A QUANTUM LEAP TOWARD HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION:

AN INTERINSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

Higher education resources are dwindling yet postsecondary institutions are expected to do more with less. As a result, institutions of higher learning are having to reimagine and reorganize standard operating procedures to identify solutions for the future. One of the options is to consider interinstitutional collaborations. A primary challenge with this route is that the competitive nature and autonomous culture are deeply rooted in the very fabric of higher education. Therefore, colleges and universities would likely have to make sacrifices to develop such a joint partnership. This qualitative case study endeavored to examine a specific interinstitutional collaboration. In this case, one public institution and one private institution, both of which are in the southwestern part of the United States, engaged in a formal collaboration designed to launch a professional graduate program. Often, the word "collaboration" (formal) is used synonymously with other terms such as cooperation (informal) and coordination (semi-formal). Given the nuances associated with the various types of relationships established between and among entities, it is important to be clear about whether the relationship is informal, semi-formal, or formal. Anchoring this study in a real-life case provides tremendous insight into the significance of making such a distinction. Certain pre-requisites are necessary for a more formal partnership that might have less relevance in an informal joint venture.

The conceptual framework used in this study is adapted and blended to provide a meaningful lens through which one can look to understand why leaders opted to pursue this joint venture. Also, the prism is useful vis-à-vis understanding how the leaders navigated and negotiated any anticipated or unanticipated challenges.

This descriptive case used qualitative design for the intent of this study. Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews of academic leaders, document compilation, and observations.

The findings yielded a number of reasons the leaders decided to forge this interinstitutional collaboration. The underlying themes that emerged from the study are: political, social, cultural, and economic. The legislative and historical context (political), the impact on the two institutions' academic reputation and profile as well as the community at large (social), the merging of two complimentary cultures (cultural), and the financial return on investment (economic) all influenced the exploration, development, and early implementation phases of this academic partnership.

Subsequently, this study pivots toward the discussion of major takeaways. Additionally, recommendations are proposed as academic leaders and policy makers consider the pursuit of interinstitutional collaborations.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Collaboration is vital to sustain what we call profound or really deep change, because without it, organizations are just overwhelmed by the forces of the status quo" – Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith, Roth, & Kleiner, 1999, p. 25.

Throughout the first half of the 1980s, Publicis, a French-based company, became a juggernaut in the European advertising industry. Although the organization had increased its European profile, Publicis wanted a greater presence around the world, especially in North America. Toward the latter half of that same decade, Publicis aggressively pursued a host of opportunities to expand its footprint in the United States. At the same time, Foote, Cone & Belding (FCB), based in the U.S., was a major North American advertising player, which had an international reputation and was among the top 20 ad agencies in the world (Kanter, 1994). Similarly to Publicis, FCB had a desire to expand its capacity, scale, and scope. Both ad agencies were on a pursuit to identify a mutually beneficial partnership, one that would afford each the opportunity to increase its global profile.

In 1988, the two companies brokered a historic deal by entering into an agreement to forge a partnership (Kanter, 1994). Through this strategic interorganizational arrangement, both companies increased their capacity, established a broader presence, and reached new markets (Ireland, Hitt, & Vaidyanathm 2002; Kanter, 1994). In addition, the partnership became the second largest ad agency in the U.S. and Europe as well as one of the top ten largest global companies (Kanter, 1994). A tangible example of organizational gain is Publicis' ability to secure high-profile clients, such as Coca-Cola and British Airways, as a result of the joint venture. These collaborators each contributed and exchanged an equal degree of expertise to the interorganizational arrangement in hopes that such efforts would achieve a successful joint

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venture (Ireland et al., 2002). To that end, the two entities adopted the following mantra: "[While] we cannot predict the future…we can create it" (Collins & Hansen, 2011, p. 1).

What are some key messages to take-away from this international strategic alliance? One of the rationales for joining forces was to develop an international collaboration that would create a global competitive advantage (Ireland et al., 2002). As such, the overarching goal was to strengthen the brand, thus generating more business. Each organization brought an equal level of risk and benefit to the interorganizational arrangement. The strategic partnership buttressed the longstanding goal of having an international presence (Kanter, 1994). In that case, the two entities considered their strengths and weaknesses and realized that the benefits outweighed the costs and that neither ad agency could achieve the goals independently (Logan, Davis, & Parker, 2010). The motivations for forming the collaborative partnership were derived from an opportunistic standpoint, not one borne out of desperation (Kanter, 1994). At the same time, since these two organizations had no history of working together, they had to be intentional about building and cultivating individual and collective relationships. The two organizations established a vision for the distant future, not just the short term. The international strategic alliance afforded the two entities the ability to reduce the learning curve substantially because both organizations had a certain degree of competency and familiarity within the advertising field (Ireland et al., 2002). As a result, the level and type of knowledge were relatively comparable (Ireland et al., 2002, p. 431). Another long-term objective of the alliance was that the coordinated effort could become a collaboration model that could be replicated moving forward. In other words, either ad agency might have the ability to broker new relationships (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). At the time, Publicis and FCB were pioneers in the ad industry. By each organization pooling resources and developing a shared purpose, they were

optimistic about their ability to become effective and efficient with regard to operations and delivery of services.

Lessons learned from this case study:

- The vision called for more resources beyond the capacity and capability of Publicis and FCB independently. Therefore, *each company's leadership demonstrated openness to the possibility of collaborating with another organization within the same industry*.

- *The strategic partnership was sought based on a shared vision and genuine optimism, rather than trying to mitigate or compensate for deficiencies* (Kanter, 1994).

- *The collaboration engendered equal value for both organizations* (Kanter, 1994) *rather than benefitting one agency more than the other*.

This interorganizational-linkage scenario has become commonplace among companies in a host of industries around the world. Many unprecedented challenges, such as changing market conditions and reductions in funding, in the higher education community have required confronting a new paradigm in which resources are limited and interdependence is inescapable (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Yet, colleges and universities have been slow to adopt the type of interorganizational relationships like the one established between Publicis and FCB. Often, the reason has been because traditional structural and cultural components were not designed to undergird such joint ventures (Kezar, 2005). Recently, however, multiple higher education institutions have expressed a great deal of interest in exploring the concept of collaborative partnerships (Heaney, 2010) with other colleges and universities (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Stein & Short, 2001). If institutional stakeholders are willing to reassess and reconfigure many of the

current practices and procedures (Eckel & Kezar, 2003), interinstitutional collaborations could become more prevalent in the near future.

Background of the Study: Reasons for Collaboration

Over the last 20 years, the business and management literature illuminating shifts toward the adoption of interorganizational relationships (IOR) has been expansive (e.g., Austin, 2000; Dacin, Oliver, & Roy, 2006; Doz, 1996; Gulati, Lavie, & Sing, 2009; Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001; Lumineau, Eckerd, & Handley, 2015; Mariotti, 2012; Sanchez, Velez, & Alvarez-Dardet, 2013). In an ever-changing global context, organizations have compelling interests and reasons to redesign and revolutionize business models to accommodate this so-called interdependent reality (Kezar, 2006). Interdependence could be best summed up as the need to come together to accomplish a task or solve a problem. Austin (2000) asserted that "a convergence of political, economic, and social pressures" (p. 69) is the impetus for forging collaborative partnerships. In a myriad of professional industries and sectors, collaboration is a phenomenon which has experienced exponential growth, both domestically and globally (Gulati, 1998).

Separately yet equally important to note, the literature reveals that many collaborative partnerships fall short of fulfilling their long-term goals (Anand & Khanna, 2000; Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Casey, 2008; Eckel, Hartley, & Affolter-Caine, 2004; Glowacki-Dudka & Murray, 2000; Gulati, 1998). In fact, different articles indicate that anywhere from one-half to 70 per cent of IORs fail (Castro & Roldan, 2015; Kale & Singh, 2007; Kezar, 2005; Lambe, Spekman, & Hunt, 2002; Park & Kang, 2013; Park & Russo, 1996). Despite the sobering statistics, organizations continue to pursue joint ventures because of the perceived value and worth (Ireland et al., 2002). In many cases, the aforementioned alliances cut across boundary lines, both inside and outside of various professions (Bryson et al., 2006). Many of the

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collaborative initiatives have been undertaken to address numerous structural, social, and political issues (Austin, 2000).

With collaboration must come change. However, two U.S. industries that have demonstrated reluctance to change, such as joint ventures, are medicine (Lorenzi & Riley, 2000) and higher education (Carruthers, 2015). Since the U.S. health care system has experienced tremendous success, the industry has been content with status-quo operations. Thus, the means and methods for delivering medicine have remained largely stagnant over the last several decades because evolving would require much time and energy (Lasker et al., 2001; Lorenzi & Riley, 2000).

Moreover, a major challenge for changing the health care system has to do with the process of training doctors for the medical profession (O'Shea, 2014). Although current health care in the U.S. is more sophisticated and robust compared to other countries, the system needs to be reformed (O'Shea, 2014). Currently, doctors are trained using a treatment model rather than a prevention model in the context of delivering health care in the U.S. Today, medical doctors are trained to be reactive, not proactive. Another concern is the current vertical alignment of the physician as the center of the team. These are a few examples of how the health care system has become stagnant and in some cases inefficient. Given the perception exists that U.S. health care is superior to other nations, though, any efforts to tweak the current system have been met with resistance.

Along the same lines, the higher education community has attempted to preserve its deep-rooted traditions. Generally, stakeholders within colleges and universities are less apt to adjust functions and practices (Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Stein & Short, 2001) because the process requires a certain degree of organizational learning (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Eckel & Kezar, 2003). In

other words, stakeholders in higher education would have to retool their thinking (Bess & Dee, 2012) and basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010). Change in any system, particularly postsecondary education, is considered a threat, whether real or perceived (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Kezar & Eckel; Stein & Short, 2001). This "resistant-to-change" culture (see Stein & Short, 2001) has been a blessing and a curse in the fields of medicine and higher education. On the one hand, these two industries in the U.S. have withstood the test of time given their willingness to sustain longstanding traditions. On the other hand, medicine and higher education have maintained the status quo, thus having been unable to develop effective systems to address present and future societal needs in the U.S. Some changes that have emerged in medicine and higher education were originally thought to be small in size and scope (Bryson et al., 2006). As an example, the advent and ubiquity of technology have transformed processes and structures within these two fields – ranging from how information is communicated and shared to the delivery of services (Eckel & Kezar, 2003).

Despite this inclination to oppose change, the U.S. higher education system has been expected to play a vital role in developing innovative and creative opportunities to tackle twenty-first century global challenges (Byrne, 2000; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). As mentioned above, institutions of higher learning realize they cannot single-handedly solve these problems. Therefore, U.S. colleges and universities have had to confront a paradigmatic shift catalyzed by a multitude of challenges (Kezar & Eckel, 2002) including: (1) budgetary reductions due to diminishing state financial support (Leach, 2008), (2) advent and prevalence of technological advancements (Leach, 2008), (3) skepticism about the value and quality of higher education by public officials and taxpayers (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Hendrickson, Lane, Harris, & Dorman, 2013), (4) shifting demographic trends (Bok, 2013), (5) differing missions and visions, and (6)

rapidly changing global context making transformation of academic and business practices inevitable in higher education (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Institutions of higher education have to grapple with addressing the problems of today while also preparing for the issues of tomorrow (Byrne, 2000).

Reductions in Funding

The global financial crisis of 2008 had drastic ramifications for the U.S. educational system, particularly higher education. A number of states significantly reduced higher education subsidies and cuts have largely continued through the present. This shift resulted in even less funding per student than what was spent for each student prior to the recession (Mitchell, Palacios, & Leachman, 2014, p. 1). The average state investment is 23 per cent less per student than prior to the economic downturn (Mitchell et al., 2014, p. 1). The budgetary constraints posed serious challenges for U.S. colleges and universities, such as providing access to college-bound students from low-income backgrounds as well as funding research endeavors which could identify solutions to current and future social problems.

Rising College Costs

To compensate for the decline in state appropriations, higher education institutions in all sectors have instituted substantial tuition increases (Mitchell et al., 2014, p. 2). Raising college tuition and other costs may be perceived as counterproductive if the goal is to improve affordability and accessibility to the masses. Historically, the approach for many higher education institutions has been to benchmark against peer and aspirant institutions (Bess & Dee, 2012, p. 726) to determine how to proceed with regard to determining different policies and strategies – such as where to set tuition pricing. Competitive and generic benchmarking have made the prospect of collaborating with other higher education institutions challenging (Stein &

Short, 2001) because, ultimately, each institution is seeking and striving for a competitive market advantage (Bess & Dee, 2012).

Market Shifts

Changing demographics are creating an influx of college-bound students from racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation-to-college backgrounds (Hendrickson et al., 2013; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2012). Additionally, many adults are either returning to obtain or pursuing for the first time a college education to increase their job prospects (Bok, 2013). Consequently, the growth in future prospective college students is in the non-traditional demographic. At the same time, many of the said students lack the financial capacity to fund their own college education (Bok, 2013). Therefore, the aforementioned students will likely expect to rely on higher education institutions to provide more financial aid assistance. Pooling resources to address this shift (Stein & Short, 2001) could be a solution to provide access to such a heterogeneous pool of students.

Shift in University Workforce

Budgetary constraints and increased efficiency have resulted in the reduction of full-time faculty positions at many higher education institutions (Hendrickson et al., 2013, p. 316). Consequently, there has been an influx of contingent faculty (e.g., adjunct faculty, part-time instructional staff) (Hendrickson et al., 2013; Moser, 2014). The Association of American University Professors (AAUP) indicated 50 per cent of part-timers now comprise the faculty at all colleges and universities. This shift is perceived as an intentional attempt by institutions to identify opportunities to be cost-efficient. "In 1987, there were 0.8 million faculty in the United States, with 66% in full-time positions and 34% in part-time positions. By 2005, the number of faculty had swelled to 1.3 million, with 52% full-time and 48% part-time" (Leach, 2008, p. 8 as

cited by Leatherman, 2000). Simultaneously, college enrollment in 1987 was nearly 13 million students (7.2 million full time and 5.5 million part time); the numbers eclipsed 17 million (10.8 million full time; 6.7 part time) in 2005 (National Center on Education Statistics, 2014). Even though higher education experienced an approximate 37 per cent increase in student enrollment – the area of full-time students experienced the largest growth – over the almost twenty-year span. Yet, the percentage of full-time faculty decreased, thus appearing to be counterintuitive.

Furthermore, the dichotomy of full-time and part-time professors has profound implications for higher education. The rise in contingent faculty on college campuses has changed the dynamic with respect to the traditional institutional service and committee work (Hendrickson et al., 2013). In many cases, contingent faculty members have limitations in regards to the type of service and committee work in which they are able to participate and engage (Heaney, 2010). As a result, conflict arises over the division of labor, and full-time faculty members are feeling inundated by the considerable amount of teaching, research, and service they must complete to fulfill their annual and long-term obligations (Leach, 2008). With faculty members, whether part or full time, having to achieve lofty goals and assume additional responsibilities with fewer resources than before, joining forces to accomplish ambitious objectives without negatively impacting morale could have merit (Bess & Dee, 2012). Pooling resources between and among institutions could engender the ability to optimize delivery of services while maintaining the utmost quality and integrity in the educational process.

Public Good Versus Private Benefit

Increasingly, there is a paradox between the public good versus private benefit (Lambert, 2014). Internal and external stakeholders and constituents in the U.S. are questioning the increase in college tuition as well as other costs and the value of a college degree. Taxpayers

continue to express a great degree of scrutiny as to whether the higher education community is committed to the public good (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Rather, the perception is that private interest of college-bound students has become the norm. This paradigm shift has led to a growing concern because of the increasing amount of student borrowers as well as college graduates who are unable to repay their student loans. In general, the unwillingness of postsecondary institutions to curb college cost increases and identify more cost-effective methods to educate students perpetuates the popular sentiment of taxpaying citizens.

Conflicting Governance Philosophies

Tension is growing between a collegial environment and the corporatization of higher education (Langland, 2001; Lapworth, 2004; Meyer, 2002; Trakman, 2008). Many postsecondary institutions lack the internal resources to execute their mission and vision. As a result, an increasing number of administrators are expected to integrate and embrace corporate strategies and practices (Gerber, 2010; Trakman, 2008) such as identifying ways to become more efficient, and many decisions are based solely with the bottom line in mind (Trakman, 2008). To remain agile, academic leaders are expected to respond quickly and adapt to the constant, rapid changes (Heaney, 2010; Mallon, 2004). Furthermore, a more aggressive approach to building and cultivating strategic external networks and connections has been pursued in a swiftly-changing world because of the resource-restricted environment (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Consequently, numerous institutional administrators are attempting to save time by making unilateral decisions (Birnbaum, 2004; Heaney, 2010) given the perceived financial gain by pursuing certain outside opportunities. This strategy has come at the expense of the traditional democratic decision-making process that has been longstanding in higher education (Heaney, 2010). Brand equity and corporate values have begun to permeate many aspects of the academy.

As mentioned, institutional governance models within the area of higher education are striving to generate and protect net profits (Lapworth, 2004; Trakman, 2008). For example, certain stakeholders firmly believe that the academy should be overseen by individuals who have a wealth of expertise governing large businesses and corporations (Trakman, 2008). This school of thought likens educational institutions to businesses. Increasingly, university executive administrators and board members have corporate backgrounds (Hendrickson et al., 2013; Shattock, 2002; Trakman, 2008). This shift has resulted in a power imbalance favoring trustees and administrators, thus making them the principal authority with regard to decision-making (Kaplan, 2004, Lapworth, 2004; Trakman 2008). The lack of engaging traditional shared governance stakeholders (e.g., faculty) in the governance process could lead to internal strife. As a result, the inertia that ensues could preclude institutions from making external connections because stakeholders at the operational and tactical levels (Bess & Dee, 2012) might put the potential external opportunities at risk.

External Political Pressure

In addition to internal politics and financial challenges, federal and state governments have a broader presence in higher education in the form of increased regulations and accountability (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Lambert, 2014; Langland, 2011). As mentioned above, the rapidly changing environment is placing greater pressure on higher-education institutions to respond to a host of challenges (American Council on Education [ACE], 2015; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Stein & Short, 2001). Elected and public officials are scrutinizing higher education and expecting better outcomes and greater accountability (Bok, 2013; Hendrickson et al., 2013). Colleges and universities, therefore, are expected to demonstrate their value and worth in more palpable terms, especially in ways that resonate with state and federal government officials and

politicians (ACE, 2015; Bok, 2013; Hendrickson et al. 2013). Through regulatory and legislative

mechanisms, state and federal government actors are creating a very complex and convoluted

system (ACE, 2015; Hendrickson et al., 2013). Postsecondary institutions are investing a greater

degree of time, money, and expertise in an effort to navigate and negotiate this highly-regulated

landscape (ACE, 2015). Internal strategies and practices undertaken to be in compliance

contribute to rising costs absorbed by the institutions themselves (ACE, 2015; Bok, 2013;

Hendrickson et al., 2013), which in turn are passed on to the students and families.

In this resource-constrained milieu, the area of higher education has begun to explore

partnerships, both inside of institutional boundaries and beyond (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Kezar,

2005). While postsecondary institutions have historically considered and formed such linkages

with other internal departments/units (intra-institutional) or other industries (Eckel & Hartley,

2008; Kezar, 2005), the proclivity to collaborate with other colleges and universities that requires

institutional resources and governance has been less likely, given the competing interests and

values (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Also, a paucity of research in higher education (or a recipe) for

fostering interinstitutional collaboration exists (Kezar, 2005).

The chasm is especially wide between the public and private higher education sectors

(Brigeneau, Yudof, & Edley, Jr., 2011). Since public institutions are traditionally state-owned

and operated and private institutions are generally governed by an independent charter (i.e., a

separate, specific set of rules and regulations) and more autonomous (Fossey, Melear, &

Beckham, 2011; Humphreys, 2007), private and public postsecondary institutions may be less

inclined to enter into a joint venture because of the different rules and assumptions by which they

operate. Whether real or perceived, the assumption highlights the stark contrast that exists vis-à-

vis the cultural and structural differences between the publics and privates (Kezar & Eckel, 2002).

Never Underestimate the Power of Opportunity

The previously mentioned reasons for interinstitutional collaboration have been squarely focused on external forces and factors that influence the pursuit of joint ventures between two institutions. However, many institutions are poised to make intrinsic decisions to undertake external collaborations. For example, if an institution identifies an opportunity to collaborate with another institution to help them realize their vision or strategic plan, then the institution might be compelled to consider joining forces. The case study outlined at the outset in the corporate setting illuminated the two companies that were seeking to expand their global footprint. Since many institutions of higher education are on a mission to expand educational access or global reputation, they continue to remain vigilant and open to developing outside relationships because such efforts increase the ability to pool resources and enhance their expertise (Kezar, 2005). An increasing number of institutions have become proactive about considering pursuing collaborative ventures because the environment is ripe. Motivations and reasons to enter into a joint endeavor could appear different on the surface yet still have the same end goal in mind (Kezar, 2006). To that end, one institution may partner with one institution because of external forces while the other may agree to seize the opportunity that lies before it.

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Purpose of Study and Research Questions

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As increasing uncertainty in higher education is demanding the most strategic and prudent leadership (Eckel & Hartley, 2008; Leach, 2008); finding fresh, relevant, and impactful solutions requires confronting internal and external tensions (Austin, 2003; Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Many institutions of higher education are attempting to develop innovative efforts to

address the twenty-first century challenges (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Byrne, 2000). As mentioned above, throughout this process, many colleges and universities are discovering they alone lack the necessary resources to tackle many of the problems (Eckel & Hartley, 2008). Therefore, institutions have begun to explore the concept of forming interinstitutional collaborations to enhance capacity and capability to solve the issues of today and tomorrow (Austin, 2000; Byrne, 2000; Glowacki-Dudka & Murray, 2000; Lang, 2002; Larrance, 2002). Potential benefits and risks are associated with higher education institutions entering into formal and informal relationships (Kanter, 1994). Also, positive and negative perceptions can inhibit or foster interinstitutional partnerships (Stein & Short, 2001). Even though institutions may opt to pool resources for the greater good, the risk of enduring conflict is still high if the institutions are unwilling to set aside differences and embrace each other for what and who they are (Glowacki-Dudka & Murray, 2000).

