comparisons; 6) providing a subsidized "weekend of exploration" to London, England where the student pays \$200 for the learning adventure; 7) initiating a "reaction program" where the institution sets aside over a quarter of a million dollars to react to other offers that a desirable student has received from other institutions -- parents are encouraged to "put competing bids on the table."; and 8) employing the use of econometric or statistical models to predict the likelihood that a student will enroll based

upon a unique collection of variables (i.e. student grades, SAT scores, geographic location, cost of attendance, extra-curricular activities, etc).

DePaul University:  
Enrollment Management Goals and Tactics

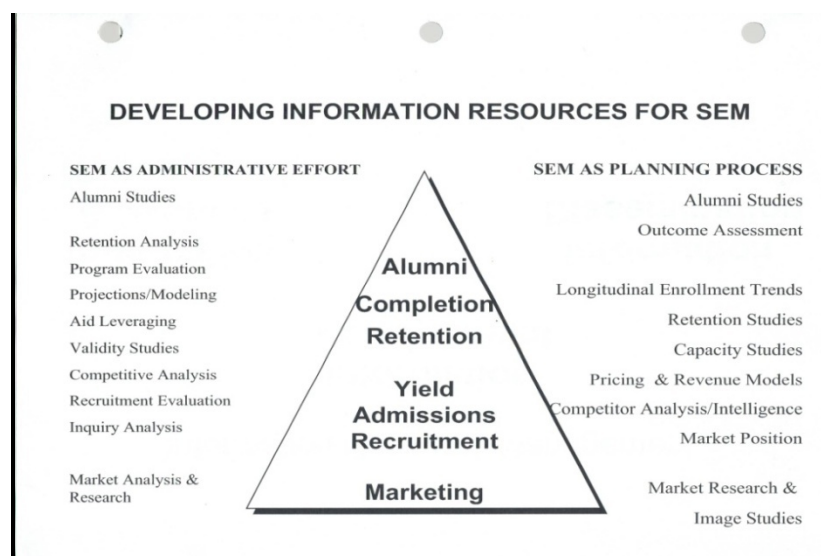
While speaking at a 2005 Academic Impressions Enrollment Management conference David Kalsbeek presented DePaul's Market Metrix (Beck- Conference Notes, 2005). DePaul's Market Metrix demonstrates how the collection of information can influence the development of institutional goals and tactics. Kalsbeek introduced the concept as the "two faces of strategic enrollment management" where in the first "face," strategic enrollment management is viewed as an administrative effort. Kalsbeek (2005) suggested "the focus is on the management and administration of those departments and functions formally charged with achieving the institutions enrollment goals." Decisions in this "face" focus on optimal resource allocation to achieve enrollment goals. Examples of decisions made with SEM as an administrative effort include: 1) mix of direct mail versus high school visits; 2) regional recruitment priorities; 3) financial aid leveraging; 4) course offerings and scheduling; 5) media mix in advertising; 6) brand building versus program promotions.

The second face of strategic enrollment management encompassed the planning process. In this instance, the focus is on the outward and forward looking activities that guide the institution's pursuit of its preferred future in a constantly changing and competitive environment. Decisions in this "face" focus on long range planning and institution-wide strategy development. Examples of decisions made with SEM as a

planning process include: 1) new curricula and new academic programs; 2) facilities development and campus master planning; 3) market and image campaigns; 4) investments in technology; and 5) pricing decisions.

Using the two faces of strategic enrollment management, Kalsbeek presented an enrollment management pyramid with relevant informational resources representing each “face.” The purpose of the pyramid is to highlight pertinent data collection and information resources to understand the impact of each “face” in terms of 1) marketing; 2) recruitment; 3) admissions; 4) yield; 5) retention; 6) completion; and 7) alumni activity. *Figure 2.5* provides additional detail as to how the two faces of strategic enrollment management call for unique data sets based upon the various levels in the pyramid.

Figure 1. Enrollment Management Pyramid - Information Resources for SEM – DePaul University



Next, Kelsbeek presented DePaul's Market Metrix™ a concept that is comprised of three dimensions: 1) market position and performance; 2) the enrollment pyramid; and 3) research and analysis methodology. The market position and performance dimension is the primary focus of the "metrix;" and outlines seven questions that range from an *external environmental focus* to an *internal environmental focus*.

Figure 2. DePaul's Information Resource Management Cube

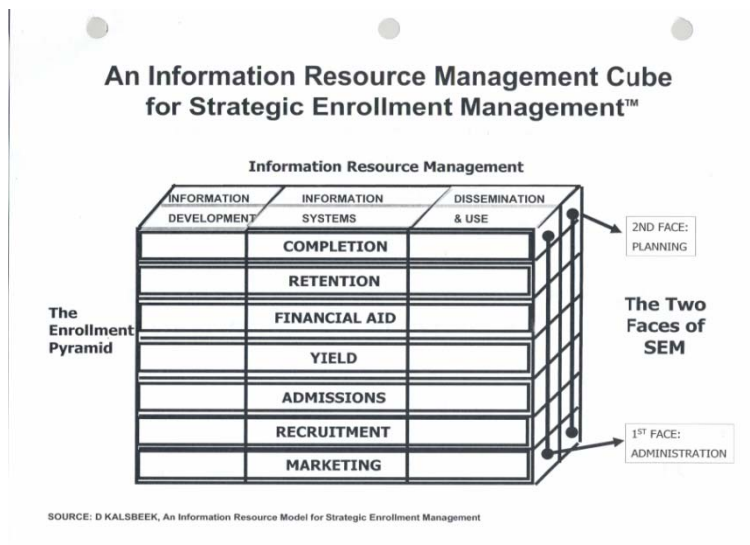
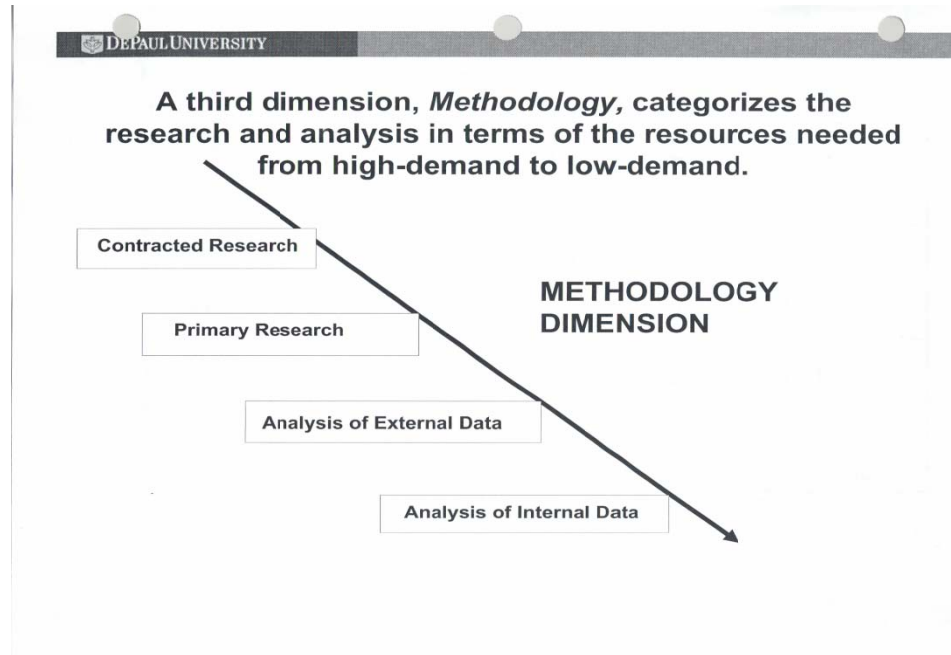


Figure 3. DePaul University – External/Internal Environmental Focus



The next step represents the replication of the enrollment pyramid. The “segments” or “phases” of student progression or flow are represented and range from market (or pre-entry) to alumni (post graduation). This continuum or “second dimension” of the Marketing Metrix is the same concept demonstrated inside the pyramid in *Figure 2.1*. DePaul’s third dimension focuses on the concept of “methodology” where the need for research is categorized and analyzed in terms of the resources needed from high demand to low demand.

Figure 4. DePaul University – 3<sup>rd</sup> Dimension of Strategic Enrollment Management - Methodology



DePaul’s three dimensions create “an information resource management cube for strategic enrollment management.” This cube represents the heart of DePaul’s strategic enrollment management plan. Information is collected from external constituents (i.e. the Bureau of Labor Statistics, competitor market analysis) and internal constituents (i.e. FAFSA cross applicants, senior survey, freshman focus groups) and is used to answer specific questions related to the various rungs on the enrollment management pyramid. DePaul University uses both internal (staff) and external (contract) market researchers/analysts to collect data related to the thirty-five questions outlined in the metrix below.

Figure 5. DePaul University Thirty Five Data Collection Point for Strategic Enrollment Management.

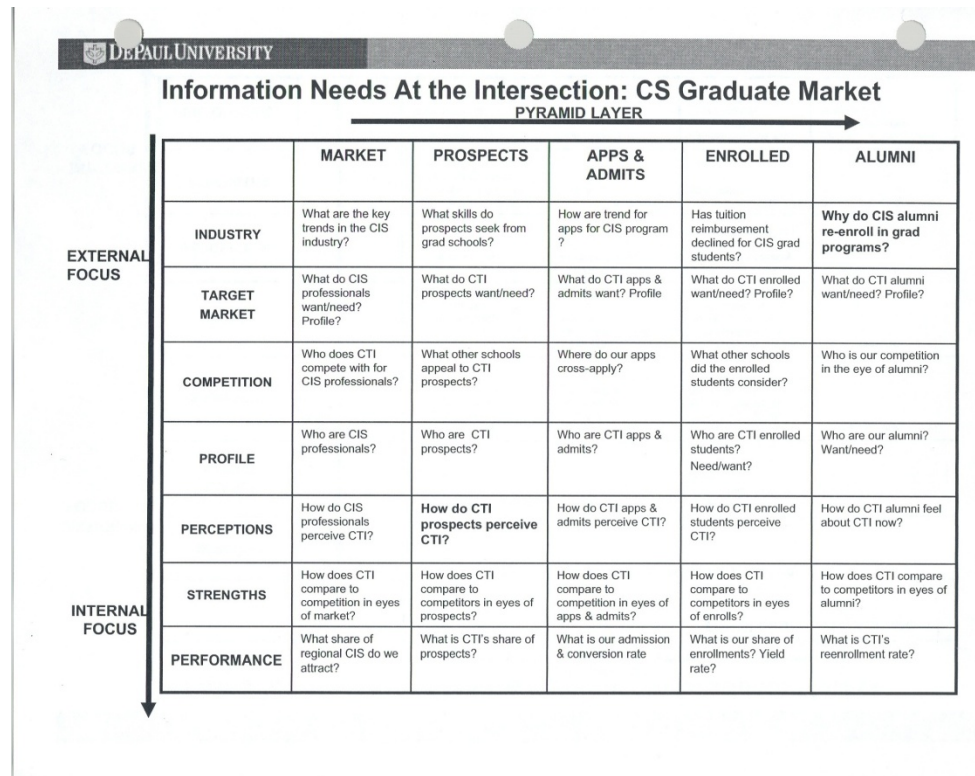
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

The intersection of the first 2 dimensions provides a focus:  
what is the question we want to answer and what information do we have to answer it?

|                |                      | PYRAMID LAYER |           |               |          |        |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------|
|                |                      | MARKET        | PROSPECTS | APPS & ADMITS | ENROLLED | ALUMNI |
| EXTERNAL FOCUS | INDUSTRY             | 1             | 2         | 3             | 4        | 5      |
|                | TARGET MARKET        | 6             | 7         | 8             | 9        | 10     |
|                | COMPETITION          | 11            | 12        | 13            | 14       | 15     |
|                | PROFILE              | 16            | 17        | 18            | 19       | 20     |
|                | PERCEPTIONS          | 21            | 22        | 23            | 24       | 25     |
| INTERNAL FOCUS | STRENGTHS            | 26            | 27        | 28            | 29       | 30     |
|                | PERFORMANCE MEASURES | 31            | 32        | 33            | 34       | 35     |

DePaul's strategic enrollment management processes from above amalgamate into a list of questions that target a specific academic program. In Figure 2.10, DePaul investigates the Market Metrix of the computer science graduate market. Questions range from the highly external and market focused (What are the key trends in the CIS industry?) to the highly internal and institutional focused (What is our admission and conversion rate?).

Figure 6. DePaul University – Information Needs at the Intersection



### Pricing and Tuition Discounting

Allen and Shen (1999) created a simple enrollment demand model to investigate the price elasticity of demand for a private institution measured by the competitive threat of a similar private and/or public institution within the same region. Their model concluded that while the private comprehensive institutions were in direct competition with the other private institution, the public institution was not a factor. They also concluded that tuition price subsidies played a critical role in the enrollment management function at the institution.

Allen and Shen (1999) also revealed an interesting finding in their study that nicely dovetails with the concept of competitive advantage *between* institutions of higher education. They noted: “the implication is that one can strongly and adversely impact institutional income by raising the tuition price without an accompanying increase in scholarships and grants. Conversely, a vigorous development program to increase scholarship grants has the potential to positively impact student enrollments and raise institutional income significantly”(p. 460). Both analyses portray that tuition pricing and the subsequent strategy of the institution *pricing themselves with an eye on the competition* is an important element in the overall competitive strategy mix of that institution.

Curs and Singell (2002) focused their research on the difference in price elasticity between in and out-of-state students at the University of Oregon. Through their pricing model, they learned that “1% increase in price yields a 0.23% and 0.62% decrease in the respective probability of in-state and out-of-state applicants enrolling at the UO (p.117). Curs and Singell posited that out-of-state enrollees appear “to be relatively more price sensitive than their in-state counterparts, which likely indicates that they have relatively more alternatives” (p. 117). They further noted, “the results suggest that price discrimination can have adverse distributional effects because relatively poor in-state students tend to be less price sensitive than relatively well-to-do out-of-state students precisely because income limits their options. Thus the practice of enrollment management, although institutionally rational for budget-tight public universities, is likely to be inconsistent with the social objectives of higher education (Curs, Singell, p.

122, 2002).

## Section II– Market Orientation

The second major facet of this chapter highlights the concepts of market orientation and sustainable/strategic competitive advantage primarily emulating from the business literature. This research set is arguably more robust and practiced than the newly emerging higher education literature that reviews the notion of higher education as a market good and therefore serves as an excellent heuristic from which to extend that concept. According to Narver, Slater and MacLachlan (2003), “the *marketing concept* holds that the key to achieving organizational goals is to be more effective and efficient than competitors in identifying and in satisfying the needs of target markets” (p. 334). It is therefore not too inconceivable to use the for-profit business sector literature to compare public higher education, since as Kolter and Andreasen suggested, “in non-profit organizations the objective analogous to profitability is survival, which means earning revenues sufficient to cover long-run expenses and/or otherwise satisfying all key constituencies in the long run” (quoted in Narver & Slater, 1990, p. 22).

### Market Orientation – An Introduction

Narver and Slater’s (1990) research and initial exploratory study are premised on a long held idea (Kolter, 1984; Levitt, 1960; Webster, 1988) that “a business that increases its market orientation will improve its market performance” (p. 20). Yet until their seminal 1990 piece, no one had attempted to develop a valid measure of it or assessed its influence on business performance. Narver and Slater argued that “for an

organization to achieve consistently above normal market performance, it must create a sustainable competitive advantage (Aaker, 1989, Porter, 1985). That is, it must create sustainable superior value for its customers. The logic of sustainable competitive advantage is that for a buyer to purchase offering X, the buyer must perceive that the expected value to him of that offering (i.e. the proposed solution to his need) exceeds the expected value to him of any alternative solution” (p. 21).

They continued with: “a market orientated seller understands that, through the numerous means of creating additional benefits for buyers as well as the numerous types of reductions in the buyers’ total acquisition and use costs, there are many potential sources of sustainable competitive advantage (Aaker, 1988; Hall, 1980; Porter, 1985). Thus, a market-orientated business continuously examines these alternative sources of sustainable competitive advantage to see how it can be most effective in creating sustainable superior value for its present and future target buyers. To maximize its long run performance, the business knows it must build and maintain a long-run, mutually beneficial relationship with its buyers. Accordingly, a market-oriented seller decides how best to share with its buyers the superior value it creates for them” (Narver and Slater, 1990, p. 21).

#### Market Orientation Roots.

Through an extensive literature review and meta-analysis, Narver and Slater (1990) suggested the common threads towards a market orientation consists of three behavioral components: 1) customer orientation – the sufficient understanding of one’s target buyers to be able to create superior value for them continuously; 2) competitor

orientation – where a seller understands the short-term strengths and weaknesses and long-term capabilities and strategies of both the key current and the key potential competitors; and 3) interfunctional coordination – the coordinated utilization of company resources in creating superior value for target customers. The authors punctuated the importance of the third behavioral component with “given the multidimensional nature of creating superior value for customers, marketing’s inter-dependencies with other business functions must be systematically incorporated in a business’s marketing strategy....when there is no interfunctional coordination in a business, effective advocacy and leadership are needed to overcome each functional area’s isolation from the other functions. Achieving effective interfunctional coordination requires, among other things an alignment of the functional areas’ incentives and the creation of interfunctional dependency so that each area perceives its own advantage in operating closely with the others” (p. 22).

In addition, from their conceptual literature review, the authors noted two other important decision-making criteria for an organization to consider as it ponders its market orientation: “1) long term focus, and 2) profit objectivity” (Narver and Slater, 1990, p.22). In their respective literature reviews, Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990) found that profits were perceived as a component of market orientation; however, both sets of authors argued it is likely a consequence of market orientation. Further, they noted that the concept of *profitability* does not exclude not-for profit organizations, since *survival* is akin to “earning revenues sufficient to cover long-run

expenses and/or otherwise satisfying all key *constituencies* in the long run” (Narver and Slater, 1990, p. 22; Kotler and Andreasen, 1987; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

Narver and Slater’s (1990) findings indicated market orientation is an important determinant of profitability for commodity and non-commodity businesses (p. 32). They also noted that the concept of market orientation is one that is based upon a continuum, observing in their research that “the businesses having the highest degree of market orientation are associated with the highest profitability” (p. 33).

Similar to Narver and Slater’s 1990 seminal piece, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) were also credited with pioneering the concept of market orientation. Kohli and Jaworski, and later, Kohli, Jaworski and Kumar (1993), highlighted three “themes” or “pillars” emerging from the conceptual literature as commonly accepted market orientation concepts: 1) customer focus – including but not limited to market intelligence; 2) coordinated marketing – to include a concept broader than the work of a marketing department within an organization; and 3) profitability. The results of Kohli and Jaworski’s 1990 landmark study will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

#### Definitions of Market Orientation

A variety of definitions have been written to describe market orientation. Early and classic thoughts were explored by Felton (1959, p. 55) who suggested the marketing concept is “a corporate state of mind that insists on the integration and coordination of all the marketing functions which, in turn, are melded with all other corporate functions, for the basic purpose of producing maximum long-range corporate profits.” McNamara

(1972) posited a broader view by suggesting market orientation is “a philosophy of business management, based upon a company-wide acceptance of the need for customer orientation, profit orientation, and recognition of the important role of marketing in communicating the needs of the market to all major corporate departments” (p. 51).

Slater and Narver (2000) suggested “market orientation is the business culture that produces outstanding performance through its commitment to creating superior value for customers. The values and belief implicit in this culture encourage: 1) continuous cross-functional learning about customers’ expressed and latent needs and about competitors’ capabilities and strategies; and 2) cross-functionally coordinated action to create and exploit the learning.” (p. 69). Qu and Ennew (2005) presented a theoretical history of “market orientation” in a recent publication where they wrote “a central tenant of modern marketing science, the marketing concept (market orientation) is essentially a business philosophy, an ideal or a policy statement that prescribes that the key to affirm success is to understand and meet customers’ needs more effectively and efficiently than competitors” (p. 2). Kohli and Jaworski (1990) used the term “market orientation” to mean the implementation of the marketing concept. More specifically, they take an information processing perspective and define market orientation as “the organization wide *generation* of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, *dissemination* of the intelligence across the departments, and organization-wide *responsiveness* to it” (p. 6).”

Market orientation might also be defined by describing what it is not. Slater and Narver (2000) distinguished market orientation from entrepreneurialism by noting, “Where a market orientation is primarily concerned with learning from various forms of contact with customers and competitors in the market (Narver and Slater, 1990; Day, 1994a), entrepreneurship is primarily concerned with learning from experimentation (Dickson, 1992). Furthermore, an entrepreneurial orientation encompasses such values and behaviors as innovativeness, risk taking and competitive aggressiveness (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996).” To that end, Slater and Narver asserted that market orientation and entrepreneurial values should compliment each other.

#### Measures of Market Orientation

During the course of their study, Kohli, Jaworski and Kumar (1993) interviewed several managers or practitioners. They observed three basic components of market orientation that were occurring in the field: “1) intelligence generation - the collection and assessment of both customer needs/preferences and the forces that influence the development and refinement of those needs; 2) intelligence dissemination – refers to the process and extent of market information exchange within a given organization and should occur both formally and informally; and 3) responsiveness – the action taken in response to intelligence that is generated and disseminated” (Kohli, Jaworski & Kumar, 1993, p. 468). The result of their work produced a three part, thirty-two (32) item questionnaire intended to measure the market orientation of a strategic business unit. In order to capitalize on “goodness of fit” the researchers reduced the set to twenty questions (20) and were satisfied with the overall result. The instrument is now known as

the 20-item MARKOR (market orientation scale). A description of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

The applied value to this and other similar scales is that the measure “can be used to establish a baseline level of market orientation within a strategic business unit...equally important, charting the progress of *all* strategic business units within an organization would enable the organization to develop target market orientation levels that are feasible for the organization. Comparative measurements of this kind would allow the organization to isolate problem areas related to one or more components of market orientation and to address the deficiencies in future intervention efforts” (Kohli, Jaworski and Kumar, 1993, p. 475).

As previously mentioned, Narver and Slater (1990), soon followed with the first operational measure of market orientation and demonstrated a positive relationship between market orientation and business profitability. They continued with their research and in 2004 published an article titled “Responsive and Proactive Market Orientation” (Narver, Slater, and MacLachlan, 2004). In this piece, the authors suggested that past research attempted to chart the *responsive* market orientation (i.e. expressed needs of the consumer) but failed to develop the *proactive* market orientation concept (i.e. latent needs of the consumer). Porter (1998), too, reminded us of the importance of responding to the latent needs of the customer since price competition will emerge when there is no basis for meaningful differentiation of product (which may include differentiation from higher prices or lower costs). Therefore to avoid aggressive pricing competition, a business or provider should move beyond the customers expressed needs and explore the

customer's latent needs (Narver, Slater and MacLachlan, 2004). Hurley and Hult (1998) suggested that market orientation and innovation orientation should compliment one another.

To that end, Narver, Slater and MacLachlan demonstrated the following in their 2004 study: 1) to create and sustain new product success, a responsive market orientation is not sufficient; 2) “a business that relies solely on customers expressed needs to develop its new products creates no new insights into value adding opportunities for the customer and thereby creates little or no customer dependence and foundation for customer loyalty” (p. 334); and 3) it is possible to measure the effect of *proactive* market orientation on new product success and to confirm that there is a larger effect to new product success than a *responsive* market orientation.

#### Barriers to Developing Market Orientation

According to Narver, Slater and MacLachlan (2004), scholars generally agree that bureaucracy inhibits innovative behavior in large and complex organizations by encouraging standard operating procedures, centralized decision making and rigid structures. They also noted that innovative behavior is negatively impacted in bureaucratic organizations though emphasizing rigid rules, formal authority, limiting available information, and centralized decision making. Finally, due to the barriers of a rigid structure and lack of innovation, Narver, Slater and MacLachlan (2004) wrote that “the benefits of a proactive market orientation cannot be realized in a bureaucratic

organization” (p. 337), thus making it difficult to secure new product success in a highly competitive marketplace.

Large organizations, however, need not be labeled as bureaucratic, simply because of their size, indeed market orientation and innovation can complement each other regardless of size. (Hurley and Hult, 1998). Wal-Mart, for instance is noted for being highly innovative and focused on continuous improvement in terms of overall value delivered to the customer, supply and distribution chain, inventory control, etcetera (Narver, Slater and MacLachlan, 2004; PBS Documentary - *Is Wal-Mart good for America?*, 2004). As discussed previously, evidence of innovation and proactive market orientation is visible in DePaul University’s enrollment management organization in terms of targeting prospective students to fill an industry need and grow academic programs.

### Diffusion of Innovation

Everett Rogers (1983) developed a well-used and cited model from which to test the diffusion of innovation. Diffusion is operationally defined as “the process by which 1) an *innovation* 2) is *communicated* through certain *channels* 3) *over time* 4) among members of a *social system*” (p. 10). Rogers asserted that these elements are transferable to any campaign or program involving a new idea, product or service.

Next, Rogers (1983) outlined typical characteristics of innovations as perceived by individuals: 1) *relative advantage* – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes. Rogers noted, “it does not matter so much whether an

innovation has a great deal of *objective* advantage, what does matter is whether an individual perceives the innovation as advantageous” (p. 15). Weick (1979) supported this assertion by observing the perceptions of situations are typically the triggers of action; 2) *compatibility* – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adopters; 3) *complexity* – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use. Rogers asserted that new ideas that are simpler to comprehend will be adopted quicker than those innovations that are complex. 4) *trialability* - the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis. Rogers asserted that a new idea that is “testable” or that does not require initial permanent commitment will be adopted at a quicker rate than those innovations that cannot. 5) *observability* – the degree to which the results of an innovation are observable to others. Rogers posited that the easier it is for an individual to see the results of a new idea, the more likely it is that the new innovation will take hold.

Rogers then outlined the four major elements for a diffusion of an innovation to take hold: 1) *the innovation*- something (a product, service, idea, practice etc) must be new or perceived as new by the potential adopter; 2) *communication channels* – the process by which the potential adopter comes to understand the innovation, the degree of communication will range on the continuum from interpersonal to mass communication; 3) *Social System* - change or innovation occurs in the context of a social system, which is defined as a set of interrelated entities that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal. The social system typically consists of two types of

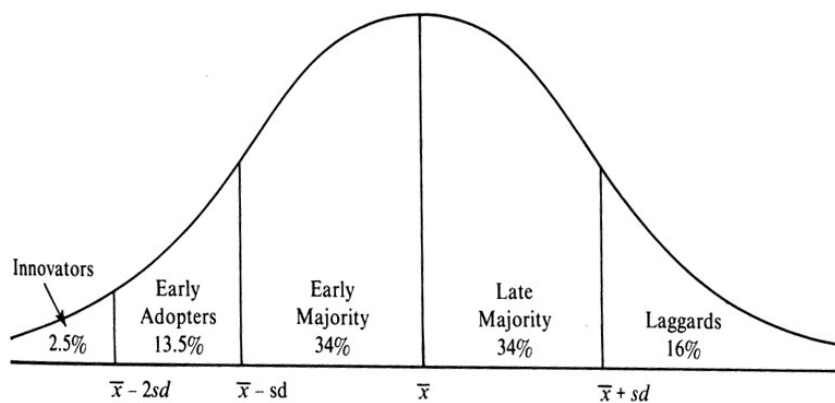
individuals that can assist with or detract from the adoption of the innovation. *Opinion leaders* are individuals who have the ability to set the tone and outlook of a group.

*Change agents* are individuals who seek to adopt the new innovation and typically are aided by opinion leaders to assist with driving the change. If change agents do not partner with opinion leaders, whether knowingly or unknowingly, the adoption of the innovation could be jeopardized since opinion leaders tend to drive overall perception; 4) *Time* – it will take time for an innovation to be adopted and can typically be charted with a process that includes: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. As evidenced in figure 2.7, rates of adoption can typically be charted using the following categories: 1) innovators (2.5% of population); 2) early adopters (13.5% of population); 3) early majority (34% of population); 4) late majority (34% of population); and finally 5) laggards (16% of population).

Figure 7. Adoption Curve for Diffusion of Innovation. Rogers (1983).

*Innovativeness and Adopter Categories*

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### Competition Theory

The concept of competition and competitive strategy is cited by, and is an integral part of, Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) definition of market orientation. Their definition is comprised of three behavior's: 1) customer orientation; 2) competitor orientation; 3) interfunctional coordination. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) noted that the competitive environment may moderate the performance or outcomes of the market orientation of an organization suggesting that in high demand instances, market orientation may not be as important of a goal as when demand is off-set by supply or choice.

Understanding how the concept of *competition* fits into the market orientation equation is important. As Narver and Slater (1994), noted, "in highly concentrated markets, the number of powerful competitors is relatively small. In a concentrated market, any of the leading competitors has the ability to alter significantly competitive intensity in the market. Increased intensity is reflected through tactics such as aggressive pricing, high-level of advertising, product introductions and adding services (Porter, 1980). Because of the substantial impact that any one leading competitor can have on competitive intensity, close competitor monitoring is essential" (p.49).

However, they continued with "in markets with numerous competitors, competitor monitoring is both more difficult and potentially less important. This is because no one competitor has the capacity or resources to alter substantially the balance of power among the sellers. In this environment, focusing on the buyer's values equations while staying abreast of competitive developments is the approach that is most likely to lead to success" (p. 49).

As organizations attempt to develop knowledge of and attempt to out-wit their competition, they must also recognize that their competition is likely pursuing the same in terms of intelligence gathering and therefore should be prepared for *competitor hostility*. According to Narver and Slater (1994) competitor hostility “involves the breadth and aggressiveness of competitive actions. A hostile environment is characterized by competitors who attack each other aggressively on numerous strategic dimensions” (p. 49). Conversely, “in a market in which the rules of competition are stable, a business that pays close attention to competitors costs and strategies can uncover competitive weaknesses that represent opportunities to develop competitive advantage” (p. 49).

Much has been written in the academic literature regarding competition, competitive strategy, and competitive advantage with respect to for-profit business. Michael Porter is perhaps the most recognized scholar in this subject area (1979, 1980, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1996, 2001). Porter, along with others, has written on the following topics: competition and strategy (Porter, 1979, 1996); how information gives you competitive strategy (Porter and Millar, 1985); endgame strategies for declining businesses (Harrigan and Porter, 1993); competitive advantage to corporate strategy (1987); clusters and competition: new agendas for companies, governments and institutions (1994, 1990, 1995, 1996); and the competitive advantage of nations (1990).

