

ABSTRACT

BURTON, CAROL. *An Ethnography of Faculty in a Community College and a Public, Regional, Comprehensive University.* (Under the direction of John S. Levin.)

The purpose of this study was to seek to understand faculty culture at a community college and at a public, regional, comprehensive university. Although public, regional, comprehensive universities and community colleges share a number of characteristics, there are areas where their differences are most apparent, such as student abilities and qualities, faculty credentials, and community orientations, to name a few. While quantitative indicators are readily available by institutional type, there is limited information on the nature of the work of faculty in these institutions or the faculty beliefs about their work. Research on culture in these institutions in particular is also necessary in light of the increasingly complex, economic, technological, and global influences impacting them. In this study, the impact of institutional mission, student abilities and qualities, teaching orientation, and the external pressures related to state, federal government, and national mandates on faculty at community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities are analyzed using institutional and neo-institutional theories, as well as culture theory.

The study uses ethnography, a qualitative methodology framework to seek to understand the life of faculty at two institutions of higher education. Interviews of 37 faculty members were conducted at two institutions of higher education. A community college and a regional, comprehensive, public university were selected as the research sites.

**AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF FACULTY IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND A
PUBLIC, REGIONAL, COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITY**

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

ADULT AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION

Raleigh, NC

2007

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DEDICATION

In memory

S. G. K.

BIOGRAPHY

Carol Burton was born and raised in London, England, to Jamaican parents. At age 15 she and her sister moved to Jamaica with their parents where she completed her secondary education at Hampton School for Girls in Malvern, St. Elizabeth. Those four years were some of the most influential years of her life; during that time she developed a true thirst for knowledge and love of learning. Following graduation from high school, Carol enrolled at Western Carolina University (WCU) in Cullowhee, North Carolina, where she successively earned a Bachelor of Science degree in food, nutrition, and dietetics (1987), and a Master of Arts in Education degree in counseling (1989). Between 1992 and 2005, Carol worked in the College of Education and Allied Professions at WCU where she directed the Teaching Fellows Program. Beginning in March, 2005 and continuing to May, 2007, she served as the director of Western Carolina University's review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) while completing her dissertation for the doctoral degree.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To be educated is not to be informed but to find illumination in informed living.

Eduard C. Lindeman, 1926

Earning a doctoral degree has been the most educationally rewarding experience of my life. However, equally rewarding to me on a personal level has been the love and support I have received from my family, friends, and colleagues. I am eternally grateful to them.

Lorene Todd, Russ Foster, and Mike Burnette of the Asheville Cohort program in Adult and Community College Education have been my champions and my defenders. They have encouraged, assisted, and supported me for the last six years. My advisory committee, Drs. Marvin Titus and Alyssa Bryant of the Adult and Higher Education department at North Carolina State University, and Dr. Gayle Moller of Western Carolina University, have afforded me support, advice, and more patience than I deserve. The chair of my advisory committee, Dr. John Levin, Bank of America Professor of Education Leadership and Director of the California Community College Collaborative (C4) at the University of California, Riverside, has taught me more about conducting research and scholarly writing than anyone else I know. His commitment to my success and willingness to provide me with responsive, constructive feedback is exemplary. All doctoral students should be fortunate enough to have a chair with his qualities.

Gurney Chambers, Mickey Randolph, and Brenda Wike have been the strongest personal allies anyone going through this process could have—always believing in my ability to succeed and never tiring of conversations about my study. They have shown me the nature of true friendship. I am indebted to them. Beth Lofquist, Kyle Carter, and A. J. Grube have championed me, offered me solace when I needed it, and understanding when work and dissertation were too heavy burdens to bear concurrently. Thank you all.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested that institutional culture in the higher education arena is shaped if not determined to some extent by mission and purpose of the institution (Berberet, 2002; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Gumport, 1997; Tierney, 2003), as well as by the greater social context external to the institution (Altbach, 1995; Birnbaum & Shushok, 2001; Duderstadt, 1999; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Fairweather, 1996). Colleges and universities reflect the “political, social, economic, and historical realities of their societies” (Altbach, 2001, p. 16). If this is indeed the case, current societal changes that occur within the United States will be particularly reflected in an American institution designed to advance society—public higher education, and by association, those constituents existing within its walls.

Historically, American public higher education has been charged with meeting the lofty goal of society’s salvation (Fairweather, 1996; Kezar, 2004). Once characterized by democratic ideals such as open access and free enterprise, its place in today’s educational landscape has evolved into a panacea for current economic woes, social injustice, and perceived K-12 educational mediocrity (Gumport, 2001). At the same time that discussions abound on the renegotiation of the social contract of public higher education (Duderstadt, 1999; Gumport, 1997; Kezar, 2004) others call for a renewal of its commitment to open access, equity, and core academic purposes (Bok, 2003; Chandler, 1997). Social equity, defined as the provision of educational opportunity for members of the low socioeconomic classes, minorities, and individuals with special needs (Grubb, 1999), has long been the mainstay of the public education movement (Grubb & Lazerson, 2004). Community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities, in particular, have symbolized the

struggle for the democratic ideal, and their respective faculties, caught at the nexus of social and political change, have numerous roles to play and challenges to overcome.

The precursor to a large number of public, regional, comprehensive universities was the teacher's college. Most were established prior to 1900, and their emphases on teaching and teacher education remain an important institutional and educational legacy (Clark, 1987; Henderson, 2007). Public and private comprehensive colleges and universities, as distinguished from the large state universities typically established as land grant institutions propelled by the Morrill Act of 1862, account for 15.5 % of all higher education institutions, or 611 of the total colleges and universities in the United States (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2004). Classified as master's colleges and universities, they are divided into two groups: Group (I) represents those institutions that offer a broad array of baccalaureate programs, emphasize graduate education and award up to 40 master's degrees in at least three academic areas and fewer than three doctoral degrees; Group (II) is comprised of the same criteria as the group (I) institutions except that they only offer between 20 and 40 master's degrees annually and award no doctoral degrees (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2004). This study will be confined on the one hand to the 272 public master's colleges and universities, groups I and II, also referred to as public, regional, comprehensive universities, and their respective faculties. The faculty employed in public, regional, comprehensive universities typically hold terminal degrees (72%), are mostly full-time employees (63.5%), and numbered 131,000 in 1998 (Zimbler, 2001).

The development of community colleges occurred in the early years of the last century. Primarily established as private, junior colleges, they evolved and multiplied into public community colleges following World War II. Their early missions centered on providing a bridge between high school and preparation for baccalaureate studies (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Shaw & London, 2001), open access to education beyond secondary school, vocational and technical preparation, remedial education, and community or cultural opportunities (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Community colleges (including technical and junior colleges) are classified as associate's colleges by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2004), and offer associate's degrees and certificates with fewer than 10% of undergraduate completers receiving the bachelor's degree from these institutions. In some distinction, Cohen and Brawer (2003) define community colleges as institutions earning regional accreditation and offering the associate degree as the highest credential. The public community or associate's college is considered the sector of American higher education most oriented toward a teaching mission; serves 39% of all postsecondary students; and comprises more than a third of the professoriate in the United States (Clark, 1987; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Associate's colleges (public and private) account for 42.3% (or 1,669) of the total number of institutions of higher education in the United States. For the purposes of this study, the 1,025 public community or associate's colleges (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2004) and their corresponding faculty serve as the primary interest. This study will be confined on the other hand then to these institutions. In 1998 there were approximately a quarter million instructional faculty members employed at these colleges, 36% of whom were full-time employees and 20% of whom possessed a terminal degree (Zimbler, 2001).

There are numerous similarities between community colleges and regional public universities which are reflected in their comprehensiveness. Comprehensive missions, diverse student bodies, broad admissions policies, open access and low or moderate selectivity, and breadth in educational programs defined their respective institutions for much of the last century (Altbach, 2001; Clark, 1987; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Fairweather, 1996; Griffith & Connor, 1994; Grubb, 1999; Roueche & Baker, 1987; Shaw & London, 2001). In public, two-year colleges, students earning associate degrees tend to be predominantly White, non-Hispanic (417,739 or 70% of the associate degrees conferred in 2001-02), and more typically female (357,024 or 60%) than male (238,109 or 40%). Of the minority groups represented on two year college campuses and enrolled in degree seeking programs in the same academic year, Black and Hispanic students make up the majority of those enrolled with 67,337 (11%) and 60,003 (10%), respectively. In public, four-year universities, students earning bachelor's degrees in 2001-02 were mostly White, non-Hispanic (958,858 or 74.2% of degrees conferred) and more typically female (742,084 or 57.5% of degrees awarded) than male (549,816 or 42.5% of degrees awarded) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). As with public two-year colleges, for the minority groups on which data are collected, a majority of students earning degrees are Black, non-Hispanic (116,624 or 9%). In contrast to minority representation on two-year college campuses, however, Asian/Pacific Islanders comprise the next largest group earning bachelor's degrees at four-year public institutions with 83,101 (6.43%), followed by Hispanic graduates, 82,969 (6.42%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Student diversity is an issue as well as an opportunity that public, comprehensive universities and community colleges address every day and faculty members work within this multicultural landscape.

Institutional characteristics that are viewed by many as strengths and worthy of emulation by other nations (Altbach, 2001; Grubb, 1999) also pose some of the greatest challenges to community colleges: “comprehensiveness is both the distinction and the challenge of the community college” (Cross, 1994, p. 106). Lack of focus, unclear mission, and goals that are too broad have also characterized the public regional universities (Boyer, 1997; Henderson, 2007). To date, faculty beliefs about the comprehensive natures of their respective institutions and the diverse make up of their students have not been studied to a large degree.

Bergquist (1992) identified similarities between the community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities a decade and a half ago basing his argument on the emphasis on teaching typically prevalent at two- and four-year public institutions and Boyer (1997) emphasized the teaching mission prevalent at community colleges. More than one authority on community colleges has focused on the role of teaching in community colleges as a negative: “teaching is the ponderous portion of the profession, the burden to be carried” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 82) and others have alluded to the existing contradictions between the primary purposes of community colleges, open access and inclusiveness, and the roles of teaching, academic rigor and collegiate standing (Grubb, 1999). Others have decried the emphasis on teaching at comprehensive, public universities, blaming it for a lack of direction and mission at these institutions (Caesar, 2000). Yet, faculty employed in community colleges and public, regional comprehensive universities consistently rank teaching as a major, if not their primary, avocation: almost 80% of full-time public comprehensive university faculty and 84.5% of full-time public community college faculty

listed teaching as their “principal activity” in 1998, as compared to 46.8% of faculty at public research universities, and 54.6% at public doctoral institutions (Zimbler, 2001).

Although public, regional, comprehensive universities and community colleges share a number of characteristics, there are areas where their differences are most apparent, such as student abilities and qualities, faculty credentials, and community orientations, to name a few. Students who enter community colleges (degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking) are more likely to be first-generation college students, less academically prepared and more ethnically diverse than their counterparts at comprehensive public universities (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Community colleges also tend to be more inclusive, often with no minimum admission criteria other than age, and they are much more affordable, which also impacts access (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb, 1999). Among all undergraduates, students attending public two-year colleges are more likely (63.7%) to be financially independent than their counterparts at public four-year institutions (37.6%). They are also twice as likely to be enrolled on a part-time basis (69.5%) than students enrolled part-time at four-year institutions (33.3%), tend to be employed full-time (53.8% compared to 25.5%), and are more likely to be a single parent (16.45 compared to 9.2%), or have dependents (34.5% compared to 17.6%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). While these quantitative indicators are readily available by institutional type, there is limited information on faculty beliefs about the characteristics of their students or the potential resulting pressures associated with them. Altbach (1995) contends that faculty pressures arise from lack of autonomy, which is a function of institutional type: “faculty at community colleges and at unselective teaching-oriented institutions [are] subject to more restraints on autonomy than professors at prestigious research universities” (p. 33). However, this perspective directly contradicts that

of Rhoades (1998) who concluded based on his examination of collective bargaining contracts that among unionized faculty, the reverse is true: faculty in “two-year colleges enjoy more [professional] autonomy in their outside employment and more claim on their intellectual property than do faculty in four-year institutions” (p. 266) and this extends to unionized faculty in general, when compared with non-unionized faculty employed at research institutions. The role of unionization in faculty bargaining and its impact on faculty working conditions is a fairly recent area of research interest and is worthy of additional attention.

A common trend in recent years has been the popular rhetoric from political and business sectors of the need for higher education to become the economic vehicle driving workforce development, particularly for the low or moderate selectivity institutions (Duderstadt, 1999; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003). Unemployment rates for 2000, 2001, and 2002 indicate the relationship between level of education and percentage (or rate) of unemployment in the United States (Table 1) (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

Table 1

U. S. Unemployment rate by age and educational attainment, 2000-2002

	2000		2001		2002	
	Age 20-24	Age 25+	Age 20-24	Age 25+	Age 20-24	Age 25+
Less than high school	13.8	6.3	15.3	7.2	17.0	8.4
High school no college	8.4	3.4	9.5	4.2	11.1	5.3
College no degree	5.1	2.9	6.0	3.5	7.3	4.8
Associate’s Degree	3.3	2.3	4.4	2.9	7.1	4.0
Bachelor’s Degree	4.3	1.1	5.7	2.3	5.8	2.9

The table demonstrates that as individuals ascend the educational ladder, the unemployment rate decreases and unemployment rates have continued to increase over the three years between 2000 and 2002. The statistics are equally illuminating for distribution of financial income by level of education attainment, which reflects a positive relationship. The median income for persons with less than a ninth grade education in 2001 was \$11,379; \$14,125 for persons with some high school education; \$21,056 for individuals with a high school diploma; \$26,273 for adults with some college education and no degree; \$29,916 for individuals possessing an associate's degree; \$38,855 for adults with a bachelor's degree; \$49,627 for a master's degree; \$63,952 for those persons with a doctorate degree; and \$71,806 for a professional degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

As the missions and practices of community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive four year institutions continue to evolve, and, if for no other reason than the magnitude of the higher education sector they command, a better understanding of both institutions and their respective faculties is in order. The joint study of their respective cultures is also a reasonable pursuit given their overlapping missions. The debates regarding the expansion of the mission of community colleges to include baccalaureate preparation (especially in nursing and education), and to move beyond a local or parochial function by offering distance education programs, for example, have been active for some time and originated as potential solutions to some of society's major challenges—access to higher education for all citizens, not just the elite or majority members, the shortage of nurses and teachers, economic and vocational concerns, and the population explosion (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb, 1999; Weisman & Marr, 2002). This trend in community colleges mirrors the core mission undertaken by many public, regional,

comprehensive universities during the last century. As research is conducted on these institutions and their respective cultures, new information about the faculty employed within their walls is introduced. Research on culture in these institutions in particular is also necessary in light of the increasingly complex, economic, technological, and global influences impacting them (Altbach, 1995; Berberet, 2002; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Duryea, 1991; Gumpert, 1997; Levin, 2001), and affecting organizations in general (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Higher Education Culture

The meaning of culture is essentially the same whether it is applied in an educational (or institutional), political, anthropological, sociological, or business organizational context (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). It is defined concurrently as a process and an outcome by Kuh and Whitt (1988) and by Bolman and Deal (1997) and refers to the collective and accepted norms, language, beliefs, behaviors, practices and symbols that participants of a defined group understand and adhere to as they relate to members of their own group and to others (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Schein, 1992; Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990; Tierney, 1992). Morgan's (1997) application of organization culture is couched in his understanding of culture as "the pattern of development reflected in a society's [or institution's] system of knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and day-to-day ritual" (p. 112), and is rooted in the early anthropological studies of different societies. Schein (1992) described culture as all consuming, eventually affecting every aspect of a group's being, and LeVine (1984) worked with a definition of culture hinging on the common pattern of ideas including "intellectual, moral and aesthetic standards prevalent in a community and the meanings of communicative actions" (p. 67). What is universal in all definitions and

applications of culture is the inherently human component: cultures only exist when animate objects are involved.

The study of the culture of educational institutions is enhanced by applying the frameworks of institutionalism and neo-institutionalism, evolutions of organizational theory. Powell and DiMaggio (1991) and Scott (1995) have developed models of organizational analysis which take into account the importance of culture in institutions, and the effect of the greater social context on those institutions. In this present study, the impact of institutional mission, student abilities and qualities, teaching orientation, and the external pressures related to state, federal government, and national mandates on faculty at community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities are analyzed using institutional and neo-institutional theories.

Statement of the Problem

The faculty employed at public community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities, which comprise 26% and 7% of total higher education institutions in the United States, respectively (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2004), provide the focus for this study. Combined, these public institutions make up one third of all postsecondary colleges and universities. In spite of commanding a significant share of the number of institutions of higher education and enrolling an equally significant proportion of the enrolled students, most of the research attention has focused on the doctoral/research universities (public and private) which comprise only 6.6% of all postsecondary institutions (Altbach, 2001; The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2004). The institutions designated as open access and low or moderate selectivity (community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities) educate

proportionally a larger number of traditional and non-traditional college students than other types of higher education institutions, as indicated previously, and as such, employ a significant percentage of college and university faculty (Altbach, 1995). As Clark (1987) reflected in his seminal work on academia, “any type of work place that plays host to one fourth or one third of the members of a profession surely has a major impact on that profession” (p. 20). This reference to community college faculty made 20 years ago was not a portent of prolific research into the state of faculty life in community colleges. With the exception of a few community college scholars, little research has been conducted in the areas of faculty and faculty culture in this population or in public, regional, comprehensive universities (Rhoades, 1998). A few of the inroads to faculty culture have centered on practitioner, academic, and institutional cultures as they impact and are affected by faculty (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Levin, 2001; McGrath & Spear, 1991). McGrath & Spear (1991) described the “peculiar academic culture which has developed in open access institutions” (p. 153), and alluded to the problems of discipline dissociation and the “disordered academic culture[s] of community college, [practitioners’ culture]” (p. 154) but stopped short of proposing viable avenues to the exploration of faculty culture in community colleges or the need to pursue this field of study.

There are presumably many aspects to faculty life beyond those associated with the formal roles of teacher, researcher, and provider of service to the institution and the community. The quantitative studies that have examined faculty cultures have focused on objective constructs using a positivist orientation, typically focusing on the aforementioned roles of faculty in doctorate granting or research universities. This study investigates faculty cultures in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university from a

different perspective, exploring their similarities and differences, and examining the beliefs held by the faculty and pressures experienced by faculty using a qualitative, interpretive approach.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this study is to seek to understand faculty culture at a community college and at a public, regional, comprehensive university through the lens of institutional and neo-institutional theory. Based upon the research literature, faculty culture is generally defined as the essence of faculty life and the experiences, beliefs, assumptions, values, behaviors, and norms shared by the faculty and which provide meaning to them. An interpretive, ethnographic, qualitative research design is employed to conduct the study, and study participants include involve 37 full-time teaching faculty members at a public, regional, comprehensive university and a community college, both located in western North Carolina.

The investigation addresses faculty who are employed at two low or moderate selectivity or open access institutions and draws conclusions of a qualitative and cultural nature about the differences and similarities of their academic lives, real or perceived. Studies directed at open access institutions tend to focus on the students' academic abilities and the impact of the same on faculty (Bergquist, 1995; Pitts, White, & Harrison, 1999). Few studies attempt to explore faculty cultures from sociological or anthropological perspectives. Students who enroll in public, regional, comprehensive four year institutions and two year junior, associate, or community colleges comprise more than 75% of the college population or approximately 11.5 million students (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003). Yet, in spite of their presence and importance in postsecondary American education, the

study of their environments has lagged behind that of the major research institutions (Rhoades, 1998). There are a number of reasons for this lag including the financial rewards and prestige associated with four year research (grant producing) institutions, the lack of perceived professional identity of community college faculty in particular (Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006; Outcalt, 2002), and the elite status awarded highly selective colleges and universities. “Some of the biggest lacunae concern public comprehensive universities and community colleges; while they have enrolled the majority of higher education students and advanced to the leading edge of experimentation, these institutions have not captured a commensurate share of researcher’s attention” (National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 2002, p. 22) and as a result of this neglect, the exploration of faculty cultures in these environments has also been limited.