While conceptual and empirical work exists on the various types and inputs of collaborations (e.g., Doz, 1996), research is scarce with regard to how interinstitutional collaborations are planned, formed, and implemented. We simply do not know much about how leaders identify and address specific factors that impact decision-making in higher education institutions entering into joint ventures (Stein & Short, 2001). Also, minimal research explores how challenges are resolved and differences are reconciled to accommodate joint ventures (Eckel & Hartley, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons leaders of two higher education institutions opted to pursue an interinstitutional collaboration and how these leaders perceived and navigated any challenges that influenced the collaborative process through the conception, formation, and early implementation phases. This qualitative case study explored the

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interinstitutional linkage of a private four-year university and a public graduate/professional institution.

Accordingly, the study was guided by the following questions:

- Why did leaders of both institutions of higher education opt to form an interinstitutional collaboration?

- What were the most salient factors that influenced or facilitated the conception, development, and early implementation of this higher education interinstitutional collaboration?

- How did leaders of these institutions navigate challenges – foreseen or unforeseen – that emerged as the interinstitutional collaboration matured from the exploratory phase to early implementation?

Significance of the Study

The business periodicals and academic journals contain numerous examples of the advantages and disadvantages associated with interorganizational endeavors and the various types of interorganizational collaborative initiatives (Barringer & Harrison 2000; Dacin et al., 2006; Gulati, Nohria, & Zaheer, 2000; Lambe, Spekman, & Hunt, 2002). This study attempted to extend our understanding about how interinstitutional collaborations are considered, forged, and implemented in a specific scenario involving two postsecondary institutions. An important element to this study pertained to the increasing interest in interorganizational partnerships by institutions of higher learning (Kezar & Lester, 2009).

Through this study, I hoped to contribute to the body of knowledge, vis-à-vis a particular higher education interinstitutional collaboration. This study investigated a joint venture and drew from research pertaining to interorganizational relationships (IORs) and collaboration.

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Such work could only have been inspected, known, and understood by undertaking hands-on investigative efforts. It may be an impetus for leaders of higher education institutions to explore the possibility of collaborative initiatives to serve the common good, especially in an environment of increasingly limited resources (Kezar & Lester, 2009) and greater legislative scrutiny (ACE, 2015). Following are contextualized elements of interinstitutional relationships which will be referred to in this study as enumerated by Austin (2000): "level of engagement, importance to mission, magnitude of resources, scope of activities, interaction level, managerial complexity, and strategic value" (p. 72). These contextual, institutional, and procedural realities were some of the driving forces in the type of collaboration forged (Smith & Wohlstetter, 2006, p. 251). Pooling resources and sharing ownership could enable institutions to operate at optimal levels (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). As a result, such ventures could have sweeping implications on the higher education system. Intense pressure is growing because institutions are expected to do more with less. Yet, the literature is scarce with tangible examples of interinstitutional collaborations within the area of higher education in the current global context. This study serves as an example of how researchers might proceed with respect to investigating interinstitutional collaborations in the future.

Definition and Clarification of Terms

This study primarily drew from the business and higher education literature. Although research from different fields was explored and utilized, the business literature is replete with joint venture examples that are extremely relevant to the type of collaboration being investigated. Therefore, clarifying the terminology used throughout this study is necessary to provide a more accurate portrayal of what is being conveyed.

College/University Terminology

Business management scholars subscribe to the term "organization" to characterize a structured entity, yet the higher education literature has a tendency to employ "institution" to describe an organized enterprise. For the purpose and intent of this study, institution and organization are used interchangeably.

Clear Definition of Collaboration

Presently, definitions of collaboration run the gamut. Furthermore, multiple terms conveying collaboration are considered synonymous. In many contexts, "collaboration," "cooperation," and "alliance" are used alike. Establishing a nomenclature in which all can have a fundamental understanding is advantageous. In the context of this study, collaboration is defined as "*the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by [two or more] organizations…to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by [an] organization…separately [and is mutually beneficial]*" (Bryson et al., p. 44, emphasis in original). Following are the different terms integrated to describe the two institutions of higher learning entering into a formal partnership to work toward a common goal: alliance, collaboration (or some variation), joint venture, linkage, partnership, and relationship.

Distinction between Cooperation and Collaboration

The business and higher education literature makes a clear distinction between collaboration and cooperation and this study is consistent in keeping that separation. Grant and Baden Fuller (2004) offered insight into how large corporations have created "cooperative relationships" (p. 62) with other organizations to undertake strategic initiatives beyond their own scopes to capitalize on certain opportunities. Yet, these larger organizations are uninclined to execute formal partnerships or agreements. A formal partnership is generally classified as

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collaboration. Hord (1986) shed light on the distinctions between organizational collaboration and cooperation. If a positive outcome is equally beneficial and the alternative has a consequential impact on both entities, the relationship is likely considered a collaborative arrangement (p. 26). Otherwise, a cooperative effort would not have the expectation of mutual status in the context of the relationship. This study focused on an interorganizational linkage with shared responsibility and mutual interest. More distinction among the various types of relationships will be covered in the next chapter.

Summary

In a global context, various industries and fields have had to restructure and transform traditional and standard operating procedures. Specifically, many changes have led to a necessity to accommodate an interdependent reality within higher education. Some examples are budgetary cuts, increased cynicism and criticism of the value and quality of higher education, technological advancements, shifting demographics, and competing interests (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). External forces are causing the postsecondary community to revolutionize practices and policies. Since institutions do not operate in a vacuum, understanding the broader context is critically important (Bess & Dee, 2012). With state governments shifting much of the financial responsibility – in terms of funding the enterprise – to the institutions themselves, pooling resources has tremendous merit as a strategic option. The business literature is full of case studies and vignettes of collaborative initiatives. However, higher-education research in the area of interinstitutional collaboration is less extensive. As to be expected, a tremendous amount of give and take is required in any interinstitutional relationship. Postsecondary institutions have to be willing to compromise on some of the major drivers in higher education – complete autonomy and intense competition – in the context of collaboration. This study was pragmatic because of

the investigation of the factors which influenced an interinstitutional collaboration between a private four-year university and public graduate/professional university. Moreover, the anticipated and unanticipated challenges and tensions that arose were explored and could provide additional insight, especially for similar institutions seeking a comparable collaboration. At the same time, opportunity can be a powerful reason to consider joining forces, which often derives from intrinsic motivation, not external environmental factors. The next chapter explores and integrates the literature relevant to collaboration and higher education.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Hendrickson et al. (2013) proposed this deceivingly loaded question: "What is a college or university [in the U.S.]?" (p. 28). In order to attempt to answer this question, it is prudent to examine and understand the historical origins of postsecondary higher education in the U.S. One must acknowledge that American institutions of higher education are enterprises that have deeply-rooted traditions (Thelin, 2011, p. xxi) and, even more importantly, a history of partnerships. This chapter, therefore, begins by giving a very broad perspective on the evolution of higher education in the U.S. and key stakeholders in the context of cooperative and collaborative work. The partnerships between higher education and other areas in society illuminated below are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, the retrospective is designed to illustrate the pattern of cooperative and collaborative action and how this foundation could be considered an antecedent for collaboration. Subsequently, this section shifts to a discussion about contemporary issues in higher education that have implications vis-à-vis collaboration. Next, I present a relationship continuum drawn from the collaboration research, which is germane to this study. I close with the conceptual framework upon which this study draws.

A Legacy of Partnership in the U.S. Higher Education System

American higher education developed as a system in which power and influence were diffuse (Fossey et al., 2011; Thelin, 2011). Colonies and state governments were integral in the establishment of postsecondary institutions (Fossey et al., 2011; Hendrickson et al., 2013; Thelin, 2011). Early on, the U.S. modeled many of the processes and structures after western European colleges (Fossey et al., 2011). Colonial governments, for example, were the primary advocates for and supporters of educational institutions (Fossey et al., 2011, p. 20). This relationship could be deemed a strategic alliance between colleges and states/colonies.

U.S. colleges' historical origins are rooted in Christianity, as the original purpose of the academy was designed to preserve and teach Christian principles and teachings (Gratto, 2010; Sugden, Valania, & Wilson, 2013). The demarcation between church and school was convoluted at best (Gratto, 2010). Nevertheless, this arrangement was considered a partnership that would become the cornerstone of higher education leading up to the U.S. Civil War. Prior to the U.S. Civil War, many faculty members were perceived as generalists, not subject matter experts (Gerber, 2010; Sugden, Valania, & Wilson, 2013). In fact, many had religious pedigrees and engaged in teaching to continue to inculcate many religious principles and moral character (Gerber, 2010; Gratto, 2010). These aspiring clergymen considered educating young minds as a brief stop along the way before being anointed and serving in the pulpit full time (Gerber, 2010).

Moreover, many postsecondary colleges were governed by the church (Gratto, 2010; Thelin, 2011). Yet, most faculty members were not engaged in the institutional decision-making process (Gerber, 2010). Rather, professors were expected to manage disciplinary issues, develop character, and transfer wisdom to their students (Gerber, 2010; Gratto, 2010; Thelin, 2011).

During and following the Civil War, the prestige and demand for higher-education institutions improved dramatically (Gratto, 2010; Thelin, 2011). Postsecondary colleges and universities were able to capitalize on societal needs and external environmental demands (e.g., industrial and urban developments) (Gratto, 2010; Gerber, 2010; Thelin, 2011). As an example, the latter part of the 19th century experienced an increasing demand for skilled laborers. Despite the growing interest, institutions of higher learning inculcated the "classical learning" (Gratto, 2010, p. 42) curriculum. What is more, college campuses were not in a position to accommodate such academic ventures. In the late 1850s, a congressman from Vermont by the name of Justin Morrill authored a piece of legislation that advocated for the establishment of an institution of

higher learning in every state which would offer curricula in agricultural and technical education (Gratto, 2010, p. 42). This legislation became known as *The Morrill Act of 1862* and was passed through the U.S. Congress. This piece of legislation granted over "30,000 acres of federal land" (Gratto, 2010, p. 42) to different states (Gratto, 2010; Thelin, 2011). As a result, many land-grant college campuses were created, most of which are still thriving today. This measure presented an opportunity for the federal government, states, and the higher education community to work in concert to expand access to technical and trade programs in the U.S. (Thelin, 2011).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the next, higher education and wealthy philanthropists formed a coalition to pursue the consummate university. John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and other generous benefactors provided the financial foundation to create institutions such as the University of Chicago (Thelin, 2011). These earnest efforts were responsible for the proliferation of many independent colleges and universities that flourish today. Their vision for higher education was to move from classical learning to more practical and vocational training (Lucas, 2006). This partnership is a prime example of higher education partnering with the business community.

Colleges and universities began experiencing drastic enrollment declines during World War II, as many opted to serve their country (Lucas, 2006). Consequently, institutions had to identify new potential revenue streams. In an effort to avoid calamity, many postsecondary schools started to rely on "government subsidies" (Lucas, 2006; Thelin, 2011) to keep their doors open. The government viewed this opportunity to invest in research and expand and enhance its scientific and technical capabilities while also expanding college access (Lucas, 2006, p. 252). For instance, the Manhattan Project, the classified research effort to design nuclear arms to use in World War II, was orchestrated by collaborative action between the military and the academy.

At the same time, at the federal level, the government wanted to increase its intellectual capacity to surpass many of the world powers that were perceived as threats to the American ideal (Marsden, 1994). The conscious and concerted effort by university and government to work in concert to increase and maintain student enrollment resulted in the college population doubling by 1955 (Marsden, 1994). Thus, two different types of relationships between government and higher education had emerged – one in the form of scientific advancements and developments (e.g., military equipment), another in the form of financing the academy that continues to the present day.

Bedrock for Collaboration: Shared Governance in Higher Education

As clearly illustrated in the section above, higher education's external partnerships have taken on different shapes and sizes throughout history in the U.S. These developments would likely have been unattainable if not for the establishment of a vigorous and robust internal cooperative and collaborative effort that emerged between and among key institutional (internal) stakeholders: shared governance. Since World War II, shared governance has been the bedrock that has buttressed and guided the joint decision-making process within the U.S. higher education system (Gerber, 2010) and the interplay between legal authority (i.e., trustees and administration) and professional expertise (i.e., faculty). Shared governance has been upheld by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which strives to "advance…shared governance…to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good" (Association of American University Professors [AAUP], 2015, np). Under the traditional auspices of shared governance, trustees, administrators, and faculty have served as the primary stakeholders that share in the responsibility of governing an institution (Birnbaum, 2004; Kezar, 2004).

Shared governance is an elusive concept (Guffey, Rampp, & Masters, 2000; Kocolowski, 2010). Over the last several years, there has been explosive growth on the scholarship and research that has chronicled the evolution, analyzed many perceptions, and examined several challenges of shared governance in higher education (Guffey et al., 2000; Hartley, 2003; Kaplan, 2004; Kezar, 2004 Mallon, 2004; Pope, 2004). The shared governance paradigm has been deeply ingrained in postsecondary education and is part of the very fabric of the entire system, albeit shared governance is a nuanced concept. Critics of the traditional joint decision-making processes and structures are gravely concerned that shared governance hampers higher education's ability to respond to a host of challenges in a timely manner, both for individual institutions and higher education at large (Crellin, 2010; Guffey et al., 2000; Kezar, 2004). In other words, the sentiment toward the traditional shared governance model is that it decelerates the process necessary to act swiftly in a rapidly changing environment, thus inhibiting the opportunity to respond to external forces (Crellin, 2010; Kaplan, 2004; Mallon, 2004; Shattock, 2002). On the other hand, proponents of the current shared governance model, which is steeped in tradition, contend that the collegial and collaborative nature of shared governance affords each governing body a locus of control and allows the governing bodies *collectively* (i.e., the institution) to determine a sound, strategic, and sustainable path forward (Miller & Miles, 2008; Pope, 2004).

The literature describes the dynamic nature of postsecondary institutions in the U. S. The multifaceted operations and services conducted by a college foster an inevitable symbiosis among the board of trustees, academic leaders, faculty, and other constituents (Morphew, 1999). Traditionally, colleges have divided the control (i.e., decision-making authority) and labor into specialized areas (Kocolowski, 2010; Salter & Tapper, 2002). Each area's outputs have

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contributed to the overall mission of the institution (Morphew, 1999). Many authors posit that

through this structure, the trustees, administration, and faculty have a mutual fiduciary

responsibility to ensure effective oversight and leadership for decision-making and achieving

outcomes (Kaplan, 2004; Kezar, 2001; Kezar, 2004; Kocolowski, 2001). As the literature has

indicated, the institutional constituency base has expanded. For the purpose of this study,

though, the focus is on the traditional stakeholders (i.e., trustees, senior administrators, and

faculty) in the context of shared governance.

Functionality of Governing Boards

Higher-education institutions' outputs delivered to contribute to the public good are

absolutely imperative, but the preservation, sustainability, and vitality of higher education

institutions are the responsibility of governing boards – mostly lay people who provide a

voluntary service to an institution (Hendrickson et al., 2013). At four-year public schools, the

board members are often appointed by the governor of a particular state. On the contrary,

independent, private institutions are frequently self-appointing boards, many of whom are proud

alumni of a particular institution. Board members have a fiduciary and legal responsibility to

ensure an institution is accountable to fulfilling its mission and vision. To this end, trustees have

the ultimate responsibility for governing an institution (Association of Governing Boards [AGB],

2010B; Hendrickson et al., 2013).

In most cases, trustees derive from heterogeneous professional and personal backgrounds

bringing a multitude of talents, skill sets, knowledge, and expertise (AGB, 2010B). Their

guidance and wisdom can be invaluable to the academic enterprise (Bok, 2013). At the same

time, significant limitations arise because trustees typically are not mired in daily operations at a

college or university. Hendrickson et al. (2013) proclaimed "too often, individual trustees bring

to their board their personal predispositions on how an organization should be run…" (p. 229).

Implicit in the previous statement is the need for board members to receive the appropriate and

adequate training (AAUP, 2015; AGB, 2010B) to understand the culture of an institution (AGB,

2010B) necessary to govern effectively. Since higher education board members are unable to

provide administrative oversight on a daily basis, they must delegate this responsibility and

transfer the authority to the administration, in particular, the chief executive officer.

       Functionality of the academic president. Oftentimes, college presidents are appointed

by a board of trustees to manage and lead an institution of higher education (AAUP, 2015; AGB,

2010B). This tremendous responsibility entrusted to the president enables trustees to maintain

their daily professional and personal routines, and have confidence that the institution is fulfilling

the mission and its societal obligation of teaching, research, and service (Bok, 2013).

Historically, college presidents focused primarily on educating students. Within the last two

decades, however, a multitude of external forces has reshaped the higher-education paradigm.

This new landscape requires chief executive officers to understand the trends and achieve more

with less all while preserving the resources that are currently in place (AAUP, 2015;

Hendrickson et al., 2013). AAUP (2015) indicated that "the president has a special obligation to

innovate and initiate" (np). Oftentimes, college presidents strive to establish a sustainable,

nimble entity through the development of a robust and prudent strategic plan. The academic

president must be a leader. Northouse (2013) stated "a leader with conceptual skills is

comfortable talking about the ideas that shape an organization and the intricacies involved. He

or she is good at putting the [institution's] goals into words…" (p. 46). College presidents must

have the proclivity to engage and empower others to help shape a compelling vision. Effective

leadership requires the ability to galvanize and inspire others – through verbal and written

communication. Authenticity and transparency enable academic presidents to engender trust and build consensus. According to Northouse (2013), leaders inspire people through conceptualization, which, "refers to an individual's ability to be a visionary for an organization, providing a clear sense of its goals and direction" (p. 222). The reality, however, is the president is unable to fulfill this daunting task alone. Northouse (2013) stated "to be effective, organizations need to nourish both competent management and skilled leadership." Academic presidents must ensure that the senior administration, namely the chief executive's leadership team, has the necessary tools to optimize resources and support the mission and vision.

Since the roles and responsibilities of the college president have expanded, having senior university administrators capable of managing and leading the institution allows the college president to strike a better balance between internal and external demands (Hendrickson et al., 2013).

Functionality of the faculty. Under the shared governance auspices, college and university professors play a major role in the policy making process at an institution. The level of influence varies from institution to institution (Bok, 2013). Faculty members have the knowledge and experience to handle teaching and research matters. Following are areas for which faculty members are responsible:

- Protecting academic freedom, i.e., the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge (Dill, 1982; Heaney, 2010; Speck, 2011; Trakman, 2008);

- Shaping and maintaining the faculty reward structure, e.g., promotion and tenure process (Heaney, 2010);

- Assisting in designing and developing the content of curricula and pedagogical methods (Heaney, 2010; Miller & Miles, 2008).

The expectation of faculty is teaching, research, and service (Hendrickson et al., 2013) and citizenship. Service is an area in which many professors are less likely to engage because of the narrow scope of their expertise. Since many of the faculty members are engrossed in their specialization, the faculty senate serves as the representative body of the professors and instructional staff, which is arguably the most recognized form of faculty service. Each faculty senator is expected to protect, champion, and articulate the interests and priorities of the faculty (Kaplan, 2004). The faculty senate's responsibility is to liaise with the leaders of the various governing bodies (AAUP, 2015; Hendrickson et al., 2013). The different forms of service include, but are not limited to, making decisions, shaping policy, committee work, technological integration, and strategic planning (AAUP, 2015; Hendrickson et al., 2013). To that end, faculty governance must work in concert with a myriad of constituents to ensure the integrity and welfare of key academic and institutional decisions.

Shared responsibility of decision-making. The concept of shared governance presupposes a desire and willingness to invoke strategies and tactics to govern an institution of higher education as a unified body. The reality, however, is the varying interests and priorities between and among the trustees, administration, and faculty members inexorably create conflict.

Institutional decision-making processes are idiosyncratic depending on the situation. Some institutions might implement advisory roles in the context of making decisions; some might have "constitutionally empowered configuration of units" (Mallon, 2010, p. 71). In many cases, the process may require a few of the key stakeholders to be involved. In other cases, the engagement of all governing bodies might be necessary (AAUP, 2015). In any case, communication is critical. Birnbaum (2004) notes that involving a broad constituency will inherently create a more deliberate body. Simultaneously, engagement can increase levels of

trust and meets the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Hartley (2003) notes "[governance relies] on basic principles…[t]he principles that leaders and others adhere to in decision making determine the quality of governance" (p. 21). Institutional stakeholders operating under the notion of shared governance must have a mutual understanding of the framework that is necessary to realize and maximize the full potential of collective and collaborative decision making.

Modern Times: Challenges and Tensions for Institutions of Higher Education

The twenty-first century landscape of higher education continues to evolve. While the future is uncertain, change is inevitable. The dynamically changing environment is causing increased pressure on institutions to address a host of challenges. Many four-year private and public colleges, in particular, are considering ways to achieve lofty goals with limited human and financial resources (Waugh, 2003). This section will outline a few of the overarching issues and conflicts found at many of today's colleges and universities.

Environmental Threats to Shared Governance

Who specifically is responsible for planning and identifying institutional strategies? The shared governance model has seemingly served the academy well over the last several decades (Heaney, 2010; Mallon, 2004). Given the intrinsic tension and inevitable challenges outlined above, colleges and universities are being forced to deal with realities. As a result, unfamiliar relationships are leading to non-traditional stakeholders having a seat at the table (Mallon, 2004). Newfound collaborative efforts are causing higher-education institutions to grapple with a "broader spectrum of constituents" (Trani, 1997, p. 2), thus leading to unprecedented external partnerships and business ventures. Partnerships with corporations, for example, have led to engaging stakeholders whose cultures often are vastly different from higher education.

Institutional Realities that Impact Shared Governance

In academic year 2011-12, the U.S. had 4,706 degree-granting colleges and universities and more than 7,200 postsecondary institutions in total (NCES, 2015). Defining governance at a specific institution is crucial to establishing a shared purpose and understanding and clarifying expectations (Guffey et al., 2000). Birnbaum (2004) describes "governance" as the "structures and processes that academic institutions invent to achieve an effective balance between the claims of [multiple], but equally valid, systems for organizational control and influence" (p. 1). Considering organizational structures, human resources, politics, and symbols (Bolman and Deal, 2013) is germane to discerning whether an institution is equipped to ensure a sustainable, viable future via partnerships. Shared governance continues to function as the foundation for undergirding the necessary due diligence for deliberative, thoughtful decision-making (Birnbaum, 2004; Kaplan, 2004; Mallon, 2004). Despite this foundation, the meaning and understanding of shared governance continues to be a nebulous concept across a college or university campus (Heaney, 2010; Kezar, 2004). Speck (2011) asserted, "[since] shared governance in the academy can be characterized in so many ways…[it] militates against establishing a common definitional ground and accounts, in part, for difficulties in attempting to nail down a definition that can be analyzed" (p. 210).