Porter defined *operational effectiveness* as “performing similar activities better than rivals perform them, operational effectiveness includes but is not limited to

efficiency” (1996, p. 40). Porter described *strategy* as “performing different activities from rivals or performing similar activities in different ways...competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value” (1996 p. 40 and 42).

Narver and Slater (1994) contributed to the competition literature set by juxtaposing the concepts of market orientation and the competitive environment. In their study, consisting of 81 strategic business units in a forestry products company and 38 strategic business units in a manufacturing company, they concluded that the competitive environment (not to be confused with a competitive orientation) does not have a “moderator role” on the market orientation performance relationship. They further suggested that “the market orientation benefits are long term though environmental conditions are often transient, and thus being market oriented is cost-effective in spite of any possible short-term moderating effects of the environment” (p. 46).

#### Market Orientation and the Learning Organization

Slater and Narver (1995) produced another thoughtful publication that underscores the importance of a market orientation to organizations. The authors suggested that an organization can not be “market oriented” unless it is committed to the principles of a learning organization. They, along with others (i.e. Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Huber, 1991; Simon, 1969), argued that “at its most basic level, organizational learning is the development of new knowledge or insights that have the potential to influence behaviors.... Presumably, learning facilitates behavior change that leads to improved

performance. All businesses competing in dynamic and turbulent environments must pursue the processes of learning behavior change and performance improvement” (p. 63-64).

Slater and Narver (1995) suggested that there are two types of organizational learning. The first, *adaptive learning* (Senge, 1990) or *single loop learning* (Argyris, 1977), is considered to be the most basic form of learning where the organization assumptions about the environment and itself reflect “core-rigidities” that inhibit innovation (Leonard-Barton, 1982). They noted “the resulting learning boundary constrains organization learning to the adaptive variety, which usually is sequential, incremental and focused on issues or opportunities that are within the traditional scope of the organization’s activities” (1995, p. 64).

*Generative learning* (Senge, 1990) or *double loop learning*, (Argyris, 1977), “occurs when the organization is willing to question long-held assumptions about its mission, customers, capabilities, or strategies. It requires the development of a new way of looking at the world based on an understanding of the systems and relationships that link key issues and events. *Systems thinking* disciplines the organization to focus on interrelationships and dynamic process of change rather than on linear cause-effect chains” (Slater and Narver, 1995, p. 64).

By way of example, Stalk (1988) noted, “some companies focused on systems of business practices and redefined the way their business was conducted, whereas others concentrated on making functions more efficient. The latter is characteristic of adaptive

learning and is typical of business with strong functional commitments that become core rigidities. Generative learning is frame breaking and more likely to lead competitive advantage than adaptive learning” (Slater & Narver, 1995, p. 64).

Slater and Narver (1995) continued by exploring the *process of learning* noting that organizational learning is a three stage process that includes: 1) *information acquisition* – where information may be gathered by direct experience, the experiences of others or organizational memory; 2) *information dissemination* – organizational learning is distinguished by personal learning due in part to this concept where information that is shared and more importantly used by members of the organization becomes increasingly more valuable since other members are able to provide feedback, ask questions and give new insights to the sender; and 3) *shared interpretation* – if organizational learning is to occur, an agreement or understanding of the meaning and implications of that information must occur (Sinkula, 1994).

An organization that can “learn” has accomplished an important feat, since as de Geus (1988) noted, “the ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage” (p. 71). To that end, a firm may achieve competitive advantage if the product or service: 1) provides superior value to customers; 2) is difficult to imitate; 3) is capable of multiple applications (Barney, 1991). *Organizational learning* assists an organization’s desire to establish competitive advantage because it “focuses on understanding and effectively satisfying their expressed and latent needs through new products, services and ways of doing business” (Day, 1994b; Dickson, 1992; Sinkula,

1994). Organizational learning “should lead directly to superior outcomes, such as greater new product success, superior customer retention, higher customer defined quality, and, ultimately superior growth and/or profitability” (Slater & Narver, 1995, p. 66).

### Section III: The Market Orientation of Higher Education

The premise of this section is centered on the concept that American higher education is changing as noted by scholars, journalists, analysts, and even documentary film makers. Those who suggested a noted shift (Newman, Courtier and Scurry, 2004; Bok, 2003; Clark, 1998; Kuh, 2003; Kirp, 2003), believe colleges and universities, public and private, are changing their orientation towards a market good. Their publications provide interesting assertions as to where they believe higher education is “going.” The titles of their work include *Higher Ed, Inc.* (Keller, 2003), *The University in a Corporate Culture* (Gould, 2003), *Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of American Higher Education* (Kirp, 2003), *Universities in the Marketplace* (Bok, 2003), *University, Inc.* (Washbourn, 2005), *Declining by Degrees* (Hersh and Merrow, 2005). The authors listed above have documented their assertions with compelling statistics, and insights from university administrators, researchers, analysts, politicians, and others. Their rhetoric, for the most part, suggested that the shift towards a market orientation in American higher education may not in fact be positive for the academy. Most of the above authors, however, do agree that a market orientation is likely inevitable given present-day funding structures (primarily lessening state support for public higher education).

Their arguments are a fundamental construct to this dissertation, since as Newman, Courtier, and Scurry (2004) noted: “the pressures of competition have led most institutions to an intense search for new revenue streams: higher tuition, the use of “enrollment management” to maximize tuition revenue, virtual programs, fundraising, corporate contracts, research grants...As the push for new revenue escalates, increasing the ratio of private revenues to public revenues, so does the pressure for greater autonomy from public control. More and more, public presidents have taken to arguing that their college or university is now a “state assisted,” rather than a “state,” institution.” ( p. 35).

#### Summary of Sections I and II as Related to a Market Orientation in Higher Education.

As posited in Section I, enrollment managers are asking varied questions requiring sophisticated analysis to assist in positioning the institution to recruit, retain, and graduate the types of students an institution wants and perhaps more importantly needs (Kalsbeek, 2005; Dennis, 1998; Penn, 1999; Dolence, 1997; Bean, 1990). In Section II, the concept of market orientation (which includes but is not limited to understanding a customer’s expressed and latent needs) was introduced as an important construct if an organization is to establish competitive advantage (Kohli and Jarowski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990, 1994, 1995). The importance of an organization’s ability to *diffuse innovation* and to master *continuous learning* in order to maximize competitive advantage was also reviewed (Narver and Slater, 1990; Rogers, 1983). Further, we learned that a competitive environment does not moderate the effectiveness of a market

orientation (Narver and Slater, 1994) but a heavily bureaucratic organization does (Narver, Slater and MacLachlan, 2004). Finally, new product success requires the organization pay attention to not only responsive market orientation principles (i.e. the customer's expressed need), but also proactive market orientation principles, (i.e. the customer's latent needs).

The contents of this next section will attempt to fuse: 1) the evolving field and practice of enrollment management; 2) the concept of market orientation from the scholarly business literature; and 3) the growing body of text (both scholarly and popular) that documents the shift of higher education evolving away from a public to a market good.

### Market Orientation and Higher Education

While there are literally hundreds of indicators and examples that represent the *commercialization* of higher education (Bok, 2003) or the shift towards becoming a *market good* (Newman, Courtier, and Scurry, 2004; Kirp, 2003; Gould, 2003), this section will target the *market good* concept to a discussion that is relevant to enrollment management practitioners. William Elliot, Carnegie Mellon's Vice President for Enrollment Management stated, "The objective of the enrollment process, (good-bye admissions director, hello corporate-speak), "is to improve your market position" (Kirp, 2003, p. 12). Kirp (2003) continued with,

in this new regime, the savvy customers and management consultants are royalty. Colleges improve their market fortunes with a variety of contrivances, including changing their names, and an otherwise little noticed news magazine, *U.S. News & World Report*, produces a statistically dubious ranking system that has

become higher education's *Michelin Guide*. All this behavior is consistent with what the model of rational economic behavior predicts. More information is becoming available; buyers and sellers are doing the best job they can to promote themselves; and money talks. But "the dangers," as Robert Reich wrote, "is that the increasing competition – to be selected and to be selective – will exacerbate the widening inequalities that are raising the stakes in the first place (p. 12).

Newman, Courtier and Scurry (2004) further noted, "for the last several years the system has been shifting steadily toward greater competition, marked by less market segmentation, more dependence on market forces and less dependence on regulations. Colleges have been using a variety of strategies to compete, some creative and benign, others shocking in their intensity" (p. 9). They contrast that concept with the higher education of the past, where the "competition has been muted, more benign than ferocious, more focused on prestige than quality or price. It has been restrained by tradition and governmental regulation" (p. 9).

In an earlier writing, Newman and Courtier (2001) do not totally disregard some of the benefits of a shift towards a market orientation. They noted "market forces can help higher education address its flaws (such as large classes, too much lecturing, too little faculty contact), keep costs down, and improve the quality and excitement of teaching" (p. 12). They also examined the pressures causing the shift to market orientation with the following paragraph:

What is causing the change? It is not due to a lack of students – more are applying to college than ever before. Nor is it a result of a lack of research dollars, for total grant funding has increased substantially. But while student numbers and dollars swell, competition and the search for new revenue sources are expanding faster. Gordon Winston has described

this new climate as an “arms race” in which institutions engage in a frantic and never ending search for better students, better faculty, winning athletic teams, more research funding, prestige, and – above all – the revenue to make these things possible (p. 12).

Regardless of the reasons or rationale, the prophecy/rhetoric of change and concept of market orientation is not new to individuals who studied and chronicled the history and trends in higher education. Thorstein Veblen in 1918 noted, “it’s one of the unwritten, and commonly unspoken commonplaces lying at the root of modern academic policy that the various universities are competitors for the traffic of merchantable instruction in much the same fashion as rival establishments in the retail trade compete for custom” (p. 27). Veblen (1957) continued his distaste of a market orientation in higher education with “the intrusion of business principles into the universities goes to weaken and retard the pursuit of learning, and therefore to defeat the ends for which a university is maintained” (p. 27).

Perhaps what has changed is the pervasiveness and diversification of commercialization of higher education. A recent *Chronicle of Higher Education Article*, titled “The Companies Colleges Keep”, illustrates the above assertion (Gose, 2005). The author noted “the nations’ most prestigious universities and many others in academe – increasingly contract out portions of their campus operations. The trend is being fueled by cutbacks in federal and state support of colleges by a growing consensus that colleges should focus on teaching and research, and by corporations that see an attractive market opportunity on the nation’s 3,500 campuses” (Gose, 2005, p.1). Gose continued “in many operations – including food service, bookstores, printing, vending, laundry, parking

and security – outsourcing has become relatively common. More than 1,400 college stores (the vast majority are bookstores) are run by outside companies, nearly twice as many as in 1992, according to the National Association of College Stores. And about 60 percent of the food and beverage sales on campuses in 2004 were handled by contract operations, according to the National Restaurant Association” (p. 1). Gose cited the University of Georgia Bookstore as an example, where after contracting with Follett, its net sales increased by nearly \$300,000 in a year-to-date comparison from 2003. He quoted the University of Georgia senior vice president for finance and administration with “we have one bookstore; Follett has hundreds. They have the marketing and purchasing power to make the bookstore a success here” (p. 2).

The City Colleges of Chicago initiated a bolder step in 2001 by “outsourcing its finance department to American Express Tax and Business Services, as part of a broad reorganization that also involved contracting out information technology and some building maintenance. American Express handles budgeting, financial reporting, general accounting, grants, accounts payable, purchasing, payroll and student aid for the college system. A company employee, Abe Eshkenazi, even serves as vice chancellor and chief financial officer of the system, participating in meetings involving the president and other top officials” (Gose, p. 6).

Gose also noted that some institutions truly want the best of both worlds by outsourcing their bookstore or other auxiliaries while still using their institutional brand. For instance, “the bookstore contractors at Harvard (Barnes & Noble) and Stanford

(Follett), meanwhile, have made their corporate presence largely invisible, since the universities themselves have greater name recognition than the companies. “The Stanford Bookstore – what better brand is there?” says Scott Deaton, executive vice-president for marketing at Follett. “In the eyes of the students, it’s just a better bookstore, they don’t know that we are involved at all”” (p.3).

The University of Phoenix is perhaps one of the most extreme and potentially profitable examples of the commercialization of higher education. With a net income of \$444,731,000 in 2005 and degree enrollments of over 300,000 students (Apollo Group Year End Report, 2005) it has penetrated the for-profit higher education market since their formulation in 1975. The University of Phoenix has campuses in 244 locations as well as on-line delivery (Apollo Group Year End Report, 2005, p. 10).

Indices of Change- Market Orientation in Higher Education. In light of the University of Phoenix, and other examples which will be explored in the remainder of this chapter, Newman, Courtier and Scurry noted, “there is a deeply held tendency within the academy to respond to these changes (a shift from a public good to a market good) by commenting that American higher education has always been competitive and not much has changed.” (p. 29). Newman, Courtier and Scurry believe the typical response of the higher education establishment under-represents three sign-posts of profound change uncovered during their four year research project:

“First, a large number of changes are happening at once, reinforcing the impact of each change: 1) public, private and for-profit

institutions alike are competing to attract students, in ways and with an intensity never seen before, using financial aid, advertising and campus amenities; 2) traditional universities are more focused on developing new revenues than ever before, including starting for-profit ventures that blur the once sacrosanct dividing line between for-profit and nonprofit; 3) there has been huge growth in the number of for-profit universities and colleges, the degrees they give and the acceptance of their degrees by students and employers; 4) thousands of virtual programs are growing rapidly, altering the way many students attend college and how classes are delivered as new forms emerge; 5) corporate universities and certificate programs are wide-spread, in some fields becoming the preparation preferred by employers; and 6) for the first time, higher education has gone global, even the degree structure of ancient European universities is changing to make them more competitive” ( p. 29).

They continue with:

Second, as more information becomes available – about what courses are available; how much students are learning; how much contact students have with the faculty; whether students are satisfied with a course, a program, or an institution – the workings of the market and the pressures of the competition will accelerate” (p. 30). Third and finally, they noted, “the interest of governments in encouraging the growing competition has begun creation of a huge market of public, private, for-profit; universities, colleges, technical institutes, corporate universities; online, traditional classroom, hybrid; domestic and foreign (Newman, Courtier & Scurry, 2004, p. 30).

Further included within the second indicator of change, Newman, Courtier and Scurry (2004) argued there are several quantifiable strategies that emerged as evidence of a market orientation in higher education. The authors noted many forces (some anticipated and some not) are converging to position the future of American Higher Education into a landscape that is both new and untested. They cited the following as evidence that higher education is shifting toward greater competition and more dependence on market forces and away from government regulation or influence:

- The emergence of new competition
  - o Financial aid as a competitive weapon
  - o Marketing to students
  - o Recruiting by amenities
  - o Climbing the ladder of prestige
  - o Chasing new sources of revenue
  - o Targeting the student as consumer
- The emergence of the “new providers”
- The use of technology in the classroom
- The globalization of higher education

Examples illustrating the above list include: 1) The University of Missouri – Columbia’s new rec center which includes a 50 meter pool, a 10 meter diving well, and a themed leisure area known as Tiger Grotto and Truman’s Pond. The complex includes a hearth fireplace, bubble pool, low-rise waterfall, plasma screens, steam room, sauna, deck overhangs and a lazy indoor river, palm trees and jungle-like qualities. The director of recreation services and facilities, Diane Dahlmann, admittedly took cues from *MTV Cribs*, and fantasy vacation destinations (Disney, Las Vegas, etc) to inspire a work-out room that looks like a nightclub, and to offer a place that provides facials, pedicures, manicures and massage services. The design of the structure was to “take students away from their hectic routines and into a relaxed state of mind” (Leisner, 2005); 2) In 2005, Emory University received \$525 million dollars in royalties for their role in developing an AIDS drug with two for-profit corporations. In response to the royalty announcement, president of the institution, James Wagner, said “these dividends will be plowed back into our mission of research and discovery for the benefit of our state, our nation and the world, in accordance with the priorities we have identified in our University-wide strategic plan” (Atlanta Business Chronicle, July 19, 2005); 3) In a report published by the U.S. Department of Education (Adelman, 2000) companies including Microsoft,

IBM, Novell and Cisco are creating a *parallel post-secondary universe* by either developing their own certification programs or partnering with postsecondary institutions, corporate universities, public agencies or IT vendors to train the personnel needed to operate their systems; 4) The University of Michigan has undergone a capital building campaign that includes new laboratories, student housing, health care facilities, academic buildings and athletic facilities. Of the \$1.7 billion price tag roughly \$15 million comes from taxpayer/state money, the remainder comes from private donations, investment income, and bonds (Gershman, 2005); 5) Students at Colby College in Maine taste and learn about wine and beer Friday evenings in the student cafeteria with the expressed intent of rounding-themselves-out as individuals (CNN.com, 2005); 6) Similar to some schools in the Colorado university system, the University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary and Virginia Tech are pursuing their charter status from the legislature in exchange for less financial support from the state. The change in status is expected to allow the institutions to have greater autonomy and self-reliance to raise their own funds and control their own destiny (Kinzie, 2005; Kirp, 2004); 7) According to The Princeton Review, NYU beat Harvard University for the second year in a row as the top “dream college.” Part of their success, according to a NYU spokesperson, is that “young people want to be in cities because they can do things in a city they can’t do in the wilderness...they can get a taste of what their career might be like, they can do interesting jobs as they go to school” (Bloomberg, 2005, p. 1). An NYU student quoted in the same article said “For my career and my social life, NYU was the best school....it has the best undergraduate business program, I wanted to be in the city and I like going to

bars and restaurants in Koreatown, Midtown and SoHo”; 8) Northeastern University is attempting to become more student friendly through the use of better web tools including on-line financial calculators, more staff and a newly renovated office that exudes “warmth” with violet and blue walls, chess games, Jenga blocks, and New York Times Crossword puzzles while next door the MIT financial aid director manages a student/parent question and answer blog writing humorous posts and answering questions from perspective students and their families at all times of the day and night (Jan, 2005).

The changes in higher education from above illustrated Newman and Courtier (2001) assertions: “the academic landscape is likely to become more complex, as each institution seeks to occupy a specific niche. The experience of the last half century, in which institutions competed largely with their “own-kind” and where each could count on a reasonably predictable cadre of applicants is breaking down. As a consequence, students who have a clear sense of their own needs, a growing interest in convenience and price, and a readiness to attend multiple institutions on the way to a degree have more choices” (p. 13).

#### Evidence of a Market Orientation in the Practice of Enrollment Management.

Kirp (2003) credited the practice of enrollment management for growing college enrollments 31% between 1979 and 1999, even though the number of high school graduates decreased from a generation earlier (p. 16). Kirp (2003) quoted the observation of noted marketer, Philip Kotler (1985), author of numerous marketing texts including *Strategic Marketing, for Educational Institutions*, “the

point is plain: enrollment management is just an application of general marketing principles to the specialized problem of attracting college students. The task is not very different from boosting tourism or increasing members in church congregations...explicitly and unapologetically, enrollment managers regard students as customers and see a college education as the product students consume. In marketing terms, their assignment is to advertise and recruit customers, to set a price for their product, and to make sure that the product matches the demand” (p. 16).

Kirp (2004) identified other areas where a nexus has been established between enrollment management and a market orientation. In these instances, institutions either independently or with a corporate partner, incorporated marketing fundamentals to stream-line for efficiency or better appeal to their target audience: 1) D.H. Dagley Associates acts as the admissions office, recruiting and admitting students for forty-six schools (Kirp, 2004, p. 113); 2) The University of Chicago was able to increase its applications by 22% with its revamped view book titled *Life of the Mind*. When the campus newspaper polled a sample group of students the following year, 88% indicated that *The Life of the Mind* was better than any other college view book they reviewed when selecting an institution (p. 18-19); 3) The California State University System offers an interactive financial aid calculator, a virtual tour of the system’s 22 campuses, and a spread sheet for making easy cross campus comparisons; 4) The University of Chicago’s vice president and associate dean of college enrollment, Michael Behnke, developed the “first mover” strategy, where in marketing circles, “the firm that gets the information in

to the hands of the consumer first...can define a product category as a whole and thus become the 'prototype' against which all later entrants are judged" (p. 18) In support of The University of Chicago's strategy, Kerin, Varadarajan and Peterson (1992) noted "consumption is a learning experience, follow-on brands may be compared with the pioneer brand to their disadvantage if the latter is perceived as a 'ideal.' As a result, the pioneer brand may be viewed as competitively distinct, and making competitive inroads would be come difficult for later entrants (p. 35).

New York University: A Case Study for Market Orientation. Perhaps the best example of Market Orientation in an institution of higher education rests in a later chapter of Kirp's book, *Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom Line*. He and co-author VanAntwerpen (2004) explored the relatively sudden rise in prestige, ranking, endowment, student quality, and faculty quality for New York University. Much of the strategy outlined in the chapter is attributable to the practice of enrollment management (although the authors do not specifically credit the enrollment management process).

The NYU recovery stage was set with "until recently it was a commuter school with little prestige and less money; in the mid-1970's it was teetering on the knife's edge of bankruptcy. But in a turnaround that would do any corporation proud, over the course of a single generation, NYU has become not only a real rival of Columbia's but a nationally renowned institution that now pitches itself as the "Global University." It has earned it's display of bravado, NYU is *the* success story in contemporary American higher education" (p. 66).

Van Antwerpen and Kirp posited NYU was able to change its fortune by engaging in less traditional methods. For instance “Beginning in the 1980’s NYU was able to raise money remarkably fast: \$2 billion in less than two decades. Rather than using that money to build its endowment, as universities typically do, it spent most of it on building and buying facilities and recruiting new faculty....to reverse its record of mediocrity, the administration decided that bringing in star professors was the essential first step. Attracting better students, like other beneficial changes, would naturally follow” (2004, p.66). Indeed the benefits did follow, “NYU invested heavily in dorms – 11,000 students live in university housing, and that made it easier to recruit students nationally. By 1995, nearly three-quarters of its students came from outside New York City, compared with just 18% a decade earlier, and undergraduates’ SAT scores had ascended into the 1300’s. Jay Oliva, who succeeded Brademas (former NYU president) in 1991 could honestly brag that “we have changed from a commuter school whose entrance requirements were in the medium range into a national university whose students come from all over the country and world” (p. 71).

Over time, NYU has been able to maintain its market position through both predictable and creative initiatives that include: 1) faculty housing – supplying better and more affordable housing in desirable locations to tip the scale against other institutions competing for top ranked faculty; 2) high faculty salary’s for academic “stars”; 3) monitoring and adjusting activity for news and academic rankings (i.e. US News & World Report, The Philosophical Gourmet, etc.); 4) recruiting top ranked graduate students; and 5) developing “the Enterprise” ethos – which in essence bred a culture to promote

academic excellence and intellectual commonwealth as a team, while never being content, never believing NYU was in its “golden age” (p.78-83).

### The Consumer's Expressed and Latent Needs

As revealed in the NYU case, recruiting through amenities is a relatively new phenomenon sited in the higher education literature that has grown both in volume and creativity as time has progressed. Newman, Couturier and Scurry (2004), wrote “universities and colleges compete as well by offering amenities seemingly far removed from the traditional college experience...here again, the problem is not with the concept of competing for students but with the priorities that resulted” (p. 13). Kirp's, 2003 list of amenities that universities provided to students reinforces Newman, et al.'s reality: 1) Michigan State students can watch big screen TV's while lounging in therapeutic bubble jets in their dorm; 2) DePauw University built a putting green and batting cages on campus; 3) St. Xavier University students can work out with a personal trainer and then eat a Krispy Kreme doughnut and drink a Starbucks coffee under the same fitness center roof; 4) Rochester Institute of Technology hosts the first college ESPN Zone where students can practice play-by-play telecasts at the broadcast desk; 5) University of Cincinnati has hired a master chef to create gourmet menus; 6) Georgia Tech hosts a green grocer in the residence halls; 7) Babson College boasts a juice bar, vegan, sushi and specialty coffee stations at their student union (Leonard, 2002).

### Financial Consideration of Market Orientation

In terms of the financial consideration of a market orientation, the literature appears to point towards two major reasons for moving in that direction: 1) generate additional revenue for the institution; and 2) provide services and amenities that will separate the institution from other competing institutions in the eyes of students, parents and industry. The next section highlights examples from the literature to illustrate two emerging objectives in higher education finance.

In an attempt to broaden their respective portfolio's, the Harvard and Wharton Schools of Business developed an Executive Business Program for retired NFL players. In a *Business Week On-Line* article, Gangemi (2005) noted, "Wharton and Harvard designed their programs to fit the unique needs of NFL football players. Harvard has developed an entrepreneurial management workshop, focusing on finance management, demystifying aspects of the tax code, and understanding business-related law. It places special emphasis on organizational design, as well as the creation of successful business plans" (p.1). In addition to generating additional revenue for the institution, the program creates publicity and networking opportunities for the institution.

Institutions (or schools within institutions) have found other ways to generate additional revenue through partnering with for-profit institutions to deliver course work that has already been established to a different market-share. Cardean University (formerly Unext.com), an accredited institution, delivers coursework on-line from the London School of Economics and Political Science, Columbia Business School, Stanford University, The University of Chicago School of Business, and Carnegie Mellon. The

cost of the program is \$1,995 for each three credit course culminating into a 36 credit MBA.

Goldstein (2005) nicely summarized the initiatives of Unext.com (now Cardean University) and others with “Columbia’s Fathom, NYU-online, UMUC online, e-Cornell, plus hybrids like Unext.com have become poster children for what some proclaim as a new institutional model. Borrowing pages from technology and health-care spinoffs, we now see brand-name, new-name and no-name campuses alike building for-profit enterprises to develop, market, distribute, and manage their online offerings” (2000, p. 25). Later in his missive, he noted: “the most basic explanation as to why an institution creates a for-profit entity for technology mediated learning is the ability to generate new capital. But why the need to go so unconventional a route when colleges have been so successful with the ‘earn, borrow and beg” approach for generations? Is there something about technology mediated learning that renders these time-honored techniques inadequate to the task?...the answer is yes” (p. 26). He then cited a paragraph from a Wall Street investment report:

Few sectors will be more profoundly affected by technological advancements, the digital revolution, and the explosive growth of the Internet than the large, growing, fragmented, and increasingly important education market. On its own, the education market offers a compelling investment opportunity; add technology to the mix and the investment case is even more exciting. The education market is an integral component of the US economic fabric that represents more than 9 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, second to only health care. The (entire US educational) industry encompasses more than 230,000 providers and 138 million students. Yet despite its colossal size, it is growing rapidly, 7 percent annually, adding \$150 billion since 1990. (Goldstein, p. 27).

Goldstein clarified the last statistic with: “while those huge numbers are for all of the education sector, pre-K through post-secondary, the post-secondary market is no slouch, with \$230 billion in annual expenditures, 15 million students, and 10,000 institutions, 3,700 of which are classified as “collegiate.” More important, from the perspective of financial attractiveness, is the enormous fragmentation of this market. According to First Union Securities report, “no college or college system enjoys even a 1 percent market share.” That is a textbook definition of a market abounding in opportunity” (Goldstein, p. 27).

As evidenced in the paragraph below, institutions of higher education appear to be establishing a market orientation through product or amenity offerings to distinguish themselves, or keep pace with their competition. According to a Chronicle of Higher Education article, this competitive orientation does not come without a price tag (Van Der Werf, 2002). Standard and Poor analyst, Joshua Stern, was quoted with “a lot of schools got into this arms, or facilities race...they needed a rec center because the school they compete with has a new one. Or they had to have a new dorm because the college they compete with had one. Now those buildings are done, and they have to pay for them. There’s a lot of colleges out there that before they can spend a dime, they have already committed 10 to 15 percent of their budget to debt service” (Van Der Werf, 2002).

Geiger (2004) too noted the pursuit of amenities: “most battles for prestige, financial well-being, and academic distinction are decided in the admissions process.

Factors bearing on the competitive position of a university assume much of their importance in relation to admissions. High on this list are student amenities, which ensure that students will enjoy a high level of comfort. Also prominent are extracurricular activities: gratification for the body, the spirit and also the mind...admission, amenities, activities, and academics thus are the chief arenas in which the competition for the hearts, minds, and tuition of students takes place...As competition intensified, public universities responded too, partly by becoming more like their private competitors and partly by seeking their own competitive advantage” (p. 116). Later in his chapter, Geiger noted, “food and shelter, the necessities of life, have become chips in the bidding for the favor of potential students. Perhaps nothing epitomizes the consumerism of this era more than the “arms race” over what students consume. While most of the increasing costs are passed through to student consumers, a portion of those expenses must be paid by institutions themselves as part of unmet financial need. A more direct financial burden to universities is the capital cost of erecting ever grander structures for the creature comforts of the young scholars. The escalation of expectations is particularly evident in student centers. As places for students to meet, eat, and procure essential services, centers perform a necessary function. However, a new standard has emerged for combining all these things in an architecturally imposing structure, often resembling a suburban mall not only in design but also in the availability of upscale shopping and choice of consumables. A similar story might be told about the escalating standards for recreational facilities” (p. 119).

Geiger also provided some interesting thoughts relevant to amenities and the residence life function at universities, by noting: “dormitories are perhaps the arena where universities feel the greatest pressure to keep pace in the amenities race....dorm rooms and food are even rated in the college guides. In addition, by fostering learning communities and sponsoring intellectual activities, the living units are intended to provide an additional dimension to learning. If any single factor epitomizes the transformation in student living style, it is dormitory food... to achieve a competitive advantage here requires some imagination. Cornell, for example, periodically flies in chefs from famous restaurants to prepare gourmet meals – a factor no doubt in winning a “best food” rating from Princeton Review” (p. 119).

He continued with “still, capital costs are paramount. Universities with insufficient dormitory space, the case for most urban schools, have felt compelled to build new, attractive residences. The historic dormitories of many older campuses need to be entirely retrofitted (as at Yale) to meet current standards. It is unlikely that these projects will cover their true economic costs through future revenues. The last boon in dormitory construction occurred in the 1960’s, propelled by very low-interest federal loans. In the current era, institutions would prefer to finance these projects through major gifts. However, there are opportunity costs to such an approach – the forgoing of other projects that such gifts might have funded. The importance of these investments to universities is derived chiefly from the competition for student favor (p. 120).