Significance of the Study

Concurrent with the emergence of radical changes in society (technological, economic, and demographic, to name a few), a changing academic profession in higher education is in the making (Berberet, 2002; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 2002; Rhoades, 1998; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Tierney, 2003). For example, there is evidence to indicate that part-time faculty at community colleges constitute more than 65% of the faculty population (Levin et al., 2006) and 40% at some four year institutions (National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 2002), reflecting a significant increase over the last several years. Calls for increased faculty diversity, pressures for academic accountability, the graying of the tenured faculty, and the ever decreasing state financial support to public institutions also add to the transformation occurring in the academic profession (National Center for Postsecondary Improvement,

2002). This study addresses the paucity of qualitative research on public, regional, comprehensive universities generally, and their faculties specifically; the limited comparative information that exists about public, regional, comprehensive universities and community colleges; and the lack of postpositive, subjective knowledge available about community colleges and their faculties.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions about faculty culture.

1. Does faculty culture in a community college differ from faculty culture in a public, regional, comprehensive university, and if so, in what ways?
2. In what ways are faculty cultures in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university similar?
3. How does institutional mission affect faculty culture in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university?

Delimitations and Limitations

This study is bounded by the use of ethnographic principles of qualitative research and as such, the focus of the study is on the culture of the faculty at the institutions involved in this study, through their perceptions. The identified themes are generated by the participants and in turn influence the outcomes of the study. Qualitative research is not a mechanism to develop generalizable constructs; it is designed to illuminate phenomena, explore and describe experiences, and to provide an understanding of concepts (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). As a qualitative study using purposeful and theoretical sampling, the results in this study are not statistically generalizable but will add to the theoretical knowledge base.

The limiting of the participants to a sample of the population may be insufficient to gather enough information to draw common cultural themes. Also, the role of the researcher as an instrument in gathering evidence may contribute to bias in the study in two primary ways. First, I am employed by one of the institutions where data are gathered, which potentially is an influence in the conduct of interviews, observation of faculty, and analysis of data. Second, the characteristics of qualitative research encourage the primary researcher to immerse herself in the culture of the institution to develop the emic perspective (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996), which is controversial in some research circles. The role of the researcher is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

This study does not present a hierarchy of faculty culture based on institution of employment or any other characteristic. It does not examine perceived or real differences in faculty culture along racial or gender lines. Nor will it explore the nature of the relationships between faculty and specific administrators except insofar as faculty perceive the ability of administrators to affect their culture.

Definition of Terms

The following general definitions applied during the current study.

Community College. One of the 1,025 state owned public, two year institutions that offer certificate or degree programs up to the associate degree; also includes junior and technical public colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2004).

Community College Faculty. Employees whose primary responsibility at a community college is to teach; generally employed full-time participants in this study.

Culture. The collective and accepted norms, language, beliefs, behaviors, practices, and symbols that participants of a defined group understand and adhere to as they relate to members of their own group and to others (Schein, 1992; Thompson, Ellis & Wildavsky, 1990).

Organizational Culture. The design of a society's information, ideology, philosophy, laws, and accepted behaviors (Morgan, 1997).

Public, Regional, Comprehensive Universities. State-owned four year institutions with low or moderate selectivity admissions criteria, broad missions, and degrees awarded primarily up to the master's level, with some offering a few doctoral programs. They do not include doctoral/research universities (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2004).

Public, Regional, Comprehensive University Faculty. Employees whose primary responsibility is to teach at a state-owned four-year postsecondary institution designated as a public, regional, comprehensive university; generally tenured or tenure-track, and full-time to the institution.

Methodology and Methods

This investigation employs an ethnographic, qualitative research design and applies methods of data collection and analysis consistent with the tenets of qualitative field methods research (Burgess, 1984; Le Compte & Preissle, 1993; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Mason, 1996; Maxwell, 2005). In order to address the research questions, I chose this methodology as an appropriate way to understand the perceptions and experiences of faculty at Southwestern Community College and Western Carolina University—the two sites for this investigation. These sites were selected as they conformed to several of the criteria

necessary to obtain both reliable and comparable data. First, each site is located in the same state, region, and community, all of which enables comparability without mediating variables of location as influential. Second, each site is deemed to be a non-selective, regional institution and thus both students and faculty at these sites are unlikely to be affected by strong institutional missions that advocate a national research agenda, which would affect faculty interests and performance in significant ways. Third, access to the institutions to interview faculty was believed to be easily obtainable by the researcher given her proximity to and her relationship to individuals at both institutions. Fourth, the rural location of the sites was of interest to the researcher.

The Organization of the Dissertation

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter explores the current research on community colleges, and public, regional, comprehensive universities, and their faculties, identifies the research questions the study will explore, presents the purpose and significance of the study, and outlines its delimitations and limitations. It is followed by the review of relevant literature in Chapter Two. The discussion on organizational culture, institutional theory, and the role of faculty in higher education presented in Chapter Two identifies the gaps in the literature on faculty and their culture in community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities. Chapter Two also introduces ethnography as the primary methodology for conducting the study—a critical approach to understanding any culture—and describes the general characteristics of the faculty populations that are the focus of the study. The third chapter is a discussion of the key tenets of qualitative methodology and the rationale behind employing ethnography to conduct this study. The researcher’s rationale for selecting interviewing as the primary data gathering means and a discussion of

the methods used in the study are also presented. In addition, the third chapter includes both an overview of the measures used to recruit participants and descriptions of the participants and the research sites. Finally, the frameworks of Scott's (1995) institutional theory, Martin's and Myerson's (1988) cultural matrix, and data management and validation strategies are presented as the primary means of analyzing information gathered in the study. The fourth chapter presents the results of the interviews conducted and analyzed through the institutional theory framework and the cultural matrix mentioned previously. The final chapter synthesizes the major themes and ideas gleaned from the faculty participants in this study, compares the similarities and differences between faculty culture in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university, and presents recommendations for future research on faculty culture.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter explores the relationship between institutional and neo-institutional theories and organizational theory, highlights the characterizations of culture from different sociological and anthropological perspectives, and assesses the impact of the literature on higher education culture. The chapter introduces the rationale for conducting the current study using qualitative methodology and provides a basis for analyzing the faculty data gathered.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory emerged from the organization studies popularized in the early to mid 20th century by theorists such as Durkheim, Parsons, Weber, and Hughes (Scott, 1995). The theory, generally, has helped to explain the processes through which norms are established and preserved identifying the links between formal and informal rules that cause institutions to survive (Nee, 1998). Furthermore, in its recent manifestations, new or neo-institutional theory underscores the importance of culture in shaping institutional foundations and because it is an amalgamation of different perspectives, neo-institutional theory affords researchers the opportunity to analyze organizations and institutions from cultural, structural, human capital, economic, physical and productivity frameworks (Campbell, 2004; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2001).

Neo-institutionalism evolved from older models of institutional analysis and is comprised of three primary orientations: historical, rational choice, and organizational (Campbell, 2004). These orientations are fundamental to any discussion of institutional analysis because they help to explain the evolution of institutions, as well as institutional

differences, actions, and change patterns, and they even dictate levels of institutional analysis. For example, rational choice institutionalism defines an institution as a function of formal and informal rules and drives for compliance, as opposed to organizational institutionalism which defines an institution as dependent on underlying cultural and cognitive paradigms. Organizational institutionalism frames the analysis of institutions through examinations of populations, which is different from the micro-analytic units of analysis employed in rational choice institutionalism. Yet the models share traits as well. All three are partial to the punctuated equilibrium and evolutionary patterns of organization behavior as a way of explaining institutional change (Campbell, 2004). Neo-institutionalism's roots draw on political, economic, and sociological perspectives and its value lies in its broad applicability. For example, this theory has been used to explain the development and maintenance of organizational structures in social world order, cultural institutions, economic markets, scientific systems, technology expansion, globalization, and national education and health care systems (Campbell, 2004; Nee, 1998; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2001), and has been particularly relevant to the study of higher education systems (Brint & Karabel, 1991).

Mirroring the disagreement surrounding a definition of culture, a common definition of institutions has plagued researchers for a number of years (Campbell, 2004). Scott's (2001) typology of institutional dimensions affords organizational analysts a mechanism with which to characterize institutions. He defines institutions along three lines or pillars: regulative, normative, and cultural or cognitive. Institutions that exhibit characteristics of a predominantly regulative nature tend to function as a result of externally or internally imposed rules or regulations. For example, many institutions are highly subject to the

directives of state legislatures and regional accrediting agencies for approval and operation. This reliance on a regulatory body often controls how organizational missions, practices, and beliefs are interpreted and perpetuated. Institutions that are predominantly cognitive or cultural in one or more aspects of their mission, priorities, and reward structure, for example, rely on their members' emphasis of what is important to the members for the institutions' direction and roles. Finally, institutions that function with a normative emphasis gauge their performance by comparing themselves and modeling after other institutions that possess desired status or prestige.

Powell and DiMaggio (1991) expounded on Weber's metaphor for institutions, the iron cage, to explain their model of institutionalism and change. According to them, isomorphic change is the result of coercive, mimetic, or normative mechanisms. Both frameworks lend themselves to the study of faculty culture in higher education institutions. Campbell's (2004) qualitative applications of institutional theory to the study of organizational change produced notable outcomes, and although none were conducted in the higher education arena, Campbell did underscore three important areas that need attention when identifying institutional dimensions which have critical bearing on this study. The first is theoretical perspective. The study of an institution from a normative orientation entails focusing on prescribed behaviors and goals as opposed to the cultural perspective which frames the analysis of institutions from the operational and unwritten assumptions evident as well as from the organizational symbols present. The second area is salience, which refers to the importance of different aspects of institutional functioning afforded by the inhabitants of the institutions themselves as opposed to institutional analysis dictated by the researcher's perspective or definition of what is worthy of study. Finally, researchers predetermine the

level of analysis employed when analyzing institutions, which, according to Campbell, is as much a function of personal preference as it is related to the pillar of focus. Furthermore, the level of analysis also impacts the theoretical outcomes of the study. As Scott (2001) illustrates, institutions are often a function of cultural, cognitive, normative, and regulative domains and are not limited to just one orientation.

Their multiple natures notwithstanding, institutions can be physical as well as intangible: “a process as well as a property variable” (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991, p. 85). Nee (1998) defines them as web-like structures comprised of rules and norms:

Webs of interrelated rules and norms that govern social relationships comprise the formal and informal social constraints that shape the choice-set of actors... conceived as such, institutions reduce uncertainty in human relations. They specify the limits of legitimate action in the way that the rules of a game specify the structure within which players are free to pursue their strategic moves using pieces that have specific roles and status positions. Norms are implicit or explicit rules of expected behavior that embody the interests and preferences of members of a close-knit group or a community. (p. 8)

Whether close-knit or not, higher education faculty are part of an institutional structure with their own sets of rules and norms and an identifiable culture. What, then, ties sociology, and specifically, organizational sociology, to both institutions and the culture and behavior of individuals who inhabit those institutions? According to Nee (1998), institutional theory is the most critical contribution to the study of organizations. As such, it forms the framework for this study of faculty culture in higher education institutions. Scott’s (1995) definition of institutions not only is consistent with Nee’s but also mirrors that of Nee’s (1998):

“institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior. Institutions are transported by various carriers—cultures, structures and routines—and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction” (p. 33).

Characterizations of Culture

While debates about the definition of culture have persisted (D’Andrade, 1984; Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; White, 1975), there have been several attempts to characterize or define common elements of culture (LeVine, 1984; Rousseau, 1990). One of the problems associated with studying cultures is the eagerness of researchers to pigeonhole or restrict various cultures into categories, particularly by discipline. For example, only using higher education literature to analyze faculty culture is unnecessarily limiting to educational research. Trice and Beyer (1993) rejected this simplification of culture research advocating instead an eclectic approach as a means of identifying often ignored or unknown aspects of the culture. They developed one of the most widely known characterizations of cultures in use today.

The first characteristic identified by Trice and Beyer (1993) as common to cultures is their collective natures. This characteristic speaks to the inherent social aspect of culture, addressing the important element that culture membership is predicated on adhering to the beliefs and behaviors defined by that culture and expulsion from the culture can occur if conformity is not achieved. The faculty culture of community colleges and public comprehensive four year institutions, for example, reflects a culture that promotes the values of teaching and service as demonstrated by their mission statements and, where applicable, reappointment, promotion and tenure processes (Boyer, 1997; Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

LeVine (1984) and Spiro (1984) adopt the same approach to the collective nature of cultures to imply the ways we can detect elements of a culture. Spiro (1984), however, advocates a more cautious approach to the observability of culture than Trice and Beyer (1993), not limiting it to behaviors, social patterns or social organization. Rousseau (1990) also views culture as an inherently social process, underscoring the “shared” nature of a group’s beliefs and behaviors in her study of cultures.

The second characteristic Trice and Beyer (1993) discuss as common to many organizational cultures is the “emotionally charged” (p. 6) nature of cultures. Others (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Smircich, 1983) have supported the role culture plays in handling change, chaos, and disturbances to routines which make cultures, by association, avenues for channeling and releasing feelings by members of that culture. By relating this characteristic to the study of faculty cultures scholars can anticipate the emotionality of daily life in academe, study the ways internal and external pressures impact faculty members, and identify mechanisms within the cultural structure to channel the emotional character of cultures into positive outcomes.

Trice and Beyer’s (1993) assertion that cultures have a contextual history that is unique to a group or organization, their third characterization, is supported by Kuh and Whitt (1988), “because culture is bound to context, every institution’s culture is different” (p. 13), and corresponds to Spiro’s (1984) notion of cultures having foundations in traditional patterns of behavior: “they are developed in the historical experience of social groups, and as a social heritage” (p. 323). This element of cultures also speaks to the process of acculturating members and transmitting particular aspects of the culture over time. Groups are formed in faculty cultures based on discipline (as in academic departments), common

interests (as in multidisciplinary research teams), or some other contrived structure (Becher, 1989; Kuh & Whitt, 1988). As members arrive and depart, the consistent core becomes the avenue for transmitting significant and symbolic aspects of the particular culture—the overt and underlying values, assumptions and shared behaviors (Louis, 1990) that have helped to maintain the culture over time.

Cultures represent and contain symbolic determinants important to groups or organizations. For some groups, symbolic elements are the most critical aspects of their culture and may even be considered synonymous with culture (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Spiro (1984) attaches meaning to cultural symbols both in the conventional and literal sense, as well as in the subjective interpretation awarded them by the cultural group. For example, in faculty cultures, selecting committee chairpersons or determining which faculty member has her choice of office location can demonstrate a symbolic seniority. It is noteworthy that symbols can have multiple cultural significances. Symbols can be artifacts or gestures that convey meanings beyond the obvious intent. Symbols represent the fourth characteristic common in cultures by Trice and Beyer (1993).

The fifth element Trice and Beyer (1993) postulate is the dynamic nature of cultures. They link the symbolic traits inherent in any culture and the unpredictability and constantly changing characteristics present in many processes involving human nature as a way to explain the non-static nature of cultures. In community colleges and public four year institutional cultures this would be manifest in at least two important ways. First, public institutions tend to be highly susceptible to external influences, for example, state funding, legislative mandates and market conditions (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) and, as with private institutions, they are accountable to internal stakeholders (Bok,

2003; Newman, 1997). As institutional funding, mission and direction change, all cultures that make up a university, including the academic, administrative, athletic, and social and student cultures, experience permutations as a ripple effect (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003). There is no reason to expect that there will be a decrease in the external and internal influences impacting institutions, particularly the public colleges and universities, any time in the near future (Berberet, 2002; Duderstadt, 1999; Gumport, 1997; Gumport, 2001; National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 2002; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). The second manifestation refers to the demographic changes which are part of any higher education culture. Public colleges and universities attract diverse students, a characteristic directly related to their open access missions—their very establishment was predicated on serving the masses, the make-up of which has changed and continues to change over time (Altbach, 2001; Bergquist, 1995; Chandler, 1997; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). This manifestation, coupled with the turnover of faculty members and changes in leadership affects institutional culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

The sixth and final characteristic Trice and Beyer (1993) assert as common to cultures is their “inherent fuzziness” (p. 6). Cultures tend not to be neat, well-aligned and hierarchical. Formal and informal cultures exist in conjunction with major cultures and subcultures, which speaks to this characteristic (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Indeed, some scholars caution against striving to create a well-defined culture characterized by consensus, going so far as to label it “dysfunctional” (Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990, p. 287) or “ambiguous” (Martin & Meyerson, 1988).

Exploring Faculty Culture in Higher Education

Historically, the investigation of faculty culture in institutions of higher education has been characterized predominantly by quantitative inquiries conducted on faculty in research institutions (for example, Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). While valuable in amassing basic descriptive information such as faculty characteristics and working conditions, post positivist approaches are often restrictive in the parameters established for conducting studies and focus on cause and effect cases supported by empirical evidence; objective criteria can be more easily tested, which is frequently the goal and outcome of quantitative research (Creswell, 2003). However, as Chaffee and Tierney (1988) observed, use of the “traditional perspectives, oriented toward quantitative measurement of objective structures and patterns, do not adequately capture the dynamics of culture” (p. 10). What is most often absent in the literature is the broader understanding of faculty experiences described and analyzed through their own eyes, studied in their specific contexts, and synthesized into new theories or webs of significance (Creswell, 2003). These subjective and inductive approaches to exploring culture allow input from the participants of the study in the form of generating their own responses to prompts (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). These approaches also invite the involvement of the researcher, who often becomes an active instrument in the data gathering process, an element of research considered unacceptable in the quantitative paradigm. Thus, if the primary goals of conducting research in the social sciences arena are to explore, describe, explain, or predict (Hart, 1998; Johnson & Christensen, 2004), an inductive, qualitative umbrella more closely approaches an exploration of faculty culture than a merely quantitative exercise. As Wolcott (1994) states, the exploratory nature of qualitative research is most helpful when the researcher does not know or is unable to identify the variables to be

studied before beginning her work, or when the researcher plans to discover general behaviors common to a group, for example, in ethnography. According to LeVine (1984), identifying with the cultural core of a group is only available through ethnography and Geertz, a prominent anthropologist, noted that the study of culture must not be limited to “an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (as cited in Tierney, 1988, p. 4).

Yet even in this arena there is dissension. Martin and Meyerson (1988) challenge many of the commonly accepted and historically based avenues to the study of culture. They adopt the stance that culture exists without the opportunity for scrutiny by those within or without the boundaries under exploration—that is, culture is not a phenomenon we can simply study and present in a research report. To this end, they developed a matrix to guide the examination of culture from different perspectives, based on the underlying assumption that cultures are essentially ambiguous and devoid of any objective qualities. Martin and Meyerson’s (1988) paradigm allows researchers to study a particular aspect of the culture of an organization or institution in light of three primary domains. If the element under investigation is consistently described or experienced in the same manner throughout the organization and is devoid of ambiguity, then the cultural element is described as “integrated.” If a cultural element is interpreted by the members with some inconsistency of understanding, agreement on the interpretation of the element exists within groups but not across the board, and if ambiguity is evident on at least a superficial level, then the element is described as “differentiated.” Cultural differentiation often occurs in higher education institutions within departments or disciplines. Finally, if the organization projects the element under study as confusing or lacking in clarity, highly ambiguous, and reflective of

consensus only at the issue-specific level, then the element is categorized as “ambiguous.”