Varying Interpretations of Governance

The traditional notion of shared governance is embraced by a wide swath of four-year colleges and universities (Tierney & Minor, 2003). Yet, the perceptions of power and influence being equally distributed are in question. The University of California, Los Angeles conducted a survey which indicated less than 50 per cent of full-time faculty at four-year public schools felt that faculty members play an adequate role in the decision-making process (Chronicle of Higher

Education, 2006). Arguably, one threat is the lack of a consistent or universal definition on what

shared governance is. Creating a nomenclature in which all constituents have a mutual

understanding (Schein, 2010) may be advantageous. Tierney and Minor (2003) distilled the

various interpretations of shared governance into three different buckets:

- *Fully collaborative decision-making* – this interpretation is considered the traditional

  perception of shared governance, in which trustees, administrators, and faculty

  members work in tandem to build consensus.

- *Consultative decision-making* – faculty members are conferred with and their feedback

  is solicited, yet the final decision resides with the administrators and governing boards.

- *Distributed decision-making* – this reactive interpretation establishes distinct clusters

  of constituents whose area of expertise is deemed germane to the issue(s) at hand. In

  other words, the authority is situational and rests with the faculty in some instances and

  the administration and/or trustees in others.

The idiosyncratic nature of the interpretations of shared governance elucidates the lack of

consensus on a universal definition of shared governance. The reality that nuances of shared

governance exist in higher education calls for identifying cultural elements of an institution.

Governance Challenges and Conflicts

Birnbaum (2004) described the type of forward-looking governance which reinforces

goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships (Bolman & Deal, 2013) as "hard" governance.

This concept is supported by logical thinking (Birnbaum, 2004). In other words, structural

arrangements are established to undergird an organization's formal set of policies and

procedures. Through the division of labor, rules, and systems of reprimand, a hierarchical order

is created and perpetuated (Bolman & Deal, 2013). In that case, certain lines of communication

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and authority should be adhered to for the preservation of this type of governance. On the other hand, Birnbaum (2004) coined the phrase "soft" governance as the type of environment that is more reflective and invested in the social interactions and relationship building. Through various customary traditions, institutionalized expectations, and norms, a college or university taps into the visceral elements of an institution (Bolman & Deal, 2013) by respecting tradition. "The essence of soft governance is embedded in the socialization and expectations of the participants; institutions justify their behaviors, [roles, and support] based on…consistency with processes, roles, and missions established in the past" (Birnbaum, 2004, p. 10). Applying these concepts to a higher-education institution in the context of the joint effort of decision-making reveals potential conflicts and challenges.

Structural idiosyncrasies. Structurally, institutions of higher learning are intrinsically decentralized systems (Bess & Dee, 2012). Therefore, the policy and decision-making processes have been traditionally collaborative and collegial. Since colleges and universities often are loosely-coupled systems (Heaney, 2010), developing a balanced approach to building consensus among various stakeholders within the academy is important. Engagement of all stakeholders can engender a slow process because of the disparate interests (Heaney, 2010). In this day and age, though, "speed" apparently is the expectation and academic leadership may grow impatient in the process and be more interested in emulating the corporate sector; consequently, more institutional administrators are endeavoring to save time by making unilateral decisions (Birnbaum, 2004; Heaney, 2010). In addition, brand equity and corporate values have begun to permeate many aspects of the academy. This shift in focus has garnered a power imbalance that has tipped in favor of trustees and administrators, thus making them the principal authority with

regard to decision-making (Kaplan, 2004; Mallon, 2004). The assumption is this shift in power

has been orchestrated by the boards and senior administrators themselves.

Time constraints. Participation in the deliberative, inclusive decision-making process is

time intensive (Guffey et al., 2000). Oftentimes, faculty members are less inclined to partake in

the process because such an undertaking could compete with their teaching or research, both of

which are faculty members' chief priorities. Perception becomes reality for many outsiders

looking into the joint effort to devise strategies and policies that could have an overarching

impact on the institution (Heaney, 2010). In many cases, a knowledge and information gap

emerges about what the commitment entails.

Communication obstacles and confusion about roles and responsibilities.

Establishing effective communication among such a broad constituency base can be difficult.

Institutions, for example, often fall short of communicating expectations and responsibilities

with regard to shared governance (Heaney, 2010; Guffey et al., 2000). Interestingly, the word

"shared" in "shared governance" induces considerable confusion about the various roles in the

decision-making process (Guffey et al., 2000). In some cases, stakeholders overstep their

boundaries. In others, constituents underestimate the commitment necessary to maximize the

benefits of shared governance. For example, the challenges that emerge at the institutional level

are real and could have broad implications. Individuals who participate as leaders in the various

governing bodies have to understand that the decision-making process will likely be deliberative

and democratic. Therefore, the aforementioned stakeholders must expect to be committed for

the long haul (Guffey et al., 2000; Heaney, 2010; Mallon, 2004)

Lack of training. Many authors highlight how due to limited experience and preparation

the stakeholders arrive at the table with quixotic expectations about the joint decision-making

process (Guffey et al., 2000; Heaney, 2010; Kezar, 2004; Speck, 2011). Expertise in one's

chosen academic discipline does not guarantee instant understanding of the operations of an

institution. At the same time, often community members actively involved in institutional

decision-making have misguided assumptions that shared governance will serve as a panacea

(Guffey et al., 2000). Given the revolving door metaphor associated with leaders of institutional

governing bodies, continuity can be a challenge. Therefore, identifying ways to ensure a

seamless transition could likely have personal and institutional benefits (Birnbaum, 2004; Guffey

et al, 2000).

     Trust. An ambiguous understanding and expectations can have major ramifications with

respect to trust. If individuals are expected to perform certain duties, then they will have to

execute the tasks as expected (Logan et al., 2010, p. 584). Fulfilling the roles and

responsibilities will increase confidence and allow an organization to have confidence that a

collaborator will make a good faith effort to do good by the organization (Logan et al., 2010).

Ireland et al. (2002) assert that an organization may be afforded the opportunity to use its

connections with other organizations to increase the likelihood of executing a mutually beneficial

interorganizational relationship (p. 429).

     The governance structure, process, and stakeholders, as well as the issues and conflicts

within higher education are critically important since these components are integral to the

decision-making process. Understanding these key elements provides tremendous insight into

the players and procedures that would likely influence whether and how joint ventures come to

fruition.

Typology of Partnerships

Collaboration appears to be necessary yet the literature suggests the process is complex (Bryson et al., 2006). Given the dynamic nature of interorganizational relationships, understanding the range of collaborative initiatives is vital to the facilitation or prevention of a joint effort. The following forms of relationships are described: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. The distinct relationship descriptions provide context to gain some level of comprehension of the elements involved in an interinstitutional partnership. Smith and Wohlstetter (2006) highlight research that postulates collaborations become more formal as they progress from cooperative initiatives to collaborative endeavors.

Relationship Continuum

Oftentimes, interorganizational arrangements fail because of a lack of mutual understanding (Lang, 2002). In other words, organizations fall short of explicitly stating relationship type and the expectations that will accompany the partnership. By defining the mutual endeavor, institutions have the ability to hold each other accountable based on developing an operational definition (Lang, 2002; Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001).
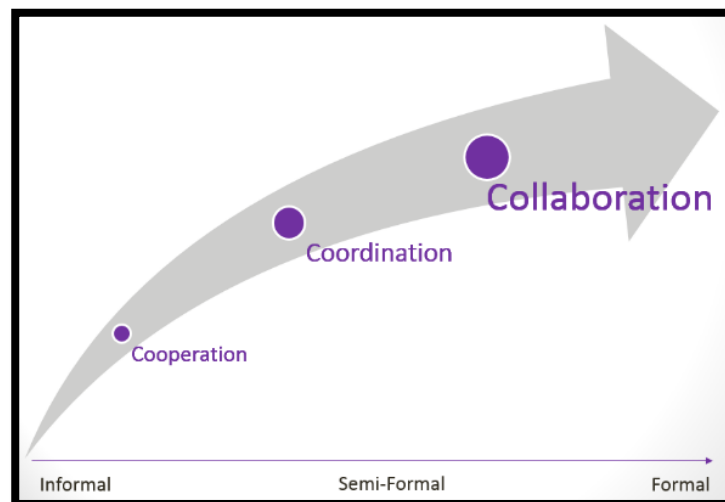
Figure 2.1. Relationship Continuum

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In this study, distinguishing among the different levels of engagement was instructive. Three kinds of relationships are addressed: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

Cooperation. Cooperation is arguably the most informal type of partnership on the relationship continuum (see Figure 2.1). Cooperation is essentially a mutual understanding and agreement between parties to take unified action to achieve success for one's own individual efforts/program (Hord, 1981; Mattessich et al., 2001). Mission and vision are less likely to be explored in the context of cooperative action (Mattessich et al., 2001). To that end, very minimal risk is associated with this relationship type.

Coordination. A semi-formal relationship is coordination. Given the parties agree that the independent missions are congruent and joint action can be taken to propel the independent yet harmonious mission makes this a more formal endeavor (Hord, 1981; Mattessich et al., 2001). Moderate risk is associated with coordination because all, one, or none of the entities could have success. Each entity preserves separation and certain degree of authority.

Collaboration. Collaboration is the formal approach to a partnership and requires mutual control and accountability to the formation, development, implementation, and assessment of the collaborative arrangement (Hord, 1981; Mattessich et al., 2001). Every entity has an exponential amount of skin in the game and is empowered to make significant contributions to the endeavor. In other words, institutions opt to pool resources and develop a partnership in how decisions are made (Smith & Wohlstetter, 2006). If one fails, then the entire relationship fails. This type of arrangement has the highest degree of risk involved.

<p style="text-align:center;">**Collaboration Factors**</p>

Mattessich et al. (2001) identified twenty factors which could positively or negatively impact a joint venture. The different factors were organized into "six broad categories:

environment, membership characteristics, process and structure, communication, purpose, and

resources" (Mattessich, 2001, p. 7). Their research on each factor draws from a host of studies.

While this work might be relatively dated, certain factors provide insight into which elements

were influential in planning, developing, and implementing a collaborative initiative. In what

follows, I briefly outline nine of the twenty factors that could likely impact interinstitutional

collaborations in general.

Environmental Context

The collaboration literature identifies environment as one of the most fundamental

elements that determines the success or failure of a collaborative endeavor (Bryson et al., 2006;

Kezar, 2005; Kezar & Lester 2009; Mattessich et al., 2001). Key questions should be taken into

consideration. For instance, does the larger context support and encourage collaborative

arrangements (Stein & Short, 2001)?

History of collaborative efforts. Pre-existing relationships between two institutions

constantly increase the likelihood of legitimate collaborative initiatives (Eckel et al., 2004;

Ireland et al., 2002; Mattessich et al., 2001). For example, do partnerships currently exist

between two postsecondary institutions? Or, have the same higher education organizations

already joined forces in the past for a common purpose and/or shared vision? If so, this history

of working together could as a major building block. Otherwise, if this partnership is the first

foray, potential collaborators could be apprehensive about entering into the relationship.

Support of public/elected officials and community. An appetite for joint ventures is

crucial for the facilitation or obstruction of collaborations (Mattessich et al., 2001). Elected and

public officials must promote and undergird the concept of interorganizational relationships

(Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Lasker et al., 2001). Ultimately, state and federal politicians have

ultimate authority over the fiscal appropriation and allocation processes and procedures.

Therefore, garnering support of policy makers is in the best interest of the joint venture. Along

the same lines, tax-paying citizens within the locale of a collaborative initiative should be

engaged and conferred with throughout the process (e.g., business community, other leaders).

The effort to engage the local community could increase the likelihood of support, or if nothing

else, minimize pushback toward the collaborative endeavor.

Membership Qualities and Composition

Mattessich et al. (2001) illuminate the importance of understanding personal,

interpersonal, and group dynamics. What are the attributes of the individuals who will have

direct, active involvement in a collaborative venture? At the same time, what are the artifacts,

values, and underlying beliefs (Schein, 2010) of the organization?

An equal level of respect, understanding, and trust. Since institutions typically have

different operating procedures and organizational cultures, it is important for institutions to

invest time learning about each other (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 14). Kanter (1994) uses the

relationship metaphor to provide illustrious perspective for how organizations develop and

mature. In other words, this comparison is comparable to the way people develop romantic

relationships. While the journeys will be incredibly nuanced, Kanter proposes five broad steps

of how collaborations progress. For example, the first phase is *getting engaged*. As to be

expected during this phase, the collaborating organizations are courting each another to

determine whether the two will be compatible. In that case, organizations will be best served by

building that rapport at the outset rather than just concentrating on forming and executing the

goals and objectives of the partnership.

A willingness to find common ground. The successful joint ventures traditionally have institutions that are amenable to negotiating and comprising. Collaborative partners should be prepared to be flexible (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2004; Gulati, 1998) and patient throughout the process (Kanter, 1994; Mattessich et al., 2001).

Process and Structure

Personnel involved in the planning, development, and implementation of a collaborative initiative should feel a sense of empowerment. Constant monitoring and tracking should take place to ensure that if any changes are necessary (Ireland et al., 2002), they can be made accordingly and promptly.

Different levels of engagement. In a joint venture, members at all levels – strategic, tactical, and operational (Bess & Dee, 2012) – need to have a voice and involvement in contributing to and shaping the collaborative endeavor. Members at every level should have consistent participation throughout the process. Solely connecting the senior leadership team of organizations would be myopic in the context of interinstitutional collaboration.

Malleability. Foreseen and unforeseen challenges will likely emerge throughout the collaborative process, both internally and externally (Gulati, 1998). Partners involved in a joint venture should endeavor to make a concerted and conscious effort to remain abreast of potential weaknesses and threats that could have immediate, short-term, and long-term implications. In that case, collaborating institutions should always be prepared to adapt (Mattessich et al., 2001).

Open and Constant Communication

A transparent, honest, and constant dialogue is expected vis-à-vis a collaborative initiative (Eckel, Green, & Affolter-Caine, 2004). How are collaborative partners keeping each other informed throughout the planning, development, and implementation phases? Institutions

will likely develop formal channels of communication when working across two different institutions. Some examples of successful collaboration include standing meetings, workshops, and town halls to educate, train, and/or collect feedback from employees with respect to a joint venture. On the other hand, informal functions can be integral to allow members from different institutions an opportunity to move beyond surface-level conversations and could build and cultivate trust.

Rationale

A host of motivating factors, the overarching goals and objectives, and division of labor (Bolman & Deal, 2013) are instrumental in interinstitutional collaboration. Creating and agreeing to a goal or set of goals should be a chief priority for collaborative partners (Ireland et al., 2002; Kezar, 2005). Engaging key stakeholders and allowing them to have a voice in the strategic direction and ultimate goal(s) of the joint venture could pay dividends in the long run (Kezar, 2005). Mattessich et al. (2001) claim the vision could inspire members of a collaborative initiative to support the effort and the mission could serve as the compass and guide to help the members of the institutions achieve the goal(s).

Sufficient Financial and Human Capital

Having a sufficient amount of fiscal resources, human capital, and time are requisite factors for collaboration (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 27). For example, a reasonable amount of time is necessary to determine whether the joint venture progresses and matures in the way it was intended. Another example is securing the dollars to support a collaborative endeavor, which is absolutely imperative. Having people who have the capability and competence to move the collaboration forward is critical, too. Determining whether the endeavor will start from scratch

or will build upon a pre-existing effort is a fair question to consider. Such strategic decisions

require an adequate amount of time, expertise, and funding.

Conceptual Framework

My approach to this study drew from two theoretical models: Kezar's (2005) *Stage Model of Collaboration in Higher Education* and Bryson et al.'s (2006) *Framework for Understanding Cross-Sector Collaborations*. These two frameworks for analyzing collaborations were adapted and blended as the conceptual prism through which I conducted this
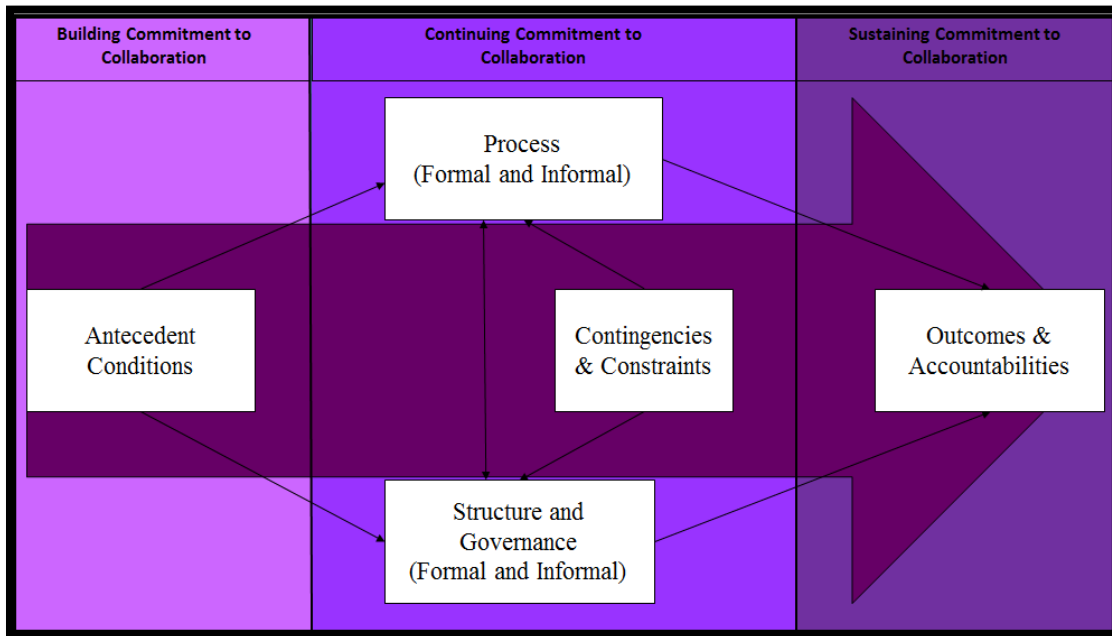
study.

Figure 2.2. Adapted and Constructed Framework Drawing from Bryson et al. (2006) and Kezar (2005)

My approach to this study adapted Kezar's (2005) model of collaborative work specific to higher education as the broad themes. That same author's model invokes three different stages that foster and undergird intra-collaboration (internal) at a single college or university: (1) building commitment to collaboration, (2) continuing commitment to collaboration, and (3) sustaining commitment to collaboration. Additionally, Bryson et al.'s (2006) framework contextualizes the broad themes by synthesizing and distilling the literature on elements that impact collaborative ventures. I anticipated that five primary areas (see Bryson et al. 2006)

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would offer insight into this collaboration: (1) antecedent conditions, (2) process, (3) structure and governance, (4) contingencies and constraints, (5) outcomes and accountability.

Building Commitment

This framework (see Figure 2.2) first begins with *building commitment* in which the higher education institution endeavors to collect input and feedback from different "sources" (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 48) germane to the values of the organization. At the same time, boundary spanners (Bryson et al., 2006) identify reasons and motivations from outside the institution to provide the rationale and purpose for undertaking a joint venture. An example of the extrinsic motivation or reason why leaders might use political or legislative pressure is to garner internal support for collaboration. The antecedents increase the ability to persuade employees to buy in to the value and worth of collaborating.

Prior to undertaking a collaborative arrangement, this framework suggests exploring and examining the antecedent conditions (Bryson et al., 2006) to gain a sense of what could impact the formation of a joint venture.

Environmental elements. Over the last several decades, organizations have become less capable of making sound, fair predictions of their own future (Bryson et al., 2006). External elements directly and indirectly impacting the internal goals and objectives of organizations are beyond their control. Having to do "more with less" (Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001, p. 180) has served as a catalyst for organizations to consider developing external partnerships to increase certainty and stability. Often, collaborative arrangements lead to a larger footprint.

Accountability organizations could have a major impact on how and why collaborations emerge. For example, higher education accrediting bodies are responsible for ensuring that institutions of higher education are meeting certain standards, thus essentially serving as quality

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control (Hendrickson et al. 2013). As a result, external expectations could greatly influence how institutions of higher education approach and/or shape collaborative endeavors.

Not only can outside forces have an impact on an institution, but also certain internal preconditions can play an integral role on forging joint ventures (Bryson et al., 2006). Trust can be established between and among entities and people (Gulati & Sytch, 2008). Specific to individuals, credible leaders within organizations often serve as the catalyst for bringing organizations together (Bryson et al., 2006; Mattessich et al., 2001). In times of uncertainty, trustworthy leaders who have prior interactions with an organization or individual could be a tremendous advantage (Gulati & Sytch, 2008) from a potential collaborator standpoint. That leader could leverage his/her connections in order to solidify a joint venture (Gulati & Sytch, 2008). Mitchell (2001) asserts that interorganizational relationships formed based on familiarity and trust can dissolve if the person(s) responsible for establishing the connection is removed from the equation.

External forces, such as political pressure and financial implications, are often the impetus for creative partnerships throughout the U.S., especially in higher education (Stein & Short, 2001). The planning and organization of collaborative initiatives are dramatically impacted by environmental changes and shifts.

Continuing Commitment

The next stage is *continuing commitment*. During this phase, senior university officials make a conscious and concerted effort to undergird collaboration by providing the utmost leadership. In other words, key leaders reassess the mission, vision, and philosophy of the institution to determine whether these align with and foster collaborative work.

Collaboration process. Bryson et al. (2006) highlight six factors—forging agreements, building leadership, building legitimacy, building trust, managing conflict, and planning—associated with the joint venture process (p 46).

Depending on the type of collaboration, an official or unofficial agreement might be more appropriate (Bryson et al., 2006; Mitchell, 2001). For example, if the two organizations undertaking a partnership already have a history of partnering, then an unofficial agreement might suffice (Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Bryson et al., 2006; Gulati & Sytch, 2008). On the other hand, newly formed partnerships would certainly warrant the drafting and revision of a formal written document to ensure a clear understanding and the ability to hold all involved parties accountable. In today's highly litigious society, institutions would be wise to develop a formal agreement – to make certain expectations are outlined in a clear and concise manner.