In a 2004 study, Morpew and Baker conducted a pecuniary analysis titled: *The Cost of Prestige: Do New Research I Universities Incur Higher Administrative Costs?* Their findings reveal mixed and somewhat unexpected results, noting rising Research I (Carnegie Extensive institutions) did not spend significantly more on institutional support than Research II (Carnegie Intensive) during the study period.

Given the increased reliance on student tuition dollars, many scholars are connecting the dots, suggesting that the customers/clients of higher education expect the amenities that the expense of their tuition dollars are demanding (Kirp, 2004; Geiger, 2004; Washburn 2005). Washburn quoted the former Vice Provost and Dean of Emory's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences with "now when you go and look at university business plans, as they are called, students are seen as clients, parents as customers...the question has now become 'What is going to sell?' As opposed to 'What is the right thing to teach?' Once things take on commercial, monetary value, the whole academic decision making structure becomes impacted" (p. 209). Washburn continues with "academic administrators have, indeed, embraced the language of the business world, referring to students as customers, and to courses as ideas and products, they strategize about the university's brand name and niche market, its competitive edge and pricing strategies" (p. 209).

### Review of Methodology

Qualitative research methods are "multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret,

phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studies use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). More specifically, grounded theory, as defined by Strauss & Corbin (1994), is a “general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed” (p. 273). Generalizations emerge out of the data themselves and not prior to data collection. Thus, the emergent theory is grounded in the current data collection and analysis efforts. Because the initial or emerging theory is always tested against data that is systematically collected, this approach to research has been called the *constant comparative method*” (Mertens, 1998, p. 171). This method “requires the researcher to constantly interact with the data, ask questions designed to generate theory and relate concepts’ (Mertens, 1998, p. 171).

### Chapter Summary

Literature from three distinct areas was discussed in this chapter: 1) enrollment management; 2) market orientation; 3) market oriented public higher education. Based upon a number of case studies represented in section three, it appears as though a shift has been made in the delivery of American public higher education in terms of customer expectations for amenities and institutional willingness (whether real or perceived) to meet the expectations and in some cases to drive the expectations of their “customer.” Given what some term to be an “amenities race” in higher education, this dissertation

attempted to determine the degree and strategy to which market orientation is occurring in American public higher education.

## CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

Introduction

There is limited evidence in the scholarly literature linking the practice of market orientation with the delivery of American public higher education. While many authors (Washburn, 2005; Newman, Couturier and Scurry, 2004; Kirp, 2004; Bok, 2003; Wolff and Bryan, 1999) have expressed their opinion that American higher education is moving toward a market orientation, few studies have been published citing the actual practice or success/failure of an institution(s) demonstrating market orientation qualities.

Conversely, however, many studies have been published citing the effects of practicing a market orientation in a traditional business environment in terms of profitability; market share, employee commitment; firm performance, the learning organization; etc. (Yoon and Lee , 2005; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Slater and Narver, 1995; Narver and Slater, 1990). This study employs the premise of Jaworski and Kohli (1990, 1993) and Slater and Narver (1990, 1995, 2004) to explore if the presence of market orientation exists in two selected public Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions (2005), and if it is present, the effect it has on the recruitment and retention of undergraduate students.

The purpose of this comparative case study was to determine if two selected public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions are utilizing market orientation practices

(Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Narver and Slater, 2000) as evidenced in their organizational culture, to enhance their undergraduate recruitment and retention strategies. While both universities were listed as Carnegie High Research Activity institutions, their similarity ends with that designation. University A is located in a large metropolitan area in the southern United States. University A was founded less than 50 years ago and is almost three times the size of University B, which was founded in the late 1800's on land from a former plantation.

### Research Questions

The methods used in this study were developed to answer the following research questions:

*RQ1:* What market orientation practices influence institutional recruitment and retention outcomes the most?

*RQ2:* What market orientation practices influence institutional recruitment and retention outcomes the least?

*RQ3:* How does the institutional culture promote or hinder a market orientation?

Similar research questions have been posed and studied in the academic business literature. They have not, however, received much consideration in the academic higher education literature. While many authors (Kirp, 2004; Newman, Courtier and Scurry, 2004; Washburn, 2005) have asserted the landscape of higher education is changing, they have not articulated if the changes (an apparent move to a market orientation) are reflective of better institutional or student success outcomes. Conversely, in the business

literature, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) argued that the impetus for businesses to move toward a market orientation should include better organizational profits and higher customer satisfaction. Few academicians who study higher education have identified how an institution can adjust its culture to be more “market oriented” with the intent of creating a better balance sheet and higher “customer” satisfaction. The increasing opinion-edit oral literature declaring higher education has become market oriented (Kirp, 2004; Bok, 2004; Newman, Courtier & Scurry, 2004; Washburn, 2005; Gieger, 2004 ) will be tested in this study by querying “if” and “how” this phenomena has occurred at two universities.

### Research Design

Selection of Participant Universities. The study was accomplished in two distinct steps reflecting two very different forms of research design due to the exploratory nature of the research questions and the comparative case study design of the dissertation. The first step was descriptive in design and used the 2007 US News & World Report College Rankings to select a participant group of institutions. In order for an institution to be considered for the study it had to be a public institution listed in either the first or the fourth tier of US News & World Report (one institution from each tier). 244 institutions met this criteria. Institutions ranked in tiers two and three from US News & World Report were not included in the study since the author selected case study methods and wanted the maximum dispersion possible between two institutions in the rankings.

Next, the researcher required the institutions to be part of the 2005 Carnegie Classification for “High Research Activity.” The researcher selected High Research

Activity (following the advice of committee members), because many of the institutions that comprised the Very High Research Activity classification had strong “brand name” recognition and were involved in other activities, which had the potential of casting doubt upon the efficacy of a market orientation in recruiting and retaining undergraduate students. Of the original 244 population group of institutions 76 met the criteria of Carnegie High Research Activity.

Then using the 2007 US News & World Report College Rankings, the researcher required the institutions to be located in middle of each tier (25-75 percentile) thus preventing the highest and/or the lowest performing institutions in each tier from being eligible from participating in the study. The highest and the lowest performing institutions were excluded from each tier because the researcher was concerned about the results being skewed by overly high or overly low performing institutions. Of the remaining 76 institutions, 17 met this criteria (four in tier one and thirteen in tier four).

Next, the institutions were considered for the study in relation to their geographic location (south eastern United States). Due to time and resources, it was necessary for the researcher to study institutions that were within a reasonable traveling distance but were not located within the same state. Institutions from the same state were not included to guard against any affect that might occur from: 1) reporting to the same governing/oversight board; or 2) the presence of state politics, state funding/mandates, etc. The researcher relied heavily on the professional network and relationships of a committee member who used his personal contacts to generate entrance into both

institutions to conduct the study. Finally, the researcher requested and received permission from both institutions to conduct the study by sending a letter detailing the purpose of the research (see addendum).

Comparative Case Study Design. The second step used was case study design and was completed by conducting on-site interviews of university administrators who by their titles were involved with various aspects of the enrollment management function (Dennis, 1998) of the institution. Data about the institutions were also collected through: 1) an examination of the web pages for both institutions; 2) conducting an on-site campus visit which allowed the researcher to experience the campus *in situ*; 3) reviewing news clippings; 4) reviewing institutional press releasing; 5) reviewing institutional promotional material (i.e. brochures, posters, video, and newsletters). Using this information, the researcher attempted to develop a theory around the use of market orientation research (Kohli and Jaworksi, 1990, 1993; and Narver and Slater, 1990, 1995, 2004) by extending market orientation theory (based upon scholarly business literature) to public universities.

Case study research methods were appropriate for the second step of the study since:

“it is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter... Researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studies use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and

problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2).

The researcher used interview, observation, historical information, visual texts (photographs and visual experiences gained while visiting the campus, and institutional rhetoric – primarily through institutional web pages, videos, brochures, and other publications) as part of the case study research.

Selection of Participants. The researcher requested interviews with individuals who met Dennis' (1998) criteria of individuals who participate in the enrollment management process. Titles of those interviewed (from both institutions) included but were not limited to: vice president for student success and development, director of admissions, chief public affairs officer and assistant to the president, director of first year advising, associate dean for undergraduate education, director of transfer initiatives, registrar, assistant director of financial aid, director of the sophomore center, senior analyst – office of institutional research, assistant to the president and associate provost for academic affairs, assistant vice president for student success, director of the career center, vice president of admissions, marketing and branding, dean of undergraduate education, etc. Only one individual (assistant vice president for admissions) declined an interview. In addition, individuals were also referred to the author through key campus contacts on both campuses, allowing the researcher to use his/her name to add credibility to the data collection process. Finally, other individuals agreed to participate in the study either because they were advised to by their supervisor or were referred to the researcher by a colleague.

### Instrumentation

#### Validity and Reliability

The interview protocol was created by the researcher through the modification of Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) 32 scaled item instrument designed to probe for the presence of a market orientation within organizations. The researcher used the following sub categories attributable to Jaworski and Kohli as a vehicle to examine the presence or absence of market orientation practices at the two institutions selected: intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination, response design, response implementation, top management emphasis, top management risk aversion, interdepartmental conflict, interdepartmental connectedness, formalization, centralization, reward system orientation, organizational commitment, esprit de corps, market turbulence, competitive intensity, technological turbulence, and overall performance. The reliability of the interview protocol was enhanced by using a model created by Jaworski and Kohli as they created, tested, and published a model that tested the market orientation practices of a business. To that end, their study can be used as a heuristic to study market orientation practices of public institutions of higher education. Further the methodological procedures (including interview protocol) were audited by an independent third party. The auditor (see auditor's letter in Appendix) reviewed the interview transcripts, coded test sheets, analysis, findings and conclusions and concluded the study conformed to accepted methodological standards, and the results and conclusions are a reflection of the data.

Interview questions were written using the market orientation model as a guide (Kolhi and Jaworski, 1990). Two types of questions were targeted in the interview script: 1) those that allowed the participant to elaborate through open-ended comments (i.e. *“How difficult is it to make a “new idea” that is believed to enhance student success happen on this campus?”*); and 2) forced choice questions that allowed the participant to answer with a relatively short response (i.e. *“On a scale from one to five with five equating to “strongly agree” please answer the following question: Several offices or departments on this campus meet regularly to discuss how well we are meeting our strategic goals in terms of student recruitment and retention”*).

A total of 15 sections (included in the Appendix) comprised the protocol (potential follow-up probes are included in each section). The first type of question allowed the participant to share their perspective and permitted the researcher to further explore or clarify the response with follow-up-probes which co-insides with the criteria of grounding theory (Glaser, 1965). The second type of question permitted the researcher to validate the position of the participant, and where necessary, use quantitative responses to triangulate findings (Golafshani, 2003).

Golafshani (2003) reminds us that “triangulation is typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings” (p. 603). Mathison (1998) bolsters the importance of triangulation by noting: “triangulation has risen an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation [in order to] control bias and establishing valid propositions because

traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology” (p. 13). Beyond the likert scale questions asked during the interview, triangulation occurred by reading and quoting from the institutional webpage, watching institutional videos, writing field notes and experiencing the campus environment ‘in situ,’ engaging in impromptu conversations with students and staff, taking a campus tour, reviewing photographs of the campus, and reviewing institutional history.

The use of the US News & World Report 2007 College Rankings provided a comprehensive and systematic tool for data collection/analysis. According to the US News & World Report website (2006), 94% of institutions surveyed participated. Data that was not provided by the institution was either estimated or gathered from other sources (American Association of University Professors, NCAA, National Center for Educational Statistics). The use of their rankings provides for strong internal validity controls, since there is relative uniformity in the collection of the data that has been refined over a period of 21 years. While the US News & World Report findings are controversial (Cronin, 2006) using the collected information in this study provided for a reasonable amount of external validity, since several variables (i.e. student retention, graduation, alumni giving, student-to-faculty ratio) could be replicated with similar results from other sources.

Thirteen of the eighteen interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist, three of the interviews were not transcribed because the participants were not comfortable with tape recording or the interviews occurred via telephone. The

remaining two interviews were not transcribed by the transcriptionist due to poor audio quality and were transcribed by the researcher. The researcher used field notes and the *in situ* experience to assist with understanding the content of the tapes with poor audio quality. The reliability of the data is enhanced through the interview transcriptions since according to Golafshani (2003), establishing good quality studies through reliability and validity in qualitative researcher is centered in trustworthiness of the data. In this instance, the credibility of data was enhanced through the transcription of the interviews by a professional transcriptionist.

### Piloting

In an effort to improve and validate the interview protocol, the researcher conducted three interviews with three different individuals who were involved in the enrollment management function at an institution that was included in the US News & World Report national university rankings but was not selected as a participant institution. In this instance, the researcher first interviewed the participants to evaluate interview flow, time, efficacy of the questions, and the general response of the participants. After the interview questions were asked, participants were asked to critique the questions/interview. The researcher modified the interview protocol based upon the feedback. For instance, questions that were redundant or were too technical were either removed or re-written. Further, the phrasing of the interview questions was “tightened” to improve interview flow. The researcher also carefully reviewed the websites of the two participant institutions to ensure the vernacular of interview questions did not deviate

from the organizational culture or “insider speak” of the institution or the reality of the participant.

### Data Collection Procedures

After identifying the two institutions through the methods described in the *population/subjects* section in this chapter, the institutions were contacted for their informed consent. Once a written agreement (see appendix) from an appropriate institutional designee was received the designee was requested to send an email of support for the study to his/her direct reports or colleagues who were asked to participate in the study. The researcher sent a follow up email with additional information (see appendix) detailing: 1) purpose of the study; 2) time-frame/location; and 3) researcher background/interest in the study. The researcher then set up one hour appointments with participants to meet in their office.

The protocol included: 1) a description of the study; 2) an explanation of informed consent; and 3) questions relevant to the market orientation and competitive strategy practices of the institution based upon the theory of Jaworski and Kohli (1990). Before the interview began, participants were asked to sign a letter of informed consent. The interview protocol consisted of both open-ended questions, encouraging the participant to share their perspectives, and closed-ended (ranking) to check the validity of the responses with those of other participants. In keeping with the interview protocol, the researcher, where necessary, deviated from the script to ask relevant follow-up questions. The interview protocol designed for this study allowed the researcher to query the

participant with follow-up questions and to deviate from the protocol script when necessary (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). For instance, if the participant was not familiar with the concept of student retention because the institution did not formally articulate that function, the researcher chose to elaborate or provide more information when querying the subject. When granted permission from the participant, interviews were tape recorded (fifteen of the eighteen interviews were tape recorded).

Qualitative data were coded and analyzed based upon the principles using a constant comparison method (Glaser, 1965). This method is a fitting model from which to classify data revealed during exploratory/grounded theory research, because the method is concerned with generating and plausibly suggesting many properties and hypotheses about a general phenomenon (Glaser, 1965), and will be described below.

#### Steps Comprising Glaser's Constant Comparison Methodology

Step One – Comparing Incidents Applicable to Each Category. Significant statements from participations were recorded in a excel spread sheet. A statement was deemed significant if: (1) a question was answered by the statement; (2) the information was relevant to the purpose of the study; and (3) the statement was an accurate assessment of the “situation” based upon the participant’s subjective reality. However statements that were speculative and represented another person’s subjective reality were not included. For instance, the statement “I don’t think my boss would want to dabble in that area, it just doesn’t seem like something like my Vice President would do...” was not included in the compilation of significant statements.

Information was coded by looking for both distinct similarities and differences to responses during each interview. The constant comparison method was adopted because it generates theoretical properties of each category as it emerges (Glaser, 1965). During this stage, an effort was made to ground the original categories in theory and not in subjective speculation or interpretation. This was done by comparing each statement with another statement in order to uncover unifying themes both within and between interview transcripts. The statements were assigned a “topic” or “word” that represented a theme, category, or concept. If the statement was complex or multifaceted, more than one “word” or “topic” could be assigned to the statement.

Step Two – Integrating Categories and Their Properties. Using the principles outlined by Glaser (1965), a shift was made during the sorting process to compare statements with properties from categories which emerged by previously comparing statement to statement. Initially, 23 categories were established from trends and themes that emerged as the statements were sorted. The original 23 categories included the following concepts, themes or events: 1) leadership; 2) communication; 3) institutional branding/slogan; 4) collaboration; 5) assessment; 6) intelligence – organizational/professional learning - reflection; 7) competition; 8) change; 9) innovation; 10) fiscal issues; 11) goals; 12) vision; 13) student retention; 14) student development; 15) history – reflections on the founder and his will; 16) institutional affinity; 17) organizational shift; 18) new leadership; 19) US News & World Report Rankings; 20) Future Focused; 21) Marketing – Messages; 22) Institutional Report Card; 23) Institutional DNA.

Step Three – Delimiting the theory. Glaser states that delimiting occurs at two levels: (1) the theory, and (2) the original list of categories proposed for coding (1965). First the theory was delimited by narrowing the focus of the study to components that comprised the research questions. Doing so insured that the categories defined during the previous two steps were parsimonious, clear and relevant to the narrowed theory. At this point the researcher ensured that the categories that emerged from the data were reflective of the research questions. To this end, one category (fiscal issues) was eliminated because compelling theoretical saturation had not occurred with this category. The remaining 22 categories were refined or combined to thirteen because the original groups were neither mutually exclusive nor collectively exhaustive and the researcher believed the categories were more meaningful and robust when combined. After reviewing the final 13 categories, it was apparent that theoretical saturation had occurred, in that no new categories or sub-categories emerged from the data (Glaser, 1965). The remaining 13 categories are: 1) leadership; 2) communication - collaboration; 3) assessment - intelligence; 4) strategy triangle – competition, change, innovation; 5) vision/goals; 6) student retention; 7) student development; 8) the common thread: history – institutional affinity - DNA; 9) president and board of trustees; 10) organizational change – turning point; 11) US News & World Report Rankings- Institutional Report Card; 12) Creative Initiatives; 13) Ambition for Tomorrow.

Step Four – Writing Theory. Using the aforementioned 13 categories a process ensued to write theory relevant to the components necessary to advance two models that

are presented in Chapter 5 (one for each participating institution). The theory will be developed and discussed in Chapter IV.

### Analysis

Using the categories generated from the constant comparison method described above, the results were compared against the institutional website and other relevant publications or institutional documents (including videos) to measure for consistency between what the participants said and what the institution's promoted. Triangulation further occurred through: 1) institutional documents provided by participants; 2) news clippings; 3) institutional press releases; 4) information gleaned while visiting the campus (i.e. campus tour, flyer and info in the Student Union Building, etc.); 5) information from other credible sources (National Center for Educational statistics; American Council on Education, US News & World Report College Rankings, etc); 6) conversations with students and other staff while visiting campus; 7) and observing institutional video posted on the web. The use of the ancillary sources listed above to triangulate the data fortified the validity of findings because the perceptions of the participants were checked with other sources.

Triangulation, as intended with the interview protocol, was not realized using likert scaled questions. In many instances participants would either not provide a specific number (on a scale from one to five) detailing their opinion, or the researcher failed to ask the question out of concern the richness of the participant's statements may have been jeopardized if the researcher interrupted the follow of recollection. In retrospect the

researcher would recommend providing the likert scale questions with a follow up questionnaire a week following the interview appointments.

### Summary

Using case study methods, three research questions were developed to uncover whether market orientation practices existed at two public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions, and if so, to what effect. Beyond Carnegie classification, the institutional profile of each university was different in terms of size, location (rural v urban), student demographic, institutional mission, and history. Interviews with participants from both institutions were conducted *in situ* and followed a 15 question interview protocol. Interview transcriptions were sorted and coded using Glaser's (1965) constant comparison method. Results were triangulated using information collected from the campus visit, campus website, press releases, newspaper clippings, and on-line video. Thirteen categories emerged from refining the data; the findings are presented in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

There is limited evidence in the scholarly literature linking the practice of market orientation with the delivery of American public higher education. While the higher education literature does document a shift in the way universities ‘do business,’ the literature typically does not, beyond editorial assertion, demonstrate if public higher education institutions are actually practicing a market orientation. Conversely, however, many studies have been published citing the effects of practicing a market orientation in a traditional business environment in terms of profitability, market share, employee commitment, firm performance, the “learning organization”, etc. (Yoon and Lee , 2005; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Slater and Narver, 1995; Narver and Slater, 1990).

The thrust of the study attempted to determine if two selected public Carnegie High Research institutions are utilizing market orientation practices (Kohli and Jaworksi, 1993; Narver and Slater, 2000) as evidenced in their organizational culture, to enhance their undergraduate recruitment and retention strategies. Given the state of the scholarly literature regarding higher education administration, it is important to know if enrollment management outcomes can be enhanced by through a market orientation strategy, or if as the majority of the literature seems to reflect, a shift towards a market orientation will degrade the institution and the learning outcomes for students.

The findings presented in this chapter reflected the realities of eighteen senior and mid-level administrators from two public Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions and the reality of the researcher while visiting the campuses and collecting data. For the purposes of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, the institutions will heretofore be referred to as “University A” and “University B.” While both universities demonstrated impressive or strong statistics in terms of: retention rates, enrollment growth, improvement in SAT scores, U.S. News & World Report Rankings, and other key performance indicators, the institutions were vastly different in terms of organizational culture, tradition, size, student profile, history, location, mission, athletic conference, etc. The dichotomy between institutional profiles presented an intriguing set of findings that will be presented in this chapter.

#### Data Collection and Analysis

Summary of the *In Situ* Experience. Once the two institutions were selected, and a senior level executive from each institution agreed to the study, the researcher followed the methods below for collecting the data. It should be noted that the researcher had surprisingly open access due in large part to the relationships that a member of the dissertation committee had with individuals at the two institutions. It would have been unlikely that the researcher would have received the level of access and candidness without this relationship. Further, many of the participants also asked how the researcher funded the trip (i.e. through institutional funding, grant, self-funded, etc.), and

the researcher advised the participants who asked that the expenses were self-funded. The researcher believes that disclosure allowed for open and honest access.

The researcher conducted on-site interviews at Universities A and B (two interviews were conducted by telephone the following week). The researcher spent three days at University A and two and-a-half days at University B. The *in situ* experience included but was not limited to: interviewing the participants, taking pictures of the campus, touring buildings/the campus, reading campus bulletin boards, eating on campus, partaking in casual conversations with students and staff. The researcher attempted to schedule an hour break between each interview in order to allow time to walk/drive between each interview and write field notes. Interviews were scheduled between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Beyond the *in situ* experience, the research extensively studied the institution's webpages, and watched videos about the campus both on the institutional website and through the medium of other web portal products.

The interviews occurred during the month of March, which in retrospect amounted to a good timeframe to conduct the study as the semester had begun, students were on campus, faculty/staff were not on vacation, and participants were generally willing to give of their time – only one person declined an interview. Approximately half of the interviews were one hour in length. Only two interviews were less than an hour, the remainder exceeded an hour with the longest interview continuing for two and half hours, including an impromptu mini campus tour to discuss the richness of the institution's history (including athletics) and a review of the retention data set for

“strategic groups” the institution had a vested interest to retain. All of the interviews were located in the participant’s office. Participants were provided an informed consent letter (Appendix E); all participants agreed to the study and signed the consent letter. Fifteen of the eighteen interviews were tape recorded. For those interviews that were not tape recorded extensive interview notes were written during and after the appointment; the participant’s responses represent paraphrases of the interview. In most instances, participants were asked a series of questions following a pre-tested interview protocol, however in some instances, where the participant reflected on a particular topic or area outside of the interview protocol (but was still relevant to the research questions or “rich” in content, the researcher choose to deviate from the interview script)

The participants had varied titles and responsibilities ranging from mid-level administrators (i.e. Director of the Sophomore Center, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, University Registrar, Career Center Director, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Director of Admissions, Director of Transfer Services, etc.) to senior/executive level administrators (i.e. Vice President of Student Success and Development, Vice President of Admissions, Marketing and Branding, Assistant to the President and Vice President for Institutional Research, Dean of Undergraduate Education, Chief Public Affairs Officer and Assistant to the President, etc).

The majority of the interviews adhered to the interview protocol, with the exception of two interviews (both deviated from the protocol). In the later instance, the participants (executive level administrators) answered the majority of the questions

following their own story line by relaying their personal/professional perspectives. In these two instances, the deviation in protocol likely enhanced the richness of the data, since the participants told their story and were surprisingly candid and open, becoming more so as the interviews progressed. Interruptions by the researcher seemed to negatively affect the richness in data, so the researcher decided to move away from a structured interview to more of a free-following conversation (both interviews extended beyond one-and-a-half hours).

Generally speaking, the participants appeared to enjoy relating their thoughts and opinions in the interviews; the interview protocol was not contentious in nature and the subject matter was not challenging to the participants. Only one participant appeared cautious, but still provided quality, rich data. Two interviews occurred because of referrals from participants. One participant walked the researcher “down the hall” to introduce the Dean of Undergraduate Education to schedule an interview. In another instance, a senior level executive called one of her reports into her office and suggested “it would be good if you could spend some time together to visit...” The majority of the participants invited continued participation if the researcher required additional information; further, many of the participants provided reports, papers presented, university brochures, posters, to support their assertions. Perhaps most unique, one senior level executive drew “University B’s DNA” and described the history, goals, vision, mission and organizational hierarchy through the DNA diagram.

Summary of Data Analysis. Data management and analysis was accomplished through the following multi-step process. Participants were interviewed by the researcher in their office (two of the interviews occurred by telephone since both participants were not on campus at the time of the visit). With the exception of three interviews, all participants agreed to tape recording the interview (extensive field notes were written during and after the interviews where tape recording was not permitted). The remaining fifteen interviews were tape recorded, thirteen of the eighteen interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. The remaining two interviews were transcribed by the researcher, due to poor sound quality on the tape or turning off the tape recorder because of unusual interviewing scenarios (participating in a campus tour, reviewing the institutional data set, reviewing the institutional web page), which made it difficult for the professional transcriptionist to understand. In total, 670 pages of interview transcriptions were produced between the professional transcriptionist and the author (see notarized affidavit – Appendix E). The content of the interviews were reviewed using Glaser's (1965) constant comparison method, where a four step process was employed to delimited the data with the attempt to ground theory. The data and findings were audited by a third party who endorsed the findings.

Triangulation. In addition to using Glaser's constant comparison method to analyze the interview data, other sources of information collected before, during and after the site visit were included in the study in an attempt to ground theory. Therefore, the research findings are based upon eighteen interviews from mid-level to senior officials employed at the institutions and are triangulated with: 1) "*in situ*" research notes

(including photographs); 2) web pages and other institutional publications/videos; 3) information shared by the participants or others who assisted with the process (i.e. administrative assistants, office staff, student employees, etc.) by sharing journal articles, data sets, etc.; 4) institutional press releases and news clippings; and 5) information from other credible sources (National Center for Educational Statistics; American Council on Education, US News & World Report College Rankings, etc).

This information was used to either corroborate the findings or to prompt the researcher to consider more information or be open to more options when attempting to de-limit data and extract findings from emerging themes from the interviews. Golafshani (2003) reminds us that “triangulation is typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings” (p. 603). Mathison (1998) bolsters the importance of triangulation with: “triangulation has risen an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation [in order to] control bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology (p. 13).

### Findings – University A

*“University A – Stands for Opportunity”*  
Institutional Slogan

#### Brief Institutional Profile

University A is a young, large and rapidly growing public institution in a major metropolitan area located in the southern United States. The institution first emerged as a technical commuter university in the 1960’s and by the early 1990’s transformed into a

predominately undergraduate institution, with some masters' and doctoral graduates. As a sign of continued growth, the institution will open a new medical college in 2009.

University A is not known for a strong intercollegiate athletics program, but is in the process of building a 45,000 seat football stadium and a 10,000 seat convocation center. Known as a non-residential campus, the institution has a housing portfolio of 5,191 beds, along with 3,756 beds in affiliated housing, and plans to add another 2,000 beds in the next three years. Considered an “access institution,” University A developed strong working relationships and clear transfer articulation agreements with 28 public community colleges in the state creating a pipeline from the enrollment of over 6,000 transfer students each year, in addition to the 4,100 freshman students. Beyond the main campus, University A also has 4 regional campuses located in the surrounding metropolitan area.

Table 4.1 University A – Performance Indicators

| Performance Indicator         | Institution A |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Enrollment – 2005             | 46,719        |
| Undergraduate                 | 35,545        |
| Masters                       | 5,639         |
| Doctoral                      | 1,535         |
| Freshman Retention – 2006     | 82%           |
| Graduation Rate – 2005        | 57%           |
| Acceptance Rate – 2005        | 62%           |
| Alumni Giving                 | 11%           |
| Founded                       | 1963          |
| Number of Colleges or Schools | 12 Colleges   |

Table 4.2 – University A –Financial Profile

| Budget Entity         |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Education & General   | \$397,816,231        |
| Auxiliary Enterprises | \$99,500,000         |
| Contracts & Grants    | \$128,000,000        |
| Local Funds           | \$310,550,035        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>\$926,866,266</b> |

Table 4.3 – University A – Freshman Class Profile

|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| First Time Applicants   | 18,887 |
| First Time Acceptances  | 8,729  |
| First Time Enrolled     | 4,133  |
| Average SAT Score       | 1201   |
| Average ACT Score       | 26     |
| Average High School GPA | 3.68   |

The following represents the themes that emerged from the data using Glaser's constant comparison method to delimit, sort and classify the data. Four themes emerged from the data and are discussed in detail below. The themes support the concepts of retention, student success and development which are fundamental to the culture at University A.

#### Leadership (Vision and Goals)

All of the participants spoke of leadership in their interviews; progressive, visionary, persistent, and enabling leadership seem to be part of the organizational culture at University A. Most of the individuals affirmed the role of the president in providing strong leadership (including vision and goals) in the institution's success of retaining

students. Others commented on how their immediate supervisor was supportive or a “visionary.” Only one participant demonstrated some frustration with the leadership of the institution, but even in frustration the individual was complementary of the achievements of the leadership and the difficulty in communicating to a large and complex organization.