The matrix developed by Martin and Meyerson (1988, p. 117) is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Martin and Meyerson’s Paradigms (1988, p. 117)

Defining Characteristics	Paradigm Name		
	1. Integration	2. Differentiation	3. Ambiguity
Level of consistency	Only consistent elements mentioned	Some inconsistency	Lack of clarity
Degree of consensus	Organization-wide consensus	Consensus within, not between, subcultures	Issue-specific consensus, dissensus or confusion
Orientation to ambiguity	Denial	Channeling	Acknowledgement
Metaphors	Hologram	Islands of clarity	Web, jungle

This matrix is useful in analyzing cultures because it allows researchers to form a broader base from which to view and interact with cultures. The paradigms identified in the matrix are not mutually exclusive and different cultures will consist of all three paradigms in differing degrees (Martin & Meyerson, 1988). The matrix can also be used to describe and compare faculty cultures in two-year colleges and four-year and universities,¹ lending a flexible framework for analyzing how faculty interact with each other, with students, and with administrators. It is the reflection of a more detailed approach Martin and Meyerson (1988) developed to study cultures and is based on “content themes (external and internal),

¹ The use of the term two-year college is for technical and community colleges, and although they are not strictly speaking all two-year colleges, national data sets use the term “two-year college.” However, Levin, Kater, & Wagoner (2006) use the term “community college” to refer to institutions that are predominantly Associate degree institutions, covering two-year colleges, technical colleges, and community colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees.

practices (formal and informal), and artifacts (stories, rituals, jargon and physical arrangements)” (p. 98).

There are several sociological and anthropological orientations that utilize a cultural perspective on group behavior. Qualitative methodology, such as ethnography, phenomenology, case study, and grounded theory, lends itself to the exploration or explanation of phenomena, unique situations, or theory generation. Phenomenology, an exploration of the essence of experience, was derived from philosophy; case study methodology claims a multidisciplinary origin from law, medicine and education; and grounded theory evolved from sociology (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). While each promote different data gathering methods, use various styles of analysis, and connote specific epistemological orientations, they all contribute to our understanding of human behavior. Educational ethnography, in particular, with its anthropological epistemology, is used to describe the qualities and themes present in the culture by those being studied. Educational ethnography is defined as “the discovery and comprehensive description of the culture of a group of people...as they relate to educational issues” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 369).

Although inquiry into faculty culture using a variety of methodological approaches has increased during the last several years (Bila & Miller, 1997; Kempner, 1990; Toma, 1997; Wolfe & Strange, 2003), there seems to be no well-conceptualized model for assessing faculty culture in these institutions, merely ‘hit and miss’ attempts. One of the most popular and frequently used frameworks applied to higher education is organizational culture. A discussion of this framework follows.

Higher Education and Organizational Culture

Several important works have studied the organizational culture of postsecondary institutions and lead to an emphasis on institutional culture (Becher, 1989; Birnbaum, 1988; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Tierney, 1992; Wong & Tierney, 2001), or an investigation into the relationship between faculty governance structures and faculty culture (Baldrige, 1971; Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Henderson, 2007). Kezar and Eckel (2004) noted that institutional culture was one of the factors with a strong effect on overall institutional performance. The importance of culture and its relationship to governance has direct bearing on institutional efficiency and effectiveness. Birnbaum's (1988) work on institutional organization and functioning underscores the importance of context on institutional culture and the effects of context and individuality on governance. Governance is a core function in any institution of higher education (Hines, 2000) and its characteristics are important determinants of an institution's culture and accompanying subcultures (Baldrige, 1971; Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 2000). This understanding reinforces the value of cultural theories where campus context, history, mission and beliefs more aptly affect the survival of an institution (Kezar & Eckel, 2004).

These studies shied away from addressing the differences, if they exist, between research institutions and low selectivity or open access colleges and universities. Some scholars of the community college have attended to faculty culture in those institutions, often focusing on the teaching aspect of the profession (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb, 1999; Kempner, 1990; Levin, 2001). One of the earlier scholars to study non-selective institutions was Tierney (1988), whose initial attempt to develop a framework for identification of institutional cultures was based on a case study of a public college and included many

aspects of an institution and its corresponding culture. A flaw with Tierney's study was the absence of an exploration of the employee culture in contrast to the institutional culture. This was an interesting omission given the author's assertion that organizational culture is based on the outcome of actions and decisions involving those most intimately involved in the organization's work, both of which are by necessity the result of human conduct:

"organizational culture exists, then, in part through the actors' interpretation of historical and symbolic forms...[and is] grounded in the shared assumptions of individuals participating in the organization" (Tierney, 1988, p. 4). A stronger argument in support of Tierney's framework would have resulted from incorporating an investigation of employee subculture.

An area of study that has received significant attention is the relationship between faculty governance and organization. Typically, faculty members organize by discipline and this has been a popular structure by which faculty cultures have been analyzed (Becher, 1989; Palmer, 2002). References to academic tribes and territories are common metaphors for faculty structure derived from anthropology (Becher, 1989). Palmer's (2002) limited study on teaching style differences by discipline, interactions with students, and life inside and outside the institution focused on full-time community college faculty. His study would benefit from replication if it also included a broader sample that would lead to inferences regarding the nature of community college faculty culture and comparisons with four year college faculty. Fairweather (1996) conducted an extensive quantitative study on faculty in *American Academic Life* but did not extend his research to include community or junior colleges which is a drawback to generalizing his research. His work, particularly that pertaining to public, regional, comprehensive institutions, is germane to the study of faculty in community colleges for reasons already discussed: establishing and nurturing a faculty

culture hinges on rewards, socialization, leadership and administrative actions as they relate to faculty. These factors are typically present in all higher education settings. Indeed, it could be argued that they are common to all organizations. For example, in much the same way that Fairweather (1996) advocates congruence between institutional missions and faculty performance, Bolman and Deal (1997) stress the importance of a good fit between management initiatives and employee outcomes and Lindholm (2003) suggests the same application in higher education in her research. Levin, Kater, and Wagoner (2006) depict the changing institutional mission (of community colleges) and the development of new forms of community colleges or “nouveau colleges” as a result of neo-liberalism and globalization, and they explore the impact on the faculty who teach in these institutions. The economic and political context in which community colleges find themselves is the same arena in which another veritable public institution of higher education exists. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the public, regional, comprehensive university is as much a product of its environment as the nouveau community college.

Smircich’s (1983) earlier work capitalized on the juxtaposition of culture and organizational theories, promoting the concept that different research agendas are dictated by researchers’ assumptions regarding culture and organizations. Her emphasis on the metaphorical and interpretive approaches to the study of organizations supports the works of other researchers which have given rise to popular organizational theories such as systems theory, the management and bureaucracy models, governance frameworks, and political and social models (for example, Baldrige, 1971; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Fayol, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Taylor, 1996; Tichy, 1983; Weber, 1996). Of the five themes Smircich (1983) depicted as developing from an overlapping of anthropological culture concepts and

organization theory (cross-cultural/comparative management, corporate culture, organizational cognition, organizational symbolism, and unconscious processes), no one theme clearly addresses the description or role of faculty culture in an institution of higher education. Whether this is because the study of faculty culture as a subculture delimits their application or insufficient attention has been paid to faculty culture is a matter of debate. Nevertheless, we arrive at the same point as that discussed earlier in this chapter: faculty culture has little theoretical framework with which it can be characterized and analyzed to inform the higher education knowledge base.

In the study of organizational culture, particularly as it relates to the understanding of its subcultures, in this case, faculty culture, it is important to remember that organizational culture subsumes the subcultures. In other words, we cannot fully comprehend faculty culture without also exploring the larger culture of the organization (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Lindholm, 2003; Martin & Meyerson, 1988). Kuh and Whitt (1988) identified four subcultures of faculty culture in higher education settings: institutional, academic professional, discipline, and higher education in general. Others added societal, which might suggest overlap with the general higher education subculture of Kuh and Whitt or other designations such as the inquiry paradigm (Toma, 1997) and organizational subculture (Austin, 1990).

A difficulty in studying organizational culture arises when an institution's culture is not clearly defined, Martin and Meyerson's (1988) objections to reifying cultures notwithstanding. This can hinder faculty integration and performance since established cultural values inherent at an institution are often difficult to learn and use on the part of faculty (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988): "although subcultures may exist, they usually partake in

and contribute to a common frame of reference” (p. 131), “and are normal to every organization” (p. 133). “Organizational culture has its roots in perception and communication among people within and without the institution. An organization’s culture is the means by which people come to understand and interpret what the institution is about” (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p. 169). Zucker (1991) supports this argument with her studies of institutionalization and cultural persistence.

Schein’s (1992) work on organizational culture provides critical insights on the definition and roles of culture as they relate to understanding, analyzing, and improving organizations, and culture’s effect on and impact by leadership. If we apply his framework to community college and university culture, Schein’s major categories of observable behavior and phenomena provide needed structure in the study of faculty culture: behavior patterns, language and rituals resulting from interaction with others in the culture, for example, students, other faculty and administrators; accepted values and norms; “espoused values; organizational climate; shared meanings; embedded skills; rules of the game; formal philosophy; integrating symbols and habits of thinking/ cognitive paradigms” (pp. 8, 9). In examining faculty culture utilizing these lenses, we acquire a beginning knowledge of the elements of the culture. Schein (1992) promotes the understanding that cultures possess structural stability and a connection to a greater culture, which is important for researchers to understand as they study the nature of faculty culture. Furthermore, the existence of a subculture of faculty that is separate from the institutional culture may give rise to what has been termed oppositional culture (Levin, et al., 2006). Oppositional faculty cultures form as a result of subgroups of faculty coalescing in informal protest against institutional administrators or initiatives.

Tierney's (1992) examination of culture and community as applied to an institutional context is useful since he includes the dynamic element that is an inherent part of any culture. This is supported by Trice and Beyer's (1993) broad generalizations on cultural components. Institutional culture is impacted by many factors including leadership, external environments and outside stakeholders, new and current employees or other members, and administrators, and it is revealed in the daily activities in which the participants, including faculty, engage. His work promotes the changing, dynamic and renegotiating essence of culture and its development and continuation as a necessary ingredient in any organization: "culture is created by, and creates meaning for, the organization's participants" (Tierney, 1992, p. 16).

A major benefit of studying organizational theory is its relationship to organizational effectiveness, a significant aspect of which is the human resource component: in the case of our study, faculty employees. When applied to the higher education arena the study of organizational effectiveness, specifically its enhancement by understanding faculty and their culture, becomes clear. For all institutions, the creation of an engaged, responsive, and productive (as defined by the university or college) faculty is of paramount importance (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988).

Conclusion

Faculty culture is an important aspect of any institution of higher education. To date, few scholars have researched the nature of faculty culture in public, regional, comprehensive universities and community colleges, and there have been no comparative studies conducted on the two types of institutions. Furthermore, there are few studies using a qualitative methodology to investigate the lives of faculty in these two types of institutions, an important gap given their numerical prominence in higher education. The sociological and

anthropological underpinnings of culture are invaluable to the study of faculty culture, as is an understanding of institutional theory and its applications to faculty culture. This study examines the impact of different aspects of the faculty experiences on faculty culture, and draws conclusions about the impact of internal and external pressures, institutional mission, governance, career aspirations of faculty, the pathways to becoming a faculty member, faculty relationships with students, and faculty priorities, to name a few, on faculty culture. The study is guided by the following questions about faculty culture.

1. Does faculty culture in a community college differ from faculty culture in a public, regional, comprehensive university, and if so, in what ways?
2. In what ways are faculty cultures in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university similar?
3. How does institutional mission affect faculty culture in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university?

The following chapter provides the rationale for selecting the qualitative methodology, specifically ethnography, employed in this study and details the processes used to gather information to understand faculty culture in a public, regional, comprehensive university and a community college.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define qualitative research as studies that produce outcomes not originating from statistics and as primarily interpretive in nature: “it can refer to research about persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as [be] about organizational functioning, social movement, [and] cultural phenomena” (p. 11). They and others (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Wolcott, 1994) suggest two major reasons for a qualitative approach to research. First, researcher preference, including history and discipline, creates the conditions conducive to qualitative methodology. Second, the nature of the research question(s) dictates the research methodology selected. Glesne (1999) and Hart (1998) support the view that ontological assumptions dictate preferred research methods and the nature of our research questions. In quantitative and positivist orientations, the search for measurable, defined, and objective realities is the focus (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 1999); qualitative research is “pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 2). The experiences of the participants and their accompanying meanings or interpretations are of paramount importance (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Qualitative approaches such as ethnography, phenomenology, case study, and grounded theory lend themselves to the exploration or explanation of phenomena, descriptions of unique situations, or theory generation. Phenomenology, an exploration of the essence of experience, was derived from philosophy; case study methodology claims a multidisciplinary origin from law, medicine, and education; and grounded theory evolved

from sociology (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

While each uses different data gathering methods and various styles of analysis, and connotes specific epistemological orientations, they all contribute to our understanding of human behavior. Educational ethnography, another qualitative methodology, with its anthropological epistemology, is used to describe the qualities and themes present in the culture by those under investigation. Educational ethnography is defined as “the discovery and comprehensive description of the culture of a group of people...as they relate to educational issues” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 369).

Two of the most critical elements in exploring any culture or cultural phenomenon involve a qualitative approach and naturalistic observation (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Cultural theorists tell us that the most effective way to study culture is to become immersed as a member of the culture being investigated—the emic perspective (Rousseau, 1990). Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, two early anthropologists who promoted the holistic functionalist approach—each espousing the philosophy that only by studying respective cultures in their own context and considering all aspects of the particular society under study, rather than isolated elements, could support the importance of cultural studies—subscribed to the following view: “cultural practice was only understandable in terms of the system of which it was a part...the significance of culture consists in the relation between its elements” (Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990, pp. 175-176). They believed that cultures are developed and maintained to sustain societies and/or satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of those cultures. When applied to the study of faculty cultures, researchers must begin with asking what general purpose the institution serves and follow up with an investigation of how the faculty support that purpose. Discussions about

whether faculties create cultures purposefully, whether the cultures form out of the environment, and the nature of faculty characteristics of those who inhabit universities and colleges can also be part of the study. Because Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown moved to create generalized or universal laws for societies, their functionalist perspective has been criticized by some theorists as narrow and unnecessarily restrictive (Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990).

Role of the Researcher

The nature of qualitative research dictates that the researcher is a key element in an ethnographic study. As a 20-year member of the culture of one of the sites to be used for the current study, my history affects my perceptions and beliefs about the institution and the existing faculty culture. Knowledge regarding university politics, key players, and sensitive information may hinder the credibility of this study if not addressed. No close colleagues of the researcher will be involved in this study. Masking participants' identities will be accomplished early in the process of gaining entry. Confidentiality in observations, document analysis, and interviews will be maintained. Leading prompts and questions will not be included in the interview process and consistency of questions asked of all participants will be honored as much as possible within a qualitative domain; the nature of qualitative research dictates that the researcher allows themes to emerge and does not rely solely on scripted prompts (Seidman, 1991). Although studying the researcher's own environment has been labeled "backyard research" (Creswell, 2003, p. 184), having the insider's view of the mission, history, and major issues of the institution can be helpful in interpreting data gathered as long as the interpretations are subject to the participants' review and opportunities are made available for them to make changes to reflect their statements

accurately. Finally, while I have been employed at the institution for many years, I am classified as a non-teaching EPA (Exempt from the Personnel Act) employee; thus, I have not been a bona fide member of the faculty and can maintain a certain distance as a result of not having experienced the faculty culture in its fullness.

The relationship between community college and university faculty has not received much attention to date. Where it has been referenced, there are examples of a hierarchical relationship with the latter often relegated to the superior position (Grubb, 1999). This is an unfortunate occurrence and one which I will endeavor not to foster as part of this study.

Ethical Issues

I conducted an informal pilot study to ensure that potential problems with the methodology were addressed prior to embarking on the study (Seidman, 1991). As part of the pilot study, the questions employed in the actual research were used to interview volunteers who were not participants in the study. Adjustments to the questions were made and a coding system for results was developed as a result of obtaining feedback during the pilot study.

Study participants were notified of the study's purpose in advance of their agreement to participate. Cover letter invitations included the purpose of the study. Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures for human subject involvement in research at North Carolina State University and Western Carolina University were completed (Appendix A). Southwestern Community College does not have an Institutional Review Board. Informed letters of consent were developed in accordance with good research practice and included the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, methods to be used in the study, potential benefits and outcomes of the study, entitlement to view results of the

research, and the right to ask questions as recommended in Creswell (2003) (Appendix B). A letter to the host site administrator at SCC requesting permission to conduct the study was developed and included the purpose and scope of the study, the potential outcomes and number of participants to be included, and a confidentiality statement (Appendix C). In addition, I endeavored to minimize disruptions during field observations and developed aliases for participants to protect the privacy of all parties. Nonetheless, I did not maintain anonymity of the two institutions in that this was not necessary to protect the privacy of individual participants and the naming of the institutions lent credibility to the investigation. Necessary validation strategies were employed to ensure accuracy in data collection and are discussed in a separate section. Finally, the researcher used appropriate and unbiased language in conducting the research and refrained from “suppressing, falsifying, or inventing findings” (Creswell, 2003, p. 67) to strengthen the outcomes of the study.

Information (data) Gathering

Data were collected over a 12 month period beginning in November, 2005 and culminating in November, 2006, at two research sites in rural western North Carolina: a public, regional, comprehensive university (Western Carolina University), and a community college (Southwestern Community College).

Research Sites

Western Carolina University, established as a normal school for the preparation of teachers in 1889, is a public, regional, comprehensive four-year institution located in rural western North Carolina. It maintains an enrollment of more than 8,800 undergraduate and graduate students and there are approximately 450 full-time faculty members. It offers more than 50 degree programs organized into four undergraduate colleges and a graduate school.

The university offers one doctoral program (in educational leadership). As a regional, comprehensive university, it draws a significant percentage of its student body from the eight westernmost counties in North Carolina, as well as Mecklenburg (Charlotte area) and Wake (Raleigh area) Counties. The institution has a minority student population of approximately 8% (Western Carolina University, 2006). Southwestern Community College, also based in western North Carolina, is a public two-year institution with an enrollment of more than 2,600 students in approximately 50 programs; there are 66 full-time teaching faculty members. Established in 1964, it is one of 59 community colleges in the State. The enrollment is comprised of 82.8% White, 12% American Indian, and 1% African American students; it is 64% female and 36% male (Southwestern Community College, 2004).

The institutions were purposefully selected because they exhibit the characteristics needed for the current study: public, open access (low or moderate selectivity), comprehensive program offerings, and employment of a significant pool of full-time teaching faculty. The institutions are located approximately five miles apart.

Interviews

I conducted 40 semi-structured, face-to-face, in-person interviews for this study (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998) that provided the participants with the opportunity to talk about their experiences as faculty members in their own words. As Seidman (1991) indicated, “at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 3). Interviews were conducted using an interview protocol and results were analyzed using the cross-case approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Cross-case analysis contributes to transferability of the results and enhances understanding of the concepts under investigation.

The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to ask the same open-ended questions of all participants and facilitated flexibility in the order in which questions or prompts were issued. The first two interviews were conducted to test the interview protocol I had developed to guide my data collection. Three of the interviews were not analyzed because the quality of the tape recording was too poor to transcribe. The remaining 35 interviews were audio-taped using a digital recorder, and transcribed by two independent transcriptionists. The in-depth interviews were conducted in two phases: the initial interviews took place between November, 2005, and August, 2006, using the first interview protocol (Appendix D); follow up interviews took place between September and early November, 2006, using a second interview protocol (Appendix E). Written approval to interview faculty at both sites was secured prior to beginning the study via formal approval from the vice president of instruction and student services at the community college and from the Institutional Review Board at the university.