Structural and governance components. Dyer (1997) and Gulati (1998) suggest that heterogeneity has been ubiquitous in the context of recently emerging alliances. Organizational structure, in this context, is the blueprint that is designed to move the process forward (Bolman & Deal, 2013). This theme has impacted how relationships are developed and managed (Gulati, 1998). The latter part comes in the form of governance. Formal control is designed to support and guide collaborative ventures (Thorgen & Wincent, 2011) toward achieving a mission and vision. A common assumption is that to become effective in the context of governance, it is important to have a clear understanding of the division of labor (Bryson et al., 2006), authority (Kezar, 2004), roles, and standard operating procedures (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Bryson et al., 2006; Kezar, 2004). On one hand, organizations involving a formal interinstitutional relationship might require having a bureaucratic structure (Gulati, 1998). On the other hand, interorganizational relationships that could be considered cooperative endeavors (informal

partnerships) may require less formal hierarchical structures (Gulati, 1998). Different contexts such as historical, political, economic, social, and formal and informal could have a profound effect on the structural and governing elements of a collaboration. In any case, organizations must have clear distinctions of roles and responsibilities as well as the ability to work as a cohesive unit (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Contingencies and constraints. Bryson et al. (2006) enumerate three aspects found in the literature that could have far-reaching impacts on the developmental process of a collaborative initiative. I see two of three factors specifically relating to this study: the type of interinstitutional joint venture and power disparity. The latter would likely have many unintended consequences. For example, if institutions opted to pursue a joint venture and one institution had more influence and control over the process, then the power disparity could result in irreconcilable differences. Consequently, institutions must be prepared to cut their losses, if the time comes. The literature reminds us that many collaborations end in failure (e.g., Castro & Roldan, 2015; Kale & Singh, 2007; Kezar, 2005; Park & Kang, 2013; Park & Russo, 1996). The unevenness of power could be real or perceived.

Sustaining Commitment

The final phase is *sustaining commitment*. The goal of a collaborative initiative to develop a continuous process (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Kezar and Lester (2009) discovered that a systematically coordinated effort could enhance the ability to maintain a collaborative context (p. 224). Structural and procedural elements have to be integrated in order to create collaboration that can be preserved for an extended time period. Kezar (2005) adds that assessment is a key part to sustaining collaboration. In fact, Kezar illuminates the inherent collaborative nature associated with systematic evaluation.

Outcomes and accountability. Bryson et al. (2006) illuminate three big buckets to sort the outcomes of collaborative endeavors. The three areas are: "public value, first-, second-, and third-order effects, and resilience and reassessment" (p. 50). In the context of this study, capturing and articulating the impact on the public good served as a chief priority. At the same time, each of the institutions involved wanted to discern whether the collaborative venture added any value to their organization (i.e., self-interest). Each kept an open mind into how the value and worth was determined. For instance, the institutions had the foresight to consider how this collaboration might lead to any other external partnerships as a result of the original joint venture. Such benefits were immediate, yet others could materialize in the distant future. That is why constant vigilance is critical. The direct and indirect results are related to the final stage of the conceptual framework (see Figure 2.2). Short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes should be considered. The scope of this study hones in primarily on the short-term and intermediate pertaining to the early implementation phase.

Accountability is an all-encompassing concept (i.e., this process ranges from inputs to procedures to results) (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 51). Tracking, monitoring, and regulating formal and informal agreements are vital to the success of a partnership. Systematic assessment, for example, is a necessary ingredient in a joint venture. Data collected during the formation, development, and implementation should frequently be reviewed and shared with stakeholders, so they can feel empowered and engaged throughout the process (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). As a result, they are afforded the opportunity to take ownership in the process. The evaluation should not only be limited to the collaborative relationship, but rather the environment at large (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Building consensus around a set of standards by which people are accountable can be challenging given the varying interpretations and expectations of the goals

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and objectives. Different organizations implement different systems to monitor and evaluate progress (Bryson et al., 2006). Therefore, the dissension that emerges from the idiosyncratic mental models could lead to inertia, thus inhibiting the collaborative work from progressing accordingly.

Assumptions

Working from the aforementioned theoretical bases gives rise to some assumptions that shaped this work. First, an underlying assumption in this study was the likelihood of an interinstitutional collaboration materializing is increased when a pre-existing relationship exists between or among institutions (Lumineau, Eckerd, & Handley, 2015). For instance, if two institutions have entered into a joint venture or have worked together in the past, then depending on the quality of that relationship, they would likely be willing to enter into another partnership. Contrary to Bryson et al. (2006), I presumed even if two institutions already had a history of working together, a formal agreement would play a role in establishing a precise and robust understanding of the expectations for the new venture.

Specific to higher education, colleges and universities must have a culture and climate that support and embrace change. One of the realities in higher education is institutions are accustomed to operating autonomously. Forging an interinstitutional collaboration, however, would require postsecondary institutions to relinquish full autonomy in order to find middle ground. Blending two different cultures yielded an interesting dynamic in the context of this interinstitutional collaboration. Therefore, establishing formal and informal opportunities to build and cultivate trust is important.

More specific to these two institutions, I assumed they entered into a joint venture because each university felt the collaborative endeavor would be a substantial return on

investment for its institution first and foremost. Although identifying and conveying how this joint venture would impact the public good, I suspected intrinsic value would prevail as the overriding factor in the decision-making process.

The ideal collaboration has a long-term shared vision (Eckel & Hartley, 2008) and distinctive yet advantageous purpose (Mattessich et al. 2001). To clarify, this specific purpose refers to the fact that the intent of the joint venture would be mutually beneficial.

Another assumption was these institutions of higher learning had to have sufficient financial and human capital to undertake this interorganizational initiative. Entering into a partnership would require employees to wear multiple hats and step into unchartered territories. In addition, I presumed adequate infrastructure (i.e., instructional facilities and other structural needs) would be absolutely imperative to developing this academic collaboration.

In the context of these two institutions of higher learning entering into the collaborative initiative, mutual respect, trust, and understanding had to exist. Prior to embarking on this interinstitutional partnership, these universities ultimately had to receive the blessing of key members of different governing groups before officially solidifying the collaboration. At the same time, I suspected both institutions would seek the support of certain external stakeholders such as key business leaders and elected officials. Engaging stakeholders at all levels was a requisite for creating a sustainable joint venture.

Summary

As illuminated in this chapter, higher education has engaged in and undertaken many forms of internal and external partnerships over the last few centuries. From the church to government to the business community back to government, higher education, in general, has not existed in a vacuum. In effect, this history of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration has

assisted the U.S. at very critical times and provided many solutions to challenges that have emerged. The most important internal partnership is shared governance, which is unique to higher education. Many authors note that the nuances of a decision-making model vary from institution to institution (Guffey, Rampp, & Masters, 2000; Kaplan, 2004; Kezar, 2004; Kezar, 2005), thus creating distinctive challenges specific to a college or university. In contemporary times, the issues are compounded by external forces that are conflicting with the traditions and values of shared governance.

This section, too, highlighted the various types of partnerships and how the scope and nature move from informal to formal. Collaboration, the most formal type of partnership, consists of a multitude of factors that influence the planning, formation, implementation, and assessment. With that in mind, this study is appropriate to investigate this interinstitutional collaboration between two institutions of higher learning. The blended conceptual framework of Kezar (2005) and Bryson et al. (2006) provides a lens through which this phenomenon can be analyzed. Ideally, the research conducted in this area will contribute to the broader body of literature that will serve as a building block for other researchers and insight for the higher-education community.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the perceptions of key leaders on the factors which influenced the process of exploring, undertaking, and maintaining a joint venture between a private four-year university and a graduate/professional higher education institution and how any challenges or conflicts were resolved. Again, this study was guided by the following central research questions:

- Why did leaders of both institutions of higher education opt to form an interinstitutional collaboration?

- What were the most salient factors that influenced or facilitated the conception, development, and early implementation of this higher education interinstitutional collaboration?

- How did leaders of these institutions navigate challenges – foreseen or unforeseen – that emerged as the interinstitutional collaboration matured from the exploratory phase to early implementation?

Qualitative design was appropriate to the objectives because the underlying premise "involve[d] studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions" (Yin, 2011, p. 8).

> *Qualitative research* begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis

that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns and themes. (Creswell, 2013,

p. 44, emphasis in original)

Qualitative research represents the vantage point and perceptions of people who inhabit a

particular context (Yin, 2011, p. 7). Qualitative research, too, gives insight into the conditions in

which people live and work (p. 7). Many other research methods are less likely to yield such

rich and in-depth results (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2011). Specific to this study, understanding the

different factors and how they influenced the decision to form, develop, and execute the joint

venture require[d] "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 2013).

Case Study Design

To address the research questions, I made use of qualitative methods and, specifically,

case-study design. Case studies are mechanisms for extensive examination of an entity, a

people, a group, a process, or collaboration (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). Qualitative case studies

endeavor to discover "meaning and understanding" (Merriam, 2009, p. 39) of a phenomenon or

phenomena. Traditionally, researchers of a case study explore contemporary scenarios so they

can capture and collect information in real-time. One case may be investigated or two or more

may be explored for comparison purposes. In this study, investigating one case – that involved

two institutions of higher education – was sufficient because the objective was to capture breadth

and depth. This descriptive case was robust and rich (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). A vast amount of

information was generated based on the case study, which led to understanding more about

issues at the core of the research (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Merriam 2009). Understanding

and analyzing the results created a scenario where the findings could have significant

implications for academic leaders.

This interinstitutional collaboration is appropriate to study because this case articulates the narrative about a bounded system (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In other words, I had the ability to identify and parse out the various elements and how they function in a broader context (p. 395). I should note I had a great deal of interest in this academic collaboration because I am an administrator in higher education. Therefore, this intrinsic case study (Merriam, 2009) offers insight into how this joint venture was formed, implemented, and maintained. As such, the single case study approach enabled me to invest an extensive amount of energy into investigating this particular phenomenon to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in action (p. 397).

Procedure

This section unpacks the study context, the partner identification and selection processes, and the proposed methods of data collection and analysis.

Study Context

This study focused on the unfolding interinstitutional collaboration between a regional, up-and-coming institution, which I will refer to as "Mature University," and a university with a national reputation, which I will call "Independent University," both of which are in the southwestern part of the United States. This collaboration, which aimed at filling a void in a southwestern U.S. community and providing a public good, consisted of multiple elements that were explored as a qualitative case study. Specifically, the newly formed academic collaboration was an allopathic medical school—a program that awards degrees in doctor of medicine. This type of medical school would be the first of its kind in the region. Trying to gain a broader and deeper sense of this contemporary case yielded tremendous insight into how the phenomenon fit within the context (Yin, 2013, p.16). The meticulous and detailed understanding sheds light on

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other intricate circumstances (Yin, 2012) germane to the interinstitutional collaboration being explored.

The site selection process was based on having access to the two higher education institutions that developed a formal partnership. As such, one of the parameters for selecting institutions in this case study consisted of institutions that made a public announcement pertaining to the interinstitutional collaboration. Merriam (2009) suggests "to find the best case study, [one] would first establish the criteria that will guide the case selection and then select a case that meets those criteria" (p. 82). The selection of an interinstitutional collaboration for this study was based on the other following criteria:

- The institutions recently formed, developed, and implemented a formal collaboration.

- For the most part, the leaders responsible for undertaking and implementing the collaborative endeavor were still employed at the two institutions which entered into the joint venture.

- The joint venture was of a scope that would make it feasible to investigate an interinstitutional collaboration comprehensively as a case study.

In summer of 2015, Independent University and Mature University announced their agreement to enter into an academic collaboration to create the first-ever MD School in the area. This case study was chosen because of the uniquely-designed academic collaboration in the context of the region and the public announcement. This interorganizational linkage was initially designed to combine resources to establish a new allopathic medical program. No collaboration of this kind currently exists in this metropolitan area. The historical context that molded the interinstitutional collaboration is multifaceted and broad. As a result, this case had merit and was worth exploring.

As mentioned, the two institutions that formed this collaboration were Independent University and Mature University. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education categorized the two different institutions as the following: Independent University is considered a doctoral/research institution; Mature University is considered a special focus institution – medical school and medical center (The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2015).

Mature University. Mature University is a public graduate/professional institution. The university was founded in the latter half of the 20th century and originally derived as a private college offering a degree in osteopathic medicine; the initial entering class was 20. Mature University awarded the inaugural graduating class their doctor of osteopathy degree in the mid-1970s.

Mature University has evolved since its founding. Today, this institution has expanded tremendously. The institution touts itself as one of the leading graduate/professional institutions in medicine in the county. Mature University has several different programs divided among five academic divisions—osteopathic medicine, biomedical sciences, public health, health professions, and pharmacy. The university has been recognized as "one of the…50 medical primary care schools" (Mature University, 2015) in the U.S. In fall 2014, Mature University reported having an approximate 2,200 students enrolled and an approximate 1,600 staff members employed; it serves as the only graduate medical institution in the city. It graduates the second highest group of primary care physicians in the nation; in other words, 60 per cent of its graduates enter into the primary care field. The 2015-16 estimated tuition rate for students pursuing the doctorate degree in osteopathic medicine for in-state residents is nearly $20,000 and $35,000 for an out-of-state resident.

Mature University considers itself one of the premier graduate/professional medical centers in the U.S. and the institution strives to "transform lives in order to improve the lives of others" (Mature University, 2015). The institution estimates that it has made a substantial economic impact on the community, generating more than $600 million annually and $43 million in research. Also, 560,000 patients were seen by the roughly 230 health care providers. To date, Mature University has more than 6,500 alumni.

In 2015, Mature University's executive leadership team reassessed the values, vision, and mission of the institution. Several senior administrators engaged in a thoughtful and thought-provoking process to understand and clarify its values. Through this iterative and introspective journey, the leadership team solidified the values: *serve others first, integrity, respect, collaboration, and be visionary*. Through this exercise, Mature University rebranded itself.

In addition, Mature University recommitted to and reaffirmed the mission and vision. The mission is: "*solutions for a healthier community*. The vision is: *to be the team of choice for education, discovery and health care*" (Mature University, 2015, np). To buttress the mission, vision, and values, "trust" serves as the cornerstone on which the institution operates.

Independent University. Independent University was founded in the late 19th century and has a religious affiliation. Independent University is a mid-sized institution that has a student body that exceeds more than 10,000 (total headcount), nearly 8,900 of whom are undergraduates and slightly more than 1,400 of whom are graduate students. Also, Independent University employs almost 2,100 faculty and staff members to serve the community; approximately 600 are full-time faculty members, with more than 80 per cent holding the highest degree in their fields. The institution offers more than 100 areas of study divided among multiple colleges and schools, one of which is a non-degree granting academic division. Also,

50-plus master's level and 25 doctoral study programs are available at the graduate level. The

campus is spread out across 275 acres of land and is located near the heart of a major urban area.

The university presents itself as a place with big school opportunities and resources with a small,

private college feel. For the 2015-16 academic year, tuition is listed around $40,000 and the

overall cost of attendance (direct cost) is listed as more than $50,000.

Independent University's annual budget for the academic year 2015-16 is estimated at

$600 million and the total investments are roughly $1.7 billion. The university believes the

tremendous investment of financial and human resources have greatly contributed to a high

freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of 90 per cent. Also, Independent University has more

than 85,000 alumni. The mission, vision and values of Independent University are delineated

below (Independent University, 2015, np).

- The mission is *to educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and
  responsible citizens in the global community*.

- The vision is *to create a world-class, values-centered university*.

- The values are *academic achievement, personal freedom and integrity, the dignity
  and respect of the individual, and a heritage of inclusiveness, tolerance and service*.

Participant Identification and Selection.

Merriam (2009) suggests that "purposeful [also known as 'purposive'] sampling is based

on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and

therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 77). I used purposive

sampling in this study. Legitimate access to key stakeholders engaged in the process was an

important reason for selecting the participants. As a result, I was able to yield rich and

meaningful data for this study. One of the most commonly used forms of purposive sampling is

snowball sampling (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). Throughout conversations with key stakeholders, snowball sampling was applied to confirm which other key participants should be engaged (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2011) sheds light on the importance of being purposeful in how subsequent interviews are conducted that may derive from snowball sampling. He suggests not just seeking other participants out of convenience, but rather, the decision should be based on merit and worth in the context of the study (p. 89).

Johnson and Christensen (2012), Merriam (2009), and Yin (2011) assert that the "snowball" could grow exponentially based on the number of leads and other recommended participants to interview. In that case, a valid concern presents as to when to stop acting on various interview leads or recommendations should cease. The aforementioned authors state that redundancy is usually a good indication to cease efforts with respect to pursuing other leads or potential participants. For instance, the repetitiveness could be in the form of proposed prospective participants or information that is conveyed. To this end, my stopping point with snowball sampling transpired when I no longer yielded new and/or fresh data or experienced duplication of recommended potential participants.

Interviews occurred upon the prospective participant's reviewing, signing, and dating the appropriate documentation. Each potential participant was contacted by email, telephone, or in-person in order to extend an invitation to participate in the study. Participants were active and integral leaders of the interinstitutional collaboration and others as suggested by the original participants. Interview participants began with senior-level administrators who played an instrumental role in the decision-making process to form this joint venture which required shared ownership, control, and decision-making. Specifically, the participants at Independent University consisted of the chancellor (chief executive officer), provost/vice chancellor for

academic affairs, and a member of the board of trustees' executive committee, as the committee

played an integral role in the decision to move forward with this collaboration. The counterparts

at Independent University were interviewed. Titles varied between the institutions. Mature

University participants were comprised of the president (chief executive officer), the

provost/executive vice president for academic affairs, and a member of the board of regents.

Mature University and Independent University established two primary committees to

help guide and facilitate the process. One committee was the search committee and this group

embarked on the process to identify a pool of qualified candidates who could serve as dean of

this academic collaboration. By the time interviewing of participants commenced, a dean of the

MD school was in place. I included the dean as a participant because he was able to share

insight into how to operationalize the bold vision and lofty goals. At the same time, another

group responsible for providing leadership was the management committee, of which the two

chief academic officers served as the co-chairs. Eight others served on this committee. I

identified four people from the management committee, two from each institution, to interview.

Two academic deans at Independent University served as participants, as well as, academic

leadership at Mature University.

The co-chairs of the management committee created subcommittees and assigned various

employees to the subcommittees to support the planning, development, and early implementation

phases. In order to streamline this process and establish continuity, the management committee

co-chairs hired a project coordinator to manage the subcommittee process. This person tracked

the progress of the subcommittees and kept each subcommittee accountable. The project

coordinator was also interviewed as I suspected she could shed light on how the process

unfolded or recommend other participants who could provide rich perspective on the

collaborative endeavor. Again, I used snowball sampling and this technique was relatively

effective in this context.

Table 3.1

Key Stakeholders Involved in the Private and Public Academic Collaboration

Key Private Stakeholders	Key Public Stakeholders
Chief Executive Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Chief Academic Officer	Chief Academic Officer
Chief Financial Officer	Chief Financial Officer
Member of Board of Trustees	Member of Board of Regents
First Academic Dean of Private Institution	First Academic Dean of Public Institution
Second Academic Dean of Private Institution	Second Academic Dean of Public Institution
Dean of the Academic Collaboration (represents both institutions)	Project Coordinator (represents both institutions)
Chief of Staff	Chief of Staff
Chief Institutional Advancement Officer	
Chief Marketing Officer	

Data Collection

Yin (2011) suggests the possibility of undertaking multiple data gathering efforts within

the same study. The same author underscored data should derive from multiple sources in the

scenario of case study research. While this strategy is time-intensive, the payoff could greatly

enhance the overall quality of the study. Semi-structured, thorough interviews served as the

chief data collection method, complemented by document review, structured observations, and

field notes to encapsulate the elements of this real-life case (Creswell, 2013). Pseudonyms were

applied to the participants and institutions involved in this study. This practice was integrated to protect the privacy of the individuals who graciously participated in the process.

Data collection occurred over a five-month timespan. Also, to develop and maintain authenticity of and consistency within the study, triangulation was undertaken via the creation of an interview protocol, an observation protocol, and a documentation protocol. Johnson and Christensen (2012) described triangulation as "when the researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon" (p. 439).

Semi-structured interviews. Merriam (2009) claims "in all forms of qualitative research, some and occasionally all of the data are collected through interviews" (p. 87). In this case, the primary method of data gathering included interviews of key leaders of the two institutions (see Table 3.1).

The timeline for interviewing spanned five months. In April 2016, I sent an email to each potential participant to coordinate the face-to-face interview. An effective strategy to build trust and rapport with the participants was to provide a specific explanation as to elucidate the purpose of the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Each interview was approximately 45 minutes. I requested permission of each participant to digitally record the conversation, which proved to be beneficial during transcription and analysis. To maximize the meeting time, interview participants were given a copy of the potential questions prior to the actual interviews. The benefit of sending questions in advance of the interview was the participant was afforded the opportunity to be prepared for the meeting. One concern I had was the preparation could lead to canned responses. However, the nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for a more organic conversation. If the interview did not yield the type of data that I was seeking, I was prepared to follow-up to have the participant(s) clarify and/or expound as deemed appropriate, though this

was unnecessary in the end. Five additional names were recommended through snowball sampling for a total of 19 interview participants. I had scheduled a meeting with one of the academic leaders, but later received an email stating that the meeting was cancelled. I made a few attempts to follow-up, but received no response. As a result, I ended up interviewing 18 participants.

The typical method of selecting an interview structure is contingent upon how much information and the type of data the researcher is seeking (Merriam, 2009). Since the interviews were semi-structured, I was able to facilitate a more conversational tone and elicit more natural and authentic responses (Johnson & Christensen; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2011). Merriam stated "less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways" (2009, p. 90).

Interview protocol. Interviews were the primary data collection method used in this study. The interview protocol **(see Appendix B)** was sent to the participants in advance to delineate the process and set expectations of the interview. This protocol included open-ended questions with the intent to generate thorough, thoughtful responses from the participants. Johnson and Christensen (2012) proclaimed "[the] cardinal rule in research [is] that you must 'try out,' or pilot test, your [protocol] to determine whether it operates properly *before* using it in a research study" (p. 183, emphasis in original). In fact, the authors suggested that testing out the questions should occur with no fewer than five people. I, therefore, pilot tested the protocol with eight of my colleagues. Half of them responded with constructive feedback and helped me to organize my thoughts. Since the interviews were designed to elicit verbal responses, I used the "think-aloud-technique" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 183), which to a certain degree was a comparable simulation of the actual in-person interviews. In order to optimize the time

and energy invested here, the pilot sessions were audio recorded to encapsulate the delivery of the instructions and how they are interpreted and the verbal and nonverbal responses evoked in the simulation. Per the insights gleaned from this process, questions and instructions were adjusted accordingly.

Structured observations. Merriam (2009) noted "observations take place in the setting where the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs…[and] observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest…" (p. 117). Moreover, observation can be an effective approach when it is methodical and the appropriate due diligence occurs to yield credible findings (Merriam, 2009). Merriam provided a checklist of fundamental aspects to consider in preparation for observation: physical setting, the participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors, and [the observer's] own behavior (2009, pp. 120-121).