Participant #2 spoke of the goals and vision of the President and how ideas that support the president’s vision are provided with a budget to execute the idea, program or services.

...but his goal is now – graduation, so everything we’re going to do with next year is all about graduation and if your office team can create a program or something that’s going to help with graduation then you’re going to get additional funding for that. So everything you know, obviously what – what the President wants to do, then we move forward with that at the same time because we’re always constantly evaluating, restructuring if we need to, to make that happen, to make the changes, so. It – I think it’s just because of how fast we’re growing you know, we try to make sure we’re doing what we do, but there’s always something new for us to have to do.

Participant #1 complimented a senior level executive with his ability to brand the institution using numerous methods and changing how others view the institution.

So I think it’s given a higher – maybe level of prestige to the University; not that it wasn’t there before, but I just think...I have just seen that – I mean that’s been relatively recently like the last year or so and I think primarily [Dr. H]. in his new role – he moved from being in charge of this division and if it weren’t for his role in that...kind of his branding of [University A] and all that kind of goes with that and I think it was – from brochures, to ads, TV ads, news print, so I would say, just kind of the, the – the re-packaging, the look, you know – the ‘[University A] Stands for Opportunity’; having that whole theme or I will use the word tag line. You know, so that to me

I think has really helped the image or how others see [University A], yeah, yeah.

Participant #3 was very direct and clear in her attribution of the role the President has played in University A's success.

Oh yeah, it feels like we're on fire...That's our leadership. I've been here thirteen years and it's always felt that way....it's not just now. This is a place that – our President who's been here fifteen years – he – he saw the potential to create a great institution. Umm, it's a young institution; it's only forty years old. We've got a lot of good examples of what is great. He recognized the particular place that we have in our region, umm...both – not just the city, but really an eleven-county region in the central part of [the state], which is the fastest growing part of [the state]. Umm, and he's been extremely deliberate in, uh, working towards the achievement of his five major goals...

Participant #4 combined the themes of collaboration and leadership into the following statement that demonstrates a senior level executive's vision in program development and enhancement, personnel, and collaboration. This quote also bolsters the section on collaboration, but the author decided to place the statement here, since concept of collaboration likely emerges from a leadership commitment.

I think – I think there is – I think there is a notion of collaboration here at this institution, that goes way beyond things that I've seen at other schools. The collaboration – first of all there is this incredible, powerful moment that Dr. E brings to Student Development/Enrollment Services. She – when she first came in '94 I was in the Registrar's Office and she and I had this conversation about the desperate need for advising for students, because there – there wasn't a – a well established advising structure at the university...There was departments advising, but there wasn't a collaborative effort across the university and I really think that she created that. She understood how to stand up for the average student.

She is Vice President – she has been very strategic about hiring administrators who were committed to working across the normal boundaries and creating a university-wide commitment to this academic success for students, as well as student success at Student Life, at Campus Life, and there are a couple of things that you can see immediately as you look at our history. One is the creation of the First Year Advising Unit...

While all of the participants were complimentary of the president and other senior level executives, one participant made an astute point noting how difficult it is for the leadership to communicate at University A due to the size of the institution:

Yes. I would – I would have to agree with that (that leaders communicate their vision goals and expectations). Um, and it's not just lip service. It's just that – the reason I'm – I'm hovering is the opportunity for hearing those leaders say so is so limited at this school. This place is so big, that there is no State of the University (address) that the President delivers to the campus. (Claps hands) And the opportunity for the vice presidents to be there – our vice president has over 600 people – 600 staff, in our division. My associate VP to whom I report, have over 100 staff that report to him.

Another senior level executive assessed the president with this statement, which appears to demonstrate a personal respect and appreciation for the president and the image he portrays.

the President is probably the brightest president in the state.... Uh, he has been here being president – he came in '92; I came in December of '93 so that's a long time for anybody to be president at one place.... Um I'm sure some days were better for him than other days, but he's handled himself I'd say probably like a gentleman and has carried off a pretty good image.

He also noted the president's ability to work with others outside of the university to develop partnerships in pursuit of the five presidential goals for the institution:

...but once he got into the community and he began to talk or react, or people began to know him and he began to push, push, push about this place called University A, uh partnerships clearly is one of our goals, but a lot of incredible things began to happen; people of industry and everything started looking at him and listening to him...

### Assessment - Intelligence

All of the participants spoke of the role assessment played in the organization.

This category also includes the sub-themes of *reflection* and *organizational/professional learning* which, based upon the context of the interview statements appear to fit well within this category. All the participants cited the role that that "institutional effectiveness" process plays within the internal the political and bureaucratic realities of the institution, and perhaps more importantly in how the institution develops its strategy.

For instance, Participant #1 stated:

"Being innovative and some of the program initiatives that we have done. I mean it's just like with anything, can you say that it's totally new? That no one's ever done anything like that before? I don't know in all cases you could say that, again, I go back to the idea that (University A) is very open to doing things and that they – you know, there's always that what I think is from Dr. P; "break it all down", and yeah, we're always looking, you know we're evaluating the whole institution of effectiveness, with this – not just give just lip service, but really looking, okay – if you're not doing good things then how can you do them better – more efficiently, are you really making an impact? And if not, this really – let's put some time and effort into having more of an impact."

Another participant described the emphasis of constant improvement at University A. She also required her staff to uncover methods to make the institution better:

“That’s what we do here, we are constantly improving, there is never a reason or a time not to improve, we are constantly, constantly, constantly evaluating and figuring out how we can be better...be better for the students and to make them more successful...that’s what I try to do with my staff, what I encourage them to work on being better, to make this place better, that’s what we do.”

Participant #3 suggested the ultimate role of institutional effectiveness is to impact student success – noting there is a tremendous amount of effort/workload to create the success. She then revealed the importance of openness to innovation at University A.

There is a – there is a deep level at which we all feel like we’re sharing this load – we’re sharing this life. And it is a huge workload. I don’t underestimate that in any way at all – it’s huge, but the goals are clear, because that’s the other part of what this institution says to us. We’re doing institutional effectiveness planning every year. Lay it out for us, what are you going to do and how is that going to impact student success? What are the learning objectives? And were you successful? Did it work? If not, change it. Tremendous amount of innovation with faculty. You never have to be stuck in doing something in – that could be improved or re-doubled. That – there’s a lot of – a lot of encouragement. We’ll try it – we’ll try it – we’ll try it!

Participant #2 described how the function of institutional effectiveness has evolved at University A, with its origins being bureaucratic and now transformed into a serious function and process at the institution.

I would say it was (assessment) bureaucratic – more bureaucratic at that point, but now it’s taken very seriously and looked very seriously upon. You – you need to know what you’re doing. Now if you don’t meet your goals okay, but you better show why you didn’t

meet it and you better try to measure it, and because that's what was used to get our accreditation and they – they saw that and they were amazed. That – that got us through because they were like, 'okay, you are actually doing what we – what a school should be doing', is measuring learning, learning, how slow is the student learning.

But not all agreed, with the usefulness of the formal roll of assessment at University A or the "internal effectiveness" review at the institution. Participant #5 shared the following sentiments:

It is meaningful sometimes. It is additional workload that – that creates some arbitrary numbers of a – of goals that we have to have. This past year I wanted just four goals, but I was required to have five because we had five last year. (Long Pause) It is helpful when – when I think the department can identify pieces to work on. There is time to reflect on the goals. There is time to see where the value comes in. But our target moves quickly here, and it's not cyclical according to an assessment schedule. It demands somewhat quicker response....

Participant #1, who was transferred out of one office to start a completely new office, reflected on how institutionalized the assessment function is at University A, by noting:

the whole – "IE", (Institutional Effectiveness). Very, very big part of what we do to the Assessment Office. It's yeah – just ongoing continuously continues improvement and it, you know evaluation improvement. So yeah, I don't know, I can't imagine we can do much more, I mean...it's a very, very vital piece of everything we do, on a consistent basis. It's not just like at the end of the year, 'Oh yeah, we need to do this to you know'; it's something that's very much ongoing throughout the year and so yeah, yeah, I think it is very strong....we have a meeting this, this Friday with a lady from our unit that's really – really big of this whole kind of developing your plan and your goals and objectives. Because this is a new office, we're kind of – in some ways kind of starting from scratch in a way; kind of

setting our IE information for like 2007 – ‘07/’08, so you know we’re meeting with her on Friday but as a whole staff.

He completed his comments with:

I mean I know from our area, it definitely goes – from us it goes certainly like to Ms. D , it would go to Dr. P, and you know it makes it way up to Dr. E and there are others that look at it, so no, I have no – no fear or – use the right word. I have no reason to think that it’s not being looked at very seriously and carefully.

Participant #6, a respected senior level executive at the institution and a well known scholar in the area of enrollment management and institutional branding, frames the concept of assessment with the following pragmatic example of using information from assessment to make significant changes at an institution that tied into the university’s strategy of improving recruitment and retention:

I wrote more than anybody I guess in the business during the mid to early 80’s on this topic and subject and um, continued thinking about the linkage between key – what I considered to be reasonably clear indices’ that you could leverage to increase the improvement in enrollment of your institution and obviously at that time one of the things was to better your recruitment but another thing was what are you going to do to get there in retention? And there were a lot of other things that impact that – what are we going to study? What are we going to major? Etcetera And so at University X during my tenure there which was nine years, from ’75 to ’84; taking again the marketing and looking at things, uh and I began to look at the majors that students were choosing around the country and uh, it was interesting to note that the major listed the most was undecided. So I took that and immediately created a program and we marketed it like it was an accounting program or a history major or whatever and we called it the Academic Exploration Program...well that way it was clearly a program, it was advertised as a program and it became quite attractive to students and parents from anywhere....

Assessment at the institution is highly technical, strategic, and includes a feedback loop, as one of the mid-level administrators and “data crunchers” indicated with this statement:

We'll run the data, um – the analysis hopefully at the end of this month, first part of April and we will give the – the advising folks the names of the thousand most ‘at risk’ students, based on this data mining project and then they will do what they call a night success program and try to bring in about 500 of those students for intervention.

He continues later in the interview describing the depth and technique of University A’s data mining protocol and results of monitoring student progression through graduation:

We look at, uh –uh, we look at everything. I can tell you the retention rate of students – freshmen students in a particular hall, in a particular resident, uh I can tell you whether they live on and off or off campus; whether they live off campus at an affiliated housing. We look at GPS, we look at test scores, we look at what high school they came from, what area of the state they came from and so we know that there are certain, certain factors that historically have – have popped up on the screen and said, these are ‘at risk’ students. And for instance – don’t know why, but students that live off campus are at risk. Freshmen – uh – their retention rate’s much higher. Um, and what’s amazing that I was just starting to realize, it’s much higher than the graduation rate, which is kind of interesting because we know that the student doesn’t stay on this campus for four year, so just the mere fact that they spent their first semester – that’s all we can get - all we know is that the first semester they lived on campus. Their – their graduation rate is significantly higher than off campus students.

### Collaboration - Communication

A third theme that emerged from the interviews and review of University A's webpage revealed there was a high level of collaboration and communication between different departments and offices at the university (particularly within the division charged with student success, development and retention), or a common understanding of the university's goal to enhance student retention. Only one participant demonstrated some frustration with the top-down approach to communication indicating some of the initiatives were more "forced" than collaborative, but that participant also provided examples of collaborations that were successful outside of his office and spoke highly of the retention rate. Most of the participants portrayed an image of "selflessness," as though their work and career was not about "them" but rather the success of the institution and student success in general. Further most of the participants also spoke of working together.

Participant #3 discussed the role that opportunity plays with collaboration at University A and the goal of student success.

I – I think we're not – I think as a group we're not competitive with each other as much as complimentary and supportive. And I mean I feel very fortunate to be here. Umm, because the opportunities are truly endless, I mean it's – it's – at first it's this umm statement seemed simplistic, and yet we use – it's so easy to use it in everything that we do....And meaningful, yeah right, right, so umm, yeah oppor – the opportunity to continue to find ways to enhance this experience and make, and encourage and seeing more students becoming successful. It's still something that really motivates us.

Participant #2 spoke about collaboration with other departments as it related to advising, which is a hallmark program at University A in terms of increasing the overall freshman retention rate at the institution.

We've really changed our whole focus on our first year advising and done a lot more outreach into the communities versus students just coming here. They go to the union first (inaudible), they go to, um all of the on-campus housing communities and off-campus apartments and do outreach now for the past three years have really been going out to the students and trying to outreach to them, so that's had a big impact on them.

Another participant talked about how she collaborates and communicates with colleagues from various areas of the campus (and on off campus partnerships) in pursuit of the ultimate goal of student success:

– we're getting these students in but we're getting them in so late, look, look, they're flunking out after two semesters.' So let's – I mean, these kinds of – and as I suggested the Academic Advising Council, that university-wide does this collaborative coordinated effort to be sure that we're providing the best services we know. You know we're not duplicating, we're sharing resources, but the responsibilities where they overlap, we're working together. We've got a transition program now that's taking our freshmen, new Sophomore Center, so we're going to work with taking those freshmen out of their freshmen year with this intensive advising and they're not quite ready to come into the colleges over here, so we've got a transition program – we're going to bring these two together so that students have this kind of better bridge, better pathway to their academic majors. Um, we do – we do a significant amount of – we haven't in the last two years – of bringing – we have brought faculty from the community colleges to meet with faculty by discipline here at the university, to work out – like we have a math and science one three years ago, where students were coming in quite well prepared enough, so we bring in chairs from the departments and chairs from the departments and we work together to see if we can't figure out what we're doing that the students are better prepared, so that when they get here, they're ready to move on. And this kind of institutional

framework. They don't always last for years and years and years, but sometimes they morph into other things.

At times too, the concepts of assessment, collaboration, and communication were fused together, with the following statement from

Participant #3:

but the – the way we do it here at University A, is we – we talk about it, we meet with people, uh, we use data to show trends and I think that's why we now have a strong professional advising program everywhere...

Later, using an example of “forced collaboration,” participant #3 shares an example of how she combined assessment data with political fortitude to describe a tough situation that eventually bolstered the retention program at the institution.

And I – I – they – they questioned – they didn't think they really – that it was a problem and I showed the data and it was clearly a problem.....Well and then, I said, “Well if we can't find more seats, I'm just not going to give them those classes.” And I remember the Chair of the Department saying, “Well how can you do that?” I said, “Well, I think I can.” And I did. And so we had more seats. Which was another – another way that we developed a retention program. We now really manage our seats, because we need so many English and we need so – we know – we have a history of what people need. We want to balance large classes and small classes and if we don't save those seats, they're gone and so our freshmen are starting out at a disadvantage.

Participant #2 provided an ultraistic example of collaboration involving a relationship between his department and an academic college:

I know that through our Summer Bridge Programs, which is our – we have a – well, we actually have a new strategy that was – two things that happened is – we have a Step Program. I'm not sure

exactly what it stands for but it's run through the College of Education and so they – for two years now they've been targeting students, um who may be provisionally, provisionally admitted, it helps them to see the college, but to get them to benefit from getting into the College of Education and they set up a coordinator in there and exercises to help them, then recruit them for here and then to keep them as educators within Florida at the same time.

Participant #1 spoke of his role and philosophy in collaborating and communicating with students to meet their needs and demands to ensure their success which also means working with the colleges, even if at times that relationship is not perfect:

Among other things, what I want them office staff and student peers to do is to be more connecting with students – student to student. To kind of get the 'what are your needs?' Why, you know – 'Are we offering what you would like us to offer?'

He later continues with:

You know, all of this is connection and collaboration with the colleges and I know it's a big issue with trying to make sure students are able to get the courses that they need. I think the whole advising teams – again, that's our level of collaboration that we do with the colleges and making sure, and if we're only good as giving information to the students as we get it and that's always – it's a continual collaboration effort, which normally kind of eliminates from us, a lot of times, to communicate with the colleges and not that it's not a two-way street but you know, that hey you know, we're working with these students whether you know they're a first year Freshmen that are a business major or engineering, what have you. My focus with the Sophomores, primarily with the declared of course they have no college to go to if they don't have a major yet, but I have to be aware, up to date on all of the college requirements, because our goal is to get them into a major.

### Strategy Triangle (Innovation, Change, Competition)

This section is comprised of three sub-themes emerging from the participant's comments and has been titled "strategy triangle," because the participants seemed to be tactical and mindful of strategy and used the three concepts/tactics interchangeably to achieve the desired result of improved retention. The majority of the participants did not appear to be constrained by status quo or an institutional bureaucracy; rather, they appeared enabled by the opportunity to innovate, change or provide a set of services that were as good or better than their competition (from their perspective) or better than what they are currently providing (internal competition).

The findings assumed the following definitions specific to this study and University A:

Innovation – the idea or concept, something that deviates from the status quo or a traditional response to a problem or issue at the institution.

Change- the act or action of incorporating the innovation (or the idea) into the practice or culture of the institution.

Compete – an organizational ethos that manifests itself as a tactic or reaction from University A in response to an institution, industry or concept with the intended effort of "being better than" or "at par with" the opposing institution, industry or concept. The term *compete* also includes the organizational ethos of internal competition, or becoming better as an institution, division or office when compared to a previous period of time or situation.

During the sorting process, the sub-themes originally stood independent, however after much review the researcher decided to create one category, since the “themes” appeared to work in concert at University A and are not necessarily mutual exclusive concepts. The “strategy triangle” emerged because the three concepts appear to be linked closely together with the same tension and support required to create an equilateral triangle. The concepts are closely tied together, but at the same time play a distinct role within the organization. When participant’s spoke of innovation at the institution often times they linked that concept to a strategy. When others spoke of competition, they spoke of their innovations (how they have risen to be one of the better institutions in the state because of their good ideas or programs made a difference).

Innovation, change, and competition are housed under the strategy due in large part to the statements from a senior level executive who shaped much of the division. He believes higher education is a commodity, and as such, require an appropriate marketing strategy that allow University A to differentiate themselves from other institutions. He begins with:

...differentiation is – is a – difficult. Because I believe in higher education we are dealing in a more and more in a-commodity market place. And if you’re in a commodity market place and most of the universities have the same programs, same services that everybody carries. Small classes, uh great location, new buildings, nice rec. center, uh and it – the movement is they’re really moving on price or convenience, then it becomes a little difficult at times to differentiate yourself. You really got to think about it and work hard to do it.

He continues by outlining a strategy for differentiation, comprised of three points: 1) research, 2) communication and 3) relationships – with key effecting agents.

Um, marketing is absolutely essential with differentiation; it's kind of – they're closely tied. Uh – I think it's absolutely important, but I think sometimes people in the undergraduate or the graduate whatever – wherever they may be; the admissions operation are so caught up by the trees that they don't see the forest. They just don't want to take the time to do the research that might give them a better idea of where they should be going and what they should be doing and crafting their messages that frankly some people may want to hear. I have said this in a lot of presentations I've made around the country, that this is a commodity we provide here and it's very difficult to differentiate and such with this sort of thing then it might be – three points on this (first point is research). Uh, the second point – let's see this is people say – uh the second point is uh – if – this is the environment in which we're in now then the second point is uh – um – the importance of communication, which you say – what it looks like, what you're projecting and the other one is relationships. Yeah – now these two right here, communications – how you define your communications – do your communications snappy? What does it look like? You know, do people understand it? Is it attractive? You know, a lot of times these days words aren't as supportive as what the image looks like. So if we're in a commodity, and if everybody's trying to differentiate themselves, etcetera, communications and relationships that you build are absolutely essential. The relationships could be with key affecting agents. The relations could be with your own students. Uh, the relations could be, although I don't think you have to do a lot about this, I've never had to prove it many, many times – some of these key affecting agents might be college advisors. Okay you know if you think you can succeed in that, but and sometimes you can. Sometimes you can't but it's still wonderful to have good relationships. They're not going to I don't think win the day for you, but at the very worst they can at least not be negative about you. Then there's one thing I always come back and say. When you think about it, we – we go through these years; we see all this going on then maybe the most valuable lesson of all of this is that it's really not what we say about our institution, it's what the people who go here and graduate say.

In another example, change, innovation, and the desire to be competitive were rewarded at University A. Note how the participant makes a clear distinction between innovation (the idea) and change (the action to make the idea happen):

We used to say all the time, I mean – the – one – part of the controversy was, well why are we getting all this money? Which is a – a perception that people have and yet it really – we didn't really get all this money, we came up with ideas, we got support for those ideas, and we combined things. You know, changed directions of certain things. But, I would say – I kept saying, well I can't – I'm going to go forward when I have the resources to go forward.

The participant, who is responsible for a program that affects 6,000 students annually, continued with the following statement:

Um, I am more of a bureaucrat than a visionary. I'm much more of an implementer than a designer of the new, but for us, innovation is connected to how – how we can assist students. How we can create convoys for students. How we can provide better services for students. How we, in our small arena, can, um, improve what we do for students.

Participant #7, a senior level administrator provided the following example of innovation and willingness to morph and change in order to innovate:

We innovate here, we are constantly looking for the next best or good idea. I don't care if we take it from another institution or organization, stealing is fine with me, but the goal is to always be ahead, always in front.... A while back we were thinking about where are students and how can we better advise them, how can we find students to advise them? Someone came up with the idea that students wait at bus stops...that's where they are...that's a place we could connect with them while they are waiting...they could ask an advisor any question that they wanted....so we decided to do bus stop advising....for real....it's worked and I think it says to students, "hey, we are committed to your success, we'll do anything to make sure you graduate, that you are successful"....

He also noted:

If we don't like something we change it, we change to improve, we change because someone learned of something that is better than what we are doing....we are constantly wanting to improve to make it

better for students, to improve our institutional effectiveness. I don't think too many of us are afraid of change, if they are they typically don't last long....or they change! Um, we change things a lot, and sometimes that is tough to, because when it comes to measuring our success we've lost our baseline, but, we'd rather change than wait to find that we should have changed and missed an opportunity.

Participant #10, an associate dean spoke of how she changed a class assignment to enhance student learning:

I asked my class to write on a disease --I assigned them a disease-- and wanted them to write about what is going on with the disease from a scientific stand point. Most of the papers were terrible. Just terrible...really, really discouraging. But about 10% of the papers were really good...and I remember visiting with a student and asking her why her paper was so good, so well written, so well researched. And I learned a member of her family had this disease, and researching it, understanding it was important to her...and then suddenly, it was like a light bulb went off for me,...the rest of the students couldn't care less about the disease that I assigned them, so they didn't care -- they didn't learn. So the next time I assigned the project, I let the student's pick their disease...the papers were much better because they would write about something meaningful to them.... I use this example when I visit with faculty...when I try to encourage them to think about innovation in teaching.

Another participant spoke of a significant change, and the iterative process of continued change, for an office's orientation presentation to better maintain the interest of students:

We just recently modified our orientation presentation to include multi-media of film segments, with cartoon characters, to keep the attention level of the student who is media-driven these days, as opposed to simply a talking head (inaudible). My trainer on board, who does the presentation and support staff within the office who saw the need, given the support, given the funding internally and they took it. We're now at a point where, uh, we're probably in version 4. We

have incorporated feedback from the staff who've reviewed the video, given feedback, honing it and then now we're at the point of section 5 and await compliance.

Participant #1 spoke of how he wanted to innovate (in an office that had a new function on campus), the office and its purpose didn't exist a year ago. The participant used Athletics at University A as a model to underscore his example.

...we want things you know...whatever we can do to make things more you know, more accessible and more exciting for someone to look at. You know that can only help. And again, what would make sense – it's something that's not just you know...you want to have some flash and you want to have some different things for students, whatever's kind of exciting. I mean I see that with the Athletics website and they've made a lot of changes to it. Got a lot of good innovations – you know someone will write in and say, "I don't like this..." I guess someone's...you know, you're never going to satisfy everybody... "Why didn't you do this?" "Why didn't you...?" Now we have a web-cam to our new football stadium...showing as the stadium is being built. Well, someone wrote in and said, "Why don't you have a web-cam showing...?" You know, so...maybe they already had the idea to do it anyways; maybe not, just someone took that as kind of a you know, a – a suggestion and so that – and they did it. And so that's what I want to do as well with our Sophomore Website, that we can get a point in (inaudible), you know give us suggestions, what...you know, what do you think of our website? Did you not find certain information you were looking for? Well it may turn out that we have the information there but they couldn't find it. Well yeah – or maybe we didn't have the information. It's like yeah, we need to – we need to add this in, so as we get our student peers and our advisory council together. Because I want them to feel some ownership in what we're doing in a lot of these areas, so...there's some things, which I kind of held back on a little bit because I kind of want to get some other inputs.

Another participant spoke of how they changed the process of advising students at orientation, which from a meta-analysis standpoint, the change is a fairly dramatic

innovation (i.e. revamp the advising and registration process at a large institution) while the change was controversial, the “change agents” communicated with the campus community (in a political, persuasive, and informational sense). Also in this example, the participant detailed how the organization began using information to make decisions.

Custom is – the way students selected courses were – was ridiculous, in fact we never did it again, because it was sort of like you tell students to put down their ideal schedule. You put it like into a hat and then over lunch advisors would register people and of course most of the people did not get what they needed and so it was a very negative experience and it took us a long time to really fix that and we were – underwent quite a transition in terms of our registration system anyway, but we weren’t using any information on students. You know, we were just looking at here’s the – here’s what you need, not here’s what you – you might be good at, or might be – so we changed the way we did advising. And again that was somewhat controversial, but we just – I – I just worked with people to help them understand it and I just – I could show through the data that it was working.

Innovation or creative activity at the institution can extend beyond the student body, in this example the innovation targeted parents:

Well I think from our office specifically the thing that we just started last year was a bilingual program of Spanish for our Hispanic family members....its not for Spanish students themselves...but for parents... but by making this program available I – we feel that it is going to help parents – especially parents that only speak Spanish to understand that there are resources here for their students and we are targeting students from [a southern region in the state], so hopefully that will encourage more Hispanic students to come, as we want to try to increase our minority population....

Another example of an innovative idea and featured on University A's web page and discussed by many of the participants is the LINK program. This incentive program for freshman is equivalent to an airline frequent flyer program, where the students are encouraged to attend events on campus (i.e. residence hall programs, advising activities, club and organizational presentations, etc). Students "swipe their campus card" at each event to earn points for attending. At the end of the semester, the university hosts an auction where students can bid on items, using their points, which are as varied as free t-shirts, to laptops, and free tuition. One participant noted:

It's a program and I think about it's fourth year, um...but it was started through our division through the student enrollment services and now it's...it was coordinated through housing and now it's coordinated through our leadership programs and what it is...it's basically a program where they coordinate – like we – we have a program or through advising, or whoever has programs, we submit them to them to put on a Master Calendar and students then can look it up on the website and they can choose – they can go to programs throughout the fall, summer, spring, whatever and they earn points. And they earn these points, then they go, "okay" – you know, they win a prize at the end – they can win tuition, free tuition, or whatever when they earn these points, and so it's self-encouraging to go and learn at the same time, but also get involved and interact and the whole thing about interacting with each other.

The program was also useful from a retention perspective, through assessment and data mining, the institution was able to determine which students were "engaged" and those who may be at risk and then intercede. As another participant stated:

Um, well we know that the students that participant in at least one event are retained significantly higher rate than those that don't. We also know that the students that are at six or more events are retained something in the 90% -- the ones that go to ten or more, they're

almost 100% ...it is a way for us and it's the one area that I don't think we've done as much as we could, because if halfway through the fall semester we know a student's not participating in the LINK programs, we need to you know jump n that person real quick and find out why, because we know that for whatever reason, they're not going to be retained.

Participant #6 was direct when he clearly commented on University A's ability to innovate:

Well, we innovate a lot here. We have a number of things prioritized for the future, uh, we have been working on online transfer requests, as we see that as a – a needed tool. Again, so that students don't have to come into the office, fill out a form, mail it to us – put it online.... So, it's identifying the next robust piece we need to add that is a very high labor intensive method that we can create a system for to provide that service.

While the participants were queried directly about their thoughts on competition, two themes emerged: 1) they have and they wanted to continue to improve their rankings and status within the state and 2) the participants seem to be invigorated with the challenge of 'getting better' or making the institution better, simply for the sake of getting better – a form of internal competition. For instance, a senior level executive at the institution provided a clear sense of direction and desire for success relative to the expected direction of the institution with the following statement:

Umm, so there's always kind of a new horizon I think and um, and I think the challenge for us is to go from good, to great, to excellent now... You know, like we have a very good program – great program and how do we – like right now we're upset because our retention rate is – it's stuck at 82%, 83% for the last three years. Well, we're – we're not comfortable with that. You now, how do we

boost it up? And that's what our challenge is with.... I think you'll find that – at least from my perspective, there is clearly a umm, a direction that is set by our President and embraced by the Vice President's and even though we each do something unique, umm, we are going to do whatever we can to support direction that the President wants to go in terms of making the institution great. I mean he's constantly talking about, we have the potential to be a great institution...

#### Participant #2

I know that we are becoming the number one choice for students. It used to be that we used to be the second or third choice, but for many students we are now becoming their number one choice, so the strategies that admissions is doing...I think it's also just getting our name out there, and when people come for a campus visit they see our campus and they realize that this is the place they want to be.

Another participant remarked:

I would focus primarily on the transfer experience and the success we've had as an access institution for transfer student but just for one moment I want to say that *University A* has an astonishing retention rate. In part because of the commitment by the university to making that first year experience, um, as solid and connected into the university as it can be for these students. So we have the First Year Advising Office, we have an intense commitment to advising because of Dr. E. We have, um, a powerful program run through the Residence Life, the LINK Program that again provides programming and connections and a deep involvement in the lives of freshmen students to make their transition to the university um, as strong as it can be:

She later continued with:

we go to conferences and talk about our – our retention rates and about having them 83% retention rate and our President's not going to be happy until we get to 90 and people are just like blown out of their chairs, like how do you possibly? And given who we are, I mean – we are an access institution in a huge state. We got dynamic populations and students who are coming out of high school not

necessarily as well prepared as they should be for the university experience. Again, reflecting the demographics and politics of the state...