Description/Demographics of Participants – Community College Faculty

The 17 community college faculty participants were full-time instructors at Southwestern Community College, who were recruited to participate in the study in two ways: 1) I made a presentation about my study at a general faculty meeting in October, 2005, and 2) I contacted a faculty member at the community college, who invited faculty in person and by an email message to participate in the study. The self-selected participants volunteered to become involved in the study by sending email messages to me, and I responded with a telephone call to discuss the study and a follow-up email message that included my contact information, a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix B) and a brief written synopsis of the study (Appendix F). I scheduled initial interviews on-site for an

hour and a half and an hour for the follow up interviews. In a few cases, participants requested to complete the follow up interview by electronic mail, which I accommodated. The participants represented a variety of disciplines including academic and vocational or career-related programs, possessed different academic qualifications, and had varying degrees of tenure at the institution as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Community College Participants – General Characteristics

Faculty Pseudonym	Total Years in Higher Education	Years at Community College	Discipline/ Academic Area*	Gender	Highest Degree Earned
Bruce	2	2		Male	Bachelor's
Lawrence	12	7		Male	Doctorate
Martin	3	2		Male	Master's
Pamela	5	5		Female	Doctorate
Frances	3 (incl. adjunct)	3		Female	Master's
Barry	23 (incl. adjunct)	16		Male	Master's
Charlotte	4	4		Female	Master's
Ross	11 (incl. adjunct)	11		Male	Master's
Michael	15	2		Male	Master's
Samuel	18 (incl. adjunct)	18		Male	Master's
William	7	7		Male	Master's
David	9 (incl. adjunct)	4		Male	Master's
Greta	23	23		Female	Associate's
Charles	5	5		Male	Master's
Wendy	2	2		Female	Master's
Bill	4	4		Male	Master's
Brian	3	3		Male	Master's

* Department/discipline affiliation information is redacted for confidentiality purposes.

Two of the faculty at the community college had previous experience (adjunct) teaching at a university.

Description/Demographics of Participants – University Faculty

The 18 university faculty participants were comprised of 14 full-time faculty and four instructional faculty members who also had administrative responsibilities. The participants were invited to participate in the study in two ways: 1) I developed a list of faculty

representing a variety of academic disciplines, both genders, and reflecting different tenure at the university, to whom I sent an email message about the study, and 2) I issued an invitation by email message to members of the university’s faculty senate. Both methods resulted in 18 self-selected volunteers becoming participants in the study (Table 4). I scheduled the initial interviews on-site for an hour and a half and an hour for the follow up interviews.

Table 4: University Participants – General Characteristics

Faculty Pseudonym	Total Years in Higher Education	Years at Current University	Discipline/ Academic Area*	Gender	Highest Degree Earned
Hannah	7	5		Female	Master’s
Homer	19	3		Male	Doctorate
Kevin	7 (incl. adjunct)	1		Male	Doctorate
Howard	21 (incl. adjunct)	13		Male	Doctorate
Philip	17 (incl. adjunct)	10		Male	Doctorate
Norman	8	5		Male	Doctorate
Mary	7	4		Female	Doctorate
Keith	2	2		Male	Doctorate
Simon	4	2		Male	Doctorate
Marie	30+	17		Female	Doctorate
Charlotte	14 (inc. adjunct)	12		Female	Doctorate
George	9	7		Male	Doctorate
Jeff	20+	4		Male	Doctorate
Hugh	17	17		Male	Doctorate
Maureen	16	2		Female	Master’s
Harry	32	25		Male	Doctorate
Juliet	30	28		Female	Doctorate
Casey	14	8		Female	Doctorate

* Department/discipline affiliation information is redacted for confidentiality purposes.

The university faculty participants’ employment history was generally categorized into three primary groups: fewer than five years, at or about 10 years, and more than 15 years at the institution. All except two faculty members possessed terminal degrees, and all participants taught in the discipline of their degrees. Four part-time administrators who taught one or more classes were also interviewed and provided additional perspectives for the study. Three

of the faculty had previous experience teaching at a community college; one had previous experience as an administrator at a community college. All participants were employed full-time at the institution.

Information Recording

The evidence gathered during the observations, interviews, and document analyses were recorded during or immediately following the field visit so that memory lapses did not compromise the study's results. An indexing or coding method that linked the research questions to the interview questions, and provided a guide for the on-site observations and document analysis was employed to collect the information that was analyzed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Memoing, a qualitative research technique geared toward immediate application of theory and conceptual framework to the data being gathered was employed to make sense of the process as it was occurring (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Information analysis was concurrent with information gathering (Merriam, 1998). That is, the researcher was engaged in an iterative process; a classification scheme developed from the institutional theory framework was used to categorize the results. Interview protocols were used during each visit to facilitate record keeping and included sections for the researcher's reflective notes and details of the visit, such as day, time, event, and general tone of the field visit (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

Data Management

The interviews conducted as part of this study were audio-taped by the researcher, who also took detailed notes during the interviews. I reviewed the notes on each interview immediately following the interview. The written transcripts of the interviews were created by paid transcriptionists who typed the interviews verbatim and submitted them

electronically in individual files to me. I deleted irrelevant sections of text that dealt with personal information from the files and reviewed each transcript for consistency and accuracy against the notes I wrote during the interview. Once the written transcripts were created, I made one copy of the original transcript of each interview. Using the copy of the transcripts, I then analyzed each participant's response to the individual prompts so that I was reviewing the prompts holistically. That is, I read the responses from all participants for the same question before I moved on to the next question. I highlighted descriptive phrases and terms in each response which I then used to create categories, checking for participants' use of common terms to describe their experiences or beliefs about a particular topic. I created notes on each major theme or short phrase, clustered them according to topic and attributed them to the participant with whom it originated. Finally, I constructed a chart depicting the groups of responses to each topic. Once the responses were analyzed in the manner described, I further analyzed them using Scott's (1995) pillars of institutions and Martin and Meyerson's (1988) cultural paradigms. Finally, I cross-checked the responses by institution, reviewing the responses for similarities and differences by institution. A description of this process follows.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis consistent with ethnographic methodology was employed in this study. Thick and detailed descriptions were used to present the results of the interviews. General themes were studied that are consistent with the characteristics of public, regional, comprehensive universities and community colleges to facilitate organization of the information collected. Categories for analyzing and interpreting the information gathered

were defined and developed using the three pillars of institutions in Scott’s institutional theory (see Table 5).

Table 5: Scott’s Three Pillars of Institutions

	Regulative	Normative	Cognitive/Cultural
Institutional Mission (CC or PRCU)*			
Student Abilities (CC or PRCU)			
Teaching Orientation (CC or PRCU) Faculty Priorities (CC or PRCU)			
External Pressures (CC or PRCU)			
Internal Pressures (CC or PRCU)			

* CC: Community College or PRCU: Public Regional Comprehensive University

Interview data that were generated for this study were separated by institution, then analyzed by institution under the pillars of institutions (regulative, normative, and cognitive/cultural) described by Scott (2001) with the following general themes: institutional mission, perceptions of student abilities, perceptions of internal and external pressures and faculty decision-making capabilities, interactions with other faculty (by department, college, and institution-wide) and with administrators, path to becoming a faculty member, career aspirations, interactions with and perceptions of students, affiliation with discipline, and service, teaching, and research activities. Scott’s (2001) pillars are intended to identify a predominant element on an institutional level, however, no institution is confined to one

pillar and all organizations operate with some degree of all the pillars concurrently depending on the theme or factor being analyzed. The information gathered was applied to the institutional theory framework to discover themes between and within the institutions and to develop possible new lines of inquiry regarding faculty culture. Similarities and differences between the two faculty cultures emerged from the results of the study. Once the information gathered was analyzed using Scott's pillars of institutions, I employed the integration, differentiation, and ambiguity paradigms of Martin and Meyerson's [cultural] matrix (1988) to appropriate elements of culture being explored. Level of consistency, degrees of consensus, orientation to ambiguity, and use of metaphors were applied to the themes, practices, and artifacts studied to determine the underlying cultural assumptions in place in the faculty cultures of both institutions (see Table 6).

Table 6

Martin and Meyerson's Paradigms (1988, p. 117)

Defining Characteristics	Paradigm Name		
	1. Integration	2. Differentiation	3. Ambiguity
Level of consistency	Only consistent elements mentioned	Some inconsistency	Lack of clarity
Degree of consensus	Organization-wide consensus	Consensus within, not between, subcultures	Issue-specific consensus, dissensus or confusion
Orientation to ambiguity	Denial	Channeling	Acknowledgement
Metaphors	Hologram	Islands of clarity	Web, jungle

Strategies for Validating Findings

Several strategies were employed to ensure that the research findings are credible, trustworthy, and authentic (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Triangulation (the inclusion of multiple sources of information), member checking (the participant's review of information submitted by the participant), the use of thick description, reflexivity (researcher's thoughts on bias and involvement with the study), debriefing (conversations with participants following the interviews), discussions about conflicting or opposite viewpoints with participants, and extensive field time on the part of the researcher, contributed to validation of the research findings (Creswell, 2003).

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative study that relies on interviews as the primary source of data leads to an inherent subjectivity in this methodology on the part of the researcher. Being cognizant of this potential conflict, I sought to reduce the degree of bias potentially present in interpreting, analyzing, and synthesizing the transcripts. I made every attempt to not judge faculty responses as correct or incorrect.

Interviewing is among the best qualitative tools to help us understand the lives, experiences, and cultures of an organization's inhabitants; it is the most effective way of understanding the value and meaning people place on the events that shape their world (Seidman, 1991). Seidman (1991) proposed two basic methods of preparing the interview transcripts for analysis: individual participant profiles and thematic connections. I selected the latter for the purposes of this study for several reasons. First, the number of interviews conducted was quite large, and efficiency was highly desirable. Second, although the interviews were in-depth, there were areas of faculty life that were not explored in this study.

Thus, a less than complete depiction of individual faculty profiles would have resulted. Third, the presentation of the results of individual participants' profiles would not create the connections among the experiences of the participants, but would foster a disparate analysis. However, although I selected thematic connections as the primary method to analyze the interview data, in some cases it was clearly beneficial to incorporate some individual profiles for illumination purposes. Additionally, as I reviewed the transcripts, I was careful to assess the degree to which an event or experience was "characteristic or idiosyncratic" (Seidman, 1991, p. 101) of faculty, and made decisions about analyzing it in that light. Issues of researcher judgment, such as those just listed, were considered in the early stages of this study.

Units of analysis studied primarily included phrases, with particular attention paid to themes. Following analysis and interpretation according to Scott's (2001) institutional theory, I employed the integration, differentiation, and ambiguity paradigms of Martin and Meyerson's (1988) [cultural] matrix. Level of consistency, degrees of consensus, orientation to ambiguity, and use of metaphors were applied to the themes, practices, and artifacts generated to extrapolate the underlying cultural assumptions present in the faculty cultures of both institutions.

Chapter Four details the results of the interviews conducted with faculty at the two research sites. It includes a preliminary analysis of the differences and similarities of faculty culture between the two institutions and a review of the impact of institutional mission on faculty culture.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This study was designed to provide understanding of the nature of faculty culture in a community college and in a regional, public, comprehensive university by addressing the following research questions:

1. How does institutional mission affect faculty culture in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university?
2. Does faculty culture in a community college differ from faculty culture in a public, regional, comprehensive university and, if so, in what ways?
3. In what ways are faculty cultures in a public, regional, comprehensive university and a community college similar?

Consistent with the characteristics of qualitative research, some of the themes and concepts raised by the participants do not always relate directly to the research questions advanced by the investigator. However, since the themes and concepts were raised by the faculty who were interviewed, including those themes with minimal bearing on the focus of the study, all responses merit analysis as important factors affecting faculty culture. The analysis of the interviews and other data generated in this study provide insights into faculty perceptions, experiences, and beliefs about their lives as faculty in a community college and a regional, public, comprehensive university. The data are presented in categories that reflect the nature of faculty culture and describe the common themes and concepts that emerged from the analysis. A summary of the major differences and similarities investigated in this study between the faculty participants at Western Carolina University and Southwestern Community College is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Summary of Findings between SCC and WCU Faculty

Southwestern Community College	Western Carolina University
<p>Pathway to Faculty Position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied Follows practical experience Personally recruited Typically adjunct initially Master’s degree the norm 	<p>Pathway to Faculty Position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal education route Teaching-emphasis institution Doctorate degree the norm Typically full-time
<p>Career Aspirations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remain teaching 	<p>Career Aspirations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remain teaching Achieve tenure and promotion
<p>Mission - Multidimensional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career preparation focus Immediate service area Basic skills emphasis Transfer function 	<p>Mission – Multidimensional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First generation college students Liberal education focus Region and beyond service area Less consistent interpretation More ambiguity
<p>Faculty Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Service (local/regional orientation) Scholarship Limited formal reward structure Rewards of Teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Light bulb” Making a difference Student maturity Affiliation with discipline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioner angle 	<p>Faculty Priorities (loosely ordered)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Scholarship Service (regional/national orientation) Formal reward structure present Rewards of Teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to community college Affiliation with discipline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theoretical/research angle
<p>Perceptions of Student Abilities/Motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide range of abilities Diverse backgrounds Motivated and unmotivated 	<p>Perceptions of Student Abilities/Motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow range of abilities Mostly motivated Strong sense of entitlement
<p>Faculty Relationships with Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally positive and electronic 	<p>Faculty relationships with students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vary based on faculty member
<p>Research Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited 	<p>Research Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key to tenure Pressure to publish
<p>Decision-Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited at all levels 	<p>Decision-Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory at college level Advisory at university level Participatory at department level
<p>Pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly satisfied in general Lack of annual contracts Heavy teaching load 	<p>Pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching load External interference TPR process

Southwestern Community College (SCC)

Pathways to Becoming a Faculty Member

The pathways to becoming a faculty member at SCC were characterized by the participants as an accidental event, almost always following early adjunct work at the college, and typically following employment in the workforce of the teaching discipline: “It began by accident. I was working on my master’s degree and purely for economics reasons I needed to get a job. I put in an application at SCC and was surprised to get a call about teaching a class. Eventually, a full-time position opened. I taught part-time for a while, then back to full-time” (Lawrence[†]); “I sort of fell into it. I had been in the business sector as a vice president for operations at a bank and making great money, but that wasn’t everything. I traveled a lot and worked 60 and 70 hours a week. A friend recommended that I look into teaching and he contacted someone at SCC who called me about teaching. It meant a major salary cut but I love being in the classroom” (William). Few of the community college faculty aspired to become teachers at a community college or at another higher education institution, and many were personally recruited from industry by institutional representatives: “It was never my goal to become a teacher. I was recruited by an employee at SCC while I was working on my MBA. I taught a business law class for three semesters, then they offered me a full-time teaching load. I really liked it, to my surprise. Now I have been here for 14 years” (Samuel); “I didn’t plan to be a teacher. I worked in the field of psychology for more than seven years and then switched positions for a couple of years. After that, I really wanted a change and began teaching here part-time. I was asked to begin teaching full-time about four years ago” (Charlotte). None of the faculty I interviewed had earned master’s degrees in two-year college teaching, although most had earned master’s degrees (13) or doctorates (2)

[†] Department/disciplinary affiliations have been redacted for confidentiality.

in other fields, and it was also rare for the faculty to enter the profession immediately following formal education in their fields. Although a few of the participants were engaged in pursuing formal education at the time of the interview, or were planning to pursue higher education at some point in the future, they were not typically lacking the formal education requirements to maintain their position; more likely, they desired the increase in salary an additional degree would afford them. In some cases, the participants revealed that they had attended a community college as a student prior to becoming employed at one: “I graduated from SCC and was invited back to assist with the clinical program on a part-time basis. After a couple of years and after earning my bachelor’s degree I was hired to teach full-time in my field” (David), and “after getting my instructor’s training here in 1979 and 1980, I got my instruction license and interviewed here and at the high school at the same time--I got this job before the high school called. I had plans to use my degree. I practiced my field for several years while teaching part time” (Greta). For the majority of the faculty, teaching at the community college occurred later in life, often following retirement from another career: “when I retired from the state police, I had at least 10 to 12 years of work left. I had always had a dream to teach and I felt that I had knowledge I could pass on to students, so I began teaching two days a week as an adjunct at another community college and at a high school. I didn’t enjoy teaching in a high school; the adult population is preferable to me” (Martin); “my husband and I retired to the area following careers in large cities and I got bored after a few months here. I started looking around for something to do part-time. I applied for a job as an adjunct instructor at SCC and after one semester, ended up being invited to teach full-time” (Wendy).

Trice and Beyer's (1993) characterizations of culture underscore the importance of members' history and background to the development and maintenance of an organization's culture: they bring their past experiences, beliefs, assumptions, and values with them and those help to shape the culture of the organization. In the case of SCC, the strong desire of the faculty to teach at that particular institution, to retire from SCC, or remain there for a long time, helps to create a collegial, informal atmosphere that is punctuated by a strong sense of job satisfaction. Their knowledge of and experiences in industry and other professions provide them with another context with which to contrast their community college teaching position; most of the time, their current position as a faculty member elicited the more favorable regard. Furthermore, those 'real world' work experiences also shape their approaches to teaching in significant ways: "it's not like in a university, we have a lot of latitude to try any number of things; there are no stipulations on *how* we teach, but we typically teach in a hands-off [from administration] approach" (William); "I think it is important to bring practical experience into the classroom—it lends grounding and perspective to the class" (Ross); "hopefully [I] have the real world experience to be able to tell people that we teach what they need to know to succeed; I do as much authentic assessment as I can to give them what they are really going to use in the real world from that particular class—to know that I have actually given them information that they can use and that they have learned" (Bruce).

Career Aspirations of Faculty

The faculty participants in this study possessed high job satisfaction associated with working at SCC. Only three of them intended to seek other positions, either at SCC or elsewhere. One faculty member had a 55-mile commute to SCC and he desired to work

closer to home. Two of the other faculty members have considered entering administration at SCC. In the remaining cases, the faculty plan to continue teaching at the community college until they retire: “I have about eight years and I hope to stay here at SCC until I retire” (Greta); “I have no plans for higher education; I want to continue doing what I am doing” (Martin); “I am *really* enjoying teaching; I haven’t thought beyond that and my family life dictates anything else that I do” (Pamela); “I very much enjoy teaching and want to remain in the classroom. I do not enjoy administration at all. I really think I want to stay at SCC, too” (Samuel); “age is a factor for me. I probably don’t want to advance, but just keep up to date in business; I have no desire to be promoted further. There is comfort in doing this because it’s what I want to do” (Wendy). Only two of the faculty interviewed aspired to different positions at SCC, most notably in administration, if the opportunity arose: “I am not against going into administration but right now, I really enjoy teaching. I have never done administration and I maybe one day will do that but right now, I really enjoy this” (Bruce), and “there are a few reasons I am interested in getting my doctorate degree, one is personal. There is no way I will stop short of the final. I am going to go all the way. The second is, for my last few years with the state, I may want to get in to administration simply because the salaries are larger and retirement is based on the big five or the big three but nothing about administration attracts me at all” (Brian). Three of the participants were currently enrolled in a higher education program and at least five others were planning to enter a program, either at the master’s or doctorate level. The most typical reason provided for seeking advanced education was intrinsic motivation: “I would like to finish my dissertation. I have no goals to enter administration; I just love being in the classroom. I am pursuing the degree for purely selfish reasons—for my parents and for my students—it lends credibility” (William); “I

really would like to get my doctorate in nursing degree or at least start it in about five years. I am not sure what else I would want to do, but I would like to be a doctor” (Frances); “I would like to consider getting a Ph. D. at some point in the future but I like this job and want to stay here, even with an advanced degree. I like being a community college instructor. I feel like I make a difference” (Bill); “I plan to complete my doctorate on-line--by distance ed., in a few years. I want to stay at SCC indefinitely” (Charles).