Observations should be directly tied to the research aim and questions. Observing requires the utilization of all senses – including the proverbial "sixth sense" of intuition – and the ability oftentimes to be in the past, present, and future *simultaneously.* Merriam (2009) noted that researchers can either have active engagement as an observer or have more of an ensconced role (p. 125). There are four types of observational roles (Creswell, 2013, pp. 166-167):

- *Complete participant.* The researcher is fully engaged with the people he or she is observing. This may help him or her establish greater rapport with the people being observed. (Creswell, 2013 as cited by Angrosino, 2007).

- *Participant as observer.* The researcher is participating in the activity site. The role is more salient than the researcher role. This may help the researcher gain insider

views and subjective data. However, it may be distracting for the researcher to record data when he or she is integrated into the activity.

- *Nonparticipant/observer as participant.* "The researcher is an outsider of the group under study, watching and taking field notes from a distance" (Creswell, 2013, p. 167). He or she can record data without direct involvement with the activity or people.

- *Complete observer.* The researcher is neither seen nor noticed by the people under study.

The predominant observational role the researcher assumed in this study was the participant as observer. That approach allowed the investigator to have direct access to otherwise closed meetings. Thus, the investigator was able to do a better job of capturing and recording data. Creswell (2013) eloquently wrote "as a good qualitative observer, [the researcher] may change [his/her] role during an observation…" (p. 167). If needed, I was prepared to adapt to the various observational scenarios; however, that was never the case. Through the varying observational roles, I sought to collect data related to the factors that influenced the decision-making process and challenges that emerged.

Field notes were critical during the observation process (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) asserts a steadfast commitment is required to "sit down" and recount situations that were observed (p. 129). I recorded notes in the various observational capacities.

On September 30, 2015, a joint email from the two chief academic officers was disseminated to stakeholders and constituents at the two higher education institutions to provide an update on the progress of the joint venture. This information enumerated a few items that were underway and a tentative timeline moving forward. One aspect highlighted the best-case

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scenario that was the MD school would have its first class by fall 2018. The electronic

communication, too, indicated that since this interinstitutional collaboration was still in the

nascent stages, numerous committee meetings would be ongoing. I attended and observed as

many of the various meetings as possible to try to extrapolate the factors that influenced the

formation and development of the interinstitutional linkage as well as some of the expected and

unexpected challenges which emerged. In all, I attended six meetings as I collected data for this

study.

   Observation protocol. Field observations comprised a secondary data-gathering method.

Data were collected by using an observation protocol to collect accounts of the participants and

specific to the collaboration. Yin (2011) stated that "[observations] can be an invaluable way of

collecting data because what you see with your own eyes and perceive with your own senses is

not filtered by what others might have self-reported…" (p. 143). An observation protocol was

specifically designed for this study **(see Appendix C)**.

   Document review. Data collection involved the acquisition of documents given by the

participants germane to the study and any documentation from other sources such as the media.

The documents consisted of, but were not limited to, internal memos, official records, letters,

newspapers, historical accounts, electronic communication, online documents, visual documents,

public records, etc. (Yin, 2011). While some of the documents were available for public

consumption, others were not. I had to make a conscious and concerted effort to discern which

information should be published versus the sensitive and confidential information. One of the

safest ways was to check with the source(s) as to whether considered a document was sensitive

or confidential.

Documentation protocol. The documentation compilation was another secondary data-collection method integrated into the study. The documentation protocol **(see Appendix D)** was an attempt to address the authenticity of the sources of information gathered.

Data Analysis

Gathering the qualitative data through different mechanisms is manageable for beginning investigators (Merriam, 2009). However, "analyzing [the] data is a much more daunting task" (Merriam, 2009, p. 175). The purpose here is to "make sense out of the data" (2009, p. 175). In order to optimize this process, I reviewed the relationship between the data and the guiding questions and research purpose (p. 170). Yin (2011) states the following pertaining to case study data analysis:

> To begin the more intensive phase of data analysis in a case study, all the information about the case should be brought together—interview logs or transcripts, field notes, reports, records, the investigator's own documents, physical traces, and reflective memos (p. 203).

The data analysis consisted of the following: (1) analysis of the interview transcripts, (2) a review of the documents pertaining to the collaboration, and (3) a review of my field notes and summary memos. This host of data points was sorted into categories and the analysis employed measures delineated by prominent qualitative inquiry scholars (e.g., Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2011; Merriam, 2009). The investigator integrated multiple techniques to analyze the data points. Analysis occurred synchronously with the data-gathering process to address any gaps as quickly as possible rather than waiting until later in the process (Merriam, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Starting with the premise that it is unrealistic to think all of the data can be

captured throughout the process (Miles et al., 2014) makes the data analysis process seem more manageable.

While I organized the data, the transcription of the audio recordings of the personal interviews were outsourced. I reviewed all of the data to comprehend fully the totality of the data. During the process of reviewing the interview transcripts, I began an internal analysis through a series of analytical memos. Moving between one's own thoughts and perceptions and the actual data and disintegrating and putting back together the data points is crucial to understanding the meaningful material (Yin 2011). Merriam (2009) suggests the practical technique of writing one's perceptions and thoughts during the experience, which is also known as memoing. (I kept memos throughout the data collection and analysis since they were happening concurrently.) Memos served as building blocks to the subsequent phase: coding.

Next, I coded all data. Codes fostered rich and robust contemplative meaning of the data collected (Miles et al., 2014). Utilizing coding helped with prioritization of determining which data points had value and worth in the context of the study. The same process allowed for the opportunity to unearth certain connections or meanings that were initially identified (Miles et al., 2014, p. 73). The Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), *Dedoose*, was utilized for organizing and coding the data. This platform streamlined the searching and synthesis process of specific themes and categories. Saldaña (2013) illuminates the importance of approaching coding strategically. The same author mentions that the different data points coded throughout the "First Cycle coding processes" (p. 3) will likely run the gamut "from a single word to a full sentence to an entire page of text to a stream of moving images" (p. 3).

Miles et al. (2014) enumerate three specific fundamental approaches to coding: Descriptive, In Vivo, and Process coding (p. 74). These serve as the cornerstones to coding.

Descriptive coding places "labels to data" (p. 74) to encapsulate "words or phrases" (p. 74) found in qualitative data. In Vivo is the most recognizable form of coding. This coding type endeavors to maintain the original information conveyed by an interviewee participant. Process coding is the third type of method. This approach "uses gerunds…" (p. 75) to give context to space and time and what specifically was observed and conceptualized. Given the number of qualitative interviews in this study, I attempted to preserve the essence of the data communicated by the participants. In that case, I used In Vivo coding. Thereafter, coding moved to the more specific coding methods. For example, I coded based on different themes, stemming from my guiding/research questions. Further, I used the nine (of 20) factors from Mattessich et al.'s (2001) work that I adapted and were presented in the previous chapter as a starting point. The factors were as follows:

- History of partnerships

- Support of public and elected officials and community

- Equal level of respect, understanding, and trust

- Willingness to compromise and find middle ground

- Different levels of stakeholder engagement and involvement

- Adaptability

- Formal and informal communication channels

- Common vision and purpose

- Sufficient financial resources and human capital

Although these broad themes evolved throughout the process, they served as useful starter codes.

Field notes from observations were analyzed to supplement the qualitative data collected from the interviews. Poring over the field notes and listening again and again to the audio

recordings in a timely manner were critical to capturing the meaningful data (Yin, 2011).

Additionally, comparing this information was insightful and instructive. The "highly

descriptive" (Merriam, 2009) field notes afforded me the opportunity to identify any

relationship(s) between the activities and behaviors at the two different institutions and the

perceptions and feelings held by the participants. Having a considerable amount of detail is

crucial to the data analysis (Merriam, 2009).

Yin (2011) asserts "documents or artifacts have been underused in qualitative studies…"

(p. 153). Therefore, analyzing the documents provided by the participants and generated by me

greatly benefited the study as a whole. Inevitably, themes and categories which I distilled were

subject to researcher bias. Subsequently, the identified themes were reassembled in relation to

the research questions as well as the collaboration issues conveyed in the literature review.

Limitations

As with any research process undertaken, strengths and limitations with regard to a case

study emerged. The case study provides a comprehensive review of a phenomenon and could

solidify implications for future studies (Creswell, 2013). On the other hand, some limitations

were encountered which is common due to the nature of qualitative research. Research bias is a

threat to the process. Johnson and Christensen (2012) proclaim "…the problem of researcher

bias was frequently an issue in qualitative research because the qualitative research tends to be

exploratory and is open ended and less structured" (p. 264). As to be expected, the researcher

embarks on the process with certain pre-conceived ideas and thoughts, whether consciously or

subconsciously. In that case, the researcher might have the proclivity to become engrossed in

certain areas that relate to the researcher's own experiences and viewpoints, which may impact

the data interpretation. As a result, the study's findings may not have merit or worth in another context because of the researcher bias.

This study explored a real-life interinstitutional collaboration involving the linkage of a private four-year university and a public graduate/professional institution. The formal partnership had a purposefully selected sample. The interinstitutional collaboration occurred in southwest U.S. The joint venture between Mature University and Independent University may be specific to this collaboration and not representative of interorganizational collaborations in general. Of course, the opinions shared by the participants are based on the primary players involved in the formation, development, and early implementation phases. Candidly, collaboration is no universal remedy (Bryson et al., 2006) for solving many of the twenty-first century challenges illuminated in Chapter One. Still, articulated views pertaining to this phenomenon may be insightful to potential collaborations in other places. Also, understanding the potential challenges that may arise and how they are resolved in this particular context could be useful.

The legal framework within an interinstitutional collaboration is one of the key aspects of ensuring the accountability and integrity of a joint venture. The scope of this study was not intended to invest a substantial amount of time covering the legal structure of the linkage between the two institutions of higher learning. Rather, certain legal elements of the formal agreement will be addressed in the next chapter as they relate to the questions guiding this study. As a result, another limitation is the limited scope of the legal framework involved in interinstitutional collaborations. Also, at times, legal constraints precluded me from accessing highly confidential and sensitive documents and/or meetings.

My role as an administrator at a higher education institution could possibly be problematic. I worked to surface my own biases throughout my exploration and investigation. Still, it is possible the participants may have been less inclined to be forthright if they felt the information could reflect negatively on them, their institutions, or the collaboration.

<div align="center">**Trustworthiness**</div>

The following section will illuminate efforts that I employed to enhance the overall credibility and reliability of the study.

Credibility

I used several different tactics to ensure the credibility of the process, both internally and externally. As I mentioned above, to address researcher bias, I engaged in reflexivity. Again, this measure required constant "critical self-reflection" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 266) by me to address the potential partiality and predispositions that could have impacted the process. Also, I used personal memos to capture my own thoughts and feelings throughout the study.

Another strategy was triangulation (Merriam, 2009, p. 215). This endeavor increased the likelihood of intentionally comparing and contrasting the data and interpretations with a host of procedures and sources. The goal here was used to substantiate the information when there was consistency and congruency.

Member checking was critical during this study. Sharing the feedback and responses with the participants empowered them to have ownership in the process. This measure helped to build trust and rapport with the participants, too. One of the challenges that could have arisen with this procedure was the participants might have been inclined to project their best side (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). However, I felt the participants were authentic in their responses to my questions.

Peer review was a mechanism that served this study well. Inviting colleagues to provide feedback frequently was a good best practice (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Any questions or concerns that were raised warranted a reevaluation of my own interpretations, but did not automatically lead to modification. Each situation was considered on a case-by-case basis. As I stated above, pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants, during any discussion of emerging findings with peers.

Reliability

The techniques used to increase the reliability of the study included development of protocols, digitally recording personal interviews, and using the CAQDAS, *Dedoose*. The interview protocol was pilot tested to ensure the information was concise, precise, and effective. Again, I sent the protocol to eight of my professional colleagues and they provided constructive feedback. Their insight allowed me to mitigate potential biases and clarify responses. One all-encompassing strategy to enhance reliability was audit trail. This endeavor is an extensively thorough account of the "methods, procedures, and decision points" (Merriam, 2009) taken to execute a study. Journal and memos were used to chronicle my journey. These efforts will afford future researchers to replicate this study in different contexts.

<div align="center">

Ethical Considerations

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The study was approved via the Institutional Review Board process at Texas Christian University, and a formal request for permission to undertake the study and the informed consent form was distributed to each participant prior to conducting any interviews. No monetary incentives, financial compensation, or any other gifts for participation in this study was offered, which was communicated to the potential participants via the interview consent form. Interviews only transpired after reviewing, signing, and dating the aforementioned documentation.

Data storage is often an overlooked part of the process (Creswell, 2013). I stored and maintained data on my password protected personal equipment. This equipment included technological devices such as iPhone, iPad, and PC laptop. This cautionary measure increased the protection of the data and improved the overall integrity of the data.

Summary

This chapter started with the restatement of the research aim and questions explored and examined in this study and delineated the research design. Subsequently, I described the study context, participant identification and selection process, data collection, data analysis, limitations, and credibility and reliability strategies, and ethical considerations. The research methods applied meticulous mechanisms specifically congruent with qualitative research design and efforts which were appropriate to address the research purpose and questions. The next chapter will delve into a holistic, thorough analysis of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons leaders of two higher education institutions opted to pursue an interinstitutional collaboration and how these leaders perceived and navigated any challenges that influenced the collaborative process through the conception, formation, and early implementation phases.

Again, this study was guided by the following central research questions:

- Why did leaders of both institutions of higher education opt to form an interinstitutional collaboration?

- What were the most salient factors that influenced or facilitated the conception, development, and early implementation of this higher education interinstitutional collaboration?

- How did leaders of these institutions navigate challenges – foreseen or unforeseen – that emerged as the interinstitutional collaboration matured from the exploratory phase to early implementation?

Various patterns emerged throughout my data analysis. Some of the themes include, but are not limited to: the value of partnerships in today's higher education context; the implications relative to a historical and legislative context; and, the criteria used in selecting a partner. Of course, more areas will be covered throughout this chapter. Bear in mind that the organizing principles are the three aforementioned guiding questions. Also, it is worth noting that throughout this chapter, I will use "public" to represent the public higher education institution (e.g., "public CEO") and "private" to represent the private higher education institution (e.g., "private CEO").

Forming the Interinstitutional Collaboration: Why Leaders Engaged in the

Interinstitutional Collaboration

Research Question #1 – Why did leaders of both institutions of higher education opt to form an interinstitutional collaboration?

I wanted to understand the interinstitutional collaboration phenomenon by anchoring this study in a real-life case. So, examining and understanding the "why" behind forming this joint venture was instructive. The initial overarching phase began with an attempt to build a commitment to the collaboration. This context provided the understanding of reasons and motivations behind pursuing this interinstitutional collaborative venture. Throughout analyzing my primary and secondary data collection (see Chapter Three), certain environmental elements and conditions were revealed. This first research question in particular endeavored to ascertain the overarching motivation behind the collaboration. I gleaned a few separate yet overlapping antecedents: leaders saw value and worth in interinstitutional collaboration in today's environment; the collaborative endeavor was congruent with strategic plans; partnership was different yet mutually beneficial; institutions embraced entrepreneurialism; historical and legislative context had implications on the partnership; and the academic collaboration was dedicated to the greater good.

Leaders Recognized Value in Joint Ventures

The interviewees recognized the significance of joint ventures undertaken by two or more institutions. To put the feedback in perspective, 14 of the 18 interview participants indicated that interinstitutional collaboration was very important in higher education in today's context. As one participant stated:

I think [interinstitutional collaboration is] really important…when you look at higher

education as an industry, and you think about…over time, how industries morph and

change. So, take for example, newspapers…they have so significantly [changed] and a

lot of that was due to technology. Same for Tower Records, when you used to walk into

a record store and buy a record and now you don't do that. Or Blockbuster, where you

used to go into a store and get a video and now you don't do that, you go to Redbox, you

do Netflix. So every industry I believe goes through its own morphing…[or its] own –

evolution if you will [sic]. And I think higher education is *ripe* for that kind of evolution.

This feedback, along with other interview participants' commentaries consistent with the

aforementioned remark, substantiated, to a certain degree, the leaders' perception that pursuing

joint ventures in higher education is a worthwhile and necessary consideration.

As I mentioned above, most of the participants proclaimed that higher education

interinstitutional collaboration was important. Despite the overarching attitudinal consensus, the

business and higher education literature report a low-to-moderate success rate of

interorganizational relationships (IORs) (Castro & Roldan, 2015; Kale & Singh, 2007).

The Interinstitutional Collaboration Aligned with the Leaders' Goals and Desired

Outcomes for their Respective Institutions

The participants articulated that institutions must have a shared vision when entering into

a joint venture. If collaborators do not elucidate a common goal, many participants suggested

that measuring and making progress could emerge as a challenge. One participant claimed that

delineation can move the process forward by noting, "…goals need to be clear and agreed upon

by all of the parties involved in the collaboration." Additionally, interview participants alluded

to the fact that an effective and a successful interinstitutional collaboration could be

characterized as instances where partners' actions are aligned with their desired outcomes. As the entities engaged in a joint partnership extend the discussion, the participants' sentiment was the organizations begin to have a vision that is bigger than each institution itself. Many of the participants described that the alignment creates a certain level of synergy between and among partners – one that helps to facilitate progress relative to the interinstitutional collaboration.

Leaders Perceived the IOR could be Mutually Beneficial

Many of the interview participants noted the importance of having the parties as equal beneficiaries in the context of an interinstitutional collaboration. One of the interviewees directly addressed the effect of an unequal partnership by stating: "[the relationship] [c]an't be lopsided, because then one will…have…more of a…goal to invest in the collaboration and the other [will just tag] along for the ride." In other words, this participant suggested that if one partner has an advantage over the other, then the collaborator who might not gain as much could underinvest in the partnership intentionally at the expense of the collaboration itself.

Leaders Embraced an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Another consistent theme from the responses was that joint ventures should involve institutions who embrace entrepreneurialism. For instance, a participant from the private entity shared "[W]hen you're designing a [partnership]…you need people – who can think outside – the confines…of what you're doing now, and see how it's going to grow." Essentially, participants indicated the most successful collaborations consist of partners who are willing to explore new ways of thinking and operating that may not have been clearly articulated prior to engaging in a joint venture. As one participant stated, "you [have to]…have a willingness to try something different." Otherwise, the participants suggested that if institutions are unwilling to evolve, they could likely become extinct or at the very least irrelevant. In the higher education

space, sacrificing autonomy and setting aside competition by joining forces could greatly increase the likelihood of securing a "competitive advantage" as shared by one participant. Of course, moving in this direction would require compromise, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Leaders were Committed to a Sense of "Public Good"

Historically, higher education institutions have been known for contributing to the public good. Beyond each institution having a self-serving interest was the prospect that this interinstitutional collaboration could have an overwhelmingly positive impact on the greater good. Leaders at both institutions described the physician shortage in the region, state, and the country. At the same time, the leaders highlighted the dearth of residency slots available to aspiring medical doctors. In time, the community at large could be serviced by the outputs of this academic collaboration. Both institutions' participants firmly believed the joint venture could be a coup for that region of the country. As an example, one of the academic leaders proclaimed that "[t]ogether, we are creating a better future for health [care] and higher education." This statement helps to highlight the common vision between the two institutions of higher learning.

The vision of this interinstitutional collaboration spoke directly to the historic mission of colleges and universities. A participant declared "[t]ogether, we are creating a better future for health care and higher education in [our region]." Other interview participants indicated a growing demand for medical doctors in the community. One of the study's participants conveyed via an email communiqué "[the two institutions] are embarking on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make [the region] a medical destination, work that cannot be done without strong support from our community partners and team members." The population of the

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region served by the institutions is expanding at a rapid pace. In order to be able to meet the community's needs, more medical doctors must be trained. The formal collaboration agreement indicated that "[these] [i]nstitutions believe there is a compelling case for an allopathic medical school in [this north Texas region] to focus on the education of the healthcare provider of the future." Yet, these academic leaders were not only persuaded by putting out just any medical doctor. Rather, they were inspired by developing the "21st century medical doctor." One of the interview participants from the public institution stated "[o]ur students will become physicians who focus on their patients and learn to deliver care as part of larger health care teams." An article referencing the allopathic medical school illuminated the following:

> [T]he 'blended' curriculum of the new medical school will allow for substantive clinical experiences throughout all four years of schooling, and will focus on communication skills, empathy, cultural awareness and leadership. These emphases encourage medical students to focus on the perspective that a patient is the center of the team, and a physician is part of that team.

This audacious vision inspired many of the participants to get on board. Given the landscape of the technologically-savvy and dependent generation – "Generation Z" as the generation has been labeled, the medical doctors of the future must have the ability to address their patients' needs from a holistic standpoint. This theme was gleaned from observation data.

Required Antecedent Conditions Were in Place

This interinstitutional collaboration had a distinctive mission. While the sphere of this effort correlated with the efforts at the two different institutions, neither university offered a program of this nature. A private institution participant shared, "[this process] has to start…clearly, to me, [with] the strategic plans of both institutions. Both institutions have to

have enough skin in the game – that they [want to] support the collaboration." The public

interview participants indicated such a purpose was directly part of the direction and goal of the

institution. Even though the public university had endured multiple unsuccessful attempts at

implementing an allopathic program (which will be discussed in more detail in the next section),

the institution's leadership was relentless. A participant stated, "for the public institution, they

held a long-term vision for a new allopathic medical school." Along the same lines, in 2012, the

private institution made a declaration and steadfast commitment, endorsed by its board, to

expand its graduate program offerings, which an initiative will be discussed later. A respondent

proclaimed, "this [allopathic medical school] is *exactly* within *our* strategic plan, as we were

looking for a way to enhance our graduate programs." This specific strategic imperative was

designed to elevate the academic profile and reputation of the private university. An interview

participant conveyed that "this [pursuit] *perfectly* aligned with our vision and our current

strategic plan with that being the top line increase to the academic profile and reputation." To

that end, the allopathic medical school directly aligned with the strategic direction of both

institutions.

<center>**Salient Factors that Influenced the Evolution of the Academic Collaboration**</center>

Research Question #2 – What were the most salient factors that influenced or facilitated

the conception, development, and early implementation of this higher education interinstitutional

collaboration?

Advancing the Commitment to Collaboration

This guiding question addressed the factors that influenced the formation, development,

and early implementation of the academic joint venture. Participant responses indicated that

such factors included the impact of the historical and legislative context of both institutions'

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pursuit of professional graduate programs, the costs of engaging in the potential collaboration, the perceived benefits of the collaboration, and a recognition of the cultures within both institutions. Specifically, the academic leaders engaged in this study considered, in addition to some of the antecedents mentioned in the previous section, their institution's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan to determine whether these aligned with this academic collaboration.