Participant #4 spoke of the commitment to student success on the part of the staff and the leadership, while clearly positive about her experience at University A, the participant also discussed the demand of the position and the expectations of working at the institution, which ties into the “selflessness” principle discussed in the *collaboration theme*:

I think that there is a profound culture of commitment to student success here. And I don't know whether that's different than other schools, um, I don't – I wasn't aware that a lot of institutions have a similar approach to this kind of advising support community for students, but I – I really think that there is a deep commitment to student success here. I – I think people are hired because of that, I think people of the staff are kept because of that. I think people who don't have that commitment to the students, um, don't last here – they find other places. For one thing, our – our jobs are – are intense. They require a great deal from us. They demand that we be personally committed and I – I think that people are weeded out who aren't committed to that. And because the work load is pretty awesome – it's pretty impressive. And so I think in part it's who gets hired and who gets – stays and how that culture of commitment to students is inoculated in every staff...

One of the participants who provided the most constructive feedback regarding institution, had a strong and favorable opinion about the strategy of the University A as it relates to retention:

Uh, all previous schools I – I've been in have tried to focus on retention, and I've tried a number of things, but the emphasis here has been much more successful....– it's a – it's a – it's a city upon itself that supports the students. So we got a lot of good things going here.

### Findings – University B

There is something in these hills...that holds together men and women of all persuasions...something that cuts across every difference...something that makes a man or woman stand taller, feel better and say with a high pride to all within earshot, “I went to *University B*.”

[Alumnus], *University B* Graduate, Class of ‘34  
A portion of the excerpt quoted by Participant #6

### Brief Institutional Profile

University B, is a public land grant institution, located in the southern United States and opened its doors in 1893. The university has a strong and celebrated institutional history, dating to its founder who donated the land (a former plantation) to enhance the future for the citizens of the state. His will stipulated that a Board of Trustees must be comprised of 7 perpetuating members in addition to six members who may either be elected or appointed by legislature. This legacy created a unique set of circumstances that colors the institution today.

Located in a remote area, the small town “grew up” around the university (an attribute that is used to market the institution). The university is deeply rooted in a military tradition – and until 1955 was an all-male military college. In addition to a large research portfolio (\$128 million in 2005), the institution is known for its athletics, school spirit and tradition; concepts that are well-marketed in all of the university’s publications.

Table 4.4 – Key performance indicators – “University B”

| Performance Indicator           |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Enrollment – 2006               | 17,309     |
| Undergraduate                   | 14,172     |
| Masters                         | 1,838      |
| Doctoral                        | 1,008      |
| Freshman Retention – 2006       | 89%        |
| Six year graduation rate – 2005 | 75%        |
| Acceptance Rate – 2005          | 57%        |
| Alumni Giving                   | 22%        |
| Founded                         | 1893       |
| Number of Colleges or Schools   | 6 colleges |

Table 4.5 Annual Operating Revenues – University B -2005

| Budget Entity          |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Non-operating Revenues | 205,427,000          |
| Auxiliary Enterprises  | 65,443,000           |
| Contracts & Grants     | 118,664,000          |
| Tuition & Fees         | 149,405,000          |
| Other Revenue          | 14,496,000           |
| Total                  | <b>\$553,435,000</b> |

Table 4.6 – First Time Freshman – Key Performance Indicators - 2006

|                                       |        |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| First Time Freshman Applicants - 2006 | 12,784 |
| First Time Freshman Acceptances -2006 | 6,991  |
| First Time Freshman Enrollees - 2006  | 2,812  |
| Average SAT Score – CDS 2006          | 1-217  |
| Average ACT Score CDS 2006            | 27     |
| Average High School GPA –CDS 2006     | 3.99   |

The following represents the themes that emerged from the data using Glaser's constant comparison method to delimit, sort and classify the data. Six themes emerged from the data and are discussed in detail below. The themes support the concepts of retention, and to a certain extent, recruitment.

The Common Thread - Origin - History:  
The DNA/The Family – Affinity

University B is guided by its past; the institution carries the name of its founder and it acknowledges and uses traditions to brand itself as 'a different type of institution.' As a visitor to campus, the author could not help but notice the dialectic between tradition and progression on the campus. For instance, each graduating class pursues a fundraising campaign with the intent of donating a collective gift to the institution to help facilitate "a wish-list item" from university administration. Throughout the campus, signs noting the "class gift" for a building, amphitheatre, garden, sidewalk, etc. The researcher also noted the strong presence of university branded apparel; the researcher estimates that during her time on campus, 20%-30% of the student body wore university branded apparel at anyone time (the researcher counted groups of students while on campus).

The findings in this category known as a "common thread" consist of four sub-themes that inter-relate and were discussed by the participants, were a feature on the campus during the site visit, or appear on the institutional web page. They are: 1) reflections or stories about the founder of the institution and his will; 2) "University B" Family or the "University B Experience" or the "University B – DNA"; 3) stories about

the history of the institution (military, athletics, legacy, alumni, general traditions, etc); and 4) affinity on the part of others towards the institution

Most of the participants discussed the legacy of the founder. The vast majority of public institutions do not have a “founder”, all have a first president, some have a philanthropically/political champion, most have an organizing board or committee, but very few actually have someone whose vision, words, and intention shape the institution for the expressed intent of the citizenry of the state. The presence of the namesake was unmistakable, in some cases, to the point of reverent, both on the campus and in the words of the participants, for instance Participant #3 stated:

“Everybody that I know in administration has a copy of the will in their office,... but everybody knows what the will says.... And I don’t know an administrator that doesn’t have one in their office, so we’re all sitting there saying – anytime we wonder ‘What should *University B* do?’ ‘What has *the founder* set forth for *University B*?’ We go back to the will and say, “Would this have been where he wanted us to be today?”...And what we should be doing.” And he talked about *University B* being a high seminary of learning. And he talked about *University B*- um providing back to the *State* and so when we talk about the DNA, we talk about public service because that’s the giving back to *the state*. We talk about economic development, that’s because in *the founders’* will it was about improving the lives of *the citizens of the state*. When we talk about um high seminary of learning, we talk about the arts, the humanity, the sciences that are necessary for you to move forward. Um and the quality of the students, the quality of the programs. So we’re – um everybody buys into the will and everybody believes that it is part of what we’re supposed to do, is to keep that vision, that *he* had alive and moving forward and growing, but not to the point that we ever forget where are roots are.

Another participant too, discussed the “Family Experience” but suggested it might be diminished slightly from previous years. He also reflected on the loyalty of the Alumni:

Um, to a large degree (I believe in the *University B* Family Experience) yeah. Um, I don’t think it’s quite as strong as it used to be. Um because we came from military heritage and it was more local students a long time ago. But somehow or another we’ve been able to keep the essence of it – you know maybe it’s not quite as strong as it used to be, but um – I think it’s not typical that — that Alumni have such a bond and loyalty.

He continued further by discussing how the “Family Experience” contributed to fewer turf issues than on other campuses...

Do turf issues exist here? yeah, um – to some degree, but – I think there’s a very high spirit of cooperation and part of that goes back to the *University B* Family – it’s not just among the students. Um, you know I think it’s employees and faculty alike. Um, I don’t think there’s probably as many – as much of a rift between faculty and staff here as you see at some other places. You know occasionally something will come up – an issue that you know faculty takes exception to (chuckle) or vice-versa. But overall, um I don’t think that’s a huge issue. I think people do work together.

A senior level administrator described the “Family Experience” in terms of her observations of the President and Provost.

...and so, and both of (the provost’s) children got their undergraduate degrees at *University B*, so when either of them (the president or the provost) say the *University B* Family, they mean it. Um and, so both of them feel very strongly the commitment to our primary mission of educating citizens for *the state*. Um, so while they realize that the research enterprise is really important and so is graduate education, they know that there is – at some level, a trade off

to be made between how far you go down that road and how you continue going down the path of undergraduate education. They have never wanted to say, “Okay, we’re gonna’ we’re just gonna’ not pay so much attention to the undergraduate students and I can’t conceptualize either of them ever doing that.

Another senior level administrator provided an example demonstrating that even when a student was unhappy, she still had a strong attachment to the institution. She also remarked on the affinity the alumni demonstrate toward the institution.

Okay, um the *University B* Experience is what happens when you get here. People love this place – I am not a *University B* Graduate, okay? I have never seen an Alumni Group that love their institution more than this group. They love it! They love being here, they love being part of the environment. I don’t know whether it’s because it’s so green, it’s over a lake, uh I don’t know if it’s the football team, I don’t know if it’s their roommate...I don’t know what it is. They love it, they are happy. Even students that are having unhappy experiences are happy. I saw a student and her mother on Monday and the student was having problems in a course. And we were working out the solution for that course and I said, “Well overall how do you – you know, do you like *University B* or – are everything – is everything else going okay?” She’s like, “It’s great! It’s so great that I’m encouraging my sister to come here.” They were from New York. For me, I’m like ‘out-of-state tuition, high travel costs, long distance from home.’ They wouldn’t be anywhere else but here. They love it. Our N.S.S.E – are you familiar with N.S.S.E? Our students of N.S.S.E. overwhelmingly state that if they had to choose over again they’d come right back.

Participant #1 spoke of how the culture of the campus is shaped by its location and the type of student drawn to the institution:

When you’re talking about the culture here I – I think it’s – it’s a couple things, it’s – it’s not just the – the university and the people that are here, but it’s also this area that we’re in...I mean the university was here before the town was. And so, we’re sort of surrounded in this small town setting, where people really look out

and have a lot of concern for each other in some general ways and I think that follows through to the campus.

Participant #1 also spoke of a program designed to give legacies an opportunity for admission, through a transfer program called “bridges”:

Now they’re seeing this affiliation with *University B* and they’re saying, “That’s what I want.” And we’re getting some of those kids...but they – they also – lack of a better term, they got the *University B* bumper sticker... It’s a sad story, but we had a young man last summer who was offered the Bridge Program, he accepted it, and he was killed in a boating accident...In his obituary, it said that he was going to *University B*. If that floats his boat and he’s happy, he comes here, he graduates in four years – we’ve done our job. He got a bumper sticker on a car...

After the formal interview, participant #7 took the author on a short tour of campus. He explained some the key historical moments of the institution including: 1) its military heritage, 2) the admission and graduation of the first black student, 3) stories about the football and baseball head coaches, 4) stories about president’s and administrative leaders at the institution, 5) acknowledgement of Alumni gifts. The author perceived a real “affinity” and commitment towards the institution from the participant.

In an example from the institutions web site the history and tradition of the school ring is explained below.

At one time in *University B*’s history, the *University B* University ring, as students and alumni know it today, did not exist. Although the *University B* ring tradition dates back to the late 1890’s, the first 50 years of the ring tradition saw over 50 different *University B* ring

styles, with each graduating class designing their own ring. In 1940, a group of senior architecture students realized the value to a standard *University B* ring design that could be recognized by graduates and supporters all over the world. They received permission to submit a design for an official ring. The design was unanimously accepted by both students and alumni. In July of the same year, the board of trustees passed a resolution recommending the ring design be adopted as the official *University B* ring. In the years to follow, a second *University B* ring style was adopted for the women graduates of *University B*. The official *University B* University ring design is

truly a unique tradition and one that cannot be duplicated. The design has been copyrighted, ensuring that only *University B* students and alumni have the privilege of wearing the tradition.

All seniors are invited to take part in the ceremony where they can receive their ring personally from *the president* and learn about the history of the *University B* ring. Friends and family are welcome.

The ring ceremony is sponsored by the Alumni Association and the Student Alumni Association each semester. Students will hear from an alumnus with a special ring story and receive their ring.

Participant #6, an alumna and mid-level administrator, reveals her affinity towards the institution, its history and her legacy, with the following statements:

...I'm a graduate, so was my husband, so was my father, so was his father. Um, so was my uncles, well one of my uncles was *University B* – well excuse me, two of my uncles also, back in the 20's. Um I don't know what it is. We've – well if you could figure out what that is, we could bottle it and make a fortune out of it!

I – I – you know I really and this is personal, me talking, because they – you know we – there's a big thing on what is the *University B* Experience? And, you know, what's in them there hills? You – there's a big song on the ad and that kind of thing, but I – you know I think maybe it's the fact that we are in a rural area and I think that we've kind of been cocooned here and so when you are here, you – it's – it's sort of like a big family, even though we're kind of a big school – fairly – fairly large – it's large enough. Um, but it – we just don't have a lot of the outside distractions that big city – being in the city schools would – does have....

And I think that forces you to kind of interact with each other and do things internally in the whole '*University B Experience*' more so than other schools and I suspect that if you um look at other schools similar to us, they have the same spirit because I don't think it's anything unique – *University B* – I – I – I think that there is a – it's great to see the camaraderie and the loyalty and the caring of the alumni and we don't want to ever lose that.

In a second example of affinity, graduation classes, through an organized effort donate to a specific project, scholarship or fund with the intent of bettering the university. When the researcher was walking on campus signs listing the donation (for the building, sidewalk, garden, etc) were obvious. Selected examples of donations, from the institutions web page include (by class):

- '34 Two professorships
- '34 Presidential scholarship endowment
- '39 Heritage Gardens -- Botanical Garden
- '40 Scholarships, faculty recognition and the Libraries
- '41 Professorship, a scholars program or gifts to any area of campus
- '42 Cadet Life Garden
- '43 Carillon Garden
- '44 Class memorial, construction of the Visitors Center and operating endowment
- '49 Annual unrestricted scholarships and endowment
- '50 Unrestricted scholarship
- '51 Computer kiosk for visitors at Highway 93 gates and endowment
- '52 Unrestricted scholarship endowment
- '55 MicroCreamery and Agriculture Sales Market, Libraries Endowment
- '56 Academic Support Center
- '57 Faculty Enhancement, [University B] Corps and Presidents Park Rotunda
- '60 North Campus Green Improvements
- '63 Student Center programs
- '64 Support for all areas with special account to support quality of classroom instruction

- '86 [University B] Memorial Carillon Bell
- '87 Unrestricted scholarship endowment
- '88 Markers for the Centennial Footpath
- '89 Picnic Garden in the Heritage Garden; Centennial Senior Sidewalk;
- '93 Senior Sidewalk in President's Park
- '94 Senior Sidewalk in President's Park
- '95 Senior Sidewalk; unrestricted scholarships
- '00 Granite wall in front of University Union bearing names of graduates
- '01 Senior Sidewalk in President's Park
- '02 Class of 2002 Senior Sidewalk
- '03 Class of 2003 Senior Sidewalk and Beautification of Hardin Hall
- '06 Class of 2006 Senior Sidewalk
- '07 Class of 2007 Senior Sidewalk

### Leadership – Vision – Goals

Many of the participants recognized the president for creating a vision and setting goals for the institution. Further, most of the participants engaged in retrospective sense making and compared the current state of the university with where they were in the past, and attributed their success in large part to the current president. For instance, a mid-level administrator and former faculty member made the following comments about the president's leadership and outcomes from his vision and mission statement:

...Some of them intended and some of them not. Um, we have – since our current President took over, we have really raised the visibility of *University B*, regionally. Um, people knew us pretty much as uh – a athletically competitive, medium-sized university in the foothills of the [mountain range] and I think what he was able to do was transform that into we are a – number one, a research powerhouse and number two, an academically challenging and good – good place to be. And about the time that he took over, we got the TIME Magazine uh, Public College of the Year thing. And, so it – there was a synergy there; we had this sort of National recognition at the same time that we got some really great leadership and he's sort of

run with that, and um his you know, his vision of Top 20, um has sort of become pervasive in the things that we do um and in the beginning you know I was back in the faculty ranks then and it was – everyone was very suspicious about you know, what – what is this going to mean? What does it mean for us? And the fact that we'd gone from – in his – his time here we've gone from I think it was 72nd to 30, in a very short amount of time. I think that has done a lot for us; statewide and region-wide I think, people have recognized that, that *University B* is not just another undergraduate university, it's a research university, it is the Land Grant University for *the state*, it has a lot of very powerful programs and he's also done a lot with putting *University B's* uh sort of tentacles all over the state, so that you see – you know if you're – you're just wondering around the state and if you're you know – if you spend most of your time in the lower part of the state, you're going to be sort of College of [C] and University [S], but he's done a good job of trying to put *University B's* footprint in different places in the state so that you can see that *University B* is a State University. It's – it's the – you know – it's the choice if you want to go to uh, a place that's a little more selective than the – University [S] uh – has more to offer you than say a College of [C] and so I think he's done a good job of – of that. Um, I won't give him all the credit because I know – I know that a lot – a lot of this comes about because of the types of activities that the faculty have done.

Another participant reflected on the past and then spoke of the president's ability to encourage collaboration:

So, um – we had – we actually had like five Presidents, a Provost and all kinds of things over a ten year period. We had a lot of flux during that time period. Um...our current president came in '99? And has certainly provided the leadership for making the collaboration real. He was a dean in the College of Architecture or Sub-humanities, so he actually had the opportunity to bring three diverse groups together and having them to work in a collaborative way and then brought that through the next level.

All but one of the participants spoke in positive light of the leadership, primarily targeting the board of trustees, president and provost, although a few others spoke positive about their direct supervisor (if it wasn't the president or provost. Most often,

respondents spoke of the president's vision and goals as it related to making the institution better, as one direct report to the president stated:

we help – we're about accountability, so we help the university maintain and report its accountability...So the President has a report card...That he does every quarter and our office is responsible for the report card. Making sure that those things that we're doing with regard to our vision, mission, and goals are reported on a quarterly basis in such a way that anybody could pick it up and say, "This is what you've done." All of our goals do not directly relate to US News and World, but fourteen of them do; the fourteen under the criteria that US News and World uses, but we report on each one of them and we report subjectively, as well as quantitatively.

While most were complimentary of the leadership, the author also had a sense that each of the participants were enabled and encouraged to introduce good ideas in their respective departments, offices or divisions. For instance participant #6 stated:

I think a lot – it – it works both ways here. We – you know we want ideas to percolate up and we have a very strong faculty government...Yeah and so we expect the faculty to bring things up to the university level, but we also have a President and a Provost who are great thinkers and so they do also bring stuff. Like it was the Provost who said, "Darn it, we're revising General Education." Um, the nice thing is that the way she did it was – that happened at the same time that – that the university decided that we needed emphasis areas; that we had to have particular things that we were recognized as being distinctive and 'good at'

One participant credited the president with the following "...[the] president is a charismatic leader and when he tells a story, you know – it – it's the great thing about having the architect as your President. You know, when he lays out a vision, you can see what it looks like..." She went on to discuss the relationship between the president and the Board of Trustees in terms of undergraduate students.

And so when President [name] and the Board of Trustees – has it been seven years ago? Eight years ago? Formulated this ‘Top 20’...They said, “we’re not gonna’ do it at the expense of the undergraduate students...and that’s another – I – I think another fairly unusual aspect of *University B*, is that our trustees are well informed and engaged with the campus and they have very much bought into President [name] view of the institution, but also then to supporting the students and the faculty – it – there’s you know, it’s not – I – we fear that in some places that’s being more adversarial relationship.

In an example of affirmation of leadership, another participant spoke of how the provost, who did not attend *University B*, was recently honored (as if to make her one of their own) with the following story:

The provost didn’t go to *University B*...and in fact they recently made her an honorary alumnus...Yeah, which is a very touching thing that the Alumni Council does sometimes. Um, so, I mean I certainly think it helps you know and I always think back to you know, they say that the – the President of Yale – the old phrase that they had to be a Yale Man – I’m not sure that the man still applies, but I mean, I think that at some institutions they take that really very seriously.

### Organizational Change – Turning Point

The president moved his vision into action, which on balance, for the purposes of this model is known as the “turning point,” where once the goals and vision were articulated by the president and ratified by the Board of Trustees, there was little opportunity to “turn back” as one participant revealed with:

So it was – it was having that vision; I think if we hadn’t had that I think it would be a very different university right now. But by saying, “This – this is where we are now, this is where we want to be. What do we have to do to get there?” It kind of kept everybody moving in the same direction.

The current president had an opportunity for change, since, before he took his office, the institution went through a major organizational change in the late 1990's, when many institutions received funding cutbacks by the state legislature. At the time, the interim president and the Board of Trustees decided to initiate some deep and radical changes in the institutional hierarchy and organizational chart, by combining colleges and departments to extend the budget and promote collaboration, and research opportunities. This shake up likely assisted the current president's new agenda as a culture of change was in existence as participant #3 noted:

...(the interim president) decided we were re-organizing and 'we're going to down-size.' And 'we're going to get rid of – we've got too many deans.' So we went from ten or nine colleges, down to four and ultimately back up to five and literally we merged units – we – deans were terminated, department chairs were all laid-off – you could apply for your job – I was a department head, I could apply for my job as chair if I wanted to or not, but we literally said, "we're no longer going to be silos where we've got individual focus areas, where Engineering's over here and Physical Sciences are over here and Liberal Arts are here and Business is over there" – we said, "Who works together? Who needs to collaborate? Who needs to know the other person in order to advance our research and our teaching agenda?" And we had lots of teams of people working together, but ultimately the Board sat down and said, "We're going to have this, this, this, and this and this is what we're going to be." And um so we have Engineering and the Physical Sciences, um we have Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Forestry together. We have Health, Education, and Human Development together and we have Business, Behavioral Science, and Arts – Architecture, and Humanities.

When asked by the researcher, "do you think the effort to combine colleges made a difference..." the participant responded with an answer that included the concepts of

collaboration, fiscal responsibility and ‘shaking things up’ to improve the future of the institution:

Yes. It does. Um, we have collaborative research, because the silos were broken down so that the physicists and the engineers talk together. The chemists and the engineers are working together. We have centers and institutes that cross colleges, so that faculty and bio-engineering work with faculty in the Ag. Forestry, and Life Sciences um – that work with um faculty in HEHD in terms of Nursing and Public Health. All the way across the board we’re – we’re breaking down the silos. At – they gave lip service to collaboration at the time – I think it was really more about money – about saving money. I think it was about needing different people heading things up. Um, it was – it was a way of shaking the organization up and saying, “You will be different; we will save money, we will be more effective, we will get rid of the things we don’t need. Um and we will focus.” But I think the collaboration was a – an outcome that was more unintentional, but we have certainly latch onto it and taken it to the – the next level.

One participant reflected on how the institution has changed “culturally” from one president to the other, noting that before the current president took office they were ranked next to last on the US News & World Report list.

But it – it is a cultural change and in the – in the 90’s we adopted a set of official benchmarks. This was under a different President. And at the time we were already – if you looked at how they were ranked by US News, we were next to last. We were only ahead of Mississippi State and among that peer group, which was like NC State, Auburn, Virginia Tech, Michigan State, um you know a number of schools, mostly land grants, public universities, Georgia Tech...Well now fast forward to today and we’re ranked in the top third.

This same participant later provided this account of how the current president (during his interview) created the impression that he was going to have an impact at the university and set forth a bold vision, that took many at the institution by surprise.

...not all (universities) of them are quite as you know candid about it as we are, because it's somewhat controversial (US News & World Report Rankings). But um, where this goes back to is um, is our current President, uh was a dean here for many years – graduated from here and when he was a candidate for President. He – he was a finalist and he was being interviewed by the Board of Trustees, they asked him a question that I guess they asked everybody and it's a typical interview-type question. "Where do you see *University B* five years from now?" And his response was, "I don't think I can answer that question. Let me talk about where I see *University B* ten years from now." And that was kind of interesting, because you know, the turnover at the top of universities is – has been historically pretty rapid I mean, you know to have a President last four or five years was getting to be more the exception rather than the rule and one of the things that that said to them, was "You know, I have a real long-term commitment. I don't want to use *University B* as a stepping stone to go somewhere else – this is the job I want."

In this example, a participant retrospectively discussed the president's philosophy of "we were either going to grow or we were going to stay the same" and how the change in strategy "was kind of scary" but in hindsight the decision was "brilliant."

The caliber of student that we're getting at *University B* now are incredible. Uh, our SAT Scores have gone up tremendously. We – the President is such a visionary. He made a decision five years ago when he became President – maybe it's six years now – that you know we either had to grow or we were going to stay the same. What are we going to do? And he and the –a Board of Trustees sat down and said, "No, we want quality not quantity."

"Okay, if we're going to do that then what can we do to distinguish ourselves with? What do we do?" You know, the staffs – what are we (inaudible) – that time I think we ranked 75th or 76th or something, or 74th – whatever it was....You know, do – we need to –

if we're not going to grow then we need to get quality, so if we get quality then obviously then the logical solution would be that we would you know, make our – get our ranking better.

And so you know that's what he came up with all of this – ten prong mission goals that he had. And because of that it has um, and there was fear at the time that that was made, and 'oh my gosh, nobody'll apply, or are we going to have enough candidates?' Oh you know, because we said we want to get a higher quality candidate and – and – and the decision to do that was a risky one at the time looking back. I mean now I thought it was a brilliant decision, but...But you know six years ago, it was kind of scary, and you know gosh, maybe we won't get enough candidates. Well every year since then, every year we've surpassed the applicants, every year. Every year gets more, and so it – that – that has completely, completely changed our recruiting strategy, uh and who would got to see and what we do.

### Creative Initiatives

In pursuit of their Top 20 designation in US News & World Report, University B developed a series of creative initiatives to bolster the institution's rankings and report card. In this section, a selected number of the initiatives are reviewed in depth; other initiatives are listed in Appendix G .

Branding. While the concept is not new to higher education, *University B*, has built a "larger than life" institutional brand. While on site, the researcher was continually surprised at how pervasive several of the institutional brands were on campus (from clothing, to logo's painted in the street, signs and banners, statues, busts and paintings of former presidents, mascots, and other significant figures in the institutions' history). One of the participants related this personal story about her son's "dress code," but also relayed the information to demonstrate the point that "nothing happens by accident" in terms of creating the *University B* brand.

I mean my son was in – was a student here, and uh I think half of his wardrobe was free t-shirts that he had gotten by going to various events on campus and most of them are orange. And so, if you look closely, you will see a lot of orange but it might have a logo on – somebody – some company's logo on the back of it, but yes we definitely use those colors um, in a lot of our promotional and branding activities. We try to brand our students where we can; particularly if they're prospective students and they're going to go back into their high schools with those orange t-shirts on, with the big [logo identifier] (inaudible – chuckling). Turn them into walking billboards.

The researcher experienced this reality while visiting the campus, and was struck by the number of students who wore apparel (t-shirts, hats, back packs, patches, sweatpants, hoodies, car stickers, etc.) reflecting their affinity to the institution (the researcher estimates 20-30% during her time on campus). Further, when the researcher visited the bookstore, she was surprised to see \$5 t-shirts available “for students only” adorned with the university name in the appropriate color .

Another participant stated:

I don't mean to sound arrogant, but we've worked hard to brand and to have a good brand on campus – not just on campus; regionally, nationally, but – but on campus to our faculty, and to our staff. So we've really worked hard at being a credible department and really doing and getting success and that kind of thing and a lot of that's from the data that I showed you – all that tracking and being able to put that data out...

Market Research. To learn more about prospective students, the institution practiced varying methods of gathering market intelligence. Participant #2 shared a simple technique but underscores the importance of listening...

Well we ask them. I mean you know we – as I said, we do focus groups, um the Admissions Office you know tries to gather information from students; both those who come here and those who decide not to. Um, we have a uh Visitor's Center, which uh could probably be collecting a lot more information than they are – than we are asking them to do, but at least that is a way to have a face-to-face interaction with a small group of people um on a daily basis, who are coming here for that very reason. That they're trying to decide where to – where they want to go to college, and they're here with their parents and it's a – so that's an important part of our recruiting process and our learning process. But you just have to listen to them. You have to ask them and then you have to listen to them.

Another participant discussed how he and other team members gather information about what a prospective student wants and how the student compares *University B* with other institutions.

But uh – we go out and we do usually in-state and then we also usually go to Atlanta, Charlotte and then we pick a market that's we got to get on for out of state growth... So it's a track and we go in with these students and we say, "Look, we're from a college..." "...I'm not going to tell where," and we – we'll sit there we'll throw out brochures, "What do you like, what do you not like, what says quality, what makes you – what gets you excited?" We do those kind of things and then at the end we tell them where we're from. To try to find out how they perceived *University B* compared to you know, our – our – our competitors But uh, we get some very open, very... Very candid, because they have no idea so...we've had one or two things over the year where, "I saw you at College Day."

A dean related a story about interviews conducted with employers; the information gained was used to adjust the academic curriculum.

"[the marketing group] did some interviews last – I guess it was over the summer; last summer looking – asking employers you know, what is it you're looking for and who's got a chance? They didn't tell people it was *University B* doing the survey. So some of those kinds of things have been interesting sources of data about what it is we do with our students versus

what other people do. If they were looking for an engineering student, if they wanted somebody to give presentations they would hire a Tech Graduate, but if they wanted somebody to do the work they'd hire a *University B* Graduate. (Chuckle) You know I'd like for *University B* students to be able to do both of those things.

Participant #3 shared the following story in terms of market research of their competition

Well because we want to be a Top 20 public university, all the Top 20 public universities are our competition...And we see them directly as our competition, so we look at what they're doing. Um, we explore their web pages, we participate in a number of databases and surveys where they also participate and we compare ourselves to them and to their progress. And we do it in everything we do. We have a task force with the Board of Trustees right now that's looking at a particular narrow area and they said, "What are the other Top 20's doing?" So we go out and we will get what are the Top 20's doing? So we call people at Top 20's, we look to see what the Top 20's are doing, and now – we can – we may reject what they're doing...: ...or accept it. But we really – we really want to know from their success, why they're successful. Now the President has said, "We will be a different Top 20 public university."

Building Affinity. Participant #1 spoke of a program they created to build affinity with newly accepted out-of-state students with the help from parents of current or former *University B* students. The program is intended to excite newly accepted students about the *University B* experience so that there is a high yield on out of state paying applicants.

...well we've been doing it for more than just the last two or three years and it's one that I think has meant more and more to us. Um, it's a – it's a joint effort that we do with the University Parents' Council...is a voluntary group of *University B* Parents that want to be involved in the university in some way during their student's experience, but they don't want to just be hovering over their shoulder. Uh, working through the Parents' Council what we do is, uh – host a series of receptions for accepted students, in out-of-state markets...And we have these receptions in the homes of *University B*

Parents. They host it in their house, they do a reception – you know they do balloons and refreshments and all this stuff. We do the program – there are a couple of reasons for it. One is the fact that uh it – for kids coming from a distance, it helps try to provide not just the recruitment, but that personal connection.