The aspirations expressed by the faculty at SCC relate to the aspect of organizational culture that deals with the degree of transience present in the members and, to a certain extent, reflect the level of satisfaction employees experience in their work environment. Cultures are neither static nor predictable, and, in fact, possess a dynamic nature that is highly desirable for its members (Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Yet for cultures to be maintained over time, a consistent core must be present in the form of common members, beliefs, and shared behaviors. In the case of SCC, the faculty interviewed expressed a strong sense of institutional loyalty and intent to maintain a long history with the institution. Therefore, we can speculate that the faculty who have longevity at the institution and those who actively plan to remain at SCC are vehicles for transmitting and maintaining the established cultural mores. Their strong beliefs about the institution, the value of the work in which they are engaged, and their positive regard for SCC all contribute to the culture of the institution and reflect a significant level of job satisfaction.

Faculty Perception of Institutional Mission

In general, most of the faculty who were interviewed have a clear perception of the mission of their community college and this perception is reinforced in multiple ways, for example, in conversations with colleagues, as a part of the faculty application process, and in

faculty meetings: “our primary mission is to educate students to get a job in the work force; hopefully be successful in the workplace, or to continue in their education” (Bruce); “our mission is wonderful. It is to serve the students in our community, a three county service area, by helping them get an education. It is constantly communicated from the administration” (David); “our mission is to provide quality instruction and education for the students in our three county service area” (Barry); “our mission is in two years to give students in this rural area a place where they can learn a career” (Greta); “our niche is to prepare our students for the world of work right away; we also serve the education needs of students who aren’t ready for the world of work or to attend a university” (Ross). Faculty also believe the mission of SCC is multidimensional: “I think we serve a very diverse population. We do everything from very basic career training all the way up to preparation for college transfer and some people wanting to come back for continuing education credits. I think we can serve students that may not feel comfortable walking into a university, even though we are only a few miles from Western [the closest university] and our missions overlap” (Bill); “we are unique because we have an open door policy--that is our mission” (Wendy). The mission that faculty describe is also consistent with the officially stated mission of SCC as found in promotional materials used for student recruitment, and in college catalogs.

Southwestern Community College is a comprehensive learning and teaching institution offering high quality innovative instruction and support to all who need and value these services. Seamless links with the community, advanced technology and a culturally rich environment promote student achievement and academic excellence. (Southwestern Community College, 2004).

In two instances, faculty described what they thought the mission ought to be, or what the administration purports it to be, and not necessarily what they believed it was: “I would think to empower the students in their discipline and then empower them to know that learning is a lifetime process and not just something to do while you’re at an educational institution; hopefully we are teaching them how to learn and to make it an enjoyable experience. That is what we should do. That should be our mission” (Brian); “I think that Dr. Groves [the president] has got a mission to basically help the people that live within this area become better equipped to make a better life for themselves” (Martin).

The congruence between faculty understanding of the mission and institutional articulation of its mission exemplifies what Martin and Meyerson (1988) characterize as integration within organizational culture. Specifically, based on the interviews conducted with the faculty at SCC, there is a high level of consistency in interpretation of the mission, organization-wide consensus on the purpose of the institution, and little or no ambiguity related to how the mission is perceived and presented. A high degree of integration in a factor as critical as mission, the underlying focus and purpose of an organization, is important because it drives the beliefs and behaviors of its members, as in this case. As Scott (2001) also suggests, the behaviors of members of institutions are dictated by the interpretations and meanings attributed to those actions.

Faculty viewed the mission as significant in its effect on their roles as faculty. The emphasis on teaching such a wide range or diversity of students is accompanied by the challenges of teaching students with varying levels of academic preparation and abilities. The faculty’s emphasis on “student success” is defined by course and program completion, and often the faculty adjust their teaching styles, individualize assignments, and give special

consideration to the degree of rigor to ensure that all students are able to successfully complete their classes. In many cases, the broad range of abilities in a single class leads to remedial work being incorporated in the syllabus and course content, and additional structure and assistance from the faculty member. For Lawrence, this is a fairly typical scenario, “I may tend to give some of them more individualized attention than they might get otherwise.” Faculty often find themselves teaching beyond content—offering remedial math and reading are common (Brian). “I have to be mother, father, psychologist, and boyfriend and get to know them as more than just a number; the younger ones in particular have personal problems that they bring with them” (Greta). In Scott’s (1995) view, this exemplifies the normative element of institutional theory in practice: “a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension into social life. Normative systems include both *values* and *norms*” (p. 37). The formal and informal roles faculty adopt over time to the situations and interactions they encounter become norms and play a significant part in their daily lives.

Faculty Priorities

Of the three priorities typically associated with faculty work at the collegiate level, there was almost universal agreement by the faculty at SCC that teaching is their number one priority, on institutional as well as individual levels; it is espoused and practiced. To this degree, the mission is aligned with the priorities of the faculty: “teaching is what we do” (Martin); “everything we do leads to teaching” (Lawrence); “teaching [is the most important when compared with service and scholarship]. I don’t know that anyone has ever said that to me, I just sense it from the institution” (Wendy); “teaching is number one; not that we don’t do scholarship, but it is definitely not at the same degree as at four-year institutions. Our most important role is as a teacher even though I am not sure SCC overtly emphasizes this

beyond lip service, maybe [laughs]" (Samuel). A close second priority is that of service. Faculty view their primary purpose clearly as serving the regional, rural population's career preparation needs and bridging the gap between high school and university. This strong attachment to the community and the institution is manifest in faculty relationships with prospective employers of their students, local industry representatives, and others. The faculty see themselves and their institution as more connected to the community than university faculty. There is a significant resistance on the part of faculty to SCC becoming more "university-like" because of the resulting bureaucracy. Finally, according to Eddie, "research is not discouraged here, but it is not required and it is not explicitly encouraged, either."

The implicit institution-wide priorities and expectations for faculty aligned with the faculty's own perceptions of the same meets Scott's (2001) normative pillar of institutions. While congruence between perception and behaviors supporting teaching as the primary focus of faculty and the messages received from the administration are evident, there are few formal elements present that regulate teaching as the priority. The result is that the regulative element that is imbedded in institutional theory is eliminated. The norms that prescribe faculty behaviors related to teaching provide outcomes and desired results for all members who subscribe to the roles of faculty.

The manner in which SCC faculty rank teaching, scholarship, and service is an example of differentiation, according to Martin and Meyerson's cultural (1988) paradigm. In this area, there is more consensus of the primary priority of faculty work, teaching, than with what constitutes the secondary and tertiary priorities. It appears that there is consensus on the order of priority awarded to service and scholarship by program. That is, faculty tend to

agree on the priorities of their work within their programs, not necessarily across programs. Subculture consensus, and some inconsistency in how faculty experience this aspect of their roles, is characteristic of the differentiation element of the paradigm.

Student Motivation

Student motivation is a significant issue for more than six of the faculty interviewed at SCC. For those faculty who expressed student motivation was a problem, the faculty felt it was their responsibility to mentor and encourage students to do well in their classes. None of the faculty mentioned that they were trained or that they participated in faculty development opportunities related to motivating students. In fact, there were few opportunities in general for faculty development. During the 2005-2006 academic year the upper administration mandated faculty participation in an off-site two-part retreat, 'the great teaching retreat.' While this initiative was referenced as an internal pressure in each interview, there was general agreement that it was the most beneficial activity hosted for faculty in a long time.

Service Orientation of Faculty

The SCC faculty maintain a strong service orientation toward the region that extends or transfers to their work with students. This is particularly the case for students for whom they provide real world experience and inculcate a strong sense of self-confidence so that they can transfer to a university or maintain employment in the workforce (Greta and Martin). Of the three priorities typically associated with faculty work, the participants interviewed at SCC did not have consensus regarding the priority of service and scholarship. Some noted strongly that service was the second most important aspect of their work: "from my standpoint, I think it is teaching 75% of the time. The other 25% of the time they really push service. I am here to teach and that is what I do. I serve on the committees they make

me serve on. I get out and do what they want me to do” (Greta); “teaching is first but it is linked to service, particularly as we have to create a close relationship to our service area” (David). Other faculty viewed scholarship, broadly defined, as the second priority: “teaching, then scholarship, not that we don’t do scholarship, but it is not done to the degree that university faculty do, and then service” (Samuel); “teaching is number one, then scholarship, then service” (Ross). Some of the SCC faculty interviewed maintained a different definition of service than is traditionally presented in academia. Service was viewed as encompassing helping students outside of classes, volunteering in the community, and participating on college committees. Even teaching itself was viewed as a form of service. In terms of allocation of time spent on the job, teaching was the greatest priority with most faculty teaching at least five three-hour classes a semester and some teaching as many as seven three-hour classes. The issue of priority of the professoriate is significant because it denotes the underlying culture of the faculty as well as the institutional culture, if there is congruence between the two (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Faculty Affiliation with Discipline and Scholarly Work

The community college faculty connection to their disciplines evolves from a practitioner angle, not the theoretical orientation as appears to be more common with university faculty (McGrath & Spear, 1991; Toma, 1997). While there does seem to be a wide range of activities that are defined by the SCC faculty as constituting scholarly work—teaching, publishing, attending and presenting at conferences, and membership in professional organizations—most faculty are in agreement that in general, they do little that merits the term scholarship, with the exception of teaching. As indicated earlier by one instructor, there is little expectation or time for faculty at SCC to conduct and publish

research; other faculty acknowledge this condition: “I don’t conduct formal research. I do research topics for my lessons and keep up-to-date on the news in my discipline. I’m not attending conferences these days. I keep up with my discipline by reading. Most of what is relevant to my profession is available online” (Pamela); “I do publish occasionally. Also, teaching in and of itself helps me to stay current. I do periodically read professional publications and wish I had more time to devote to that” (Lawrence); “I attend conferences, training seminars, and presentations. I try to stay current with publications but they are increasingly becoming overwhelming. Consequently, I have dropped some subscriptions to periodicals in an effort to keep pace with textbook and curriculum changes” (Ross); “we don’t teach the way university faculty do; I don’t conduct research. Ours is more from a practitioner’s standpoint and my role is to help students go to a four-year college. Our students are our resources” (Martin). Other faculty indicated that they attend professional conferences in their field. However, most faculty responses to the questions concerning the conduct of research generated a negative response. Teaching load, institutional focus and expectations, and the overwhelming increase in the amount of knowledge being produced were presented by the faculty as typical reasons for not conducting research.

Faculty Relationships with Students

More than ever, students have access to their instructors, even if that access comes in the form of virtual contact. One faculty member who teaches information technology projected that 95% of his out-of-class contact with students is by electronic mail: “I tell them [students] I check my email from 8:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night, so if they need to contact me or leave me a voice mail—I can check my voice mail through email as well—I am very accessible” (Bruce). In general, the faculty spend little time outside of class with

their students, which directly affects faculty culture: “About the only out of class contact other than them stopping by my office to talk or work with them is usually electronic—I web-enhance all of my seat-based classes with Blackboard and so they have all the information they need” (Bruce). While the earlier discussions on serving students being central to their mission raised the issue of student contact, most of the SCC faculty interviewed do not engage with their students beyond a perfunctory level outside of class. If there is contact, it usually relates to advising or working through course work issues. In this area, there is congruence between the faculty and their perspective on the institutional mission to teach students—helping students beyond the classroom is not a part of the formal mission although it could certainly be an informal expectation of faculty by the administration and by students.

Faculty Pressures

SCC faculty experience high job satisfaction and indicate that they are rewarded for their work. In several instances, faculty interviewed as part of this study indicated that they had no desire to be employed elsewhere, either at a different community college or other type of institution altogether. However, several areas of concern were raised as causing pressure or stress for the faculty.

Faculty teaching load is a concern for many of the faculty interviewed. Full-time faculty teach a minimum of five courses, while some teach as many as seven during the semester, for a total of 21 hours of time spent teaching per week. The heavy teaching load in addition to adherence to a mandated number of office hours for student contact was burdensome to more than half of the participants in this study. Additionally, two faculty members indicated the year-to-year contract as a pressure related to job security. Analyzed

through Scott's (1995) pillars of institutional theory, these aspects of the institution are regulative, designed to restrict behavior, create uniformity, and impose "rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities...[as a way to] inspect and review others' conformity to them, and as necessary, manipulate sanctions—rewards or punishments—in an attempt to influence future behavior" (p. 35).

Conclusion

The interviews of faculty employed at Southwestern Community College illuminate many of the elements of faculty culture in existence at this institution. While they are independent in many ways, the faculty's membership as part of this organization dictates that they conform to the expectations and norms present at the institution. Southwestern Community College's student-focused mission has been adopted and internalized by its faculty, with few exceptions. This level of consistency underscores an aspect of the culture that would be highly integrated according to Martin and Meyerson (1988). Internal consistency, organization-wide consensus, and denial of ambiguity, are common elements present in an integrated organizational culture. The same is true of other aspects of culture at SCC, including faculty priorities, orientation to service, and the perception of faculty pressures. The career aspirations of faculty at SCC and the pathways faculty took to become instructors at the institution were also consistently described by faculty in much the same way, although in the latter case, the pathways are actually different but faculty perceive them to be similar once they become members of the institution. The faculty at SCC exhibit elements of what McGrath and Spear (1991) refer to as a practitioners' culture as opposed to Becher's (1989) academic tribes, commonly found in universities. The nature of the

practitioners' culture and the academic tribes as applied to the faculty who participated in this study will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The results of the data gathered on university faculty follow. The same prompts employed in interviewing SCC faculty were used to interview WCU faculty. In cases where responses were significantly different from the previous faculty interviewed, new themes were identified and these themes are reflected in the major categories of interviews analyzed.

Western Carolina University

The faculty participants from the public, regional, comprehensive university were interviewed using the same protocols as those used to interview the community college faculty (Appendices D and E). In some instances, consistent with interviewing as a form of qualitative research, the participants' responses to interview prompts generated different themes from those identified by the researcher, or variations on themes discussed in the interviews with the community college faculty. The goal was to discuss faculty culture from the faculty members' perspectives—they were the primary mechanisms for gathering data.

Pathways to Becoming a Faculty Member

Two themes related to the pathway faculty used to become faculty members were identified from the interviews conducted. The first theme was the traditional path the faculty took to becoming a faculty member. Unlike community college faculty, who were often older, typically had more experience in a non-academic setting prior to embarking on an academic career, and who generally did not aspire to become a faculty member, more than two thirds of the public, regional, comprehensive university faculty pursued undergraduate then graduate degrees in the same or similar disciplines and sought university teaching positions upon earning a doctoral degree. Three of the faculty members followed a different

path to university teaching. The first, Hugh, had extensive experience in public school administration having served as a high school principal and assistant principal. He entered a doctoral program when his position as a principal became unsuccessful. Since he was enrolled at a Research I institution, he “felt an expectation that you would become a college professor at hiring time. So although I took a pay cut, I had my doctorate and applied to institutions that were similar in nature and where my record as a principal matched their needs.” The other two faculty members (Homer and Harry), who now also have administrative responsibilities, worked extensively in their disciplines before earning a doctoral degree and becoming university faculty. With the exception of two faculty members, the university faculty interviewed possessed a terminal degree, most of them earned at large, research institutions as would be expected given their roles in awarding doctorates.

The second theme that was identified related to faculty intent to teach at a public, regional, comprehensive university. More than three-fourths of the faculty who were interviewed indicated that institutional purpose and primary teaching function of faculty were most instrumental in attracting them to the university. In these cases, once they made a decision to become a teacher, the decision to apply to institutions that value and prioritize teaching was an active choice, resulting in the elimination of research-focused or doctoral institutions as viable employment options: “While I was in my graduate program I came to the realization that I wanted to be identified as a teacher who does research, not the other way around. I wanted to be rewarded for teaching and be at a place where students counted” (Homer); “for me, the emphasis had to be on teaching, that was far more important than a research agenda, the size of [the] institution or its vision” (Marie); and “I actively searched for a teaching college. My real love is teaching” (Maureen); “I knew I wasn’t a lifelong

researcher; it was serendipitous, really, ending up here. I began teaching and found that I loved it” (Jeff). In a few cases, faculty wanted the opportunity to teach and conduct research, without too much emphasis on research and a public, regional, comprehensive university was the most appropriate fit: “I always wanted to conduct research but was told I was a good teacher and I had to be coerced into teaching as a graduate student. Now, I am not comfortable in any public setting except teaching, which I started doing when I was a graduate student at a Research I institution. The focus on teaching has become very important to me” (Charlotte); “I want to excel in teaching and in research. I spent 10 years getting my bachelor’s degree and once I figured out that I didn’t want to teach in a high school, I considered being a university professor” (Keith). Only two faculty members indicated that institutional emphasis on teaching was not a consideration of employment for them; they simply applied for positions where the vacancies existed. Four of the faculty interviewed had prior teaching experience at a community college. They were most interested in teaching at a university because, as one member stated, “Teaching at WCU afforded me the opportunity to draw on the opportunities presented by my doctoral degree, such as teaching upper level courses in my discipline, and I also wanted to engage in research, which was not common at community colleges. The availability of the position and the institution’s location were also factors. Given my interests, WCU was a better fit for me” (Howard). In one instance, a faculty member considered teaching at a community college but he determined that his terminal degree was a barrier to his being hired; he was informed that he would be less likely to remain at a community college if he possessed a doctorate.

The pathways faculty at WCU used to enter the profession are in contrast to those encountered by SCC faculty, who typically entered as adjuncts, and following a long stint in

the practical application of their discipline. Rarely an accidental entry, as characterized the entry of the community college faculty, university faculty at this institution knew early on that they want to teach or conduct research at the college level, and enter higher education programs designed to lead them there.

Career Aspirations of Faculty

Homer, who is a part-time administrator with teaching responsibilities, expressed the following sentiments about his position “I am excited about my current split duties...I have the best of two worlds, teaching and administration. The jobs I have been offered have fed me professionally, but what drives most of us is a thirst for knowledge;” he hopes to maintain both aspects of his job. Another faculty member who maintains teaching and administrative responsibilities stated “I have no career aspirations beyond my current position, which is a position that allows me to remain focused on students and their needs. I have never actually applied for a position...and after 25 years at WCU, I am not exactly sure why I stayed after I was invited to interview here, but I m glad I did. I like the institution’s size, the pace and the area” (Harry). Six of the 18 faculty who were interviewed desire to remain full-time faculty and earn the rank of professor, not only for job security and increased pay, but also for the perceived academic credibility. Only three of the faculty aspire to enter administration as a department head, associate dean, or dean: “I would like to enter administration at a smaller college...you have to be pushy to be a good administrator and I am...it would be a better option than becoming a literary scholar, which I have no desire to become” (Hannah). “I would only seek an administrative position to do good [sic], not because of salary. I want to contribute and would probably be perfectly content to serve in a position related to faculty governance; I never get bored with teaching” (Jeff). A professor who also administers a non-

academic program, Philip views his roles as the best of all worlds, “I get to help other faculty provide students with hands-on or experiential learning experiences, application of knowledge and content, and [discover] connections in the community to integrate learning.” His administrative tasks provide him with another dimension of his own teaching where he can work with other faculty to expand his own knowledge base and engage with his subject on an application level. None of the faculty expressed any interest in actively seeking employment in any other position, in academic or non-academic settings. Four of the faculty acknowledged that they would assume an administrative post if asked, but noted that they were not seeking such a post. Three of the faculty interviewed had previous experience as a department head, one at WCU, and none of them desired to be employed in that capacity again. A noteworthy observation is that all except one faculty member were committed to remaining at WCU in spite of the internal pressures and other factors evident at the institution.