Impact of Historical and Legislative Context

The historical context of both institutions can provide tremendous insight into the motivation of entering into this academic collaboration. The next section presents the defining moments for each institution involved in this partnership and the implications moving toward developing synergy.

Legislative struggles. Under different leadership, according to some of the public and private institution participants, the public institution explored the possibility of starting an allopathic medical program in 2007. Unfortunately, a powerful legislative force prevented the public institution from making any inroads. Given the legislative structure in the state in which the institution operates, the public leadership had to make a compelling case to the state legislature for approval – a process that had to be repeated every other year as long as the institution pressed for, but did not receive, approval. Several of the interview participants implicitly alluded to the legislative force and others explicitly addressed the legislator who publicly opposed the development of such a health-related program in that region. Some of the respondents suggested that the legislator's motivation for thwarting such an endeavor was because the doctors of osteopathic (DOs) medicine – a powerful lobby at the state level – opposed the notion of creating an MD school in the north Texas region. A few of the interview participants indirectly referenced the historical tension between the DOs and the MDs.

According to some of the interview participants, the DOs successfully lobbied one of the most powerful legislators in the state to support their effort to block the progression of the allopathic medical program.

Initially, I was unaware of the purpose for garnering legislative support until I came across a newspaper article authored by one of the news media outlets in the region. This article brought to light the legislative statute that passed in the early 1990s designed to prevent this public institution from opening an allopathic medical at that time. Later in one of the meetings that I observed, one of the academic leaders referenced that specific legislative statute. That same leader provided context regarding the impetus for the statute. At the time, two different regions in the state were working in earnest to open an allopathic medical school. The state representative who authored the piece of legislation apparently was seeking to secure funding for another region rather than the area where the public institution involved in the academic collaboration resides. The same interview participant, too, mentioned that he did not believe the intent was for this legal hurdle to remain in effect in perpetuity. However, this legislation does not have a sunset provision (i.e., it is not set to expire). One of the interview participants disclosed that "there's this legislative mandate that would prohibit [the starting of an allopathic medical school by this public institution]."

From 2007-2011, the public institution was unsuccessful in gaining the support of the powerful legislator. By the next legislative session, which would have been 2013, the public institution brought on new leadership with the expectation that a favorable outcome would be achieved. To no avail, the new leadership encountered the same resistance in 2013 and 2015. One of the public academic leaders offered insight germane to this adversity:

"[T]he first time [the allopathic medical school idea pitch] happened, money went

elsewhere from the state. Second time…because [sic], what I understand, [the] small

group of the folks that were against it, got the ear again of [the] legislator who, you know,

basically, didn't support it and it didn't go through again."

Lost but not forgotten. In 2003, the private institution had what some considered the

"perfect" opportunity to purchase a law school. At the time, many faculty, staff, administrators,

students, alumni, and community leaders thought adding a law school to the private institution's

academic offerings would be a "boon" for the private university and would enhance its ranking.

Private leaders suggested that when the institution opted to pass on buying the law school,

multiple stakeholders were critical of the decision and those same individuals harbored bitter

feelings for the next decade or so according to the private and public interview participants.

Even though most of the leadership was not on board during that era, they were well informed by

the time they had landed at the private institution. A private institution leader indicated that "in

2005 [the private institution] looked at [the] question…and knew that a law school…[or] a high

profile professional school would really move the needle, in terms of…graduate programs."

However, the institution still opted not to pursue that option. Most of the private university's

constituents were quick to reference how the university squandered the opportunity to acquire

what could have been an academic coup. One of the private academic leaders revealed the

leadership's line of thinking:

> [The private institution wasn't] convinced about a law school. [I]f you just could wave a
>
> magic wand and just say 'you have a law school,' I think that ups your…graduate profile,
>
> without question. But you can't just do that, you have to fund it, pay for it, et cetera. And
>
> then you have to have graduates that do really well.

While the aforementioned context may be tangentially related to the research questions, most of the interview participants referenced these historical perspectives. This information provides a deeper understanding of the primary factors that influenced the pursuit of this academic collaboration.

One of the interview questions posed to the participants pertained to the genesis of the relationship specifically regarding the academic collaboration. Unanimously, the interview participants confirmed that the CEO of the public institution was the catalyst behind the collaboration. The study's participants validated the trustworthiness of the public CEO within and beyond higher education. Again, after multiple failed attempts to have the state legislative statute repealed, therefore, the academic president of the public institution had to consider alternative pathways. Through innovative thinking, the public CEO identified a way to circumvent the legislative hurdle. Since independent higher education institutions have a great deal of autonomy, the academic president decided to reach out to the CEO of the private institution as a possible partner.

History in the making. One of the most pronounced themes that emerged throughout the data analysis was the pre-existing relationships. Most interview participants as well as the documents I reviewed conveyed a well-established cooperative and coordinated pattern of work between the private and public institutions. A handful of the leaders who were involved in the preliminary meetings had already worked with their counterparts on other various projects. A respondent mentioned that "I think [the private institution] became an obvious partner both because, [the private institution is well known], but also [the two institutions] had this history of rich collaboration." In fact, when both CEOs convened the first meeting between the eight leaders, the CEOs noted the collegiality and familiarity between and among the other leaders

involved in the collaboration. Communication disseminated by one of the institutions indicated, "[t]he [collaboration] is an extension of the two universities' longstanding [cooperative work on] science and healthcare issues affecting the…community." Having a history of working together had a positive net effect on this academic collaboration (Mattessich et al., 2001). One public participant indicated "both campuses have a history of [partnerships] already….so this isn't the first thing that we've done, but it's probably the most spectacular thing that has gone along – most attention grabbing!"

Costs of Engaging in an Interinstitutional Collaboration

The public and private leaders touched on the fact that entering into this joint venture requires a tremendous investment in time, energy, money, and other physiological elements. The following section enumerates, as described by the participants, what could be considered primary tangible and intangible costs associated with this interinstitutional collaboration.

Equal level of trust and respect. The academic leaders from the two institutions involved in this interinstitutional collaboration identified that they had the utmost respect for each other. This admiration was comparable for the leaders who had worked together previously and the other leaders who only knew each other by name and reputation. As one participant acknowledged during our interview, "there was already some familiarities and we knew names and faces, so although trust had to be established at a different level, there were already some beginning aspects of trust there." In either case, the perceptions were the academic leaders at the other institution were credible individuals. As a result, this positivity and optimism permeated the various levels of involvement in the context of this partnership. As an example, when faculty and staff members came together who had no history of working with each other, they entered the collaborative effort with a high degree of confidence because of the trickle-down effect. To

be clear, the trickle-down effect was the strong connection and mutual respect exhibited by the academic leaders at a higher level within the institutions. The interview participants conveyed this sentiment and this meaningful relationship was consistent with documents that were reviewed as well as various observations. In meetings, the stakeholders involved in this joint venture were jovial and collegial. I examined digital newspaper articles with photos of both CEOs constantly smiling and exuding a sense of optimism and enthusiasm. At the conclusion of observing a meeting or poring over an article, I felt as though internal and external stakeholders were excited about and confident in the future of the collaboration.

Meeting in the middle. Although the two institutions had a great deal of respect and trust in each other, they still were conscious and conscientious vis-à-vis their institutional interest. Both partners came to the realization that they had to find middle ground throughout the process. A respondent talked about how "we compromised where we needed to and where there was a clear, better way, regardless of color of the – of the logo, we went with the better way." This previous quote buttressed the notion that the institutions were better off working toward the collective good rather than concentrating on their own personal agendas. As I shared above, the same participant communicated that "the ability to set aside petty differences and to focus on the end result [to] basically succeed" was at the forefront.

Adequate financial resources. The academic leaders acknowledged that the vision for such a significant collaboration came with a hefty price tag. Yet, many efforts had been made by the public institution to solicit and secure financial support from local leaders for this endeavor in prior years when the public institution unsuccessfully attempted to open the allopathic medical school on its own. One respondent shared that "[the public institution] had a commitment of some twenty-five million dollars [when it unsuccessfully attempted to start the allopathic

medical school] and so the private institution [had] gone back to…shore that up and make sure

that that commitment [was still] there." In that regard, the same potential donors still expressed

unconditional support for this effort. In fact, with the private institution entering the equation,

those local supporters were even more inclined to coalesce around the allopathic medical school.

The public and private interview participants conveyed how the private institution had the

stronger brand of the two institutions. Additionally, the concerns of state legislators could be

assuaged because taxpaying citizens would not have to fund the endeavor since the allopathic

medical school would be deemed private. One of the interview participants assured, "[this] plan

[is] worth praising for many reasons, not the least of which is that combining…resources would

enable the new school to start on a relative shoestring [budget] and without taxpayer assistance."

Moreover, according to the collaboration agreement, media reports, and interview

participants, the private institution indicated it would commit a sizable amount of money to this

collaboration. Given that the private institution had a very healthy endowment and freedom to

exercise such a decision, the private university firmly believed this direction was in the best

interest of their institution and community at large. A public institution participant shared that

"start-up costs would come from a private endowment of $75 million…[and] no building costs

[were] necessary, as [pre] existing facilities will be used."

Perceived Benefits of Participating in the Interinstitutional Collaboration

The previous section highlighted the costs. At the same time, public and private

participants mentioned the perceived benefits. As one might imagine, the advantages were from

the different institution vantage points, which the following section addresses.

The *pretty bride*. The study's interview participants conveyed their thoughts, feelings,

and perceptions of the culture and brand of the private institution. Academic leaders at both

institutions provided positive commentary about the private university. One of the interview participants stated "[the private institution is] so well respected and regarded [in the broader community]." Another interview participant proclaimed that "being attached to a university with a profile…[such as the private institution's] is very good for [the public institution]." The same participant went on to assert that "I like to think, and I don't mind being quoted to say this, we were the 'pretty bride' – [the other institution] had everything to [gain from the partnership]." A few other words used to characterize the private institution were: "youthful," "strong athletics," "student focused," "deliberate," "flexible," and "successful."

A major theme that emerged is the private institution is primarily an undergraduate institution. A disproportionate number of the students are of traditional college age. Therefore, the campus is considered to be energized by the youthfulness. Moreover, the university is "people motivated" as described by one of the academic leaders. To clarify, the institution is driven by the members of the community who inhabit the institution.

The interview participants were quick to underscore the private element of this institution. As a private university, the institution has the ability and autonomy to make decisions at their own pace. One of the private institution leaders emphatically stated "the institution can meander if it wants to, but most of the time it's deliberate." Another participant shared that "people are able to get things done because they can just do them, 'cause there's less bureaucracy…"

The other institution. Though the descriptions of the private institution were consistently positive, interview participants provided mixed perceptions regarding the public institution. Some of the words used by participants to describe the public institution in that particular light were: "bureaucratic," "cautious," "cynical," "complacent," and "well-seasoned."

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Bureaucracy. As mentioned in Chapter One, distinctions exist between private and public institutions. Specific to this case, one interview participant emphasized that the public institution has less independence because the institution is an agent of the state. Therefore, the university does not have the ability to make autonomous decisions. Various key internal and external stakeholders must be engaged and consulted before the university can make definitive decisions and take action. As one of the private academic leaders observed, "I think the culture at the school [with which] we're combining…because it's a *big* state school, is more bureaucracy-driven." The rigidity of the organization seemingly precludes the opportunity to make prompt decisions. While deliberate, thoughtful decisions should be executed, the public institution has to move at a much slower pace because of the tightly-controlled system.

Precaution. Per the feedback of different participants – both at the private and public institutions, given the bureaucratic milieu at the public institution, most of the employees are overly cautious about each and every move they make. One academic leader at the private institution remarked "I think…their culture is…more cautious." Consequently, the academic leaders would likely be more protective of keeping the academic collaboration confidential until the time was right. Another interviewee shared the reason for the hypervigilance: "…perhaps because they're…[a] public entity and everything…is reported…they have to be very cautious…with their messages, because everything will become public." As a state-owned institution, any information communicated becomes a matter of public record. This sentiment was corroborated by one of the public institution's participants, "we were very cautious…about who else [was] brought to the table and when…"

Cynicism. Most of the academic leaders at both institutions articulated how the public university had a certain degree of skepticism pertaining to who had knowledge of what. The

skepticism led many of the public academic leaders to be more pessimistic about disclosing information. In fact, one academic leader indicated the public institution is "…a little more guarded…" than the other institution involved in this academic collaboration because of the cynical disposition. Another academic leader stated "there [could] be problems with [the public institution] because they are a state school." That same leader shared "there has been, one individual up at [the public university], who's leaning a little bit [more] parochial…[and] doesn't want to give things up and…doesn't want to share…any – glory." The interview participant made it clear the person with the ulterior motive was not involved in this study.

*Well-seasoned***.** One of the public academic leaders indicated that many of the administrators and faculty and staff members at the public institution had worked at the same institution for several years. The same leader conveyed that "there…[are] lot of people who have been here a long time…that…have *only* been here, which I think limits the way people think sometimes." The underlying beliefs (Schein, 2010) at the public university have become entrenched. The other attributes previously used to describe the institution have become part of the institution's conscience. Therefore, leaders who are less tenured at the public institution have made a conscious and concerted effort to foster innovation and a new way of thinking. An interview participant remarked that "[we must help]…people that have *never* seen…any other institution…learn…that there…are different ways to do [things]."

Leveraging brand equity. Every interview participant was asked to describe the culture of the public institution. The overarching disposition highlighted by the academic leaders was that the public institution was leveraging the stellar reputation and strong brand of the private institution. The public institution involved in this collaboration was described by one participant as "hitching their wagon" to the private institution's. This notion was consistent with regard to

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observational data. For example, the public institution prominently displayed publications relating to the interinstitutional collaboration, which were framed and hanging on the walls. In essence, the institution's leaders appeared proud to have partnered with the internationally recognized private institution. Moreover, some of the interview participants felt inclined to wear the private institution's school colors during their interview. This scenario, however, was in stark contrast to the private institution as such actions were absent in observation data at the private academic leaders reciprocating this same sentiment. For example, the private institution had minimally visible artifacts related to this academic collaboration throughout the campus compared to the public institution.

On the other hand, the interview participants offered positively connoted descriptions of the public institution as well. The positive descriptors that were invoked: "values-based," "mature student body," "welcoming," and "medical education experts."

Values-based. A few of the participants highlighted that the public institution was guided by its values. The university's values were evident in the institution's actions. The public institution involved in this academic collaboration acquired new leadership within the last five years. So, the effort to clarify and calibrate the institution's values had been an ongoing process. Yet, the new academic leadership made the conscious decision to transform the campus culture early in its tenure. One of the participants described the culture as "evolving." Another academic leader shared specific areas related to the university's values as well as the overarching impact on the institution:

> We're definitely much more…values [based]. I think…the work that we do has not
>
> changed a lot, but how…we work together is what's changing, for the positive.
>
> [A]ccountability's improving. Leadership's been improving. Communication

is…improving, it's still a challenge, but improving…[a]nd just having that commitment

to…the values that were developed by…our team…to guide how…we behave, how we

do our work, how we work, day-in, day-out at all levels of the organization.

The values-based mantra employed by the public institution's leadership apparently has begun to

permeate the rest of the campus. The net effect has been positive according to the academic

leaders engaged in this study.

Mature. Since the public university is a graduate/professional school, most of the study's

participants touched on the maturity of the student body. The students at the public institution

have already completed their undergraduate work and therefore, in general, have different

priorities. A participant observed:

[The public students are] [v]ery – very – career focused, these kids are serious. It's their

career. They've already jumped through their undergraduate hoop and they've gotten

accepted into [sic] their next level…and the next thing they're going to go into is their –

job.

Although the private institution offers advanced degrees, a disproportionate number of the

students are traditional undergraduate students. As a result, the graduate/professional school's

spirit and pride compared to other institutions that might have more traditional undergraduate

opportunities and experiences are vastly different. For instance, the public institution does not

have athletic teams on its campus. Most of the interview participants mentioned that many

colleges and universities use collegiate sports as an opportunity to build community and school

spirit. Also, collegiate athletics is another avenue to engage alumni. So, according to the public

participants, the public institution operates using a different paradigm, albeit the institution is

still a part of the higher education community. A respondent made a clear distinction between

the private and public institutions. "So *very different* [schools]…one's all professional school, one's undergrad and [the undergrad institution is] trying to be a national player. Not only in [athletics], but in academics…" However, per many of the academic leaders engaged in this study, the public institution is attempting to build strengthen its brand in the academic arena only.

Welcoming. The interview participants shared the public institution reflected the culture of the community in which it is located. That culture was described as "warm and hospitable." A private respondent indicated that "I would say from what I know of the public institution – and particularly what I know of the CEO, is that you have – the same – characteristics, you have the same attributes [as the private institution]." The community members of the public institution were described as down-to-earth and approachable. This observation was consistent throughout my interviews. I can say this quality was consistent with my firsthand experience. For instance, each time I traveled to the public institution, I had to enter a secure parking lot. Every time I visited the campus, the security guard was gracious and helpful. This vibe was consistent throughout campus. Other examples included providing directions when I was lost as well as people who would greet me with a smile and "hello."

Medical education experts. The public institution clearly possessed the expertise in the medical education space. The university has worked in that area for more than 40 years. The academic leaders at both institutions elucidated the fact that the public institution would take the lead in developing the medical education framework. A participant remarked that the public institution has a "comparative advantage" and "[the public institution] certainly brings a lot to the table in terms of…medical education 'cause it's [already happening on the campus]." A

respondent, too, shared a similar sentiment "we know what [the public institution] brings to the table in terms of [medical education] expertise."

Baseline of Interinstitutional Trust

The initial meeting between the two CEOs was a breakfast meeting. Prior to the meeting, the public CEO invoked a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect the public university's interest. So, the private CEO had to agree to certain confidentiality terms in case a declination ensued on the part of the private institution. Interview participants from the public institution verified counsel was engaged to protect the public CEO's idea for the partnership. Nevertheless, the private CEO agreed to the NDA terms and the two met for breakfast. The public CEO made a compelling case sharing this unprecedented academic partnership between a public university and a private higher education institution. One of the interview participants indicated that the two leaders "met for breakfast and at breakfast the [public CEO] pitched the idea to the [private CEO]." The public CEO shared the need to partner with an institution that could bypass the legislative statute and he felt his institution had the expertise and wherewithal to deliver meaningful and effective medical education. On the other hand, the private CEO acknowledged his institution lacked the expertise in that particular space, but that he was open to the notion of partnering with the institution. As the dialogue progressed, the private CEO discovered the private institution had two key ingredients necessary for this interinstitutional collaboration: finances and freedom. He later realized the institution had much more to offer than just money and autonomy, but the two above-mentioned elements were leveraged early in the relationship. By the end of the inaugural meeting, the public CEO was championing a collaboration borne out of necessity and the private CEO was championing a collaboration borne out of opportunity. This context provided by the participants laid the foundation for this academic joint venture. At

the same time, the institutions encountered many expected and unexpected challenges throughout the process of conception, development, and early implementation.

Navigating Challenges of Interinstitutional Collaboration

Research Question #3 – How did leaders of these institutions navigate challenges – foreseen or unforeseen – that emerged as the interinstitutional collaboration matured from the exploratory phase to early implementation?

Careful Selection of a Partner

Interview participants in the study made it clear: When it comes to interinstitutional relationships, an organization must be judicious in choosing a collaborator. A participant emphasized that institutions "[must] have the ability to collaborate." Doing due diligence on the front end could result in tremendous cost savings. As mentioned above, costs affiliated with forming interinstitutional partnerships implied by the participants included time, financial, psychological, and emotional expenditures. The interview participants suggested engaging in a thorough vetting process to determine which organization might be compatible. One interview respondent summed it up best: "…carefully select the partners that…have…the capabilities that you want…in the area you want…[as well as] the capacity…"

Moreover, the academic leaders involved in this study highlighted that a potential partner should have the authority to undertake joint ventures. Moreover, some participants suggested institutions of higher education should be aspirational, yet they must also be realistic and practical. As participants suggested, even if one institution has the desire to partner with another institution, nothing can be achieved if the various parties do not have a culture that supports such an undertaking.

Moreover, interview participants indicated that while funding is absolutely paramount, having the individuals with the appropriate skill set and structural resources to accommodate the needs of the allopathic medical school are equally important. Specific to this collaboration, a couple themes emerged in my conversations with the interview participants. The academic leaders at both institutions asserted that the public institution had the expertise in the area of medical education. The knowledge base to educate and train future medical doctors was clear. This message was consistent in my analysis. This reality provided the reassurance that the private interview participants needed to buy-in to this concept. A respondent substantiated that "the public institution has the capacity and capability" of meeting the educational needs of the medical students. One of the participants shared "the public institution basically… pretty much knows ninety-percent of how to deliver medical education. I mean, [the public institution] already [has] one of the best med schools in the nation." Moreover, the public institution had the facilities to hold classes and house the allopathic medical school academic and administrative members if necessary.

On the other hand, per the interview participants, the private institution was perceived as having the business acumen and savvy to ensure the fiduciary success and responsibility and the liberal arts curriculum to "round out" the cutting-edge allopathic medical school endeavor. As I alluded to in the previous chapter (see Chapter Three), the private institution has been on a meteoric rise and has experienced much financial success over the last decade or so. Their brand moved from a regional platform to a national platform. A private participant asserted that:

> What does [the private institution] have? Well, [it] comes with brand identification, the
> ability to fundraise…*in my* opinion, my humble opinion, you know, if the [private
> institution] is raising money it's easier…I think people look at [this private

institution]…and in my opinion that's where I feel more comfortable with my money

going [rather] than to a public institution.

Throughout the process, interview participants indicated that the private institution has

demonstrated the ability to manage their resources effectively and efficiently.

Embracing Compromise as Catalyst for Organizational Growth

Two or more entities entering into a formal agreement to forge an interinstitutional

collaboration naturally opens up "Pandora's Box." In other words, the interview respondents

shared general insight into how multiple perspectives will lead to different interpretations which

could cause tremendous tension. Differences in the cultures of the institutions involved in such

an arrangement could, too, exacerbate that conflict because these organizations have developed

their own customs and beliefs (Schein, 2010). Some of the respondents noted the reality that

challenges inherently emerge within a higher education institution, so engaging an outside entity

could result in greater gridlock. Therefore, as an interview participant bluntly articulated:

"[institutions have to have] the ability to – set aside petty differences and to focus on the end

result." This same academic leader alluded to the premise that if institutions are willing to

embrace the notion of give and take and allow the overarching vision to prevail, they will greatly

increase the likelihood of forming a fruitful interinstitutional collaboration. A private institution

participant declared that collaborative partners have to tell themselves that "hey…you [have to]

step back [and say]…we're [going to] make this thing work – compromise [is critical]." Another

interview participant indicated that in order to develop a sustainable partnership, finding middle

ground is necessary. Specifically, the academic leader stated "compromises [must] be made to

reach [a] final collaboration agreement." Fostering an environment that is open to identifying

common ground requires involving key stakeholders in the process early and often.