Participant #2 spoke of affinity to the campus in a different way, giving credit to other academic departments and experiences on campus:

I really do think it's caring faculty. I think it's a President who listens to students, who is very clear about his mission and goals, um, and I think it's Student Affairs. We have a – we've got a dynamic Student Affairs Group. There are things going on every day that students can participate in if they want to. It's just – it's just really a uh, high energy place and people feel that. I mean they – they're aware that where they are is very special, and um – and sports helps – I don't – you know I don't want to take away from athletics. You know? They love the football games, basketball games. There's team spirit. We have 'Spirit Friday'. Everybody wears orange on Friday.

Participant #2 referred to the web as their number one communication vehicle and how they must expend time and effort:

...because it's – it's so – it changes so quickly uh, I as said, we are writing our website, we've added – I mean we had one half of one person devoted to the web. Um, so we now have a couple more than that and um – you know we were able to convince the administration that we needed some additional resources to put in that area, because all of our research tells us – not just prospective students, but prospective faculty, news media, um a lot of our important audiences – other people in the academic community; which is important to the – to the US News Ranking. That's their number one source of information and so if it's our number one source of information, we need to pay a little bit more – if it's our number one communications vehicle, we need to be paying more attention to it. So that's one specific response, to just really say, "Okay this is a much more important communications vehicle – we need to treat it that way." Um and bring in some people who have expertise that I certainly

don't have and – and who are thinking forward. You know, 'what's the next trend, and what's the next thing?'

Another example of building affinity included the development of a summer program for exceptionally bright ninth and tenth graders from zip codes that are of strategic importance to the institution.

...and so yes, we did you know to the point of – of um zip code. These – these are neighborhoods where these schools, in Texas, are putting out the kind of students that we're looking for and so – and so we did – we did some of that and that – you know and we created some new programs. Uh for example, a camp uh for very highly motivated or gifted um ninth and tenth graders, really to kind of reach a little deeper and start a little bit younger; things like that....It's – ell we haven't been doing it long enough to really tell yet. Anecdotally, yeah I mean the kids love it, you know they – they leave – they're [university mascot] for that weekend anyway.

Improvements to the Academic Program. Participant #2, a senior level administrator reminded the researcher that the improvements on the US News & World Report rankings were not due to PR spin, but through the concerted effort to make some changes in the academic program.

...but it's not because we don't belong in that – in that territory. We had a um – in just – and just to show you – and – and we have – the good thing is, it's not just I should never use this word, it's not just PR and all that kind of stuff, but I mean there had been substantive improvements in the academic program, I mean and in enrollment management.

Another administrator, too, made the point that in order to “move up to the Top 20, the institution had to focus on retention.

...Student Affairs is that we're all working together with some of those students to retain them. Because we know that... we're now #30 by the way, which I'm sure you know by now, and so we want to go to Top 20 and that's our goal. So in order to do that you've got – retention is a big – a big thing.

A dean at the university made this comment relevant to academic advising and how an improved freshman class, and the millennial generation requires a different kind of emphasis on advising.

Um, we continue to look at advising. We want to improve our advising services for students. Not that I don't think – our freshmen say they're reasonably satisfied with advising, but we think we could do better. Um and particularly we tend to take – we're taking in more undeclared students than is typical for a university like *University B*, but the brighter your students are the more choices they have and so we need to be prepared to deal with those perceived choices. Um and we – I want to see us change from talking about what we teach all the time, to talking about what students learn and that's a transition that *University B* is still trying to make. Um, and also trying to figure out the millennial student and their ability to get content on their own. Uh, I think it's – you know when I was in college I loved listening to lectures, and I just hung on every word a faculty member had to offer me. Students just aren't like that anymore and I don't see it as a bad thing, but they want to bring the content to you and then have you do something with it.

One of her counterparts agreed with the statement and suggested the following “stalking” solution:

You know and a lot of the students are falling through, so if – if I could – if I could do anything, I'd build a building and I'd put this sort of Academic Advising thing there and I would consolidate the efforts of all our undeclared type of advising that we have on campus now; bring it all together in one place. One of the things that happens with these Undeclared Majors, is that they stalk another major – we call them Shadow Majors around here, but I always think of it in terms of hem stalking, because... you know they have these really

you know, old ideas and so if you talk to faculty about undeclared majors, they typically think that an undeclared major means under-prepared major, but it's in fact just the opposite. Most of our undeclared majors are undeclared because they're so good at some many things and they're – they're working on a strategy of, 'well don't make me pick yet; I want to come to the university and get my feet wet and figure out what I want to do.' So we end up with undeclared majors that are really, really good.

In terms of advancing the academic curriculum, the institution has also taken some fairly bold measures to change their General Education requirements and distribute the course plan during the four-plus years the student is enrolled in the institution.

Um, and one of the things that they did that I really haven't seen anywhere is, that they said, "General Education should not be confined to the freshmen and sophomore years. General Education is an important function of an undergraduate experience and it needs to be distributed through the four years." And so they purposely took three of the competencies and said, "These are distributed competencies and we must see evidence of these throughout the students' experience."

And just to take the Ethical Judgment one as an example, and it just makes so much sense, because there's no way that the end of the freshmen year a student is going to have a mature...developmentally... ethical standard...The second competency is related to having a consistent set of principles that you use to make ethical judgments. We don't expect anybody to get that before their senior year really.

And so she made General Education one of those emphasis areas. And if she hadn't I'm not sure I would be sitting right here today. Um, because it just – it raised that discussion up to the level of 'here is a critical mission area at [University B] and I don't think most universities think of Gen-Ed in that exalted status.

In another example, participant #5 discussed a major change in how calculus is taught on campus and a major improvement in the DFW rate for calculus class.

We're probably not going to be more selective in terms of who we bring in, so now we've really got to get to grips with what is it that makes a student succeed? We had a remarkable thing happen in math this past year. Um, the most recalcitrant DFW rate has been in freshmen calculus.....and so while chemistry has reduced their's from 35% to 20%, um other courses with supplemental instruction were showing decreases in the DFW rate – calculus was stuck at around 40% or 42%. Which if we find for sure – if students don't succeed in that freshmen calculus sequence, they don't end up majoring in engineering, which is one of our big programs. So we wanted to change that. The math department went around and around with what to do about it; well last year they made for them the tough decision to go to teaching in a scale-up model. Over the summer they renovated the classroom so that they'd have round tables, um and put in an extra projection screen in each room. They talked to the Academic Success Center and they agreed to change the supplemental instruction model so that the supplemental instructors would be not only sitting in class, they'd be participating in class, (inaudible). They worked problems in every class and almost no students withdraw from calculus anymore and this past fall we went from a 42% DFW rate to 19%.

A staff member from Student Affairs affirmed the effort of the Provost's Office with the following statement, noting it was one of the most important initiatives in improving the freshman to sophomore retention rate:

Um, we did have a very strong unit, it's called the Academic Success Center...And they – they are very pro-active in identifying 'at-risk' groups and you know practically begging them to come in and use their services. Um, whether it's you know those that are marginal as far as staying in school, as well as those who are marginal on losing their scholarships... And they really help them with study skills and – and you know even advise them to change majors sometimes or that sort of stuff, but um – that has – e have seen a really good result of that – unit's been in place five or six years, but just in the last couple years it has really blossomed and is serving a lot of students. Um, I think that's probably the single-most thing that has affected our increase in retention rates.

Other cutting edge practices included: 1) providing a free tutor for anyone in a class of three or more students request assistance; 2) sponsoring an academic redemption policy, where a student can replace their grade by retaking the class (for up to nine credits); 3) providing an academic coach to assist students with study habits, learning styles and advising; and 4) designing the customary freshman 101 class with flexibility to allow the instructor to teach the class based on the needs and interests of the students rather than strictly following the syllabus.

The work in academic advancement has not gone unnoticed by several professional associations and national organizations. *University B* won the following awards: International Service Supplemental Instruction Award, National Tutoring Award, and the National College Learning Center Award.

#### US News & World Report Rankings and Institutional Report Card

In addition to using US News & World Report as a yard-stick for improvement and growth, University B collected 13 other variables to measure its effectiveness. The institution prepares and submits a quarterly report card on where they have improved, held steady or dropped. The information on the report card is presented to the Board of Trustees by the president quarterly. The origin for this process came from the president and emerged during his job interview. Participant #2 paraphrased the president's vision for using US News & World Report as a tool and benchmark to grow University B and to use the rankings to demonstrate the qualities of the school with the following statement:

“Until I step-down and going back to being a teacher in the – in the School of Architecture. That’s my – that’s my goal, that’s what I want to be when I grow up.” So he said, “In ten years, I think we ought to be one of the Top 20 public universities in America.” Which just blew them away....“You know we ought to do these things...” And he had some very specific goals. Um, some of which were related to the US News Ranking, some of which are not. Um and so it really, you know as he says, “This is truth in advertising, it was not based on in-depth study of the US News Ranking, what they meant, what you had to do to get there. It was just a sense of that *University B* ought to be in that league of schools. We’re that good, everybody just doesn’t know it.

Participant #3, who had strong ties to the president and the institutional assessment process provided the following information:

And so that’s what we do to help keep us focused toward those goals and we have twenty-seven and we report on every one of them and tell whether we’re making progress or not....Uh, we put up and down arrows and nobody likes to get a down arrow and people don’t even like to have an arrow that says, “You haven’t made any change.” Um, you’ll see a down arrow here, but yes we do.

As the university began its plans for accreditation and it needed a mission statement, the administration decided to specifically include the goal of being ranked in the top 20 public institutions for US News & World Report Rankings. The participant continued with...

...it really was and it hadn’t been looked at in many years and we didn’t have a real clear set of goals and so there was fortunately a – a set of committees in place, one of which was you know, working on that and based on the things that he – and we had trustees on it and – and the trustees were you know sold on this vision that – that uh President Barker had articulated and so faculty began discussing it and staff and saying, “Well you know what about the...?” Really started going to school on it. It ended up being adopted in 2001 as

our official vision statement, to be one of the Nation's Top 20 public universities, with some very specific goals, as I said most of which frankly don't relate at all to US News, because they have to do with public service or they have to do with diversity, or they have to do with a safe environment. All of – you know they have to do with a lot of things that don't have any impact on the rankings. But there were things that have direct impact that we ought to be trying to recruit the best students. Not only from our state, but we have to think of ourselves as a National University and – and recruit high-achieving students.

Participant #1 shared two conflicting opinions when asked about the college rankings with the following examples:

College rankings...They're huge – part of our mission statement. I mean, as you've probably seen, the President wants us to be one of the Top 20 of you know the public universities. I'm not real big on rankings and I'll tell you a story here in a minute that kind of explains. First of all, do you have any children?...Damn I was hoping you would – I was hoping you were going to say yes. Because I was going to ask you to rank them. Somebody did that to a US News Editor at a conference, they got him in a bar, they sat him down, they did all this chummy time – they said, "How many kids do you have?" And he said, "Three." And they said, "Rank them."

...I think it – obviously it can help – it can help to a point – sort of help draw a student from three thousand colleges in this country down to thirty...You know, to help start to develop that – that long list, or the shorter list, whatever you want to call it. But, choosing a college is an emotional process, (inaudible). Now like I say, the thing about the – the Top 20 and using the US News and they go wide -- I have some issues with the rankings – it's also a goal that could be articulated to alumni, to boosters, to citizens of this state, whatever and they can see where we are and they can see the progress we've made.

Participant number #2 shared the following comments related to a candidate who was interviewing on campus for a senior level position, and he was struck with the

number of people who personally believed they were making a difference in the institution reaching the top 20 status.

I will just say in terms of vision, mission, goals, um we recently had a – a situation – it’s just anecdotal for whatever it’s worth. We – where we were interviewing for a senior-level position of direct report to the President, and um and one of the candidates who was here was meeting with a group of other administrators and some staff and he made a comment and – and you know how it is when you go – I mean you have to go around for like two days and meet with all these different groups, and he – he said one of the things that struck him the most was that when he would ask that question, ‘Do you believe that you personally are making a contribution towards *University B* reaching the Top 20?’ He said, “Every person I ask that question to, said ‘yes’.”...And that’s pretty phenomenal....I mean that’s – that’s phenomenal, and I – and I find that in my organization. IF they really – they really think that what they do is making a difference, so...anyway.

Participant #7 spoke of his responsibility for tracking the metrics of the institution by demonstrating some of the variables he collected and analyzed to make sure things were “on track.” He provided one example of how he can predict (based upon an inferential algorithm) if current students are going to have a difficult time graduating. After he runs the report, he’ll share the information with others and they’ll simply call the student to ensure they are on track for graduation. The participant has noticed a difference in graduation rates based upon that simple intervention.

Participant #8 (as did several of the other respondents) spoke of the employee review system and the president’s influence on selecting goals that advance the institution and rewarding departments financial with the following statement:

...*the president*, again – go back to him when he came in, he – he laid out his ten year goals and – and basically and he wasn't – wasn't adamant, I mean he wasn't you know mad, but he said, you know, "Line up behind these goals and if you support these goals." And that's when they also came up with his Provost, um – they came up with these eight areas; of emphasis areas that the university and that was like two years later that they – it took 'em a year and a half to get it through it, but they also came up with these eight areas, saying, "If you can't support these eight areas, or you don't have some kind of contribution, then you're going down the wrong track, and there's not going to be money funded out this way. But you got – you got to..." You know, you got (inaudible). So he deliberately and maybe that's his architectural thinking in it, you know structure and stuff like that, uh – put those two together with his ten year goals and mission and values and all of that and we then in turn, from our Student Affairs' Leadership said you know, "We need to be matching up and if we're not supporting these goals, or we're doing something and putting all of our energies on something that's way over here and it has nothing to do with any of this, then we're – we know we're doing – we're not – we're not in line with everybody else."...So there is, to me in the last five or six years, been a tremendous uh – uh emphasis. Just to give you an – a concrete example of that, our EPMF, (Employee Personnel Management System)...I believe that's what it stands for and that's our year-end review...when *the president* got his goals together, he said, "You have to choose as a personal person one of those goals..." and underneath each goal there's five, eight, ten, sometimes bullets.... So you – "...look and see, is there anything that in your job – program that you're over that you can support that goal, or you can add value to that goal, and then measure yourself on it....and we have to choose at least one of those goals...and be graded on it...So yeah, it's –that's the key stone right there.

Finally, Participant #2 stated the following with respect measuring themselves with the US News & World Report rankings:

"...um, you measure yourself; like I said we may be the only school that admits we look at the rankings and worry about them when they're going to come out, because gosh you don't want to slip back a notch or two, even though US News will tell you, "You know you're going – you're going to bump up and down.... we're different

from most other schools that are in that group. Um, we're smaller, we don't have law school and medical school, we don't have um nearly as much money. We don't have the endowments that they have. We don't have the state funding that they have, so we do – we can't just kind of try to follow there example. We're having to figure out something different and um, but that's also kind of fun. I mean the other thing is that what that has done is it gets the Alumni onboard, because they don't want *University B* to change much. They don't mind of we get better, but they still want to have that same feel that everybody wears orange and you know, faculty members know your name and – and all that kind of stuff. They want it to be like the same experience that they had. So um, so what we're trying to do is find those areas where we can be – we can offer our students some kind of distinctive experience, because we are smaller. You know, use that as an advantage rather than looking at it as a disadvantage. Um, so it's – we – we do and we don't compare ourselves to them. I – you know we do when it's useful I guess (chuckle). Well I mean you know you have to – you have to be aware. You have to have a fairly high level of awareness of how you're doing against that competition because it is the competition. It's the competition for students, it's the competition for faculty, it's the competition for Federal dollars. You know."

#### A Culture with Ambition for Tomorrow

There is a strong commitment at the institution to grow and improve for the benefit of the university, students, and alumni. Many reiterated the president's goal of being ranked in the top 20 of public institutions by the year 2011. Others spoke of the employee evaluation process as an opportunity to select a goal or goals to help make *University B* great. Generally speaking, their thoughts and plans demonstrated a short and long term ambition, as one of the participants noted a change in the culture, a change in the belief (or self-concept) of the university since the institution began to realize its goals.

I think it – you know one of the things that the President has said that he believes the number one – the biggest challenge that we had at the beginning was self-concept and believing that we could do it.

And we're not there yet, we got a long way to go, but what he says now is, "That's not a problem." We fully believe we ought to be there; we deserve to be there. We're just going to have to make some real hard decisions and work real, real hard.

Another senior level administrator spoke of how moving into the top 20 had become an institutional mantra, but the institution is mindful of how they will achieve their goal in terms of considering their competition:

And I – setting the bar higher for faculty higher, and so I mean, but it's all the things that you know – I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say, "Well if we don't do this we – we're never going to get to the Top 20." I mean it has become our mantra...Yeah and so it's like, you know, this is a Top 20 idea, this is a...you know everything measured against Top 20. And, and it's not so much now that you're sitting there with a magazine going, 'okay how can we move this number right here?' But it's – 'look at these schools, what are they doing? And – and what are they doing that we're not doing?' And maybe sometimes we don't want to do what they're doing.

For instance, one participant described a fairly bold plan to select 10-12 students per year for scholarships who are, over the long term expected to bring prestige to the institution because they will accomplish significant achievements.

...now it hasn't been around long enough obviously to have the – the name recognition that those have, but really trying to go after that same-caliber student and provide them with um – not just a scholarship, but with opportunities...What we're assuming is that these are the people who will go out, go into PhD Programs, carry our reputation with them – maybe become the faculty members of the future, or you know, public service you know leaders and really the top one half of one percent of high school students. So those are – but that's – that's a very small group, but we bring them here for a – a – an interview weekend and really pour it on thick...

When the researcher confirmed this ambition with another participant, (offering highly lucrative scholarships to a select few promising students from across the country to eventually vault the reputation of the institution), the response was “Oh, yeah, we are definitely planning for that, it will take 20 or 30 years to see an impact, but it will happen.” She continued with:

Um, and here even though, and now we’re starting to think now about how to really use that unique aspect of this culture and so – in fact what we’re trying to promote with our graduate students is, if you want to be an academic person, this is the ideal environment in which to learn how to do that and you can work with these undergraduate students, but we’re going to watch you do it. And so, what we’re doing is really trying to work on training the next generation of the professor at...um and we’re also really trying to get our students to realize that what a *University B* education unique is the opportunity to be mentored by a faculty member and to work with faculty who are doing cutting edge scholarships in that kind of intensive relationship that if they were at a larger school or even perhaps one of the fancier reputations; they wouldn’t have access to the faculty on a day-to-day basis.

Participant #4 spoke of how the changes at the institution have made for an “exciting pace to work,” his comments leave the impression that success breeds success, and that change isn’t a negative experience.

...it’s an enjoyable place to work – you know it’s kind of exciting times because I know there’s a lot of changes coming because of a new (administrative computer) system and some other things that we’re doing – as we see the reputation increasing, it kind of makes it exciting. If you were just kind of in a place that was ho-hum you know – I don’t know that that would help.

This next excerpt was taken from the institutional webpage and is reflective of several of the comments made by the participants.

Today, *University B* is redefining the term “top-tier research university” by combining the best of two models: the scientific and technological horsepower of a major research university and the highly engaged academic and social environment of a small college. With a distinctive governance system that fosters stability in leadership, unique college structures that create an unmatched climate for collaboration, and a driven, competitive spirit that encourages faculty, staff and students to embrace bold, sometimes audacious, goals, *University B* has set its sights on being one of the nation’s top-20 public universities by 2011.

In the model presented to discuss the findings for *University B* (figure 5.2), an arrow from “Ambition for Tomorrow” reverts back to the first bubble representing the legacy of the institution, the researcher had a sense that as the participants looked forward, they were also looking in the past, being mindful of their history, lineage, and founder. Participant #3 captures that perspective well with:

“Everybody that I know in administration has a copy of the will in their office,... but everybody knows what the will says.... And I don’t know an administrator that doesn’t have one in their office, so we’re all sitting there saying – anytime we wonder ‘What should *University B* do?’ ‘What has *the founder* set forth for *University B*?’ We go back to the will and say, “Would this have been where he wanted us to be today?”...And what we should be doing.” And he talked about *University B* being a high seminary of learning. And he talked about *University B*- um providing back to the *State* and so when we talk about the DNA, we talk about public service because that’s the giving back to *the state*. We talk about economic development, that’s because in *the founders’* will it was about improving the lives of *the citizens of the state*. When we talk about um high seminary of learning, we talk about the arts, the humanity, the sciences that are necessary for you to move forward. Um and the quality of the students, the quality of the programs. So we’re – um everybody buys into the will and everybody believes that it is part of what we’re

supposed to do, is to keep that vision, that *he* had alive and moving forward and growing, but not to the point that we ever forget where are roots are.

### Findings: The Participants/The Literature

The study demonstrated an intentional effort to improve institutional status, student profile, and student success ultimately leading to increased undergraduate retention at the two public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions participating in this study. More importantly, the findings indicated that University A and B achieved their results differently using tactics that are in concert with, but not limited to, their respective: 1) institutional culture; 2) institutional mission, values and goals; 3) leadership; 4) communication; 5) brand or institutional identity; and 6) assessment.

### Statistical Versus Practical Significance

The study was exploratory in nature and likely generates more questions than it answers. No statistical significance was generated in the research project, other than acting as a heuristic to pose future questions to measure the operational and strategic methods of public institutions of higher education in United States and to correlate those measures with outputs that suggest success. The study does however have broad practical significance, especially if institutional leadership desires to improve student retention, institutional rankings or to achieve some other benchmark for success. The two unique models presented in Chapter Five demonstrate scenarios which are unique to the organizational culture of each institution but share similarities in the following

concepts : 1) institutional culture; 2) institutional mission, values and goals; 3) leadership; 4) communication; 5) brand or institutional identity; 6) assessment.

### Relationship to Prior Research

Generally speaking, the findings partially affirm Newman, Courtier and Scurry's (2004) hypothesis that higher education is moving towards a market orientation. Based upon the interviews, campus visits, and website review, a checkmark next to each bullet indicates the researcher found evidence of the tactic present at one institution; two checkmarks indicate a presence at both institutions. It might be possible that a tactic is present at the institution, but the researcher could not confirm it and therefore left the item "unchecked." The tone of Newman, Courtier and Scurry's (2004) book posits that a move to a market orientation may not be in the best interests of the student by noting "the pressures of competition have lead most institutions to an intense search for new revenue streams: higher tuition, the use of "enrollment management" to maximize tuition revenue, virtual programs, fundraising, corporate contracts, research grants...As the push for new revenue escalates, increasing the ration of private revenues to public revenues, so does the pressure for greater autonomy from public control" (p. 35). The concerns and values expressed by Newman, Courtier and Scurry (2004) will be discussed in Chapter 5.

- The emergence of new competition
  - Financial aid as a competitive weapon
  - Marketing to students ✓ ✓
  - Recruiting by amenities ✓ ✓
  - Climbing the ladder of prestige (in terms of rankings) ✓ ✓
  - Chasing new sources of revenue (creating other ventures through the delivery of education – i.e. The Darden School of Business) ✓ ✓
  - Targeting the student as consumer ✓ ✓

- The emergence of the “new providers” (i.e. University of Phoenix)
- The use of technology in the classroom ✓ ✓
- The globalization of higher education

The institution’s operational effectiveness and competitive strategy appear to align closely to the market orientation definitions of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1994). The concept of competition and competitive strategy is cited by, and is an integral part of Kohli and Jaworski’s (1990) definition of market orientation. Their definition consisted of three behaviors: 1) customer orientation; 2) competitor orientation; 3) interfunctional coordination. Examples of the behaviors found to be present at the institutions are provided in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 - Market Orientation Behavior – University A & B

| Institution    | Example                                                                              | Market Orientation Behavior |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| University A   | Bus stop academic advising                                                           | Customer Orientation        |
| University A   | Bi-lingual parent orientation                                                        | Customer Orientation        |
| University A   | Academic advising office in affiliate housing                                        | Customer Orientation        |
| University A   | Multiple-term registration                                                           | Customer Orientation        |
| University A   | LINK program                                                                         | Customer Orientation        |
| University A   | Construction of additional housing                                                   | Customer Orientation        |
| University A   | Mentor program for out-of-state students with an out-of-state mentor                 | Customer Orientation        |
| University A&B | Supplemental Instruction                                                             | Customer Orientation        |
| University B   | Free on-demand tutoring in classes with three or more individuals request assistance | Customer Orientation        |
| University B   | Academic redemption policy – up to 9 credits                                         | Customer Orientation        |

Table 4.7 - Market Orientation Behavior – University A &amp; B Continued

|                |                                                                                           |                              |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| University B   | Academic Coach                                                                            | Customer Orientation         |
| University B   | Major “stalking” program                                                                  | Customer Orientation         |
| University B   | \$5 student t-shirts at the bookstore                                                     | Orientation                  |
| University A   | Monitor competition – attempt to “one-up” services of other institutions within the state | Competitor Orientation       |
| University A   | Addition of a medical school                                                              | Competitor Orientation       |
| University A   | Market differentiation – commodity orientation to services offered                        | Competitor Orientation       |
| University B   | Institutional goal is to move from the top 30 into the top 20 USN&WR institutions by 2011 | Competitor Orientation       |
| University B   | Offers prestigious scholarships in keeping with competitors                               | Competitor Orientation       |
| University B   | Tracks win/loss record with other schools                                                 | Competitor Orientation       |
| University A   | LINK program                                                                              | Interfunctional Coordination |
| University A   | Transfer advising                                                                         | Interfunctional Coordination |
| University A   | Retention goals – Institutional Effectiveness                                             | Interfunctional Coordination |
| University A&B | Marketing Services                                                                        | Interfunctional Coordination |
| University B   | Class of...gifts                                                                          | Interfunctional Coordination |
| University B   | Institutional report card                                                                 | Interfunctional Coordination |
| University B   | <i>University B DNA/University B Family</i>                                               | Interfunctional Coordination |
| University B   | Spirit Day – First Friday Celebration                                                     | Interfunctional Coordination |

The findings were also compared to Slater and Narver (2000) where they noted “market orientation is the business culture that produces outstanding performance through its commitment to creating superior value for customers. The values and belief implicit in the culture encourage: 1) continuous cross-functional learning about

customer's expressed and latent needs and about competitors capabilities and strategies; and 2) cross-functionally coordinated action to create and exploit the learning" (p. 65). Both institutions placed a tremendous amount of effort on the processes of institutional effectiveness and assessment and to learn from their assessment. University A used a system titled "Institutional Effectiveness," where each office or department in the institution was required to set goals (which are approved by a committee) that are intended to bolster a university goal. Most of the participants in this study were highly engaged in the goal of improved retention and the institutional effectiveness process which allowed the participants to learn where they were "measuring up" and where they needed improvement. As participant #2 at University A noted:

... every office is required to do an assessment plan and every year we have to do called an IE Plan...And we have to, based on our functions of our office, we have six major functions – five or six – we have to create an objective for each of those functions and two measures. Some of them will deal with our office functions, (inaudible). A lot of them deal with student measurements. I know like, downstairs our students that sit there – they measure like how many students you know, came in for tutoring and gotten a better grade than those students that didn't. So we are measuring, our support services right there, if they came in to use our services, we can show that they got better grades. How many students came in for advising? And we retained those students who did, so we're seeing – we are able to see direct measures that way....I would say it was (assessment) bureaucratic – more bureaucratic at that point, but now it's taken very seriously and looked very seriously upon. You – you need to know what you're doing. Now if you don't meet your goals okay, but you better show why you didn't meet it and you better try to measure it, and because that's what was used to get our accreditation and they – they saw that and they were amazed. That – that got us through because they were like, 'okay, you are actually doing what we – what a school should be doing', is measuring learning, learning, how slow is the student learning.

This institution also spent a tremendous amount of effort collecting data and manipulating variables to learn more about their students and to predict those who were at risk, participant #10 stated the following:

We look at uh-uh we look at everything. I can tell you the retention rate of students – freshmen students in a particular hall...in a particular residence, uh I can tell you whether they live on and off or off campus; whether they live off campus at an affiliated housing. We look at GPS, we look at test scores, we look at what high school they came from, what – what area of the state they came from and so we know that there are certain , certain factors that historically have – have popped on the screen and said these are ‘at risk’ students.

He continued later with:

...we had to – we did a data mining research program. The purpose of the project was to collect all of the information we knew about these freshmen – everything, everything and uh used a – SAS decision trees to uh see if we could predict who would be successful and uh- and when we came out and cleared all the dust and everything away, GPA number one. And we’ve been thinking about removing GPA because that’s such an over-powerful thing to see if we can strip it out and see if something else wants to top [it out]...

University B also demonstrated a strong effort to generate intelligence about their organization, utilizing different methods than University A. Using a report card that consisted of 27 variables (including those that comprised the US News & World Report College Rankings) the institution published the report card quarterly, thus allowing the entire institution access an opportunity to view how their efforts are assisting or hindering the institutions goal to become a top 20 public university by the year 2011. As Participant #3 noted:

we help – we’re about accountability, so we help the university maintain and report its accountability...So the President has a report card...That he does every quarter and our office is responsible for the report card. Making sure that those things that we’re doing with regard to our vision, mission, and goals are reported on a quarterly basis in such a way that anybody could pick it up and say, “This is what you’ve done.” All of our goals do not directly relate to US News and World, but fourteen of them do; the fourteen under the criteria that US News and World uses, but we report on each one of them and we report subjectively, as well as quantitatively. And so that’s what we do to help keep us focused toward those goals and we have twenty-seven and we report on every one of them and tell whether we’re making progress or not....Uh, we put up and down arrows and nobody likes to get a down arrow and people don’t even like to have an arrow that says, “You haven’t made any change.” Um, you’ll see a down arrow here, but yes we do.