Faculty Perception of Institutional Mission

The faculty interviewed at Western Carolina University described the institutional mission as multifaceted and ill-defined as compared to the SCC faculty who described their institutional mission as well-defined. WCU faculty espoused several institutional missions, often combining an official version of the mission and their own internalized view of the mission. They also clearly differentiated the primary missions of public, regional, comprehensive universities from those of other types of higher education institutions, in general, and noted the importance of regional comprehensive institutions’ roles in educating a broad cross-section of students and serving the economic and educational needs of the region. Moreover, WCU faculty acknowledged that teaching students is their primary

purpose and the focus of their teaching is to prepare educated citizens who contribute to society: “our mission is to serve our region by creating educated citizens; our primary mission is accomplished with our emphasis on teaching, which relates to our classification as a public comprehensive university. We do serve our students well and they are our primary focus” (Maureen); “our mission is to serve students, our community, and the region. We prepare students for citizenship and professional endeavors” (Howard); “well, it’s not vocational training, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t applied. We need to create literate, conscious, worldly people (Norman). “Our mission is based on our history. As a regional university, we were fostered by community and valued teachers and teaching. We have a regional focus, generally, and we produce informed citizens for our area. The political changes and developments have created difficulties in redefining our mission. We have a new mission now” (Hannah).

Western Carolina University creates engaged learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research and service through residential, distance education and international experiences. The university focuses its academic programs, educational outreach, research and creative activities, and cultural opportunities to improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in the region, state and nation. (Western Carolina University, 2006b)

More recently, during the last five years, two official reviews of WCU’s mission have occurred and more than two thirds of the faculty interviewed expressed some confusion or ambiguity about the supporting missions of the institution: “I’m not quite sure what it is; that is a problem. There is not a good sense of where we are going, or what our vision is. It was

much clearer years ago, and we have more programs now, which erodes our role” (Marie). “While our primary mission is teaching, it’s not that simple. From my department’s perspective, engagement is critical. We educate those in the region and help to establish industry. We provide graduates and offer our facilities” (Simon). “I don’t know what our mission is, formally. I think we provide a service to our students who want to learn how to think and solve problems” (Keith). “When I was first hired [in 1997] I thought our mission was comprehensive, that is, to offer degrees in a variety of programs; more than simply a checklist of courses. A secondary or supporting mission was regional engagement. A more nuanced view of our mission now comes from my work with faculty senate, our SACS accreditation process, and my work in the state and region. My view of our mission is definitely shaped by my discipline and my administrative work” (Philip). Only one faculty member expressed no value or benefits to understanding the mission. He described the mission as being primarily the chancellor’s domain (retention and growth of student enrollment) and espoused that the mission had no direct or indirect bearing on his role as a faculty member: “retention and growth are important but I guess our shared mission is to educate students and provide tools for their success. I don’t think the mission affects my job. My role as a faculty member is a miniscule part of that mission. I need to develop expertise in my field and teach my students. I would do that and be a good citizen of the institution, wherever I was” (Kevin).

The primary mission of WCU is generally understood by its faculty with a few exceptions, reflecting a level of consistency referred to as differentiation in organizational culture by Martin and Meyerson (1988). This example of differentiation reflects “consensus within the [faculty] subculture,” which is an important element of the paradigm. The level of

understanding applied to the primary mission on the part of faculty lacks the “organization-wide consensus” and “denial of ambiguity” (Martin & Meyerson, 1988, p. 117) necessary for complete integration of organizational culture, and it also is devoid of the lack of clarity, dissensus, or broad confusion evident in the paradigm Martin and Meyerson (1988) refer to as ambiguity of organizational culture. Faculty understanding and agreement of the secondary missions of WCU were less differentiated and more ambiguous; the faculty tended to be more confused about the supporting missions of WCU. The faculty’s understanding and explication of WCU’s primary mission reflects a normative approach to institutional culture as described by Scott (1995): “the normative approach to institutions emphasizes how values and normative frameworks structure choices” (p. 38). In this case, faculty perceptions of the mission affect their daily work as described.

The WCU faculty who acknowledged that the institution’s mission affected their roles as faculty related the impact of the mission on the type of students who enroll, the general nature of faculty work, and the allocation of resources. At least two faculty members (Simon and Norman) indicated that the academic programs that were heavily involved in regional and economic development received greater attention and institutional priority (in the form of recognition and funding) than did departments that provided instruction in traditional subjects such as the liberal arts. The level of consistency between faculty impressions of the mission and the mission’s impact on their work was evident in all except one faculty member who proposed no relationship between them: “I don’t think the mission affects my job. I would do that [develop expertise in my field and teach my students] and be a good citizen of the institution, wherever I was” (Kevin). Other faculty expressed different thoughts on the relationship between institutional mission and the nature of their work: “the

mission's focus on teaching is congruent with this aspect of my work because it means I don't spend time chasing other things. I use my previous job experiences in the real world in my teaching; it lines up very closely with my background and my goals. The job description for this faculty position was exactly lined up with my background—a perfect match”

(Simon); “look around and see the changes in society reflected on our campus” (Homer).

Not all the faculty understood the secondary or supporting mission of WCU in the same way. A tendency toward disagreement or confusion over the university-espoused missions was evident in nine of the faculty interviewed and exemplified in the following: “we have a problem with balance with respect to our mission. We send mixed signals to our constituents, faculty, students, etcetera, and we need the leadership to distinguish us as a university...our institutional mission has a tremendous impact on my performance as a faculty member. Yet we have strategic plans that are supposed to support our mission and guide us as an institution, and they don't match up. We're just shooting in the dark as compared to one of our sister institutions that I visited very recently. It is very clear what their mission is and everybody is on board. We lack focus” (Harry); “[long pause]... I think we got it half right; our mission is to reach out to students who would not do well at large research institutions and provide them with an education equal to that provided by a large research university. But we also have a mission or obligation to provide assistance to the community in the form of research. There is a disconnect between our mission and what we say to faculty. Watching my colleagues' passion shows me the mission. It's teaching students” (Charlotte). The remaining faculty identify the importance of institutional mission insofar as it affects their course objectives and the preparation level and background of their students. “Institutional mission profoundly affects my role as a faculty member. Having

been trained at a research I university and having worked at a community college, and now being at a comprehensive four year university, I am very aware that mission affects how we spend our time, what kinds of students we attract, etcetera. Our mission and the resulting reward system have immense influence on our lives and work” (Howard). Jeff connects his course objectives to the departmental, college, and university missions, particularly the aspects of the missions dealing with economic and regional development. He interprets this merging of missions with instructional responsibilities as necessary to faculty roles. George connects the direct result of an institutional mission for a public, regional, comprehensive university to increasing class preparation time, and building relationships with students: “our experiences [as faculty] would be vastly different at a research I institution and not as good in terms of relationships with students.” The discussion with faculty about the university’s mission reflects the complexity of faculty understanding about the institution and its priorities.

Faculty Priorities

Faculty at WCU identified teaching, scholarship and research, and university or community service as important aspects of their work. However, there was little consensus in how these activities are prioritized on individual or institutional levels. The differing views on their priorities as faculty members exemplifies misalignment of a cultural value that is espoused at WCU. “Good teaching at WCU is critical, even though the emphasis on that as our priority is changing. We need to be effective with students...engaging teachers...we are largely a teaching institution and very few faculty are putting out a lot of research. I don’t know outside of my department, but I have a clear sense of where I stand—from administrators” (Norman); “teaching is the most evident and prioritized. Service and

scholarship are pretty equal although sometimes the order can be flipped. It is consistent with our mission and 50% of the tenure decision should be based on teaching” (Hugh); “teaching, scholarship, then service—in that order. Seventy percent of my job should be striving for excellence in teaching. Twenty to twenty-five percent should be about service, including committee work. My department head and other colleagues steered me in this direction and our tenure documents outline this understanding at department and college levels” (Keith). “Teaching continues to be a priority at WCU in the TPR [tenure, promotion and reappointment] process at all levels. In my experience, it is very clear that the teaching has to be good. Research is critical, too, and at one time it was valued too highly, but when it reinforces our teaching and helps students, well, that is the optimum” (Marie). According to other faculty interviewed, the commitment to teaching as the priority was clear: “teaching is definitely number one. We hear it repeatedly and I place my own priority on my teaching – the same commitment. I also hear it from my department head, dean, and the upper administration” (Simon). Not only is the message communicated verbally, but there is evidence that it is communicated in other ways as well: “people believe what they see, not what they hear. Our awards, TPR documents, etcetera, support the notion of teaching as the priority for faculty. The historical perspective of the institution also underscores it—we were established as a teaching college. Clearly, teaching, then scholarly work, then service. We’re making a difference with our new initiatives with faculty, but 10% or fewer are really doing research. That has been an area of decline” (Harry).

Based on the interviews conducted, six faculty members considered the institutional messages about how faculty should structure their time to be in direct conflict with departmental and college instructions. According to at least three faculty members, this

conflict was compounded by a recent initiative to review the tenure, promotion, and reappointment process. “Teaching matters at WCU. Ineffective teachers have a difficult time, not just in my discipline. There are lots of conversations about teaching, but that said, research is required for tenure. Publishing is becoming more difficult and opportunities to publish in refereed journals are fewer; the minimum standard for tenure is a book. Teaching at an acceptable level is ok. Service is the short leg of the stool, although it is important and we create ways to recognize and support it. But for teaching, we have multiple awards and rewards, and we bolstered support of the faculty center to underscore that” (Philip). “We are in a state of flux. There is strong resistance on the part of faculty toward research as priority one. But there is a push from our provost and our chancellor to prioritize research as number one. This is difficult. The order should be teaching, then service, then scholarship, although within my discipline research or scholarship is prioritized as number one. It makes for an interesting quandary and I think we should create an expectation to do both” (Keith). “Our official guidelines state teaching as the priority for faculty, but the reality is research because it is most of the deciding factor. And service, though not apparently valued is still required. We send mixed messages to faculty and there’s a disconnect between what the administration says and what departments do. Also, different standards exist for different departments. The burden of service falls unequally on folks who get tenured but not promoted. I think this unrealism is more typical of SCU’s [state comprehensive universities] rather than liberal arts colleges or doctoral granting institutions. Are we more conflicted? Yes, I think so. But we’re not unique in that way” (Charlotte). “We espouse teaching but scholarship is just as important, and we pay lip service to service. The messages are communicated from the provost and [from] the chancellor who talks about quality teaching. It clearly used to be a

stronger message” (George). “I think scholarship is the least important although we are making an effort to change that, which is creating ire and frustration. Teaching is number one. All want to believe that but others think it is really service. We talk about our work when we recruit new faculty. I think scholarship is an excuse to bring in a person who’s a great teacher” says Hannah, who continues that while tenure track faculty are pressured to do service, it really is not as important as it is portrayed to be. She also acknowledges that there is a conflict in faculty to do what they are prompted to do versus to do what they believe they should ethically do. Finally, Jeff proposes, “I think it is first publish—it’s a bit overemphasized but that is the reality for a large percentage of comprehensives, then second is teach, as it should be, and it is often spelled out in our missions, and third is service, which is critical, but done to a lesser degree at WCU than other institutions.”

Scott (1995, p. 40) speaks to the institutional benefits of shared goals and common definitions of acceptable behaviors as contributing to a stable organization. While the evidence supporting a normative approach to faculty priorities is not overwhelming, it is sufficient to draw the conclusion that faculty, at least individually, if not collectively, internalize and act on their impression of the university’s mission. This internalization is manifested in their daily work. For example, all of the faculty interviewed, except for the full-time visiting instructor and one of the four faculty members with administrative duties, spent several hours weekly on research, as opposed to SCC faculty who rarely spend time on research.

Faculty and Teaching

Faculty at WCU consistently described the rewards from teaching students in the same way. They are mentally stimulated and challenged by their students and used words

such as “connection” and “passion” to describe their experiences in the classroom: “I really like being in front of a class and getting excited about teaching. When they get it and make the connections and apply knowledge, it helps me to learn as well” (Norman); “my best times are when students get excited about their own learning and see it as an opportunity rather than a graduation requirement” (Philip); “my most meaningful experiences in the classroom come from connecting with students and sharing my love of ideas...connecting with like-minded folks” (Hugh); “there are different categories of students—many of whom are touched and shaped by me. I feel honored to help prepare young minds...to contribute to society...they stimulate me. I am personally and professionally committed to the social equity mission, but I am quite surprised at the number of students who seem disengaged in their learning and in their lives in general. I really enjoy a good debate with students; you know, when they disagree with me” (Homer). Three of the faculty interviewed view teaching as a panacea for the pressures associated with university life: “I really do love the classroom. Frustrated? Teach a class! Even if it’s not a good class, there is something about watching a group do something that you know is good. I love giving exams, watching them wrack their brains—it’s incredibly energizing” (Hannah); “It’s what I do! We were encouraged to not apply for a heavy teaching load [when in graduate school and applying for teaching positions]. It is an avocation; the stress and frustration is not commensurate with the pay. It is more of a calling than anything else, like music. It has to be something that you are” (Keith); “it’s intrinsic. I look for opportunities to be a part of [their] goals and aspirations. It’s just that deep for me. I don’t see that as much in my colleagues. Their passion for teaching seems to be gone” (Harry).

All of the full-time instructional faculty interviewed teach a minimum of three courses during each of the fall and spring semesters, and only two faculty taught courses during the summer term, a major distinction with full-time community college faculty who typically teach at least five courses during the fall and spring semesters and teach at least two or three courses during the summer term. Faculty at WCU have the option of teaching during the summer term, which is a difference with SCC faculty who are expected to teach during the summer.

Faculty Pressures

The pressures encountered by faculty at WCU typically derive from issues related to faculty priorities, that is, the activities in which they spend their time at work, and institutional mission, or the activities emphasized on an institutional level. Generally, the former is manifested in pressures internal to the university and the latter precipitates external pressures. One interviewee indicated he would not be at WCU next year, and the remaining participants, who planned to remain in the same positions, discussed a variety of internal and external pressures that impact their lives at the university and the effect of those pressures on faculty culture.

Internal Pressures

There was universal agreement from faculty that the pressures related to job security, reappointment, tenure, and promotion, caused significant stress, particularly for the junior faculty: “in my early years, primarily at another institution, it was difficult to understand the requirements for tenure. I had so many advisees, contact hours, and teaching loads, it was confusing. There are also some major differences in what is expected and what counts as service. Additionally, research and scholarship (publications) are important, especially given

our mission as a state, comprehensive university. In order to be a good faculty member, you have to work a lot of weekends” (Maureen); “Now we have a majority of faculty who are untenured and the tenure process...that is very stressful. Additionally, because of our growth in students, we have increased the number of faculty and our facilities, and we are restructuring our colleges and programs and all of this causes us to experience more stress. Folks are just trying to fit in and keep up with the changes” (Philip). Charlotte discussed the tenure, promotion and reappointment process as being “problematic, frightening and fraught with tension,” and proposed that the most overwhelming pressure was the need to contribute service, to the department, college, university, and the community. She characterized the pressure as resulting in burnout and being predicated on the sheer volume of service that was expected of faculty, particularly tenured faculty, and the lack of real or perceived value associated with the service. Reference to internal stress as self-inflicted was a common theme in approximately 50% of the participants. Additionally, one faculty member noted the inherent conflict between quantity (of students and courses offered) and quality (of programs and services offered) and the position of faculty in attempting to meet the demands of both aspects of institutional life.

External Pressures

Three faculty members discussed the need for balance to help combat the pressures associated with teaching at a public, regional, comprehensive university, linking the primary causes of faculty pressures to an institutional mission that was broad and undefined. According to Philip, “it is up to each individual to create balance but we need to offer more support to find balance. Doctoral institutions don’t promote service [as an expectation for prospective faculty] as they prepare doctoral students to become faculty members and

researchers. In our teaching at an SCU [State Comprehensive University] we have a tremendous variety of students, programs, and other activities. I think that is the distinction between SCU's and others. A balancing act is far more typical in an SCU than in other institutions;" and "my workload is my greatest stress. I have much freedom in my job, but with that freedom comes responsibility. I engage in too many activities, which are self-imposed. The most significant pressures exist on the part of my own decision-making. You have less choice at community colleges where the demands for institutional service are huge" (Howard). Another faculty member indicated the impact of market conditions on faculty life: "we surrender to market pressures and we are market driven. We feel that we have to apologize for being anthropologists/sociologists. In some ways, the liberal arts are being forced out in favor of the applied professions. Then, corporate or private interests dictate the institutions and we lose sight of the value of a well-rounded individual. I think that as an organization we need to be responsive to the market, but we also need to remain true to our primary mission" (Norman). The trend toward reliance on market forces overriding social values for higher education, commonly known as neo-liberalism, is more reflective of the literature on community colleges than the limited scholarship available on public comprehensive universities (Levin, 2001; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006). Increasingly, however, frameworks such as globalization and entrepreneurialism are being applied to the post secondary education arena and the inevitable comparisons to the corporate world are becoming more common (Bok, 2003; Rhoades, 1998; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

In conjunction with the perception that market conditions are affecting institutional operations is the concern on the part of at least three faculty members interviewed that the

autonomy of faculty is being eroded by state legislators, boards of trustees, or the university system office, and accrediting agencies—groups which are viewed as being external to the institution by faculty: “there is a strange suspicion of faculty by laypeople and legislators who subscribe to a general notion that faculty need reigning in” stated Hugh. He views that suspicion as an external pressure because it drives the need for faculty to have more restrictions placed on their work. A case in point is post tenure review which he suggests was derived from that suspicion. Howard espouses a similar viewpoint “to a degree, external accrediting agencies, profession-affiliated organizations and system-level initiatives affect our positions, funding, and other reward systems.” Homer proposes a similar concern with service and engagement activities that are institutional priorities but that often conflict with the time needed to meet the expectations for publishing and service for his professional affiliations.

Four faculty characterized a combination of personal issues as pressures external to the institution. Trailing spouses, the changing demography of faculty (more females in professorships with gender-related issues), the absence of social support networks, the area growth and the geographic limitations of WCU’s location, were cited as causes of stress for individual faculty.

Faculty Relationships with Students

Faculty characterized the nature of their relationships with students in a variety of ways. There is no single model for how they interact with their students either individually or collectively and there is little university guidance in this area. “I want my students to leave with two things, one, to understand that I have passion for my subject, and two, to realize that I care deeply about them. I am hard on them with some things and easy on others” (Keith);

“my students have changed over the years. I see more sense of entitlement and anger in them now than I did before and their academic performance has changed, too. Grade distributions now show more middle of the road. Students are angrier at their C’s and below. They are less prepared than before. Faculty are angry that they [students] don’t have the tools. And I am seeing more behavior problems than before. They tend to be more rude, disruptive, and cell phones are a problem. There’s just more immaturity and hostility, I think. There is no significant difference in the grades of the first year students but more in upper level courses; students aren’t synthesizing as they should. I think their behaviors are impacting on their learning” (Charlotte). Faculty out-of-class contact with students is minimal, with the majority of faculty interviewed indicating that they only spent a few (three to four on average) hours per week with students beyond class time. Unlike in the community college, there is no mandatory number of office hours for faculty at WCU, and faculty typically post between five and eight hours per week for office hours, much of which does not actually involve meeting with students. However, many faculty acknowledge their relationships with students as a central focus of their lives: “My relationships with my students are central to my job. That is why I teach” (Marie). “I try to connect with my students although I don’t want to be their counselor. I spend a lot of time with my colleagues talking about students and how to help them succeed in our classes” (Simon).

The nature of the relationship between faculty and their students at WCU is an example of the cognitive pillar of Scott’s (1995) institutional theory. Unlike the results of an examination of faculty beliefs and practices relating to institutional mission, or their experiences with the tenure, promotion, and reappointment processes, which demonstrate the normative and regulative aspects of Scott’s institutionalism, respectively, faculty

relationships with their students are much more reflective of the individual faculty member's interests. According to Scott (1995), "The cognitive framework stresses the importance of social identities: our conceptions of who we are and what ways of action make sense for us in a given situation" (p. 44). He espouses that adhering to and accepting informally acknowledged behaviors constitute the basis of legitimacy for this element of institutionalism; it is conceptually and culturally understood by the members. While the references to the importance of students in the academic lives of the faculty were numerous, that status was primarily manifested in interactions that occurred during classes. That is, faculty expressed strong commitments to spending time with their students and espoused student development and learning as being paramount in their vocation. The evidence presented in the form of numbers of office hours devoted to student contact, extracurricular activities involvement, or other student-focused activities, however, did not support their assertions to the degree verbalized. They clearly were concerned about student performance in their classes, even spending significant time with colleagues in discussion about teaching techniques and individual students, but their interactions with students outside of classes were minimal.