Engaging Institutional Cultures

The private institution and public institution were incredibly mindful of how they interacted with each other throughout the early phases of the interinstitutional collaboration. The engagement required both institutions to take heed of their own institutional cultures. The following cultural themes emerged and are highlighted in this section: involving multiple stakeholders, holding collaborative partners accountable, leveraging pre-existing intellectual capital, and establishing different communication channels.

Engaging all stakeholders. Participants invoked the importance of a multi-layered approach to engaging stakeholders. In order to garner buy-in from campus community members, it behooved the institutions to allow multiple stakeholders to have a voice in helping to shape the collaboration. One interview participant remarked: "[Involvement] can't be just at the leadership level. It's got to be at the implementation level." The aforementioned statement reinforced the importance of involving internal and external stakeholders. Making decisions unilaterally would be a myopic approach. Also, most of the academic leaders who participated in this study underscored how they subscribed to the shared governance philosophy (see Chapter Two). At the same time, the participants enumerated the other advantage to bringing in multiple perspectives. A respondent exclaimed that "the worker bees…[and] the people providing the educational experience…[are the ones] that [make an interinstitutional collaboration]…work." This measure allows institutions to tap into the talent and expertise within and beyond a campus community. As to be expected, institutions of higher education have a tremendous amount of intellectual capital. Yet to paraphrase the biblical adage, "to whom much is given, much is expected." To that end, participants reminded me that those engaged in the development of the collaboration were to be held accountable throughout the process.

Building from existing intellectual capital. Both CEOs agreed to continue to explore the possibility of pursuing this joint endeavor. The next phase was identifying the top four leaders from each institution (including the public and private CEOs) who would help move the process along. Upon solidifying the four private leaders and four public leaders, the eight leaders combined embarked on a series of private meetings.

Developing formal and informal communication. Both institutions' interview participants indicated a steadfast commitment to finding ways to connect stakeholders at multiple levels. These different communication efforts pertained to formal and informal settings. Some of the participants talked about their effort to have social functions or gatherings to allow their team members to develop healthy and productive communication. As an example, a participant mentioned "we held some social functions so everybody got to meet and talk to each other from all the different committees so that they got a feeling for what each other were doing. We even toured each other's facilities. We facilitated interactions that promoted familiarity with each other, so that it was easy to work together." A respondent indicated that this leader and the leader's counterpart scheduled a meeting to have ice cream to create one of the informal opportunities to cultivate the professional relationship. Given the nuanced nature vis-à-vis how individuals approached communicating and connecting, I gleaned an idiosyncratic dynamic with respect to the various relationships formed. As one might expect, the relationship development between the CEOs was vastly different than how the chief academic officers' connection developed. As a result, communication to the chief communication officers was interpreted differently than the chief financial officers. So, a separate "micro" culture (Schein, 2010) emerged and carried with it a certain undercurrent. This undertone created tension and confusion

both at intra-institutional and interinstitutional levels and caused significant challenges at times. One area in which the disconnect was most pronounced was that of finances.

Assuring and Ensuring Mutual Accountability

*S*takeholders involved in an interinstitutional collaboration must hold each other responsible and strive to ensure that collaborative partners are following through on commitments. A participant remarked that "there's a lot of responsibility that comes with [a collaboration] and…responsibility comes with accountability." Accountability essentially is shared responsibility and ownership. A public institution participant mentioned that in an effective joint venture, partners realize the "multiple layers of accountability" within a collaboration. Many of the respondents indicated the two requisites critical to an effective partnership: "openness" and "honesty."

Both institutions had much at stake. To protect each institution's interests, the universities started with a memorandum of understanding (MOU). A respondent remarked that "the initial agreement…solidified the partnership or the…leaders saying, we [want to] do this and we [want to] figure out how to do it, and we're committed to doing it." The MOU served both functional and symbolic purposes. Functionally, the MOU was designed to serve as the framework for the formal roles, responsibilities, and expectations as the institutions traversed through the exploratory phase. Symbolically, the MOU was designed to convey a message to internal and external stakeholders about the steadfast commitment these two institutions had to the academic collaboration. The MOU was signed in mid-2015. The MOU was used as an opportunity to define terminology in an effort to provide clarity and close any gaps. The MOU and final collaboration agreement included a total of 62 operationalized definitions.

The formal collaboration agreement was fully executed in early 2016. The official

agreement stated the plan to enroll the inaugural class was in fall of 2018. This document was

the insurance that both institutions needed to be able to proceed with a satisfactory degree of

confidence. Bear in mind that an extensive amount of work occurred between the signing of the

MOU and the fully executed collaboration agreement. To provide the broader context and

understand why the leaders of these institutions moved forward, illuminating the execution of the

collaboration agreement was important. A respondent communicated that "first we established

the MOU, then, the biggest question that took time to work out was how the organizational

structure would function." A private institution participant informed me that "the structure [of

the collaboration] itself was established and set forth in the [MOU]. So you had [the]

management school committee that was established for the MD school." The organizational

structure will be discussed later in this chapter.

Ensuring Adequate Financial Resources

The conversation about finances may be a simple concept, but is never easy to have. This

interinstitutional collaboration was no different. From the signing of the MOU right up until the

full execution of the collaboration agreement, the synergy between the two institutions was ideal

according to the participants. When the initial draft of the collaboration agreement was shared

with the leadership at both institutions, the CEOs allowed the team members to hash out the

details of the agreement. Unfortunately, the academic leaders at both institutions encountered an

impasse when it came to which university would be responsible for managing the money. As

one participant wondered, "how are we [going to] use the endowment and what are we [going to]

do in terms of getting the budget set so that we can have an MD school."

The public institution thought it should be the one to handle the finances because they cultivated the private donors during the early years of pursuing the allopathic medical school independently. However, the private university believed the money would be better managed under their purview because the institution had a stronger business acumen and better track record of success in that area. This issue almost led to the demise of this interinstitutional collaboration. As one respondent shared:

> [F]inances were difficult…I'm just being frank…[I do not like it when] I think people take advantage of [the private institution] because we're [perceived as being] rich. [I]n other words I don't like to be used…for money. And that was a big discussion we had... Yet…because so much money [was] involved I wanted to make sure that we had that conversation and decided who was in charge of which areas. And in my opinion, they would take charge of curriculum and we would take charge of finances.

In order to resolve this matter, the CEOs from the two institutions exhibited leadership and reached a solution using a smaller decision-making group. Some interview participants said that certain stakeholders were so vested in protecting their institution's interest that they would have compromised the collaboration before they would sacrifice the handling of the money. The timeline to identify and come to a resolution lasted a month. Interestingly, only five of the 18 interview participants explicitly acknowledged this challenge in the area of finances. Throughout the interviews, participants either avoided the topic of finances all together or implicitly addressed the conflict associated with finances. I firmly believe that most of the interview participants were politically conscious during our interview and they did not want to revisit this subject. As it often is in life, problem-solving around finances seemed one of the most tension-fraught areas and delicate challenges to the evolution of the collaboration.

Determining Workarounds to Bureaucratic Hurdles

A number of anticipated and unanticipated issues emerged throughout the process to forge the interinstitutional collaboration as described by the interview participants. This section presents major instances – foreseen and unforeseen – that required both institutions to engage in critical and creative thinking.

Broader community buy-in. The public and private interview participants made it clear that community buy-in was imperative. They engaged business leaders as well as local elected and public officials who could leverage their influence and connections. One of the ways to galvanize the local community was to position the allopathic medical school as the city's allopathic medical school. Many of the documents I reviewed explicitly stated the allopathic medical was the "city's medical school." Having the support of the city and county leaders served symbolic and functional purposes.

Unauthorized disclosures. In preparation for rolling out this interinstitutional collaboration to the general public, both institutions communicated and shared the information with the institutional governing bodies such as the governing boards, student government associations, faculty senates, and staff assemblies. The public institution, however, wanted to keep this news under wraps because they wanted to share this academic collaboration with the same state legislator who had been perceived as previously rebuffing the opening of an allopathic medical school. An unforeseen challenge arose leading up to public announcement and official signing of the MOU. In early July, a few days prior to the announcement, unbeknownst to the institutions, an individual released the news to the press that this collaboration was to be made public on Monday, July 6. Once the information was leaked to the media, they began contacting both institutions to confirm whether the story was accurate. A participant recalled the leak:

"…[two major media outlets] basically blasted this story out, I think two days before – the actual announcement…and it was a pretty dang accurate – I mean, whoever their leak was – their leak was in the know….and so there was a concern that might scuttle the whole [academic collaboration]." Although both institutions had a detailed rollout strategy in place to inform the appropriate stakeholders, their timetable was accelerated and they had to send communication to internal and external leaders much sooner than they had anticipated.

Commitment to Transparency and Trust

A private institution participant shared that "there are a lot of characteristics [associated] with an effective collaboration" and proceeded to list "transparency" as one of the most "critical" components. A public leader suggested successful collaborative endeavors include partners that have a "clear and transparent [vision]" that is articulated to the "people involved" in the collaboration.

The result of transparency in an interinstitutional collaboration solidifies trust. After examining how often "trust" was referenced during the interviews, I discovered that it was used 21 times by the academic leaders. A respondent mentioned, "[institutions] have to trust their better angels to say we will work around any of the problems that [transpire]." Over time, intentional time and energy have to be invested in the development of mutual understanding and respect. Given an organization's cultural idiosyncrasies, institutions may encounter tension (Mattessich et al., 2001; Schein, 2010). In higher education joint ventures, strengthening relationships at all levels is crucial to seeing the progression of the collaboration. Ironically, trust is fundamental to any partnership yet still it has to be nurtured over an extended period of time. A respondent indicated that "honor and trust" are the cornerstones of effective

collaboration. An interview participant mentioned that "open, honest, candid feedback and communication" can garner "trust" between and among partners.

Building Interinstitutional Trust

A reality that comes with having two separate higher education institutions involved in this collaboration is each school had its own set of values and beliefs. As a result, the prisms through which they view their work caused situations where there was confusion between the two universities. Interestingly, the challenges that the two institutions faced appeared to be a matter of misunderstanding and ambiguous communication. Some of the challenges that emerged were described by the interview participants in a very similar manner. Yet, each institution assumed the other had a different interpretation of the same information or event. As I indicated above, the MOU and formal collaboration agreement were opportunities to clarify any nuances or bridge any gaps between the two institutions. Another way the two institutions resolved the cultural differences was to build in opportunities for social events with the stakeholders involved in the planning, development, and early implementation. Through the formal and informal gatherings, the two institutions had the ability to establish a degree of cultural competence and awareness. One respondent proclaimed that "I think the culture and the values part played a major role in saying [the private institution] is the place we needed to go because we knew them because we worked with them on a number of other projects and that they were more close to us in terms of values." To that end, I believe the two institutions realized that their cultures were very similar.

The academic leaders involved in this study indicated they evaluated and re-evaluated as they prepared to wrap up the early implementation phases. Per my conversation with respondents, I would classify early implementation as finalizing the collaboration agreement and

hiring the founding dean. The participants solicited feedback from key internal and external

stakeholders regarding the collaboration agreement and selection of the MD school dean to make

certain they had done their due diligence. This measure was considered quality control, which

was designed to keep the collaboration on track to meet the long-term goals.

Structure and governance. The MOU and collaboration agreement formalized the

articulated the mission and vision, organizational structure (such as management and reporting

structure), and the process for operationalizing the vision. I queried the interview participants

about the steps taken from the signing of the MOU to the execution of the collaboration

agreement that related to the structure and process. The following subsections are not designed

to be exhaustive. As referenced in Chapter One, while the collaboration agreement specifically

enumerates the contractual legalities related to the partnership, these technical elements are

tangentially related and do not fall within the scope of this study.

Search committee. Initially, the public and private CEOs were engaged in the nascent

stages of conceptualizing the collaboration. Shortly after the public announcement, they became

less directly involved. Therefore, the chief academic officers at the two different institutions

became the primary drivers with respect to developing and operationalizing the joint venture.

One of the foremost charges related to the development of the medical school was to appoint a

medical school dean because the provosts would be unable to provide the direct oversight

necessary to manage the day-to-day operations as well as provide the strategic leadership. The

two provost disseminated an email communication nearly three months following the signing of

the MOU to their campus communities to outline the search process. The message indicated

"[the search committee is] charged with finding qualified candidates to serve as the school's

[founding] dean." The communique went on to state that two chairs had been appointed to lead

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the search: a private university dean and a public university dean. The search committee had five faculty members from each institution for a total of 10. Additionally, the message shared that a former founding medical school dean had been engaged as a consultant as well as a nationally-recognized search firm to identify top candidates.

Management committee. In addition to the email enumerating the search process, the information shared the process for attaining preliminary accreditation status. In order to be on track to have the first class enter by fall of 2018, the MD school would need to have preliminary accreditation by late fall of 2016. The communication from the provosts indicated that they would lead the management committee, which consisted of 18 members. One participant stated, "there was a management committee that was formed…that included both members of the private and public institutions." A different respondent mentioned, "the two provosts, mapped out what they were going to do to start this relationship, moving towards the creation of this new collaborative MD school. So they created teams, and they created teams to look at various aspects that were built around the accreditation process." I learned a great deal from conversations offline about how one culture affected the other. When the private institution identified committee members to serve on the management committee, they appointed two college seniors – one student was a high-achieving pre-medical student and the other was student body president. The public institution, however, initially arrived at the first meeting without any students. After not having a student at the first meeting, the public institution opted to add a doctoral student to the management committee. The private school's decision to include students influenced similar action on the part of the collaborative partner. Nevertheless, the management committee was charged with developing subcommittees to help facilitate the process. A public respondent declared "I think one of the…best benefits of the management committee and the

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subcommittee structures was that we got to know [people at both institutions]." As mentioned

above, although the chief academic officers were charged with leading the management

committee, their schedules could not accommodate full oversight of the subcommittees.

    Project coordinator. To manage the subcommittees and move the process along, the two

institutions agreed to hire a project coordinator. The project coordinator was responsible for

developing milestones and holding the management committee and subcommittees accountable.

After much due diligence, the project coordinator selected was from one of the institutions

involved in the joint venture. The advantage here was this person would have institutional

knowledge and connections. As a result, the projected coordinator could leverage relationships

at both institutions. All of the interview participants indicated they were thoroughly impressed

by the project coordinator's diligence and vigilance throughout the process. For example, a

private institution participant stated, "[the project coordinator] actually knows what she's doing."

As I mentioned, the project coordinator was able to streamline the process by taking all of the

accreditation standards and having them serve as the organizing principles. The subcommittees

were developed around the standards and an employee (i.e., faculty or staff member) from the

public and private institutions were appointed as co-chairs of the various committees.

    Noah's Ark. Interview participants discussed how both institutions felt compelled to

engage constantly with the appropriate institutional stakeholder and their counterpart at the other

institution. For example, if the chief institutional advancement officer was engaged from the

private institution, then the counterpart at the public institution was involved. As a participant

indicated, the process of involving university community members was analogous to "Noah's

Ark." This interview participant stated the following:

[The process was] two-by-two-by-two-by-two…and [we had to] keep it equal and do

[our] best to choose people who from *my* perspective, and [my counterpart] does the

same from his perspective, you…have [to have] a sort of *broad,* eclectic, appreciation of

what we're trying to do. [We're] not [operating] in…silo[s].

By engaging multiple employees and their counterparts, those individuals felt an equal level of

respect and value in the context of the collaboration.

A byproduct of the engagement of leaders of the same status from both institutions

created a deeper sense of trust and accountability between each leader and their counterpart. A

private institution participant explained that "[it's] this idea of it's a three-legged sack-race and

you *cannot* take off down the road without your partner." As a result, these individuals felt even

more compelled to execute and deliver. This same academic leader referenced how the approach

of reaching out to the counterpart became second nature. Essentially, the counterparts made a

concerted effort to keep each other apprised of any information that needed to be shared. In

other words, they took the precautionary measures to minimize the possibility of having their

counterpart blindsided, which only strengthened that specific working relationship.

Summary

This chapter organized findings using the three research questions. I offered insight into

why the leaders of the two institutions involved in this collaboration opted to pursue this

opportunity. Many of the participants conveyed they recognized value in undertaking the joint

partnership. Also, the vision of the collaboration was in line with each institution's overarching

goals. Next, the second research question was addressed, which presented what the leaders

considered as some of the most salient reasons. The public institution and private institution had

already encountered an opportunity to pursue professional graduate programs. However, both

institutions were unsuccessful. So when this collaboration presented itself as another chance to establish a professional graduate program, neither institution wanted to squander this opportunity. Of course, having a prior history of working together was instrumental in the two institutions willingness to develop this formal partnership. Of course, this interinstitutional collaboration certainly was not immune to challenges, which answered part of the third research question. The other side of this question pertained to how the institutions navigated and resolved the foreseen and unforeseen issues. Some of challenges that emerged pertained to identifying the right partner, merging institutional cultures, ensuring mutual accountability, enduring bureaucratic hurdles, and building interinstitutional trust. Following are a recap of a few of the efforts articulated by both institutions to resolve the issues: (1) carefully select a partner; (2) engage multiple stakeholders; (3) build from existing intellectual capital; and (4) commit to a high degree of transparency. In the next chapter, I pivot toward the discussion of the major takeaways and recommendations. Also, I discuss future research suggestions and limitations.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This qualitative case study explored the interinstitutional collaboration phenomenon anchored in a real-life case. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the institutional leaders who participated in this study found tremendous value in pursuing the joint venture, especially given that the collaboration had a direct alignment with each institution's desired outcomes. The pre-existing relationships and historical and legislative context played an integral role in the two institutions coalescing around this interinstitutional collaboration. While this joint venture came with a certain set of challenges, the institutions were able to identify ways to navigate and resolve the issues. Viewed through the prism of the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter Two, these findings give rise to several takeaways for leaders of higher education institutions who are considering pursuit of an interinstitutional collaboration. In this chapter, I discuss the important elements for academic leaders to consider when establishing and extending commitment to collaboration as well as delineating opportunities for future research in a variety of areas, including sustaining commitment to collaboration. While the elements that pertain to higher education partnerships, in general, are likely comparable across the board, not all interinstitutional collaborations are created equally, and this was a study of one particular interinstitutional collaboration. Still, the lessons derived from this real-life case may be instructive in expanding the body of knowledge in the area of higher education collaboration.

Building Commitment to Collaboration

Understanding the antecedents in this case study was critical to gleaning the affect these had on developing and shaping this collaborative endeavor (Bryson et al., 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009). The work of Byson et al. (2006) suggests that the internal and external environmental conditions were the impetus in determining whether a joint venture would progress – similar to

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the collaboration found in this study. Findings in this case study indicate the value and worth of interinstitutional collaborations in today's environment (e.g., Eckel & Kezar, 2003). On the other hand, internal factors were equally instrumental in accelerating the development and cultivation of the mutual commitment to the academic collaboration between the private and public institutions in the present study (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 2013). In the following sections, I expound on various elements that leaders of institutions pondering joint ventures might consider as they strive to build and cultivate commitment for such collaborative activity. The lessons learned from this study are: (1) Now is an opportune time to pursue joint ventures; (2) No one-size-fits-all approach exists with respect to developing collaborations; (3) Collaboration should align with long-term direction and objectives; and, (4) Dynamic, credible leadership is critical to collaborative success.

The Time is Ripe for Interinstitutional Collaboration

Insight from this study's findings and the higher education literature revealed the time is right for institutions of higher learning to pool resources and develop a shared vision (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Eckel et al., 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009). As the higher education paradigm evolves, the "competitive mentality" between and amongst colleges and universities should not continue to serve as the prevailing underlying assumption (Schein, 2010). Rather, higher education institutions should explore opportunities to join forces that require steadfast commitment between and among higher education institutions (Kezar, 2006), which could be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. This specific case study revealed that with limited resources, it was in the best interest of both institutions to join forces. At the same time, institutions pursuing such collaborative endeavors might encounter political obstacles given the robust regulatory and legislative landscape. In order to circumvent certain legislative hurdles,

institutions might have to relinquish a degree of autonomy for the betterment of the institution.

To this end, higher education institutions should be poised to identify a way to work

collaboratively, even though they may have to plan and develop an academic collaboration

without a definitive roadmap.

No One Playbook Exists for Developing Academic Collaboration

An overarching takeaway from this study is the process for pursuing this interinstitutional

collaboration was the lack of a specific blueprint to follow. On the contrary, developing this

joint venture was more art than science (see Bolman & Deal, 2013). For example, most of the

academic leaders involved in this academic collaboration talked about relying on their

professional expertise and wisdom – some within higher education and others had experience in

outside industries – to guide them through the journey to develop this academic collaboration.

As implied above, each collaborative venture varies accordingly. Consequently, leaders often

have to subscribe to trial and error. Given the variability, decision makers might want to enter an

interinstitutional collaboration with a certain degree of optimism and realism. Since the

approach to developing and cultivating a structured joint venture will vary, institutions engaging

in such collaborative activity should maintain open minds throughout the process.