Participant #2 discussed how their market research unit collects information

So, uh, so we’ve broadened that area a little bit and made uh now do again, the um – some of the types of services that they would provide, are probably more directed towards helping us doing a better job; market research and assessment, planning, um and – and again managing special projects. Things that don’t really fall neatly into the camp of either of these other two, fairly traditional communications programs. I think up until – well – I mean we have a fairly traditional university communications organization, with – with some fairly traditional lines like publications, media relations, but what we have found more and more is that a lot of the things that we’re involved with, we’re neither of those two. They needed – we needed to pull some expertise from those areas, but they really didn’t fall neatly into one of those disciplines, and um so we started marketing as – as I said, mainly to direct marketing research and special projects and it – it still tends to have pretty much that flavor.

Participant #3 added context to the above quote with:

Well because we want to be a Top 20 public university, all the Top 20 public universities are our competition...And we see them directly as our competition, so we look at what they’re doing. Um, we explore their web pages, we participate in a number of databases and surveys where they also participate and we compare ourselves to

them and to their progress. And we do it in everything we do. We have a task force with the Board of Trustees right now that's looking at a particular narrow area and they said, "What are the other Top 20's doing?"

So we go out and we will get what are the Top 20's doing? So we call people at Top 20's, we look to see what the Top 20's are doing, and now – we can – we may reject what they're doing...or accept it. Who all are you interviewing with while you're here tomorrow? That will... [she] is going to be able to go down the US News and World criteria, she does all the spreadsheets that does comparisons of where people are going and what they're doing, so you'll get all that from her...But we really – we really want to know from their success, why they're successful. Now the President has said, "We will be a different Top 20 public university."

### Negative and Positive Findings

The majority of the findings were positive and affirmed the research questions. All but two of the participants (one at each institution) appeared generally enthusiastic about the goals achieved by their respective institutions. Generally speaking the participants at both institutions (as well as the general campus environment experienced by the researcher) reflected an optimistic, collaborative and vibrant culture which would support the research questions. At University A, most of the participants portrayed energy or attitude that nothing was impossible to achieve in terms of student success or advancing the institution (except surpassing the two flagship institutions of the state – although some of the participants wanted to try). Perhaps this quote from a participant summarizes the energy at University A:

"Oh yeah, it feels like we're on fire...That's our leadership. I've been here thirteen years and it's always felt that way....it's not just now. This is a place that – our President who's been here fifteen years – he – he saw the potential to create a great institution. Umm, it's a young institution; it's only forty years old."

She later added:

Umm, so there's always kind of a new horizon I think and um, and I think the challenge for us is to go from good, to great, to excellent now...we have a very good program – great program and how do we – like right now we're upset because our retention rate is – it's stuck at 82%, 83% for the last three years. Well, we're – we're not comfortable with that. You now, how do we boost it up? And that's what our challenge is with.

A participant at University B provided a much different but equally profound statement about what she termed as the “Institutional DNA” (she actually described and drew a picture of the “DNA”) and then continued with this statement:

Now, I had a faculty member in my office who drew this differently, which I thought was wonderful too and he said, “Here's our DNA” and he drew the helix and he said, “This is faculty, staff, accomplishments. These are our student accomplishments, and these ladders that go between them are the things that make us special. This is innovation, our creativity, um – our scholarship...” And he had one more that I can't remember and then out here in the (inaudible) are all those things that make us unique, which is our – our emphasis areas of things that we're focusing on and you probably heard of our eight emphasis areas, which are like Automotive, Information Technology...here's our – our faculty, um – programs that we're doing. Um – we've got Athletics, we've got leadership – so all the things that are going on on campus all around here and they all fit together and form our DNA. So he drew it a little bit differently, but those models tell you that we're thinking about who we are – not in terms of Top 20, but who it is and what makes us *University B*.

I just – and I think when you talk about what makes us a unique place. Why is it different from anywhere else? I think it's because people are thinking like this. I mean this is mechanical engineering person who's saying, “I heard the President speak and I saw him draw all these circles, but this is what I see – this is faculty and staff, and these are our student accomplishments and we're linked and we're in this wonderful environment.” You know? I – who would – who would think that...that people are out there listening to the President talk about – “How do we make these circles work? How do we cut

across so that we don't all end up out here? In this outer circle, only focused on our research and ourselves? And that we leave the freshmen and the sophomores behind with graduate students teaching them?"

It is remarkable – it is remarkable. So, is there – does this go throughout? I would say that there's a – there's a sense on this campus that *University B* is special. Yeah. Would other people think we're special? Maybe not, but they don't live here and they're not in the environment – that's okay.

Or perhaps more succinctly stated, another participant said:

Um I don't know what it is. We've – well if you could figure out what that is, we could bottle it and make a fortune out of it! I – I – you know I really and this is personal, me talking, because they – you know we – there's a big thing on what is the *University B* Experience? And, you know, what's in them there hills?

In terms of negative findings, there was not conclusive information to suggest that market orientation practices were responsible for strong recruitment numbers (particularly for University A); participants gave differing viewpoints on the targeted success of recruitment of students. While institutions had desirable application:admission:enrollment statistics and demonstrated strong average SAT and ACT scores, some of the participants attributed that success to “demographics” or scholarship programs from the state.

At University A most of the participants were either not familiar with the recruitment strategies of the institution or did not speak positively about them, for instance, participant #4 stated: “I don't think we do as well in recruitment in some arenas that are really important. I don't think we do good at all, recruiting. We do a heck of a job keeping them and graduating them.”

A senior level executive at the institution provided the following insights on recruitment and admissions:

‘How are you going to differentiate yourself?’ Um, uh, differentiation is – is a – difficult. Because I believe in higher education we are dealing in a more and more in-commodity market place. And if you’re in a commodity market place and most of the universities have the same programs, same services that everybody cares. Small classes, uh great location, new buildings, nice rec. center, uh and it – the movement is they’re really moving on price or convenience, then it becomes a little difficult at time to differentiate yourself. You really got to think about it and work hard to do it. Um, marketing is absolutely essential with differentiation; it’s kind of – they’re closely tied. Uh – I think it’s absolutely important, but I think sometimes people in the undergraduate or the graduate whatever – wherever they may be; the admissions operation are so caught up by the trees that they don’t see the forest. They just don’t want to take the time to do research that might them a better idea of where they should be going and what they should be doing and crafting their messages that frankly some people may want to hear. I have said this in a lot of presentations I’ve made around the country, that this is a commodity we provide here and it’s very difficult to differentiate

At University B, the author received conflicting reports on recruitment strategies, as one participant stated:

Um, honestly the recruitment is, we don’t – I don’t think we have that great of a recruitment program, except for the top end and bottom end – the middle of the road student, just wants to come here because they know about [University B] and they know its reputation. We have 14,000 applications for 2,800 slots. Partly I think because we have a state that is giving what we call ‘life scholarships’, so it’s a lottery funded scholarship, every student with a ‘B’ average gets \$5,000 if you go with the state, so what’s going to happen if your in-state and you’re a B student? You’re going to apply in-state. So the number – I think the number of applications – the rise in applications is a direct result of having in-state funding; I don’t think it’s any magic there. Out of state is because of reputation.

While participant #4 presented more of a strategic point of view in terms of recruitment:

I think it's – what I see more than anything is there is a public awareness of our drive for quality. in conjunction with us you know – they come up with a strategy of – of how much money to offer you know and make somewhat of a matrix of test scores and high school ranks and those sort of things – majors and actually promise dollar amounts and when we kind of come in on the backside and put programs to those dollars. (Chuckle) Um, and we've been pretty successful I think for – I think our yield rate on the top students we're going for...

### Uncontrolled Factors

The results may demonstrate a “Polly-Anna” effect where participants largely provided “positive” information, stories and highlights about their institution. It is impossible for the researcher to know if the participants were censoring towards the positive, or if, their comments demonstrated the “bulk” of their reality. The researcher suspects that while participants generally shed a positive light on their institution, their comments were genuine, credible, and were not intended to mislead the researcher. Some natural bias on the part of the participants may have emerged, in an attempt to not “air dirty laundry” however when queried the participants would regularly provide information on areas for improvement, “gaps” with what they are currently doing, or discuss how other institutions are more advanced or are doing a better job in a particular area than themselves.

The researcher submits the participants have a strong affinity to their institution. For instance, several participants from the same university discussed the slogan that

appeared on all university publications by noting the slogan rang true for themselves or the work they do with students (University A stands for Opportunity). As one of the participants stated

“...*University A* stands for opportunity and I certainly think that has been true for me, there has been a tremendous amount of opportunity for me to grow here, so I don’t just think that slogan is just for students but it is true for all of us for many different reasons.”

While University B’s web page reads:

With a distinctive governance system that fosters stability in leadership, unique college structures that create an unmatched climate for collaboration, and a driven, competitive spirit that encourages faculty, staff and students to embrace bold, sometimes audacious, goals, *University B* has set its sights on being one of the nation’s top-20 public universities by 2011.

### Weaknesses in the Data

The data could be construed as weak for the following reasons: 1) compared to the number of individuals employed at each university, the researcher interviewed relatively few people. Therefore, while the author believes the interviews were rich in content and the reality of those interviewed is accurately portrayed, it is conceivable that other perspectives and other stories were not captured by the researcher. 2) In some instances the interview protocol was not followed when participants disclosed information that was rich in content but outside of the scope of the protocol, the researcher purposely did not interrupt the participant. 3) Not all interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist (due to tape sound quality, or the inability to tape record the interview). In these instances, participants were paraphrased to the best of

the researcher's ability; however it is conceivable that the depth and richness from some of the statements was not recorded and therefore not reflected in this study. 4) With perhaps the exception of two participants, those interviewed could be described as proud of their story and the institution; therefore the information could be skewed more to the positive than is actually the case (the two outliers presented a more cautious enthusiasm, especially towards campus leadership).

#### Resolutions of Contradictions, Inconsistencies and Misleading Elements in the Findings

Generally speaking the content of the interviews was "even" in that the subjects portrayed uniform realities of their institution from their individual perspectives. For instance, when the researcher queried who their competition was, the majority of the participants cited the same institutions (for each of the respective campuses). Most of the participants knew the number of enrollees, retention rate, graduation rate, etc. None of the participants gave radically different responses to the forced choice Likert scaled questions. The researcher attributes this result organizational culture and consistency in messages and expectations from leadership.

#### Summary of Results

Results of the study indicated that participants from both institutions were well versed in the institutional mission, vision and goals and were predominately committed to meeting those goals. Further, there was a strong commitment to institutional learning through assessment of goals and evaluation of institutional effectiveness. Institutional learning at University A consisted of a regimented method of evaluating institutional

goals and the departmental level. University B evaluated goals through a 27-point report card that was published quarterly, along with the requirement that all faculty, staff and administrators had to select and support at least one of the goals which was assessed during employee performance reviews. The institutions also developed data mining projects with a sophisticated variable set (75 + variables) in an attempt to identify students at risk and understand attributes associated with student persistence. A strong and committed organizational culture was present at both institutions. University A culture appeared to be motivated by its relative adolescence when compared to the origins of other higher education institutions. As a group, the participants were either entrepreneurial/creative or were willing to be managed by those who were. The culture at University B was more traditional and retrospective in philosophy (mindful of its founder and history), but equally as aggressive as University A in achieving its 27 goals with the culmination of becoming a top 20 public institution by the year 2011. University B appeared to use affinity to brand itself and build relationships with students, parents, alumni, employers, etc. Both institutions were heavily invested in improving student learning and success through advising and student mentoring through outreach programs.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

For the last several years the system has been shifting steadily toward greater competition, marked by less market segmentation, more dependence on market forces and less dependence on regulation. Colleges have been using a variety of strategies to compete, some creative and benign, others shocking in their intensity. Depending on how they are used, each of these strategies and competition as a whole can either serve or undercut public purpose (Newman, Courtier & Scurry, 2004, p. 9-10).

Newman, Courtier, & Scurry's assertion is similar to much of the literature recently published (Bok, 2004; Kirp, 2004; Washburn, 2005; Giester, 2005) claiming American higher education is making a shift towards a market orientation. These contentions create a terrain that is ripe for study, since a change in the landscape of public higher education affects a variety of constituents and must be better understood. To that end, it is important to know if American public higher education is moving towards a market orientation, and if so, how the shift is being accomplished, and to what benefit or detriment to its constituents. In an attempt to understand the purported shift, the purpose of this study was to determine if two selected public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions were utilizing market orientation practices (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Slater and Narver, 1990; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Narver and Slater, 2000) as evidenced in their organizational culture, to enhance their undergraduate recruitment and retention strategies. More specifically, the following questions were examined: What market

orientation practices influence institutional recruitment and retention outcomes the most? What market orientation practices influence institutional recruitment and retention outcomes the least? How does the institutional culture promote or hinder a market orientation?

#### Summary of the Problem, Methodology, Results and Conclusions

Problem. The problem addressed in this study was the limited evidence in the scholarly literature linking the practice of market orientation with the delivery of American public higher education. While many authors (Washburn, 2005; Newman, Couturier and Scurry, 2004; Kirp, 2004; Bok, 2003; Wolff and Bryan, 1999) have written about their belief that American higher education is moving toward a market orientation, limited studies have been published citing the actual practice or success/failure of an institution(s) demonstrating market orientation qualities (DesJardins, 2003). Conversely, numerous studies have been published citing the effects of practicing a market orientation in a traditional business environment in terms of profitability; market share, employee commitment; firm performance, the learning organization; etc. (Yoon and Lee, 2005; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Slater and Narver, 1995; Narver and Slater, 1990). As Slater and Narver, 1994 (p. 54) noted:

Business that apply significant resources to understanding their customers and competitors and coordinate the activities of all functions of the business for an integrated value-creation effort achieve higher relative profitability, sales growth and new product success. ....A market orientation is a particular form of business culture. As noted previously, increasing and maintaining a magnitude

of market orientation is a complex process that requires a considerable expenditure of money and time.

Finally, the literature does not uncover the practice of market orientation as it may be related to an enrollment management plan of an institution. It is not known, for instance, if institutions are exploring and addressing: 1) their financial stability/survivability needs; 2) expressed needs of the consumer (primarily the student); 3) latent needs of the consumer; 4) some combination of all three; or 4) perhaps none of the above (Narver and Slater, 1990).

Methodology. Using US News & World Report Rankings and the Carnegie Classification for public High Research Activity institutions, two universities were selected for the study based upon their tier level, proximity, and willingness to participate in the study. An interview protocol was developed and pre-tested on three individuals who worked at an institution listed in the US News & World Report rankings (but not affiliated with University A or University B). The interview protocol was based on the market orientation research of Jaworski and Kohli (1993), specifically querying the 11 elements of a market oriented organization. The researcher visited both campuses and conducted eighteen interviews *in situ* with participants whose titles ranged from a research analyst to vice-president of enrollment management functions. In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted an extensive review of each institution's website, read newspaper articles and press releases, and embedded herself on each campus for three days to develop a sense of the campus culture. Thirteen of the eighteen interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist, three interviews were transcribed by

the author, and two interviews were not recorded but detailed notes were written). Using Glaser's (1965) constant comparison method, the data were sorted, coded and delimited for themes with two unique models emerging.

Results. The results reflect emergent themes which were unique to each institution while sharing the characteristics of Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and Narver and Slater (1990) market orientated organization. Participants from both institutions provided examples of the following attributes that affected their freshman to sophomore retention rates: 1) top management placed an emphasis on retention; 2) top management was not adverse to risk; 3) the interdepartmental dynamics were collaborative and connected, without an excessive amount of conflict (one outlier at University A would not agree with this attribute); 4) an organizational hierarchy was articulated; a formal and centralized retention structure existed – but was not excessive in restriction; 5) intelligence was collected and disseminated through the organization per the directives of top management; 6) after intelligence was disseminated it was responded to from all levels of the organization; 7) employees had a strong commitment and affinity to the organization – demonstrating esprit de corps; 8) employees demonstrated a competitive intensity. Contrary to Jaworski and Kohli's model, there was limited evidence of reward and incentive programs.

Additionally, themes that emerged specifically from University A included: 1) the institutional vision and goal setting were clearly articulated to enhance student retention; 2) there was a strong leadership presence and expectation for student retention;

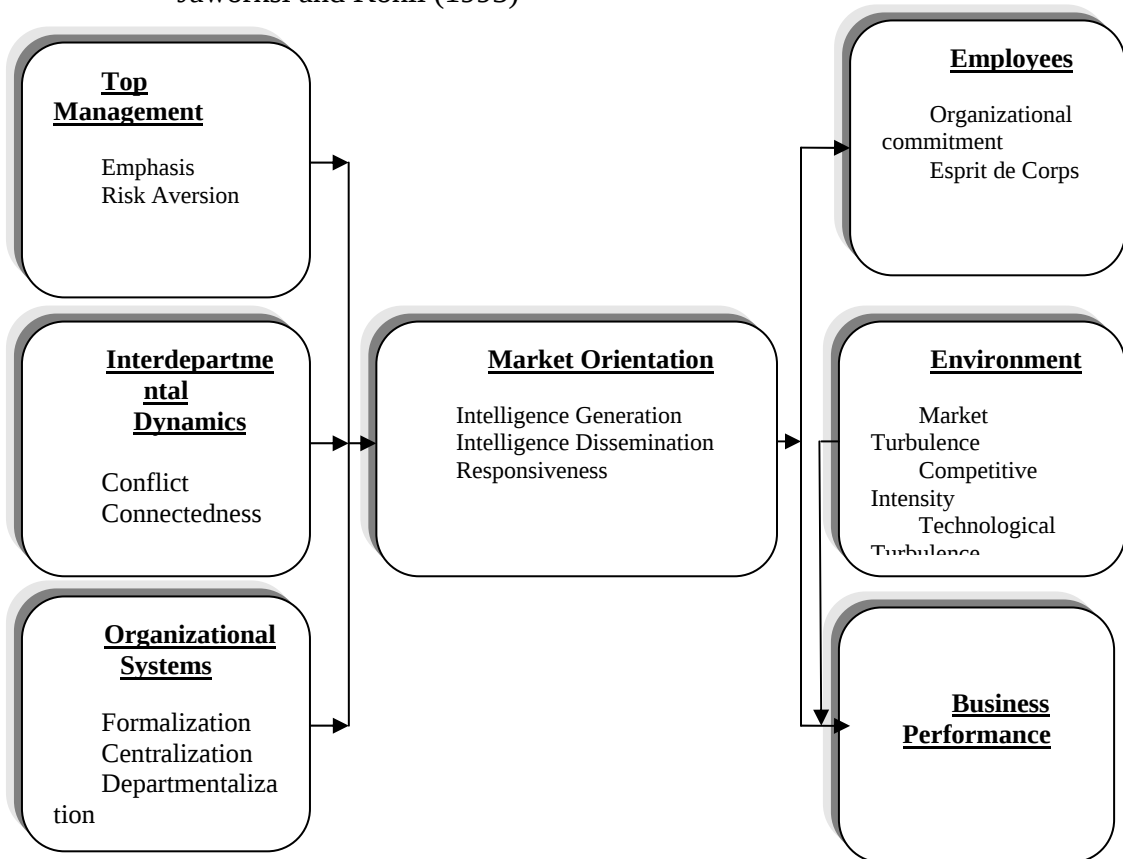
3) there was a commitment to institutional effectiveness through assessment and data mining (using performance and operational variables to predict trends, student persistence and student attrition); 4) there was an institutional expectation for staff and administrators to communicate and collaborate; 5) there was the presence of a “strategy triangle” – innovate, change, and compete.

Specific themes that emerged from University B included: 1) A common thread existed which tied the students, staff, alumni, and in some cases faculty together to create a sense of affinity – known as their “DNA” and the *University B Family*; 2) The president and the Board of Trustees articulated a vision and required a quarterly analysis of movement toward goals in the institutional report card; 3) The institution experienced a major “turning point” which helped facilitate change. (A radical initiative occurred at the institution where an interim president combined several academic units and colleges; a new president was then hired and set an aggressive goal to be a top 20 public research institution by the year 2011); 4) Creative initiatives were encouraged - if they assisted the institution with reaching its top 20 status (especially through branding, market research, academic programs/ services, and building affinity); 5) A strong emphasis was placed on institutional assessment to track movement towards the US News & World Report goal and the other 13 goals listed on the university’s report card; and 6) The institution demonstrated an “ambition for tomorrow” on the part of the staff and administrators while maintaining a respect for tradition and legacy.

Both universities demonstrated a notable propensity towards: 1) a customer orientation; 2) a competitor orientation; and 3) interfunctional coordination to understand their customer expressed and latent needs to enhance undergraduate student retention through the collection, analysis and integration of data. University A did not demonstrate a strong market orientation towards the recruitment of undergraduates, other than transfer students. University B demonstrated a high degree of market orientation towards the recruitment of: 1) prospects with strong academic potential; 2) prospects considered “legacies”; and 3) minority students. Finally the findings pointed to the effect an organizational culture can have on market orientation practices.

Conclusion. While the results reflected significant differences between the two institutions relative to organizational culture, mission, goals, institutional tactics, and competitive strategy, generally the institutions shared similar characteristics/attributes of a market oriented organization outlined in the business literature as defined by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Slater and Narver (2000). As Kohli and Jaworski (1990) noted, “a market orientation appears to provide a unifying focus for the efforts and projects of individuals and departments within the organization, thereby leading to superior performance” (p. 13). The figure below represents Jaworski and Kohli’s (1993) model for Antecedents and Consequences of Market Orientation (p. 55). A description of the antecedents and consequences of each university follows.

Figure 8. Antecedents and Consequences of Market Orientation  
Jaworksi and Kohli (1993)



Perhaps one of the most notable strengths of both institutions was their ability to generate and use data based intelligence, both internal and external to the organization. This tactic was pervasive at both institutions and reflects a central component of Jaworksi and Kohli's (1990) market oriented organization. Both institutions had offices and processes dedicated to intelligence creation and dissemination. Both units measured and published their success; all participants knew the institution's retention percentage and told stories related to their role in retention. With the exception of one participant, all respondents from University B cited their US News & World report ranking during the course of the interviews. This quote, demonstrates the organizational commitment

towards centralization and formalization using an institutional report card of the assessment process at University B:

And so that's what we do to help keep us focused toward those goals and we have twenty-seven and we report on every one of them and tell whether we're making progress or not....Uh, we put up and down arrows and nobody likes to get a down arrow and people don't even like to have an arrow that says, "You haven't made any change." Um, you'll see a down arrow here, but yes we do.

Participant #1 from University A fused the concepts of assessment with innovation and improvement with:

"Being innovative and some of the program initiatives that we have done. I mean it's just like with anything, can you say that it's totally new? That no one's ever done anything like that before? I don't know in all cases you could say that, again, I go back to the idea that (University A) is very open to doing things and that they – you know, there's always that what I think is from Dr. P; "break it all down", and yeah, we're always looking, you know we're evaluating the whole institution of effectiveness, with this – not just give just lip service, but really looking, okay – if you're not doing good things then how can you do them better – more efficiently, are you really making an impact? And if not, this really – let's put some time and effort into having more of an impact."

A second notable strength at both institutions was demonstrated through the participant's responses to the role of leadership. As Jaworski and Kohli (1993) noted "top management reinforcement of the importance of a market orientation is likely to encourage individuals in the organization to track changing markets, share market intelligence with others in the organization, and be responsive to market needs" (p. 55).

Further, top managers who “demonstrate a willingness to take risks and to accept occasional failures as being natural” are more likely to respond to changing market needs and be willing to introduce new products or services that match evolving customer needs and expectations” (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993, p. 55). The majority of the participants at both institutions appeared to trust and respect the role and vision of leadership and attributed the institutional success to leadership. Participant #3 from University A stated:

Oh yeah, it feels like we're on fire...That's our leadership. I've been here thirteen years and it's always felt that way....it's not just now. This is a place that – our President who's been here fifteen years – he – he saw the potential to create a great institution. Umm, it's a young institution; it's only forty years old. We've got a lot of good examples of what is great. He recognized the particular place that we have in our region, umm...both – not just the city, but really an eleven-county region in the central part of [*the state*], which is the fastest growing part of [*the state*]. Umm, and he's been extremely deliberate in, uh, working towards the achievement of his five major goals...

A participant from University B shared this comment, one similar to what other participants quoted, noting the president's emphasis on improving the rankings of the institution (doing so required a risk-taking orientation):

...not all (universities) of them are quite as you know candid about it as we are, because it's somewhat controversial (US News & World Report Rankings). But um, where this goes back to is um, is our current President, uh was a dean here for many years – graduated from here and when he was a candidate for President. He – he was a finalist and he was being interviewed by the Board of Trustees, they asked him a question that I guess they asked everybody and it's a typical interview-type question. “Where do you see *University B* five years from now?” And his response was, “I don't think I can answer that question. Let me talk about where I see *University B* ten years from now.” And that was kind of

interesting, because you know, the turnover at the top of universities is – has been historically pretty rapid I mean, you know to have a President last four or five years was getting to be more the exception rather than the rule and one of the things that that said to them, was “You know, I have a real long-term commitment. I don’t want to use *University B* as a stepping stone to go somewhere else – this is the job I want.”

At University A, participants regularly cited the role of the president, two vice-presidents and an associate vice-president related to their comfort with creativity and trying “new things.” At University B, all but one of the participants cited the role of the president and the provost in setting the retention goal. Curiously, the vast majority of respondents at both institutions did not credit leadership with prospective student recruitment initiatives, other than transfer students at University A, while University B targeted high academic potential prospects, minorities, out-of-state students who did not require scholarships, and legacy transfers; the university designed a community college transition program for legacy transfers who did not meet admission requirements (but with no nod towards leadership).

In general, as discussed in Chapter IV, with the exception of an outlier at University A and B, the participants at both universities provided examples relating to collaboration, commitment to the organization and a strong sense of team. Their illustrations coincided with the Jaworski and Kohli’s (1993) market orientation theory: “a market orientation is also posited to be affected by interdepartmental connectedness, which refers to the degree of formal and informal direct contact among employees across departments” (p. 56). Participants spoke of committees and councils, meetings and

taskforces that all related to retention, from various perspectives (marketing, assessment, advising, teaching, supplemental instruction, housing). Participants also told stories or gave insight about their personal or professional commitment to their respective university. For instance a participant at University B described a conversation she had with a candidate who was interviewing for a position and he noted the commitment of administrators and staff on campus:

I will just say in terms of vision, mission, goals, um we recently had a – a situation – it’s just anecdotal for whatever it’s worth. We – where we were interviewing for a senior-level position of direct report to the President, and um and one of the candidates who was here was meeting with a group of other administrators and some staff and he made a comment and – and you know how it is when you go – I mean you have to go around for like two days and meet with all these different groups, and he – he said one of the things that struck him the most was that when he would ask that question, ‘Do you believe that you personally are making a contribution towards *University B* reaching the Top 20?’ He said, “Every person I ask that question to, said ‘yes’.”...And that’s pretty phenomenal....I mean that’s – that’s phenomenal, and I – and I find that in my organization. IF they really – they really think that what they do is making a difference, so...anyway.

A participant at University A spoke about staff, administration, and to a certain extent faculty commitment in almost a spiritual way, representing the organizational commitment and esprit de corps (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993) of the staff:

There is a – there is a deep level at which we all feel like we’re sharing this load – we’re sharing this life. And it is a huge workload. I don’t underestimate that in any way at all – it’s huge, but the goals are clear, because that’s the other part of what this institution says to us. We’re doing institutional effectiveness planning every year. Lay it out for us, what are you going to do and how is that going to impact student success? What are the

learning objectives? And were you successful? Did it work? If not, change it. Tremendous amount of innovation with faculty. You never have to be stuck in doing something in – that could be improved or re-doubled. That – there’s a lot of – a lot of encouragement. We’ll try it – we’ll try it – we’ll try it!

The concept of ‘student as customer’ is not widely accepted in higher education, but many of the participants interviewed provided examples where they were attempting to meet the students expressed and latent needs, (through continual learning and improvement of the processes, services and delivery of education, as measured through student learning outcomes). As one dean from University B stated, “What I wanted to do was work for undergraduates.” The division at University A that is primarily charged with student retention is called the Division of Student Success and Development. Many of the participants spoke of listening to students (or parents) and responding or adjusting programs or services because of student feedback – which are classic examples of attempting to meet the expressed needs of students. Examples of “listening” behaviors included: 1) learning from student government; 2) sponsoring student advisory boards; 3) surveying students through focus groups; 4) hiring students to call other students to understand their needs; 5) surveying students through electronic means; 6) soliciting feedback from students in class; 7) using the data mining project to identify “at risk” students – then follow up with an advisor “intervention”; 8) providing an academic coach to evaluate student learning/studying difficulties.