Relationships with Other Faculty

The relationships between an organization's members form the core of the culture of that organization. In higher education, the faculty make up a significant subculture in the institution and the nature of their interrelationships illuminates the organizational culture. In the case of WCU faculty, there are few formal opportunities for meeting either by individual department or across departments. Departmental faculty meetings are held as often as once every two weeks, as infrequently as once per semester, and three times per semester on

average, and they last anywhere from 30 minutes to four hours. Typically, their agendas include discussions about the curriculum (current and future), personnel (recruitment of new faculty, annual faculty evaluation process, and tenure, promotion and reappointment procedures), course scheduling, teaching methodology, budgets, and student advisement. Most communication between faculty and between faculty and department heads occurs as email messages and at least half of the faculty interviewed acknowledged a need for more frequent meetings.

Most faculty are members of committees at the college and/or university level and they typically have a focused agenda or primary purpose which dictates the discussion when they meet. There is no established meeting schedule for these other committees; they generally meet as needed.

Two faculty members confessed to feeling disenfranchised and unempowered; they intended to be involved in decision-making and desired a collegial relationship with their peers but increasingly feel isolated. One example, “My department is highly political, even though and maybe partly because it is small. Committee meetings about faculty reappointment are pretty smooth but the ones dealing with tenure and promotion are contentious. I would go as far as to say our department is dysfunctional and there is almost no contact [with colleagues in her department] outside of work” (Charlotte). Contrasted with this view is that of Maureen who stated, “Our team meetings consist of the five members of our team and we are a close-knit group. We work as a team and we socialize outside of work at least once a week.” The exception for Charlotte and for the other faculty who have limited contact with peers is the relationship they build with other faculty who have children—a parents’ subculture. That has become an informal avenue that fosters contact with colleagues

outside of work and their discussions center on their children's activities, as well as university initiatives and community happenings.

Informal conversations with other faculty within and outside of the department usually take place in the hallways or at the U [University] Club, for those who are members. Discussions usually center on university politics, current initiatives, and research interests: "recently, we have been talking about the college restructuring, the direction of the university, the three-legged stool [teaching, service and scholarship], administrative management issues, the chancellor and his issues, students, etcetera. It is so hard not to talk shop" (Hannah). Of the faculty members who were interviewed, approximately eight belong to the U Club, with two being very active and either currently or previously holding an office in the organization. The U Club meets weekly on Friday evenings on campus and membership is open to all faculty and staff at WCU. There are no other formal social activities on campus for faculty and staff that meet regularly.

Conclusion

The various elements of faculty culture at Western Carolina University can be characterized using several of Scott's (1995) pillars of institutions and by applying the cultural matrix of Martin and Meyerson (1988). Faculty understanding of the institutional mission and its impact on their roles would be classified as differentiated and ambiguous by Martin and Meyerson (1988). Faculty have consensus and some inconsistency within their subculture about the primary mission of WCU, which leads to a differentiated paradigm related to primary mission. However, there is significant inconsistency and lack of clarity or confusion on the part of faculty regarding the supporting or secondary missions of the institution, which implies an ambiguous paradigm. Equally ambiguous was the understanding

faculty espoused toward their priorities. While all faculty interviewed expressed the importance of scholarship, teaching, and service, there was little consensus in how these activities were prioritized by the institution. Teaching as the primary focus was espoused by several faculty members but others indicated that scholarship was most important according to university expectations.

Faculty pathways to becoming a faculty member at a regional, comprehensive university were similarly traditional. The same is true of faculty aspirations. In general, faculty expressed no intent to seek other positions, either at WCU or elsewhere, which contributes to a stable work environment and common understanding among the members of the organization about the cultural symbols and rituals that affect the daily lives of the members. Some aspects of faculty work at WCU can be characterized as regulative, according to Scott's (1995) pillars of institutions. For example, the annual faculty evaluation and tenure, promotion and reappointment processes would fall in this category. Both processes are designed to "constrain and regularize behavior, [and involve] rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities" (p. 35).

The following chapter is a discussion of the major findings of this study, and includes implications for practice as well as recommendations for further research on faculty culture in public, regional, comprehensive universities and community colleges.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this chapter are to synthesize the major themes and ideas gleaned from the faculty participants in this study, compare the similarities and differences between faculty culture in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university, present recommendations for future research on faculty culture, and examine potential implications for practice. The participants I interviewed were willing to discuss their work as faculty and share insights that contribute to this research investigation as part of the body of literature on faculty culture. As well, the results of this study should add to the knowledge base on community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities in general.

It has been suggested by Levin et al. (2006), Lindholm, (2003), and Mintzberg (1983), among others, that organizations and their primary employees, in the case of the current study, faculty and the institutions in which they work, share identities. That is, they serve or perform their primary purposes interdependently, and these actions impact institutional and faculty culture. The shared nature of faculty and institutional identities is apparent in the two institutions that were the sites of this study. This interdependence between faculty and institutional identity is clearly evident in the way faculty at both institutions embrace institutional mission: the community college faculty internalized the primary mission of the institution to a greater degree than did the faculty at the public, regional, comprehensive university. Henderson (2007) and Clark (1987) discuss the confusion over the mission faculty in state comprehensive universities commonly experience, which can affect institutional culture. While there was evidence of separate cultures at institutional as well as faculty levels at both institutions, the existing faculty cultures were

not highly oppositional (Levin et al., 2006) to the institutional culture; that is, subgroups of faculty did not coalesce in informal protest against institutional administrators or initiatives.

Overview of the Study

This study is an exploration of faculty culture in existence at a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university, both located in rural western North Carolina. Community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities share common traits including specific characteristics of their missions (open access or low/moderate selectivity and social equity, regional and local emphases, comprehensive programming, and teaching emphasis) and this study was designed to illuminate some of the similarities as well as some of the differences that exist between the faculty at the two types of institutions. Analyzed through the experiences of the faculty and described in their own words, this investigation reveals faculty perceptions of their professional lives including their relationships with other faculty and with administrators, interactions with students, work pressures, career aspirations, previous experiences, and work priorities. The study also examined the impressions faculty hold about institutional mission and their work at a community college and at a public, regional, comprehensive university, generally. The paucity of research available on faculty culture in general, and public, regional, comprehensive universities in particular, and my own experiences at a comprehensive university, led to my motivation to study this population. This study was guided by the following questions about faculty culture.

1. Does faculty culture in a community college differ from faculty culture in a public, regional, comprehensive university, and if so, in what ways?

2. In what ways are faculty cultures in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university similar?
3. How does institutional mission affect faculty culture in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university?

An overview of the tenets of culture theory provided a context for the study.

Institutional and neo-institutional theories developed by Scott (1995) and derived from earlier organizational theory models provided the theoretical framework. Martin and Meyerson's (1988) cultural paradigm was also used to analyze the information gathered from the interviews conducted.

The study employed an interpretive, ethnographic, qualitative research design, with interviews used as the primary tool to gather data. The participants were 37 teaching faculty at two research sites who were recruited by personal contact. The limiting of the participants to a sample of the population hindered identification of common cultural themes in some areas. In addition, the use of purposeful sampling and a qualitative research design prevented the statistical generalization of the results. A discussion of the major findings of the study, a comparison of the faculty cultures at both institutions, and the implications for future research follow.

Institutional Mission and Faculty Culture

Institutional mission and purpose are clearly articulated and embraced by faculty, particularly at the community college, and especially in light of the changing academic landscape affecting higher education in the twenty-first century. The social equity principles of open access, low selectivity, and affordability are prized by faculty at Southwestern Community College (SCC) and to a lesser degree by faculty at Western Carolina University

(WCU). SCC faculty maintain a clear understanding of the institution's role in economic development, and the relationship between SCC and the local community is a strong one as exemplified by the significant faculty involvement with local industries and organizations. While WCU faculty are engaged with external constituencies, their boundaries are much wider than those of the faculty at the community college: WCU faculty view and act within their service area on more regional, state, and national levels. Faculty at both institutions continue to espouse the ideals on which the institutions at which they are employed were founded: the transfer commitment, open access, vocational and technical preparation, remedial education, and community or cultural opportunities at SCC, and open access to regional students, comprehensive programs, and an emphasis on teaching at WCU.

For most of the faculty interviewed, their action of teaching at a community college or a public, regional, comprehensive university was influential in affecting several aspects of their work life and the culture on which that work life was based. Indeed, the current study exemplifies the existence of a complementary element to faculty culture and institutional context; one affects the other, and vice versa, to a significantly greater degree than presented in the higher education literature. Studying cultures independently of context creates a gap in interpreting the results of any study. The cultural paradigm most associated with faculty perception and involvement of institutional mission at SCC is integration (Martin & Meyerson, 1988). The cultural paradigm most associated with faculty perception of and involvement in institutional mission at WCU is ambiguity (Martin & Meyerson, 1988).

Institutions that place a priority on teaching and on serving students tend to support faculty in advancing their missions and this was the case at WCU and at SCC. Faculty clearly spend much of their workdays teaching or planning to teach and institutional support

of teaching is evident in the faculty development activities and recognition awards sponsored by WCU and SCC. Even at WCU, where the institutional mission includes research and service to the region and state, and faculty job security is contingent on scholarly activity (as well as institutional and community service and teaching), faculty indicated that they did not devote nearly enough time to scholarly activity, often because of the responsibilities associated with teaching. Additionally, faculty referred to an inconsistency in how the institution recommends that faculty should prioritize their time at WCU. While the institutional missions and rhetoric stressed teaching as the most important activity, there were strong contradictions from faculty who expressed confusion over what was expected of them.

A conflict between fulfilling an institutional charge to serve the local constituents, as in the case of WCU establishing doctoral programs to serve the population of western North Carolina (they were not offered before 1995), and maintaining a traditional mission as a public, regional, comprehensive university that does not typically offer doctoral degrees, fosters and exemplifies the ambiguity faculty experience. The resulting tension from serving the local population and maintaining its pre-determined institutional status is reflected in the experiences and culture of its faculty. In the case of WCU, faculty expressions about the direction of the institution were mixed, with some faculty welcoming the changes occurring and others expressing a desire to maintain the status quo. While faculty at SCC experience with the traditional primary mission of SCC results in integration, they are experiencing some ambiguity about recent initiatives to strengthen secondary missions. Tension between the traditional institutional mission (open access and inclusiveness) and calls for improved institutional stature (based on academic rigor and institutional ranking) are somewhat conflicting and result in faculty ambiguity at SCC.

Faculty ambiguity regarding roles and responsibilities derives from institutional imperatives as well as individual experiences and interpretations about the nature of faculty work and was more evident in the university faculty than those employed at the community college. According to Martin and Meyerson's (1988) cultural paradigm, acknowledging ambiguity in institutional mission and faculty roles results in lack of clarity, confusion, and dissensus among the members of the faculty, factors which were exemplified in the university faculty. As public institutions become more affected by global economies and adopt broader missions, we can anticipate an increase in the ambiguity experienced by faculty.

Faculty at both institutions indicated that the institutional emphasis on students and teaching led them to spend significant time in meetings talking about students and the curriculum, and less time writing to publish or securing grants, as would be more common at a different type of institution of higher education, such as a research university. Related to the emphasis upon students, faculty understand the open access concept that underscores the institutions' missions and its impact on the type of students who enroll at the institution. Student diversity in age, gender, socioeconomic status, range of academic ability, and ethnic background directly affect the nature of faculty work at both institutions, although student motivation and academic ability were greater issues for community college faculty. Faculty at both institutions also expressed the central role students played in their daily lives; however, their involvement with students existed primarily during classes and not outside of the classroom to a large degree. While a few faculty members referenced the external environment and its impact on their work lives, it is surprising that more faculty did not directly attribute the political, social, economic, technological, and historical conditions of

society as affecting their professional lives. It is possible that the rural location of the research sites may explain this apparent lack of impact since there is an insular quality to the towns located in the mountains of western North Carolina. Individual references to trailing spouses, “interference” by system administrators and politicians, confusion and demands associated with the tenure, promotion and reappointment processes, and administrators’ lack of institutional vision by university faculty, and local industry demands, year-to-year contracts, expectations for student recruiting, and heavy teaching loads by community college faculty are examples of pressures the faculty experience, which have an indirect relationship to institutional mission and affect their working lives.

Similarities between Faculty and Faculty Cultures

The faculty participants in this study shared common beliefs about the nature of the external influences that affect their culture. Recent trends such as an increasing reliance on technology, an emphasis on the tolerance and acceptance of population diversity, and changing global economics were highlighted by faculty at both institutions as having an impact on the quality of their work lives. While the institutions in this study were located in a rural area with a homogenous population, and consequently reflect minimal diversity in both the student body and cadre of faculty, the rural and remote location contributes to the reliance of faculty and students on technology and the impact of global economics on this region as a result, for example, of changing modes of production and job loss. As well, rising costs for basic services and decreasing financial support from state government continue to plague public institutions of higher education and this causes some frustration on the part of faculty.

Faculty clearly speak the same language at SCC and at WCU. That is, the descriptions of accepted beliefs, symbols, behaviors, and practices at their respective institutions were common among members of both groups of faculty much of the time. In addition, this unified voice extends to their impressions of the nature of their work. This cultural conformity forms the basis for much of the experiences of faculty. Given the varied and diverse backgrounds and histories of the faculty interviewed, we must assume that faculty did not arrive at the institution with common experiences. Yet particularly at the community college, faculty individuality is often superseded by group views, suggesting that factors other than faculty experiences are responsible for the cultural conformity. Arguably, institutional factors related to cultural assimilation may account for this conformity and these factors are worthy of additional exploration.

The career aspirations of faculty who were interviewed for this study were similar. More than 90% of the faculty intend to remain as teaching faculty rather than change professions, even as far as changing to another career within the field of academia; and typically, the faculty expressed strong intentions to remain at the institution where they are currently employed. This finding is in some contrast with Trice and Beyer's (1993) characterization of cultures as dynamic (constantly changing in nature and membership) and highly susceptible to external influences. It is clear that the institutions react to legislative mandates, local population growth, and market conditions, but in general, few faculty at either institution alluded to major changes in their daily professional lives as a result of these or other external factors. In fact, most faculty interviewed maintained that the larger issues of institutional concerns did not affect them as significantly as we would expect. Career aspiration may be linked to job satisfaction, which was raised by several community college

faculty as particularly high for them. More research is needed in this area before we can draw any conclusions about the career aspirations and job satisfaction levels of faculty. The faculty at WCU also indicated that achieving tenure and promotion were aspirational goals; but this was not the case at SCC in that these objectives are not part of the faculty culture at community colleges.

Faculty rewards from teaching were similar for the participants at both institutions. Significant time spent preparing for classes, frequent discussions with colleagues about teaching, and altering instructional plans to accommodate student needs underscored the emphasis faculty identified as making a difference in the lives of their students. The faculty at both institutions used common descriptions of the rewards they encountered from teaching students. Even though academic abilities of students enrolled at the two institutions varied, faculty derived similar benefits from their work with students, which is not surprising given the respective natures of the institutional missions of public, regional, comprehensive universities and community colleges. Faculty who seek teaching positions at these institutions expect and desire the rewards associated with teaching students, and these expectations exemplify cultural alignment—institutional and faculty cultures that support teaching as an important aspect of the university or college.

Differences between Faculty and Faculty Cultures

Faculty perceptions about their students, specifically their academic abilities and their motivation levels, reflected significant differences between the two populations. Community college faculty described their students as capable, but possessing personal stressors characteristic of the community college student population that affect their academic performance, such as weak academic preparation and part-time enrollment. Given that

community college students are likely to be a first-generation college student, financially independent, a single parent or responsible for dependents, enrolled on a part-time basis, and not well prepared academically, it is reasonable to assume that these factors can negatively affect how they perform in their classes. Furthermore, given the open access nature of community colleges and the resulting wide range in academic abilities of their students, it is plausible to conclude that this population of students encounters more struggles in succeeding academically in college. The effect of teaching students who need remedial services or personal attention was evident in the results of the faculty interviews at SCC. Faculty at the community college devote considerable time to supporting students, creating new ways to reach students in their classes and discussing their concerns about students with their colleagues.

An interesting absence in the literature relates to faculty orientation to teaching and its impact on culture. Community college faculty teach from a practitioner perspective while faculty in public, regional, comprehensive universities teach from a more theoretical orientation. These different approaches advance the hierarchical aspect of higher education, which undermines the goal for a cohesive and seamless higher education structure.

The faculty participants at Western Carolina University were less concerned with the academic ability of their students, whom they viewed as academically able and equal to any students they had taught previously (even though the institution operates on low or moderate selectivity admissions), and more concerned with student personal behaviors. Faculty identified a strong sense of entitlement and poor regard for others as major problems in many of their students. In some distinction with the community college faculty, none of the faculty members at WCU referenced student motivation as problematic, and there were no

references to the faculty role of advising students beyond a perfunctory mention—an unusual occurrence since advising is a primary method of engaging with students and both faculties prided themselves on being student-focused. While the WCU faculty espouse a student-centered environment, individually, outside of the classroom, students frequently take a back seat to research interests and other faculty priorities.

While community college faculty teach more hours per week than university faculty, and earn lower salaries on average, they expressed higher satisfaction with their jobs and perceived a higher level of freedom in their professional lives than did university faculty. The community college faculty attribute high job satisfaction and a degree of freedom to a collegial work environment and the absence of stresses related to tenure and promotion requirements. This finding is consistent with national studies of full-time community college faculty (Levin et al., 2006; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002) and contradicts the early qualitative research of Seidman (1985) which portrayed community college faculty as dissatisfied with their work and covetous of university faculty positions, and, more recently, Grubb (1999) who cast community college faculty as burdened with teaching responsibilities and lacking in professional stature. Although some community college faculty did express concern over the annual reappointment process and lack of job security as compared with university faculty, most of the community college faculty did not raise job security as a major issue.

Discipline identification and research are two areas that generate contrasting results in community college and public, regional, comprehensive university faculty. The latter clearly affiliate with their academic discipline over any other element of the institution and spend significant time at work engaged in research. This contrasts with community college faculty

who organize by discipline or program, but identify with the division (for example, Academic or Occupational) and institution at least as much as with their discipline or program, and typically spend more work time in activities related to teaching. The nature of the cultural groups faculty form at SCC does not support the research in this area generated by Becher (1989) and Kuh and Whitt (1988), who propose that faculty identify primarily with their discipline and common interests, as opposed to their institution. The faculty at SCC defined scholarship broadly and did little work that would be considered traditional research. They also expressed a stronger sense of institutional loyalty in general than the faculty at WCU. Given the close alignment SCC faculty had with their understanding of the institutional mission and its implementation, it is not surprising that the faculty identified closely with SCC. However, other factors such as size of institution, perceived administrative support, collegiality, and history or tenure with the college also reasonably impact institutional loyalty.

The pathways faculty take to enter the profession are distinct and peculiar to the type of institution. Community college faculty in this study generally entered the profession having been practitioners in their discipline or program, with few aspirations related to teaching, typically having earned a master's degree, and often after serving as adjunct instructors at the current or another community college. Given the emphasis on vocational and technical preparation prevalent at community colleges, it is not surprising that the faculty members who are recruited to teach at these institutions have a strong background of practice in industry. Faculty members at WCU typically followed a career path that included completing a terminal degree and early career aspirations related to becoming a faculty member. Beginning their employment as full-time faculty, in many cases these faculty

actively sought out positions at institutions where teaching was emphasized, at least implicitly, over research. The mission and function of the public, regional, comprehensive university with its secondary emphasis on research support the hiring of traditionally prepared faculty who are generally versed in the theoretical foundations of their programs.