Vision Should be Tied to Institutional Strategic Goals and Objectives

Both the public institution and private institution inextricably linked this joint venture to

their institutional missions, visions, and strategic plans. The academic leaders engaged in this

academic collaboration specifically honed in on the opportunity and need that existed within the

community at large (e.g., Casey, 2008). Even though the concept of serving the "public good"

builds tremendous goodwill vis-à-vis external stakeholders, these two institutions realized that it

was important for them to first and foremost align with institutional goals and communicate with

internal stakeholders. Connecting the allopathic medical school's vision to institutional goals

and objectives appeared to have invigorated both institutions' rapport and trust with their campus

community members. This measure essentially afforded them the opportunity to advance the

ultimate goal of expanding their footprint and strengthening their brands. At the same time, both

universities garnered support from their constituents by positioning this academic collaboration

as a way to pool resources without reducing and competing with other campus stakeholders. In

other words, the financial and infrastructural capital necessary to establish the academic

collaboration would come from pre-existing resources and would be considered as less a threat to

other academic and administrative units on the two different campuses. Leaders should be

prepared to identify strategies for mapping their political agenda (Bolman & Deal, 2013)

Dynamic, Credible Leadership is an Asset to Interinstitutional Collaboration

Leadership is arguably the most important ingredient in developing an interinstitutional

collaboration (Mattessich et al., 2001). The public CEO was perceived as an incredibly

trustworthy leader who had the business acumen and savvy to garner the respect of both his staff

and the private institution's leadership team. Leaders who have credibility are capable of

inspiring those around them to follow their vision (Bryson et al. 2006). Additionally, the public

CEO subscribed to a philosophy of transparency and honesty. Transparency not only pertains to

information that is shared, but also action is implicit in this notion (e.g., Thorgren & Wincent,

2011). In other words, while an institution may claim to be open and honest, the talk without

follow-through is essentially meaningless. In some cases, the lack of congruency sends a

resounding message that could have profound implications on an interinstitutional collaborative

venture. For example, if collaborative institutions have the same goal in mind yet two competing

hidden agendas, the collaboration could be destined for failure. At the same time, an institution

inclined to withhold information in a partnership could seal the collaboration's fate at the outset as well. The aforementioned attributes are considered requisites for developing and cultivating trust with respect to the collaborative partner.

Separately, the interview participants along with media coverage conveyed that the public institution made several unsuccessful attempts to gain approval from the state legislature to open an allopathic medical school. If not for the creative thinking demonstrated by the public CEO, the public institution might have still been in the predicament it had faced since 2007. An entrepreneurial mindset with respect to considering joint ventures can only enhance a leader's legitimacy (e.g., Mattessich et al., 2001). Since higher education in general is typically perceived as a loosely-coupled system, many academic and administrative division operate in silos. However, the findings in this study and other research in the field (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Kezar, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009) the outreach to pool resources and develop a mutual purpose with the private institution signified a desire to perforate silos between higher education institutions.

Continuing Commitment to Collaboration

The literature indicates the high failure rate of IORs later in the development and implementation phases even when institutions have considered the factors critical to building commitment. Traditionally, though, the partnership goes awry when collaborators attempt to establish the process, structure, and governance. In many cases, joint ventures appear to lack the intentionality of cultivating trust among organizations (Thorgren & Wincent, 2011). Leaders should consider the different aspects presented in this section vis-a-vis advancing the academic collaboration between and among institutions.

Diversifying Internal Stakeholder Involvement

The findings in this study presented institutions engaged stakeholders at the operational, tactical, and strategic levels (e.g., Bess & Dee, 2012). In other words, the private and public leaders who contributed to shaping this joint venture were people who served on the front lines as well as senior university administrators who often make executive decisions and everything in between. Literature in the area of organizational change suggests that involving a range of stakeholders can greatly increase the likelihood of gaining buy-in from stakeholders (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 2013; Mattessich et al., 2001). This seems to have been the case in the present study as well: Leaders of the private and public institutions both worked to engage a range of stakeholders in an effort to bring the broader campus community on board.

In a higher education collaborative endeavor, CEOs have to have a full investment in the process (e.g., Bryson et al., 2006). Specific to this study, having the public and private CEOs steadfastly committed to this partnership had an indelible impact on this interinstitutional collaboration's progress. Despite the challenges these two higher education institutions endured, they were able to resolve and overcome adversity. Much of this reconciliation could be attributed to having the active involvement of both CEOs.

Building on Pre-existing Relationships

Having a history of working together on a smaller scale is advantageous for collaborations in general (Mattessich et al., 2001). Again, the findings in this study indicated that most of the stakeholders who were involved in the early stages of this joint endeavor revealed that most already knew one another. By having a pre-existing relationship, the academic leaders already had a certain degree of trust which allowed them to begin working in earnest on fulfilling the goals and objectives of this joint venture. However, collaborations that

lack a historical relationship could require partners to have to invest a great deal of time establishing trust and rapport with one another (Casey, 2008; Nippa, 2015). In some cases, individuals who exhibit apprehension or skepticism toward collaborative partners create a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a sense, the partnership is destined to fail because the focus is less on the vision and collaboration and more on who can be trusted (Klossek, Meyer, & Nippa, 2015). To mitigate this risk, leaders should consider developing networking opportunities to build and cultivate relationships (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Mattessich et al., 2001).

Focusing on Being Complementary, not just Complimentary

The two institutions in this study had a history of working together in a coordinated and cooperative fashion. When institutions embark on undertaking a collaborative venture, they should realize the importance of understanding their own culture as well as the other institution's culture (Eckel & Hartley, 2008). This study's findings shed light on the cultural distinctions between the public institution and private university. The findings clearly indicated, while the institutions overlapped in certain areas, they had complementary attributes. Most institutions entering into a joint venture are exclusively focused on achieving their own goals. As a result, they may be inclined to do what is necessary to build the commitment, but then might be less inclined to persist or persevere at the first sign of adversity. The findings in this study showed that the institutions understood the value and skill set that each institution brought to the table. As they approached various challenges, they leveraged the skills and expertise of each institution. Consequently, they were able to navigate and negotiate issues within and beyond the interinstitutional collaboration itself. Examining a few of the challenges via the cultural prism will be instructive for leaders.

Attending to Political Actors and Partnerships

The public institution encountered a major political roadblock in an attempt to open the allopathic medical school. This legislative statute prevented them from making progress. Moreover, the powerful legislator and DO lobby continued to present challenges to forward progress. So, rather than continuing to lobby and try to convince these influential forces, the public institution, in conjunction with the private institution, sought to identify other community and political leaders who could serve as allies. With these other powerful figures supporting the allopathic medical school, the legislator and DOs would likely find difficulty in not reversing their position and buying in to this collaboration. This shift in position boded well for the political adversary because the medical school became a private enterprise. Therefore, the legislator could be afforded the opportunity to justify supporting this joint venture. This strategic approach was beneficial for the interinstitutional collaboration. On one hand, political strategy precluded the public institution from realizing their vision. On the other hand, engaging other influential community and political leaders enabled collaborators to garner the necessary support (Mattessich et al., 2001). This scenario illustrates the power of politics and how critical it is for leaders to have or cultivate the backing of local community leaders and public and elected officials.

Maintaining Fiscal Control and Responsibility

The results from this study highlighted how important it was to have reassurance that the academic collaboration would have sufficient funding sources. The private institution felt more comfortable moving forward because the public institution had already received commitments from donors to assist in funding this endeavor. The findings in this study revealed that money can be considered a proxy for power (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 2013), however. This tangible

element symbolized the perceived authority and influence that the private institution would have over the public institution if it relinquished control of the funding.

Moreover, finances were paramount in this study. Higher education research is scarce when it comes to addressing the direct role that funding plays in facilitating interinstitutional collaboration. On the other hand, some of the higher education partnership literature hones in on broad concepts related to this phenomenon (e.g., Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Kezar, 2004). Although money is implicitly covered in the higher education collaboration research, financial matters were an explicit sticking point in the context of this interinstitutional collaboration. Despite the strong relationships and history of partnerships, determining who would have fiscal control, i.e., power, will likely be a chief priority in forming an interinstitutional collaboration. The IOR and collaboration literature shed light on the role of finances in the context of forging and developing joint ventures (Dyer, 1997; Lang, 2002; Lasker, 2001).

Attending to Symbolism and Functionality

Bryson et al. (2006) asserted that formal agreements are less likely to emerge where a history of partnerships exists. This case study, however, presented the contrary. Both the private and public university agreed to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and formal collaboration agreement. The MOU served as a powerful symbol to the internal and external stakeholders to the commitment both institutions had toward planning, development, and early implementation of this interinstitutional collaboration. This document provided the framework for how the two universities would operate (see Bolman & Deal, 2013). The formal collaboration agreement solidified the adjustments that were necessary to move forward with the full implementation of the allopathic medical school. The formal agreement was the guiding

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document for the two institutions. To provide context, the MOU, which came first, was roughly

11 pages in length and the formal collaboration agreement grew to an approximate 45 pages.

Division of labor should be clearly articulated in a collaboration agreement (see Bolman & Deal,

2013). Some examples of areas included, but should not be limited to, in this study's findings:

public relations, academics, faculty and staff, facilities, and research. It is in the best interest of

leaders to develop a formal agreement in the context of any relationship, especially in the case of

collaboration.

Limitations and Recommendations

While this case study was not designed to be generalizable, the research adds to our

understanding of how leaders engage in and work to develop interorganizational collaborations.

Additionally, since my positionality was that of an insider the results may have varied because

the context would have been limited and/or because participants felt compelled to present their

respective institutions in a particular light. However, I made a conscious and concerted effort to

develop a credible and trustworthy study by using pilot testing with regard to my interview

protocol, employing member checking, and gathering peer-reviewed feedback. The limitations

of this research far from impede the ability to develop robust and sound recommendations that

could inform academic leaders and policymakers. Therefore, in this section I draw on the

findings of this study as well as the broader literature to provide eight suggestions for

stakeholders to consider as they work to forge and conceptualize an interinstitutional

collaboration.

Have an Understanding of the Nuances of Relationship Typology

A suggestion for key leaders involved in a joint venture is to understand the type of

relationship in which entities are engaged. The literature illuminates the distinctions among

cooperative, coordinated, and collaborative efforts (Hord, 1981; Mattessich et al., 2001).

Cooperation and coordination require a mutual understanding yet the risk is minimal and

moderate, respectively. However, a collaborative venture is a more formal and high-stakes

approach for institutions of higher education. Such a partnership merits a tremendous investment

of human capital, fiscal resources, and time (Lasker et al., 2001). So collaborative partners

should discern where the joint venture falls on the spectrum to determine how to build and

continue the commitment toward an interinstitutional collaboration.

Pursue voluntary collaborative ventures. The higher education and collaboration

literature suggests that voluntary joint ventures have a tendency to be more sustainable. This

study was a clear indication that both institutions made the conscious decision to enter in to this

agreement at their own will. Even though the external environmental condition necessitated the

public institution identifying a way to circumvent the legislative hurdle, the public university still

had the decision to pursue or not pursue this collaborative endeavor. The research reports the

relationships that are coerced are more likely to result in failure (Lunnan & Haugland, 2008).

Start with cooperation or coordination. Given what is at stake and the higher failure

rate of interorganizational relationships, higher education institutions should consider pursuing

cooperative and/or coordinated partnerships before undertaking collaborative ventures. As the

relationship typology revealed (see Chapter Two), minimal risk and moderate risk are associated

with cooperation and coordination, respectively. Also, these two types of partnerships are less

formal than collaboration and typically do not require formalizing the partnership via an MOU or

a collaboration agreement. Starting on a smaller scale affords institutions to work together, learn

from the experience, and develop a historical partnership (Howard, Steensma, & Lyles, 2015).

Through such efforts, the partners could begin a certain degree of trust. Subsequently,

postsecondary institutions can enter into interinstitutional collaborations with stronger connections and can invest more time on fulfilling the mutual agreed-upon vision rather than focusing on who can be trusted. Starting on a small scale could be beneficial in terms of carefully selecting a partner. To that end, a cooperative or coordinated effort is low stakes compared to a collaborative venture.

Involve CEOs in higher education interinstitutional collaboration. Since interinstitutional collaboration is considered a total, formal commitment by two or more institutions, it is prudent for collaborative partners to engage the CEOs. A university chancellor or president's active involvement in a joint venture increase the stakes related to the partnership. Academic leaders might want to engage in creative thinking**.** This study's findings suggest that higher education leaders would be prudent to foster a culture of and subscribe to a philosophy of innovation (see Eckel, 2008). The public CEO unsuccessfully tried to open the medical school through the conventional process twice. On the third try, however, he used an unconventional method to circumvent the process. While leveraging the brand and independence of organizations has tremendous value and worth, it is equally, if not more, important to recognize the power of having an entrepreneurial spirit.

Invest in communication. Information sharing and open communication engender clarity that can serve as a unifying principle for an interinstitutional collaboration (Casey, 2008). For example, sharing institutional strengths and weaknesses allows the people who inhabit the organization to identify any gaps or opportunities. In other words, a considerable amount time would be spent nurturing and cultivating the connections, but the outcome would be less than favorable. Collaborative partners would be wise to create spaces to enhance personal and professional networks in the context of an interinstitutional collaboration (Eckel, 2008). Having

formal and informal functions allows the individuals involved in a joint venture to develop

rapport and build trust. This study's participants capitalized on the opportunity to bridge the gap

and perforate silos by hosting various social events, so the stakeholders could become well

acquainted (Mattessich et al., 2001).

Hire a project coordinator. The foregone conclusion that is associated with

interinstitutional collaboration is the likelihood of having too much ambiguity. Bolman and Deal

(2013) assert "[o]rganizations deal with a complicated and uncertain environment by trying to

make it simpler" (p. 35). The two institutions attempted to streamline the process by hiring a

project coordinator – an individual who would be responsible for managing the process. By

establishing this system, the public and private university were able to "hire…a professional…

with sophisticated expertise" (p. 35) to move the planning and development phases of the

collaboration along.

At the same time, collaborative partners would likely have to consider divergent

directions: hiring an internal or external project coordinator. Consistent with the interview

participants, I highly recommend bringing on a professional who has a project management

acumen to facilitate the process. An internal individual may be more familiar with the political

landscape and could be comfortable navigating and negotiating various issues accordingly. On

the other hand, an outside professional would likely be able to operate more objectively. Of

course, institutions will need to consider what is important to them.

Identify opportunities to lead. This recommendation of finding opportune times for

each institution to lead departs from the collaboration literature. Each higher education

institution involved in this collaborative endeavor demonstrated a variety of areas of expertise.

As an example, the results presented how the public institution was adept at designing and

delivering medical education. However, the private institution exhibited a business acumen that would serve the joint venture well vis-à-vis the finances. In the two previously mentioned examples, institutions should discern appropriate times when to spearhead efforts as well as when to allow the other partner(s) to leverage the expertise at which the partner excels. The trepidation with taking a backseat in some of these instances is the perception that partners are unequal. In that case, open, honest, and transparent communication are of the utmost importance (Casey, 2008).

Use the collaboration agreement to define and clarify terms. If used effectively, the formal collaboration agreement can have a profound impact on the various stages of forging an interinstitutional collaboration (Bryson et al., 2006). Operationalizing terminology could prove to be fruitful for collaborative partners. The agreement is another platform for fostering transparency and honesty. The two institutions in this case study leveraged the MOU and fully executed collaboration agreement by incorporating a glossary in the documents. In that case, both institutions had a clear understanding of the expectations and intent of what had been delineated. Having multiple stakeholders contribute to shaping the formal agreements could be prudent for leaders (Bryson et al., 2006) involved in an interinstitutional collaboration.

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Future Research

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In all, I suggest researchers utilize a robust methodology with respect to case study design. Also, researchers could consider conducting a longitudinal study to follow IORs (Thorgren & Wincent, 2011). Moving in this direction could shed light on understanding the third stage (sustaining a collaboration commitment) of the conceptual framework presented in this study. This next section discusses other variables to be weighed in the context of exploring the interinstitutional collaboration phenomenon.

Consideration of the Type of Relationship and How Relationships Fail

As has been indicated, many joint ventures fall short of fulfilling the desired outcomes. Many factors could be considered in determining the reason(s) a collaborative venture succeeds or fails. Lumineau et al. (2015) suggests considering whether a partnership failed because of competence or integrity (p. 50). This case study did not specifically investigate the former element. Understanding the level of competence demonstrated by institutions in an interinstitutional collaboration could have tremendous value and worth. In that case, developing and posing research questions central to exploring how and why IORs in the world of higher education could be invaluable. At the same time, the literature indicates that trust is the cornerstone for advancing collaborative partnerships (Aggarwal et al., 2011; Casey, 2008; Thorgren & Wincent, 2011). Since trust is core to joint ventures, developing an instrument to measure the level of trust in a collaboration could be useful (Casey, 2008). Moreover, the term "collaboration" or some variation is often used synonymously with partnerships that are more reflective of cooperation or coordination. Therefore, another variable that could be explored is the relationship typology itself. Does the partnership have minimal risk or semi-formal risk? Asking a range of questions pertaining to the structure, vision, mission, and other similar questions could be instructive in determining how to classify any joint venture. One last factor to consider is the commitment level of the CEOs. Mattessich et al. (2001) suggest active engagement of all key stakeholders, which starts at the very top. CEOs have much at stake; therefore, they may be more risk adverse. Exploring and understanding the degree of involvement of the CEOs in a collaboration might lend insight into predicting whether an interinstitutional collaboration might succeed or fail, especially in a higher education context.

Outcomes

This study explored the planning, development, and early implementation phases related to interinstitutional collaboration. Other areas that this study's applied conceptual framework includes yet was not addressed in this study: understanding and analyzing the intermediate and long-term outcomes. The following section illuminates the practical value that could be gleaned by examining the aforementioned outcomes vis-à-vis interinstitutional collaborations.

Intermediate outcomes. *Program theory* presents the benefit to understanding how the intermediate results (Funnell & Rogers, 2013) can be helpful in understanding intended or unintended changes between the short and long-term outcomes. As an example, suppose collaborative partners were evaluating only the short-term outcomes (after one year) and/or the long-term outcomes (four to five years). Valuable information could be available by understanding what happens in years two and three, but may never be considered. Of course, intermediate outcomes are often overlooked because serious consideration is given to initial outcomes and ultimate outcomes. Determining and monitoring intermediate results can allow interinstitutional partners to measure progress as well as understand the relationship related to variables contributing (Funnell & Rogers, 2013; Mertens & Wilson, 2013) to a collaboration. Relative to this study, for example, preliminary accreditation could be a palpable metric used as an intermediate outcome. The previously mentioned outcome would be considered high stakes. To this end, operationalizing, distinguishing between intermediate and long-term outcomes as well as examining the intermediate outcomes would have merit and value.

Long-term outcomes. Given the failure rate associated with interorganizational relationships, it would be prudent for researchers to consider the ultimate goal(s) or outcome(s). This study primarily honed in the factors that influenced forming an

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interinstitutional collaboration and how any challenges were reconciled. I would suggest that future research consider whether the joint venture was sustainable (Bryson et al., 2006). This understanding addresses part of the final stage of the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two.

Accountability

The internal and external stakeholders engaged in a joint venture must realize they have a stake in advancing the partnership. The process of evaluating and re-evaluating should be ongoing. Therefore, at various different phases of a joint venture – planning, development, and implementation – accountability and assessment should be chief priorities. The entities involved in a collaborative venture have to be willing to confront the facts, regardless of whether they are positive or less than positive. Having formal levers for accountability in a more formal partnership, such as an interinstitutional collaboration, is imperative. This element symbolizes the commitment level (Casey, 2008, p.78). Collaborative partners have to track and monitor the progress or lack thereof on a continual basis in order to measure the effectiveness of the relationship (Bryson et al., 2006). Some researchers suggest partners should determine at the outset to whom they will be accountable.

Future research could examine the correlation between a collaborative venture and the type of people or entities to which the partnership is accountable. The joint ventures where trust has been established suggest an increased likelihood that each entity involved in a collaborative venture will hold the other responsible for following through and following up (Lunnan & Haugland, 2007).

Conclusion

Resources continue to be the most divisive element in higher education as well as other industries. As the amount of resources dwindle, institutions of higher learning will have to consider combining forces. To be sure, higher education institutions must understand the requisites of an interinstitutional collaboration. This study suggests the consideration of multiple variables throughout the planning, development, and early implementation phases of an interinstitutional partnership. This research primarily explored the factors as to why two institutions of higher education opted to enter into a joint venture. Future research can provide even greater insight into this dynamic phenomenon, which impacts building, continuing, and sustaining commitment to collaboration.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A "Formal Request of Permission to Conduct Research" Template

March 1, 2016

Re: Permission to Conduct a Research Study

Dear President XX:

As a doctoral candidate at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, I am currently in the nascent stages of my doctoral dissertation. The topic I have selected for my doctoral dissertation is the recent academic collaboration between a private institution and public institution. As demonstrated in the attached copy of my research proposal, I would like to conduct a study of specific interinstitutional collaboration between two postsecondary institutions.

My research aims to uncover the factors that influence the decision-making process to form an interinstitutional collaboration as well as how challenges are resolved and reconciled. The stakeholders I desire to interview and observe are the academic leaders at the institution who were and are actively involved in the formation, development, and implementation of the joint venture. Also, if there are any other key participants who might be germane to this discussion, I would like to engage them, too. My hope is to glean from the research a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and contextual conditions of an interinstitutional collaboration. Consequently, the findings may prove to be fruitful for the two institutions, thus having potential implications for future research.

The intent of this letter is to request permission to have the institution serve as a setting to conduct my research. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Marshall

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

- How did this academic collaboration begin?
- Did you have any pre-existing relationship(s)?
- Describe the following related to the academic collaboration.
    - Purpose
    - Vision
- What were the factors that influenced the decision to enter into a collaborative endeavor between the two institutions?
- How important is interinstitutional collaboration in higher education? Why?
- What political/economic/social influences facilitated or impeded the forging of this academic collaboration?
- What characteristics do you affiliate with interinstitutional collaboration?
- What is the structure of this academic collaboration?
- What are the perceived benefits of the collaboration?
- What were some of the challenges whether foreseen or unforeseen of the collaboration? How were the challenges resolved or reconciled?
- In your estimation, what do you think were the most important reason(s) for forming this collaboration?
- If you could hit the reset button on this joint venture, what would you do differently?
- Is there any other information you would like to contribute before the interview concludes?
- Is there any other key stakeholder you believe could add value to this study that I should contact about an interview?

APPENDIX C

Observation Protocol

Guideline	Observational Notes	Researcher's Reflective Notes
Physical Setting **Participants** **Activities and interactions** **Conversation** **Subtle factors** **Your own behavior** **(Merriam, 2009, pp. 121-122)**		

APPENDIX D

Document Protocol (Adapted from Guba and Lincoln, 1981, pp. 238-239 as they cited Clark, 1967)

Questions to Consider for Documentation Authentication

- What is the history of the document?
- How did it come into my hands?
- Is the document complete, as originally composed?
- Is there any sign the document has been tampered with or manipulated?
- If the document is genuine, under what circumstances and for what purposes was it produced?
- Who was/is the author?
- What is the author seeking to accomplish? For what audience is the document intended?
- What were the maker's sources of information? Does the document represent an eyewitness account, a secondhand account, a reconstruction of an event well before the writing took place, an interpretation?
- What was or is the creator's bias?
- To what extent was the writer likely to want to be honest?
- Do other documents exist that might offer additional insight into the same story, event, project, or program, context? If so, are they readily available, accessible? Who holds them?