The results also indicated that both institutions have a competitive orientation. All but one of University B’s participants recalled the goal of being in the top 20 public research institutions. Participants at University A, though more subtle, were also mindful

of their ranking with the state's public higher education institutions, but not to the same overt degree as University B. University A's competition strategy also appeared to be driven from within, where their goal was to improve their retention rate from the previous year and not to trump an external index or ranking system. A senior level executive with University A referred to higher education as a commodity and described the environment (market turbulence) in terms of:

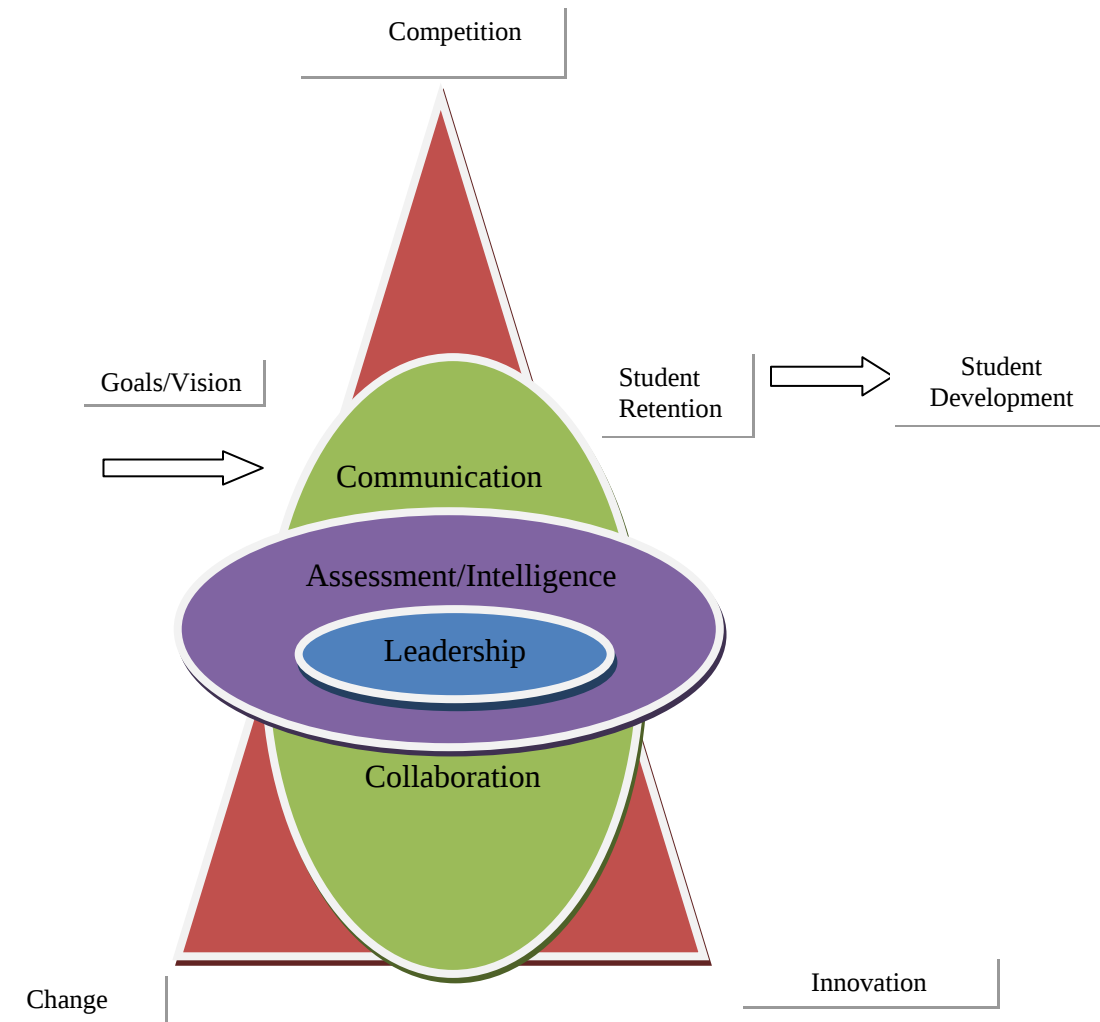
...differentiation is – is a – difficult. Because I believe in higher education we are dealing in a more and more in a-commodity market place. And if you're in a commodity market place and most of the universities have the same programs, same services that everybody carries. Small classes, uh great location, new buildings, nice rec. center, uh and it – the movement is they're really moving on price or convenience, then it becomes a little difficult at times to differentiate yourself. You really got to think about it and work hard to do it.

The findings indicated that participants did not frequently articulate tactics or attributes characteristic of a recruitment market orientation, with the following exceptions: 1) University A aggressively pursued transfer students and developed processes and services to assist transition from local community colleges to the institution. University B recruitment efforts were dedicated to targeting high academic potential prospects, out-of-state students who did not require scholarship money, minorities, and a community college transition program for legacies. University B also built a "Visitor's Center" with the intent to create an impression and collect information from campus visitors (the Visitor's Center was a gift from the class of 1944). The external environment likely drove the limited focus on recruitment since both institutions

had thousands of more applicants than admits (62% to 45% acceptance rate respectively for 2005).

The results demonstrated a culture that has a market orientation committed to retention at both institutions as reflected in the antecedents and consequences of market orientation outlined by Jaworski and Kohli (1993). This finding is meaningful because institutions that choose to embrace a market orientation culture may be able to improve their retention statistics. It is important to note the institutional profile, in terms of organizational culture, history, mission, size, origin, location, governing board, student profile, etc. were very different, yet both institutions demonstrated impressive retention statistics 82% and 89% respectively through a culture that was committed to improved retention through a market orientation. Based upon the findings, two models are presented below (one for each institution). The models represent the unique organizational culture of each institution which enabled their market orientation tactics.

Figure 9. University A – Organizational Culture – Attributes Supporting Retention, Student Success and Development



In figure 9, the themes of collaboration and communication were placed on either end of the sphere signifying that effective collaboration cannot occur without communication and effective communication cannot occur without collaboration at University A. Further, the themes of leadership and assessment/intelligence were placed within the collaboration and communication

sphere to emphasize how the presence of those two factors have influenced communication and collaboration at the institution. Leadership and the clear articulation of vision and goals were central to the initiatives at the institution. Leadership also used the tactic of pervasive assessment (institutional effectiveness) to gain intelligence on what “is working” at the institution and what needs improvement. When areas of improvement were identified, the institution typically moved to innovate, change, and/or compete in keeping with an overall institutional strategy to retain students (strategy triangle). The function of assessment guides the strategy at the institution. Leadership and the intelligence that emerged through assessment were intentionally included in the center of the model since those themes (from an organizational culture stand point) were at the heart of the institution. Leadership does not hover outside of the communication – collaboration sphere nor the strategic triangle, rather the tone set by leadership and the intelligence gathered through the assessment demanded engagement on the part of all staff. While the theme of leadership included central administration at University A, it is not limited to the executives of the institution. During the course of several of the interviews, employees of the institution articulated where they took on a leadership role within their office or division to innovate, advance change, or to develop a competitive tactic. A few of the participants cited the young age of the institution (40-years old) as the primary reason why University A and the people who work there were not entrenched in traditional institutional bureaucracy. Participants also indicated their culture would support a good idea

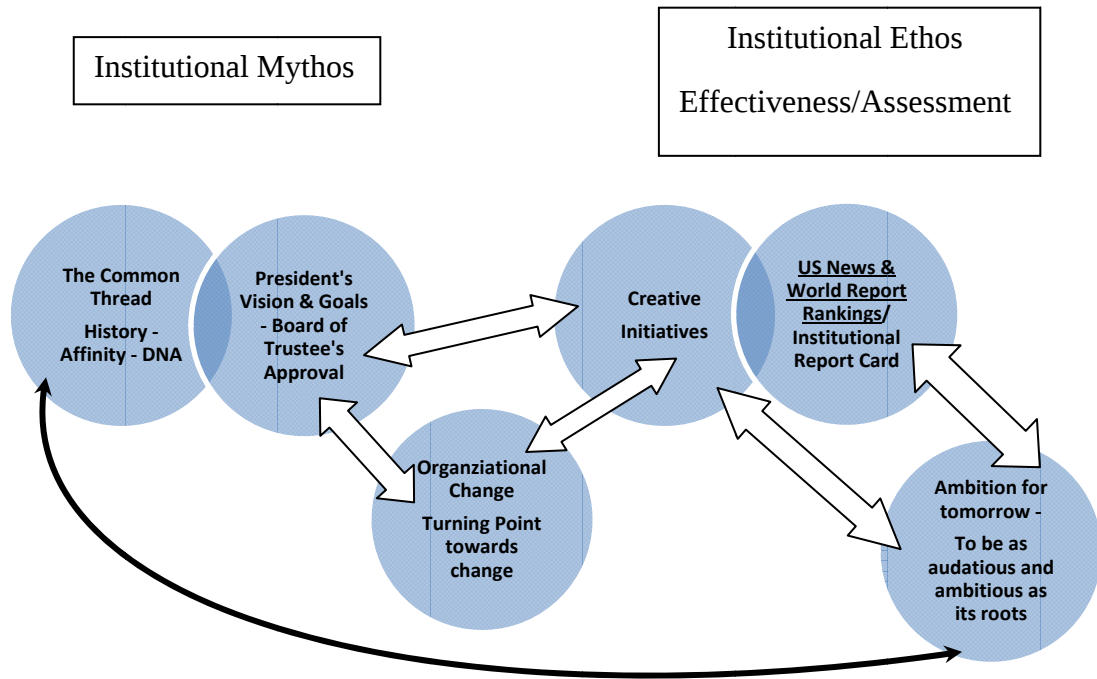
suggested by a less senior employee. Finally, the institutional effectiveness process required middle managers to take on a leadership role to innovate, affect change, and develop competitive tactics to advance the institution. In this model, goals and vision were an input into the strategic triangle, where the spheres of collaboration-communication are driven by leadership and assessment with the within the core of the organization.

The institutional culture at University B is expressed through the model in figure 5.3. University B capitalized on its “mythos” (the interrelated set of beliefs, attitudes, and values held by a society or cultural group) which was represented through a historical account of its origin and continued being. The focus on the history and legacy of the institution lead the researcher to believe that the mythos of the University B was represented both by historically correct “accounts” and institutional legend (i.e. larger than life coaches, war heroes, presidents, success of student scholars, admission of the first black student, athletic tradition, and the unique formation of the institution through the donation of land). The university embraced a market orientation by being mindful of “its roots” and building affinity through the *University B Family/DNA*. Through their institutional history, the president and Board of Trustees set forth their vision and goals, which were initiated by articulating and pursuing major organizational change (turning point) and the drive towards creative initiatives (including but not limited to brand, market research, improvement of undergraduate programs, creating affinity). Initiatives and goals were measured through institutional assessment/report card and the US News & World Report College Rankings publication. Participants in the organization

demonstrated an ambition for tomorrow” where their efforts and plans were designed to impact the short and long term goals of the institution while honoring the tradition of the past.

The last four components of University B’s model represent the ethos (the fundamental and distinctive character of a group, social context, or period of time, typically expressed in attitudes, habits, and beliefs) experienced by the researcher while *in situ*. The attitude, habits and beliefs of the participants were focused on the welfare and advancement of University B. Many would speak of their desire to improve the ranking of the institution, others relayed their experience at the institution as an undergraduate student, or that members of their family attended the university. The attitudes of the majority of the participants was to improve the institution through creative ideas that tied into the vision of the founder, and the goals of the president/board of trustees.

Figure 10. University B – Organizational Culture – Attributes Supporting Retention and Recruitment



#### Discussion of the Broader Implications of the Findings.

The findings are specific to the two institutions that agreed to participate in the study. The resulting models provide evidence that a market orientation strategy can emerge from institutions when the features of their organizational culture are mobilized in concert with thoughtful, committed, strategies. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the findings rests in the reality that the two organizations are practically opposite in terms of student profile, location (rural versus urban), history, amenities, athletic conference and size, yet both have achieved significant improvements in student retention. Based on the findings discussed in Chapter IV, the researcher attributes improved retention to the positive impact of a market-orientated culture.

Practical Considerations. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) find a substantial positive relationship between an organization's profitability and the degree to which they are market oriented. Institutions, promoting a market orientation ethic, would likely have a more predictable and constant revenue stream than those who do not. Improved or strong student retention statistics can reflect improved student retention that affect the institutional financial situation towards the positive. One method of improving the institutional bottom line is to design a market orientation that works in concert with the mission, goals, vision and culture of the institution. Further, institutions who improve their recruitment and retention outputs may improve their US News & World Report Rankings. While this assertion may be controversial, a market orientation posture requires the institution to be mindful of competitors; to that end, rankings become an important assessment tool for both the institution and the potential student. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the institutions featured in this study demonstrated strong retention rates; the market orientation strategy of the institution appears to benefit not only the institution, but the student as well.

Traditionally, institutions have focused their energy on meeting the expressed needs of students to improve student retention and recruitment. Based upon the research findings, it would appear to be important for institutions to focus energy on the organization to create, and in some cases inspire (i.e. University B's mythos and ethos) a culture of market orientation. The institution's were able to achieve success because they paid as much attention to improving and considering their own methods (at a very deep level to the point of meta-analysis of the organization) as they did in addressing student

expressed and latent needs. Assessment and the cultivation of intelligence were key hallmarks at both institutions; their understanding of students expressed and latent needs drove improved retention rates.

Limitations of the Study. The author acknowledges that much of this study reflected “what institutions are doing well” through the statements of participants who were sharing their own reality. While the author believed the participants were candid in their responses, it is difficult to know “what was not offered” by the participants. Since both institutions demonstrated impressive retention statistics, the author believed the participants were for the most part genuine in their responses. In terms of recruitment, the study found limited evidence of market orientation tactics, with the exception of a narrow list of prospects at University B.

The author also acknowledges that the findings and models generated are specific to each institution, and therefore the transferability of the conclusions to other institutions are limited, but not meaningless. The study was also limited by the number and profile of the participants.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if two selected public Carnegie High Research Activity institutions were utilizing market orientation practices (Jaworksi and Kohli, 1993; Narver and Slater, 2000) as evidenced in their market oriented organizational culture, to enhance their undergraduate recruitment and retention strategies. Based upon the findings and the resulting conclusions, it appears a market

orientation is positively related to retention outcomes at both institutions. Further, in these two instances, it does appear that an organizational culture can affect the “market orientation-ness” of the institution. Based on this study, there is not conclusive evidence of a market oriented recruitment focus, with the exception of University B effort to recruit target groups.

### Recommendations

Due to the case study orientated nature of this research project, more questions emerged relative to how other institutions might apply the findings to improve their own recruitment and retention statistics. The sections below further elaborate on recommendations relative to: 1) theoretical recommendations; 2) future research, 3) replicating the study; 4) mythological adjustments; and 5) new questions.

Theoretical Recommendations. The following theoretical considerations became apparent at the conclusion of the research study: 1) In an attempt to determine if the practice of market orientation is a consequence of high performing institutions, a study should be conducted on lower performing institutions (those with output variables (recruitment, retention, etc.) that are significantly lower than those in this study; 2) The MARKOR instrument appears to have some validity in the use of higher education. It should be tested further; 3) Organizational culture may be a defining attribute of successful institutions and should be tested further; 4) Institutions who anticipate their “customer’s” expressed and latent needs appear to return higher recruitment and retention statistics, this hypothesis should be further tested.

Further Research. The value of this exploratory study exists not only because of the questions that were answered but also (and perhaps more importantly) because of the questions that emerged from the findings. The questions answered provide an adequate base, a heuristic, from which to further study market orientation tactics and organizational culture in American universities. Public higher education institutions are complex organizations, serving varied constituents, with a blend of funding and revenue sources, tied to missions and agendas that while serving the public good, are often politically charged. As governmental funding decreases or is tied to productivity measurements, administrators should be mindful of those qualities that make them effective in value-added services or products. To that end, market orientation practices in high-performing and low-performing universities (as determined by institutional output metrics) should be studied in addition to the organizational culture.

Replication with Other Sample or Participants. The findings of this exploratory study reflected the unique mission, goals, vision, and culture of each institution. While the methodology of the study could be replicated at other institutions, the results would be different. The researcher concedes that the results might be slightly altered if the study was conducted at the same institution with different individuals since the reality of the participants was a major factor in grounding theory, however the researcher believes the organizational culture at the institutions is likely too entrenched to radically alter the models.

Methodological Adjustments. The following procedural adjustments are recommended should a similar study be attempted in the future: 1) Follow-up with the participants by sending Likert scale questions a week after the interviews to facilitate better triangulation and member checking. 2) If time and resources permit, the researcher recommends interviewing faculty and staff from different offices/departments in the organization. 3) This study targeted participants who were either directly involved in recruitment/retention or those whose ancillary job function was to support the effort (i.e. marketing); the findings would have benefitted from individuals who might not be as intimately involved in recruitment and retention, but would be able to describe impact of the recruitment and retention strategy. 4) The author also recommends the perception of the participants be checked by interviewing students to determine if the recruitment and retention efforts, as described by the participants, are present and of value. Further, by interviewing participants outside of the “core,” the researcher can test the pervasiveness of the organizational culture committed to recruitment and retention and determine if other sub-cultures are present.

New Questions. As with any exploratory research study, more questions have emerged than were answered. The findings of this study should be used as a heuristic for further research to at minimum address the following questions:

1. Are there notable market orientation differences in recruitment and retention tactics between public and private institutions?

2. Do institutions having a freshman-sophomore retention rate of less than 70% practice a recruitment and retention market orientation?
3. What effect is stronger, a profile of student persistence or an institutional market orientation strategy towards retention?
4. Is the MARKOR (Measure of Market Orientation) survey compatible with the study of “market orientation-ness” at public institutions of higher education?
5. Are favorable retention statistics a consequence of market orientation? If so, to what degree can a market orientation culture influence freshman-sophomore retention rates?

Implications of the Findings. The findings imply that organizations committed to a market orientated culture will likely produce better retention results than those who are not. A market orientation culture is impactful because it targets the expressed and latent needs of the consumer through a mindful practice of managing the antecedents and consequences of a market orientation (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). In particular, it is apparent that leaders at institutions who articulate their vision and goals, combined with the organizational culture (traditions and influences) and communication/assessment strategies, will likely be more market oriented than those who do not. Beyond the educational benefits for students through improved retention statistics, both institution's were beneficiaries of a market orientation culture as they experienced fiscal soundness and income stream predictability, thus supporting Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) assertion that profitability is likely a consequence of market orientation. Further, for one institution in particular, a market oriented culture also produced improved US News and

World Report College Rankings. Perhaps more importantly, and a notion overlooked by detractors of a market orientation (Kirp 2004; Washburn, 2005; Newman, Courtier and Scurry, 2004), the student benefits from services and opportunities dedicated to their success and persistence at the institution.

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## APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONS MEETING PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

## Tier 1- (four institutions):

- College of William & Mary (VA)
- Miami University – Oxford (OH)
- Clemson University (SC)
- SUNY – Binghamton (NY)

## Tier 3 - (seventeen institutions):

- Mississippi State University
- North Dakota State University
- Oklahoma State University
- Rutgers – Newark (NJ)
- South Dakota State University
- Southern Illinois University – Carbondale
- Temple University (PA)
- Texas Tech University
- University of Maryland – Baltimore County
- University of North Carolina – Greensboro
- University of Missouri – Kansas City
- University of Alabama – Huntsville
- University of Arkansas
- University of Idaho
- University of Louisville (KY)
- University of Maine (Orono)
- University of Mississippi
- 

## Tier 4 – (thirteen institutions):

- Kent State University (OH)
- New Mexico State University
- Northern Arizona State University
- Northern Illinois University
- Old Dominion University
- San Diego State University
- University of Missouri – St. Louis
- University of Southern Mississippi
- University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
- University of Akron (OH)
- University of Alaska – Fairbanks
- University of Central Florida
- University of Houston

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO KEY INSTIUTIONAL CONTACTS REQUESTING PERMISSION

November 13, 2006

University A  
Address University A  
City, University A

Dear Institutional Contact from “University A”:

I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct interviews on your campus for a doctoral dissertation which queries the organizational culture of institutions that are listed on the 2007 *US News & World Report* college rankings. Your institution was selected to represent public institutions that ranked in the top tier of the *US News & World Report* rankings.

The purpose of the study is to explore the enrollment management practices and organizational culture of public institutions that ranked in the top four tiers of the *US News & World Report* rankings. The results of the study will be kept confidential. Neither your institution’s name nor the identity of any of the participants will be revealed in the study.

The study is primarily qualitative in nature and therefore requires senior and mid-level administrators be interviewed for approximately one hour to query their role and perception of the enrollment management function of University A. It is my hope to interview the following positions:

- Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost (or designee)
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Assistant to the President for Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment
- Chief Public Affairs Officer
- Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Executive Director of Housing
- Associate Vice President & Dean of Students
- Director of Admissions
- Director of Financial Aid
- Director of the Office of Teaching Effectiveness & Instruction
- Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- Director of Academic Outreach and Enrichment
- Director of Career Services
- Chair, Faculty Senate
- Other individuals who are recommended either before or during the course of the interviews.

In addition to the interviews, I hope to participate in a campus tour and observe recommended campus events (i.e. athletic event) while visiting your campus. Interview data will be triangulated with your institutional website and publications that might be offered during the campus visit. An executive summary with findings specific to your university will be sent to you at the conclusion of the study.

Currently, I am a doctoral student in Higher Education Administration program at Montana State University. The dissertation is under the supervision of Dr. Larry Baker, Dean of the College of Education, Health & Human Development, Montana State University and Dr. Rich Howard, Director of Institutional Research, University of Minnesota. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact Dean Baker at 406-994-4133 or Dr. Howard at 612-626-4601.

Sincerely,

Carina Beck  
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Education  
Montana State University

November 13, 2006

University B  
Address University B  
City, University B

Dear *Institutional Contact University B*:

I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct interviews on your campus for a doctoral dissertation which queries the organizational culture of institutions that have ranked well on the 2007 *US News & World Report* college rankings. Your institution was selected to represent public institutions that ranked in the top tier of the *US News & World Report* rankings.

The purpose of the study is to explore the market orientation practices and organizational culture of public institutions that ranked in the top four tiers of the *US News & World Report* rankings. The results of the study will be kept confidential. Neither your institution's name nor the identity of any of the participants will be revealed in the study.

The study is primarily qualitative in nature and therefore requires that senior and mid-level administrators be interviewed for approximately one hour to query their role and perception in the enrollment management function of "*University B*". It is my hope to interview the following positions:

- Provost and VP for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Services
- Director, Assessment and Planning (SDES)
- Vice President Marketing, Communications, and Admissions
- Associate Vice President for Campus Life (SDES)
- Director of Admissions (MCA)
- Director of Financial Aid (MCA)
- Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Provost)
- Director of Career Services & Experiential Learning (SDES)
- Assistant Vice President, Student Success Center (SDES)
- Associate Vice President Administrative Services (SDES)

An executive summary with findings specific to your university will be sent to you at the conclusion of the study.

Currently, I am a doctoral student in Higher Education Administration program at Montana State University. The dissertation is under the supervision of Dr. Larry Baker,

Dean of the College of Education, Health & Human Development, Montana State University. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact Dean Baker at 406-994-4133.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from your office soon.

Sincerely,

Carina Beck  
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Education  
Montana State University

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Time of Interview: 11 a.m.  
Date of Interview:  
Place of Interview  
Location of Interview:  
Interviewer: Carina Beck  
Interviewee:  
Position of Interviewee:  
Other Environmental Factors:

**Opening statement:**

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. The purpose of this interview to is to learn more about how your institution works to meet your enrollment management goals relevant to recruitment and retention. Your feedback will assist me with understanding your perception of the effectiveness of this institution's recruitment and retention practices. All responses will be held in confidence; nothing you say today will be attributed to you or this institution.

If you are in agreement, I would like to record our conversation to assist with the transcribing of my interview notes. The recording will be destroyed after it is transcribed. If you are not comfortable with a recording, I plan to write notes.

The interview will take approximately 1 hour. If you feel we need additional time to discuss your role and perspectives please let me know and we can either lengthen the interview or meet again. Also, if you have any documentation (brochures, web pages, written strategic plans) you believe would be helpful, please feel free to share them. Some of the questions may not apply to your current area of responsibility, if you have thoughts you would like to share based upon your observations, please do so, otherwise we will move on to the next question.

Finally, before we begin the interview, please take a moment to read the informed consent letter. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. If you are comfortable, we will move forward with the interview.

## Questions:

1. What prospective student recruitment strategies or initiatives are you proud of at this institution?

## Potential Follow up

- Please give an example
- What would you like to “work on”?

2. What retention strategies or initiatives have worked well at this institution? .

## Potential Follow up:

- Please give an example
- What would you like to “work on”?

3. How does this institution gain insight into prospective student needs?

How do you know what a potential student is looking for when they are selecting an institution?

## Potential Follow-Ups:

- Who, if anyone, typically “discovers” that information?
- How do they discover that information?
- How is that information distributed to others?
- How frequently does this institution have a discussion about what your customer (student or parents) wants or needs?
- Who typically participates in that discussion?
- Is there another group or individual that should be present at these discussions?
- What do you do to meet those needs?
- What policies, products or procedures have been developed from that information.

4. How does this institution gain insight into current student needs?

What strategies do you have to retain students at this institution by understanding their needs?

## Potential Follow-Ups:

- Who typically “discovers” that information?
- How do they discover that information?
- How is that information distributed to others?
- How frequently does this institution have a discussion about what your customer (student or parents) wants or needs?
- Who typically participates in that discussion?
- Is there another group or individual that should be present at these discussions?
- What do you do to meet those needs?
- What policies, products or procedures, program have been developed from that information? Please cite an example.

5. Can you give an example of something that this institution has recently done in support of student success (whether recruitment or retention) that was based upon someone's "good idea?"

Potential Follow-Ups:

- What is the latest innovation, idea, process, or service you believe to be a "big hit" in terms of student recruitment and/or retention?
6. What institutions would you list as competitors for recruiting and retaining students? Conversely, what institutions do you believe view this institution as competition?
  7. If a competing institution came up with a good idea (i.e. new form of tuition discounting, housing scholarship, new marketing video, cutting edge academic program or service), would this institution respond? How quickly?
  8. On a scale from one to five with five equaling "strongly agree" please answer the following scaled questions relevant to recruitment and retention:
    - I would describe this institution as being "ahead" of our competition.
    - It takes us a long time to respond to a competing institution's new idea or strategy.
    - Several offices or departments on this campus meet regularly to discuss how well we are meeting our strategic recruitment and retention goals.
    - I would describe these meetings as productive.
    - It takes us a long time to move from a new idea to a product or a service to try to recruit a new student with that new idea.
    - It takes us a long time to move from a new idea to a product or a service to try to retain a new student.
  9. How difficult is it to make a "new idea" that is believed to enhance student success happen on this campus?
    - Would you describe your campus culture as bureaucratic?
    - How many layers of approval would it take for you to make a new idea happen?
    - Who would you implement a new idea? Who would you talk to about it?
  10. On a scale from one to five with five equaling "strongly agree" please answer the following question:
 

Senior administrators here frequently talk about advancing or transforming by recruiting or retaining the types of students this institution wants when they are speaking to members of the faculty or staff.

Follow up question:

- Please tell me more.
- If appropriate, can you give an example?
- Please discuss any other common themes.

11. On a scale from one to five with five equaling strongly agree please answer the following question:

- There is a high degree of cooperation between departments, offices and colleges achieve our student recruitment and retention goals.
- It is unlikely in this organization, that a young staff member's good idea would be "heard" and acted upon.

Follow up questions:

- Please give an example of "turf" issues that exist here?

12. How does this institution measure its success and uncover areas for improvement?

Follow up question:

- Who is responsible for measuring and reporting the information?
- Would you describe institutional assessment as meaningful?
- Does institutional assessment act as a catalyst for change on this campus? If so how?

13. Please discuss the level of commitment the faculty and staff demonstrate toward this organization?

- Give an example
- How does this institution recognize "good work" from the efforts of faculty or staff?

14. How has this institution used technology to recruit, retain, and graduate students?

Or perhaps more colloquially stated: What is the "coolest" thing this institution has done in terms of technology in the past three years?

15. Can you suggest anyone else I should talk to on this campus who can share useful information towards this study?

Conclusion:

- Thank participant for agreeing to the interview.
- Remind him/her to provide any supporting documentation.

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL COMPARISONS

| Performance Indicator            | “A”            | “B”           |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Enrollment – 2005                | 46,719         | 17,165        |
| Undergraduate                    | 35,545         | 14,096        |
| Masters                          | 5,639          | 2,172         |
| Doctoral                         | 1,535          | 897           |
| Freshman Retention - 2006        | 82%            | 89%           |
| Graduation Rate – 2005           | 57%            | 75%           |
| Acceptance Rate – 2005           | 62%            | 57%           |
| Alumni Giving                    | 11%            | 22%           |
| Founded                          | 1963           | 1889          |
| Number of Colleges or<br>Schools | 12<br>Colleges | 5<br>Colleges |

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

## INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

### PARTICIPANT'S KNOWLEDGE OF INSTITUTIONAL RECRUITMENT AND/OR RETENTION TACTICS FOR UNDERGRADUATES AND PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE TOWARDS MEETING INSTITUTION'S ENROLLMENT GOALS.

I volunteer to participate in this study and understand that:

1. I will be interviewed by Carina Niedermier Beck using a guided interview format consisting of fourteen questions.
2. The questions I will be answering address my views on issues related to recruitment and/or retention practices at this institution and my perception of the organizational culture towards meeting our enrollment goals for undergraduates.
3. The interview will be tape recorded to facilitate analysis of the data.
4. My name will not be used, nor will I be identified personally in any way or at any time. I understand it will be necessary to identify participants in the dissertation by position and college affiliation (e.g., a Senior Level Administrator from the Division of Student Affairs . . .).
5. I may withdraw from part or all of this study at any time.
6. I have the right to review material prior to the final oral exam or other publication.
7. I understand that results from this survey will be included in Carina Niedermier Beck's doctoral dissertation and may also be included in manuscripts submitted to professional journals for publication.
8. I am free to participate or not to participate without prejudice.
9. Because of the small number of participants, approximately 20, I understand that there is some risk that I may be identified as a participant of this study.

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Participant's Signature

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Date

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Researcher's Signature

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Date

APPENDIX F

NOTERIZED STATEMENT FROM TRANSCRIPTIONIST

1 **VERIFICATION**

2

3 Let it be known that I, Michelle R. Campbell have transcribed  
 4 Seven (7) micro-cassette tapes containing information from  
 5 University A; and six (6) micro-cassette tapes containing  
 6 information from University B. I have completed these  
 7 transcriptions to the best of my ability and swear that the  
 8 contents of the transcripts to be truthful, complete and as  
 9 accurate as possible. This information is confidential and the  
 10 contents of these transcripts will not be shared with anyone.

11  
12  
13

Michelle R. Campbell  
Michelle R. Campbell

14 STATE OF MONTANA )

15 :ss

16 County of San Juan

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18 This instrument was acknowledged before me on the 22 day  
 19 of June, 2007, by Michelle R. Campbell.

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Linda Streets  
Notary Public for the State of Montana  
Residing at:

APPENDIX G

LETTER FROM AUDITOR

Sarah Miller  
408 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59715

August 9, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in regard to Carina Beck's doctoral dissertation entitled, A Selected Case Study of Market Orientation Practices of Public Carnegie High Research Activity Institutions. In addition to reviewing her analysis, findings and conclusions, I have read interview transcripts and reviewed her coded data sheets.

From this examination, I believe Carina has conducted her study in accordance with the procedures outlined in her methodology. Moreover, her findings and conclusions appear to faithfully reflect the data she gathered during the interview process. I found no discrepancies between the written transcripts of the participants' interviews and the descriptions she included in her draft.

I conclude that Carina's work conforms to accepted methodological and ethical standards for qualitative educational research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Miller".

Sarah Miller

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