Another area of distinction between the community college and university faculties is the decision-making influence and capacity of the faculty. Faculty at WCU perceive themselves as having participatory decision-making capacity at department levels and as playing an advisory role at the college and university levels. The faculty at SCC indicated that they had little decision-making capacity at any level, although they were unanimous in their sense of freedom in offering opinions on institutional issues. This is a contradiction which warrants further exploration. It suggests as have others that governance practices and norms differentiate the community college from public four-year colleges and universities.

Decision-making opportunities and faculty autonomy are separate but related aspects of faculty culture. Altbach (1995) indicates that faculty at community colleges and non selective teaching-oriented institutions experience less autonomy in their work than faculty at other types of higher education institutions, and this lack of autonomy contributes to faculty stress. The current study supports the finding related to faculty autonomy at public, regional, comprehensive universities: the perceived lack of autonomy for faculty at WCU contributes to frustration and confusion on the part of faculty. In some distinction, faculty at the community college did not indicate factors relating to autonomy and decision-making as significantly contributing to their work-related stress. Decision-making internal to the institution does not necessarily relate to faculty autonomy external to the institution, and

more research in this area is needed before any conclusions can be drawn with any degree of confidence.

Implications for Future Research

Institutions of higher education are highly susceptible to changes occurring in society and faculty, by association, are affected by the social, economic, political, and philosophical mores of the times (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). The current study did not address the larger political and philosophical issues that impact faculty life in a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university. The faculty interviews did not generate significant findings in this area; however, a natural next step would include an exploration of these issues. Furthermore, with the increase of national mandates imposed on higher education, further research needs to be conducted on the impact of national higher education policy and practices on the two types of institutions included in this study. There are a number of other factors that affect faculty culture at a public, regional, comprehensive university and a community college. A discussion of these related factors follows.

A significant factor that impacts faculty culture is the nature of faculty employment: there is some evidence to suggest that the culture of part-time faculty is vastly different from that of full-time faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1997; Levin et al., 2006). The current study involved interviews with full-time employees only. Therefore, future qualitative studies that investigate the life of faculty should include interviews with the employees who make up approximately 35-40% of teaching faculty at public, regional, comprehensive universities, and 67% of the teaching faculty at community colleges. The location of the sites studied also offers opportunities for understanding the nature of faculty life. The current study was conducted in a rural area in the southeastern United States and regional differences and an

urban setting might generate different results if this comparative study was replicated with new participants in a different setting. Faculties and their culture are not independent of the institutional culture as a whole, nor are they unaffected by the other groups and the accompanying cultures that inhabit the institutions; the larger institutional culture and other subcultures have significant impact on faculty culture. This study would be enhanced if it included interviews with administrators and students to contribute to a wider understanding of faculty culture.

The nature of the career path taken by faculty at both types of institutions would benefit from additional research since there have been few, if any, studies conducted in this area. Clearly, based on the results of the current study there are key differences in the approaches to becoming faculty at the two institutions. Community college faculty are more likely to enter the profession with extensive experience in the discipline outside of academia, having served as adjunct and part-time faculty. Typically, community college faculty did not aspire to become instructors prior to entering the profession. Public university faculty tend to follow a more traditional route to becoming a faculty member, first earning a terminal degree in the field, then seeking a full-time teaching position, and often following long term aspirations of becoming a faculty member at a university. The community college faculty that comprised this study enjoyed greater job satisfaction than did the university faculty, a noteworthy phenomenon given the working conditions of both groups: university faculty receive a higher salary, on average, teach fewer courses, experience fewer institutional expectations to recruit students, and have more job security than their community college counterparts. However, pressures associated with being a university faculty member were more keenly addressed by that group than by the community college faculty. Comparisons

with other types of institutions in addition to the two focused on in this study would contribute to the literature base on faculty. Related to the discussion on career path of faculty is the impact of previous experience in higher education. Although the number of faculty in this study who had teaching experience at both a community college and a public, regional, comprehensive university was low, the faculty members who provided insights on teaching at both institutions were specific regarding the differences between the two institutions and they presented responses to suggest that findings in this area could be significant for improving faculty culture in both types of institutions. A follow-up investigation into this special population would produce a strong comparison of faculty experiences in the two institutions chosen for the current study.

Finally, there is limited scholarship on faculty culture in general. Organizational, institutional and culture theories are valuable contributors to understanding how institutions or organizations function. These theories also enhance understanding of faculty culture at institutions of higher education from theoretical as well as practical perspectives. More specifically, this research fills a gap in the lack of attention in the scholarly literature to differing faculty cultures by institutional type. Further work along these lines can provide both greater nuance to theories applied to higher education institutions and increased clarity to the understanding of practice. For example, we have learned through this research that Martin and Meyerson's (1998) culture theory has utility for the study of faculty culture and the study has extended culture theory to include the variable of institutional type: community college in contrast to regional university. Further exploration of this topic using institutional type along with culture theory will enhance the scholarly understanding of faculty cultures and behaviors in higher education by considering a wide range of contexts. Thus, this

approach will correct commonly held views that stem from scholarship that has either ignored institutional type as a variable or has used the research university as a norm for faculty work.

Implications for Practice

The study of faculty culture is significant on several levels. First, institutional missions and the roles of faculty employed by community colleges and public, comprehensive universities are influenced by the labor market. Globalization and its accompanying elements of productivity rates, reduced costs and efficiency, and competition increasingly affect how faculty do their jobs (Levin, 2001; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Second, current emphases in higher education on career and vocational preparation show no signs of diminishing and larger contingents of faculty will be needed to meet these needs. The trend over the past two decades has been to hire increasing numbers of part-time faculty, and this practice of hiring and the motivation for hiring—economic efficiency and closer institutional relationships with both the public and the private sector—will shape faculty culture. Third, faculty at community colleges and public, comprehensive universities can expect that they will be more engaged with the community and with industry, particularly with grant opportunities as state funding continues to diminish. Fourth, national and state policies and practices are increasingly directed to higher education, with greater public and private sector intervention in the operations of universities and colleges. Fifth, there have been relatively few studies that focus on the relationship between faculty and administration. Yet indicators point to a growing divide between the expectations of university and college leaders for their institutions, the realities of faculty work, and faculty perceptions of administrator responsibilities.

On another level, there are natural tensions that exist between faculty and administrators as members of each group attempt to fulfill the sometimes conflicting obligations expected of them. These tensions may amplify as community colleges and public, regional, comprehensive universities increase in enrollment and diversity of students, as state and local funding become more scarce, and as public colleges and universities generally become even more responsive to and dependent on market conditions for survival. Administrators who work with faculty at each institution may encounter faculty sub-cultures that are oppositional or conflicting in nature. Alternately, they may find that faculty are disengaged from institutional activities because they are on the periphery of decision-making or “burned out” from the increasing demands of the workplace.

Much has changed in faculty life over the past 30 years. There is an acknowledged shift from the traditional institution of higher education with its constant mission and core faculty into a globally-oriented organization that reflects the technological, demographic and economic mores of the times. The research that investigates faculty culture can acknowledge these alterations and help both scholars and practitioners to connect faculty work to their institutional context, which includes not only institutional type but also local, regional, national and global environments. In this study, we have learned that faculty and their institutions share an identity and that faculty culture is shaped by institutional context.

Scholarly Contributions of the Dissertation

This study constitutes a benchmark investigation into the nature of faculty culture at two different types of institutions. The qualitative analysis of the experiences of faculty at a community college and at a public, regional, comprehensive university provides a foundation for conducting future studies applying other theoretical frameworks.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Western Carolina University
Request for Review of Human Subjects Research
Checklist for Research Involving Human Subjects

1. The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of faculty life at a community college and at a public comprehensive university. While studies have been conducted on the nature of academic life from a quantitative perspective, for example, investigating the number of hours spent teaching, contact time with students, models of faculty governance, and formal education attainment of teaching faculty, relatively few studies have been conducted using a qualitative orientation. In addition, the majority of research on faculty culture has focused on large, research and doctorate-granting institutions, in primarily urban areas. The present study will contribute to the literature base on faculty culture at open admissions institutions of higher education; community colleges and public comprehensive universities comprise a third of all postsecondary institutions. The study will be grounded in organizational culture, institutional and neo-institutional theories. The rural nature of the two institutions is also of interest to the researcher.
2. This study will employ:
 - A. Interpretive, ethnographic techniques of semi-structured, face-to-face, individual interviews of participants who are purposively selected;
 - B. Review of documents describing faculty behaviors; and
 - C. On-site observations.

The researcher plans to interview a minimum of 40 faculty members (20 each) at two institutions, for a minimum of two one-hour sessions per faculty member. The researcher will access records such as faculty handbooks, which are public documents available on the world wide web, and she will request samples of work-related email correspondence with a) students, and b) other faculty from the faculty being interviewed. The researcher will also request access to the work calendars of the faculty members involved in the study to ascertain work habits and professional behaviors. Additionally, the researcher will conduct informal observations on site at the two institutions, describing the behaviors of faculty who are involved in the study. Time spent meeting with colleagues (individually and collectively), meeting with students, teaching, writing/conducting research, and the nature of these meetings will be examined, for example, meetings about student advisement, or faculty meetings dealing with curriculum changes. The researcher will use pseudonyms on the observation logs. The observation logs will be organized by the preceding categories (meetings, conducting research, etc..) and time spent in each category.

Participants will be recruited for involvement in this study by the researcher initiating personal telephone contact using the institutional employee directories. They will be selected to include a mix of female and male faculty representing several different disciplines and academic departments. Faculty participants will have at least half-time teaching responsibilities at their respective institutions, and will teach students pursuing associate's degrees at the community college, and students pursuing bachelor's degrees at the university. No pressure will be exerted on potential participants to participate in the study; the researcher will stress the voluntary nature of participation in the study.

Please see the end of this application for: 1) a transcript of how I will recruit potential participants (Appendix A), 2) a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix B), 3) a draft of the interview protocol I will use in the study (Appendix C), 4) a summary of the data analysis and interpretation methodology to be used (Appendix D), and 5) a copy of the letter of approval/exemption status by North Carolina State University's IRB (Appendix E).

3. There are no potential risks of a social, financial, legal, physical, or other nature. No requests will be made for information that could embarrass the participants or place them at risk of criminal, social, or professional harm. The potential psychological risk is minor and will be based on participants relaying information of a sensitive nature regarding their perceptions of experiences at their institutions. The researcher will take steps to ensure that participants are comfortable with what is transcribed (member checks), and make efforts to build relationships prior to and during the interviews. The interviews will occur in private offices or off-campus at the preference of the participants; participants will be allowed to request that interviews be conducted in confidential, neutral settings, if desired.
4. There are no direct incentives or benefits for participating in this study. *The potential benefits of this activity to the subjects and to mankind in general outweigh any probable risks. This opinion is justified by the following reasons:* the body of literature on faculty cultures at community colleges and public, comprehensive universities is sparse and participants will be contributing knowledge that will help to advance our understanding of faculty cultures in these institutions.
5. Prior informed consent will be accomplished before a potential participant officially becomes involved in the study. All elements of the informed consent form (attached) will be reviewed and a copy of the informed consent document will be provided for the participant for signature before any interviews, observations, or document analysis occur.
6. The information recorded in this study will be kept strictly confidential. Participant descriptions will be limited to essential, general characteristics, e.g., female faculty member with ten years teaching experience at the institution. Interview data will be stored securely on audiotapes held in the personal file cabinets at the home of the researcher where only she has access privileges. No reference will be made in any oral or written reports which could link participants to the study. Pseudonyms will be used to conduct the individual interviews and will be known only to the researcher. Where disciplines/departments are indicated, they will be used in very general terms, e.g., a member of the faculty in biology, not a professor of microbiology. Data will be collected on audiotapes and transcribed by a transcriptionist who is not affiliated with either institution. General themes that emerge from the data collected will be analyzed according to themes, not by individual participants.
7. The collected data do not relate to illegal activities in any way.
8. There will be no deception of the participants in this study.
9. There is no compensation to participants who choose to be involved in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary; participants may decline to participate without penalty and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which they may otherwise be entitled. If participants withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, their data will be returned or destroyed at their request. Once the study is complete, participants will have access to any and all information collected on them, if requested.

Appendix B

North Carolina State University Informed Consent form for Dissertation Research

Title: An Ethnography of Faculty in a Community College and a Public Comprehensive University

Principal Investigator: Carol Burton

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. John S. Levin

I am conducting dissertation research on faculty culture at institutions of higher education and would like you to be a participant in this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the academic life of faculty members who teach at a rural community college and a regional, comprehensive university.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be interviewed by the principal researcher for a minimum of two one-hour sessions. The study's duration will last approximately six months, between October, 2005, and November, 2006. In addition to the interviews, I will access records such as faculty handbooks, which are public documents available on the world wide web, and will request samples of your work-related email correspondence with a) students, and b) other faculty at your institution and at other institutions. I will also request access to your work calendar to ascertain work habits and professional behaviors. Additionally, I will conduct informal observations on site at the two institutions, describing the behaviors of faculty who are involved in the study. Time spent meeting with colleagues (individually and collectively), meeting with students, teaching, writing/ conducting research, and the nature of these meetings will be described (for example, meetings about student advisement, or faculty meetings dealing with curriculum changes). The observation logs will be organized by the preceding categories (meetings, conducting research, etc.) and time spent in each category.

BENEFITS

There are no direct incentives or benefits for participating in this study. However, the body of literature on faculty cultures at community colleges and public, comprehensive universities is sparse and participants will be contributing knowledge that will help to advance our understanding of faculty cultures in these institutions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

While not anonymous, the information recorded in this study will be kept strictly confidential. Participant descriptions will be limited to essential, general characteristics and pseudonyms will be used to conduct the individual interviews and will be known only to the researcher. Interview data will be stored securely on audiotapes stored in the personal file cabinets at the home of the researcher where only she has access privileges. Once transcribed, the records will have no identifying information linking them to the participants. No reference will be made in any oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures used, you may contact the researcher, Carol Burton, at P. O. Box xxxx, Cullowhee, NC 28723 (xxx.xxx.xxxx/home or burton@email.wcu.edu). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board (NCSU IRB) for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514,

NCSU, Raleigh, NC 27695 (919.513.1834), or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, Raleigh, NC 27695 (919.513.2148).

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request. You have the right to review data collected during your interview at any time during the duration of the study.

CONSENT

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time.”

Participant’s Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator’s Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C

P. O. Box xxxx
Cullowhee, NC 28723
xxx.xxx.xxxx (Office)
burton@email.wcu.edu

October 12, 2005

Dr. Gene Couch
Vice President for Instruction and Student Services
Southwestern Community College
447 College Drive
Sylva, NC 28779

Dear Dr. Couch:

Thank you for considering approving my request to use Southwestern Community College, and specifically, the faculty, to conduct research for my doctoral dissertation. My area of interest is faculty culture at institutions of higher education, specifically the community college and the regional comprehensive public university. I will investigate the academic life of faculty members and the nature of their work and how faculty work is affected by institutional characteristics and mission (for example, open access and teaching orientation), student abilities and characteristics, and the nature of internal and external pressures they encounter. I will use a qualitative research design to conduct this study.

I propose to invite up to 20 faculty members at Southwestern Community College to participate in two interviews each to be scheduled between November, 2005, and February, 2006. The interviews will be audio-taped; however, pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant and no distinguishing characteristics of the participants will be published in the study. Southwestern Community College will not be identified as the research site except to members of my dissertation committee.

I have attached the Institutional Review Board approval from North Carolina State University, and copies of the proposal narrative, informed consent form, and interview protocol for your review.

Thank you again for agreeing to consider my request. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your decision.

Sincerely,

Carol Burton
Doctoral Student
Adult and Community College Education
North Carolina State University

Appendix D

**North Carolina State University
Dissertation for ACCE
Interview Protocol**

Title: An Ethnography of Faculty in a Community College and a Public
Comprehensive University

Principal Investigator: Carol Burton
Dr. John S. Levin

Faculty Sponsor:

Opening statement: First Interview

I appreciate your willingness to be a participant in my dissertation research on faculty culture at institutions of higher education. The purpose of the study is to investigate the academic life of faculty members who teach at a rural community college and a regional, comprehensive university. The two research sites are representative of open access institutions and my research interests involve studying the nature of faculty work in both institutions.

I would like to begin our first interview by asking you for information about yourself.

I. Demographics/Participant Characteristics

A. Participant name _____ pseudonym assigned

B. Years of teaching at this institution _____

C. Years of teaching in higher education _____

D. Highest degree earned _____

E. Professional rank _____

F. Discipline/academic department

G. Status (full or part time) to the institution/teaching load

II. Background

A. How did you come to be teaching at a community college/public comprehensive university?

- B. What are your future aspirations related to your career?
- C. Of the three most common priorities identified for the professoriate, scholarship, teaching, and service, which are most evident at your institution? How are they prioritized?

III. Institutional Mission

- A. What is the primary mission of your institution? How are you aware of the mission?
- B. Discuss the role of your institution's mission in affecting your job/role as a faculty member

IV. Teaching Orientation

- A. What aspects of teaching are the most meaningful to you? Why?
- B. How do you feel about teaching at a community college/public comprehensive university?
- C. What aspects of teaching at a community college/public comprehensive university cause you the most concern? Why?

V. Student Abilities

- A. What are your perceptions about your students' abilities? How do your students' abilities impact your job as a faculty member?
- B. Tell me about your out-of-class contact with the students you teach. What types of activities do you engage in with them?
- C. Generally speaking, do your students' academic abilities differ now as compared to students you taught earlier in your career? If so, in what ways?

VI. Internal Pressures

- A. What are the internal pressures 1) within your department, 2) within your college or major unit, and 3) at the university level, that affect your position as a faculty member?
- B. How do these pressures affect your ability to function as a faculty member?

VII. External Pressures

- A. What are the pressures external to the university/community college that affect your position as a faculty member?

Second Interview

We will schedule a follow up interview if needed. Consistent with qualitative methodology, probing questions will be developed from the answers/themes that emerged from this first interview. Thank you for your time and your interest in participating in this study.

Appendix E

**North Carolina State University
Dissertation for ACCE
Interview Protocol – Second Interview**

Title: An Ethnography of Faculty in a Community College and a Public
Comprehensive University

Principal Investigator: Carol Burton
Dr. John S. Levin

Faculty Sponsor:

Opening statement: Second Interview

I appreciate your willingness to be a participant in my dissertation research on faculty culture at institutions of higher education and for taking time to participate in a second interview. The purpose of the study is to investigate the academic life of faculty members who teach at a rural community college and a regional, comprehensive university. The two research sites are representative of open access institutions and my research interests involve studying the nature of faculty work in both institutions.

Date and Time of Interview

VIII. Demographics/Participant Characteristics

A. Participant name _____ Pseudonym assigned _____

What do you talk about with other faculty--formally (in meetings)?

Informally (over coffee; in the hallways)?

What are your relationships with students about—how would you characterize them?

What is the nature of your relationships with your academic colleagues? Other faculty? Within your discipline? Outside your discipline?

What is the nature of your relationships with administrators? Department / division heads? Upper administration?

Do you conduct research? If you do, what is the topic(s)? How much of your time is spent conducting research?

How does decision making occur in your institution and how do faculty fit into this? What role do they play in decision-making?

Can you describe your professional life? Describe your personal life. How these two are separate, or not?

What is your discipline affiliation and how do you sustain this? (conferences, presentations, publications, journal reading).

Appendix F

*Invitation to Participate in a Research Study/Dissertation on the Culture of Faculty
Employed in a
Public, Regional, Comprehensive University and a Community College*

Principal Investigator	Carol Burton, Doctoral Student at North Carolina State University, Adult and Community College Education Program
Dissertation Title	<u>An ethnography of faculty in a community college and a public comprehensive university</u>
Dates for Data Collection	Spring Semester 2005 to Fall Semester, 2006
Purpose of the Study	To seek to understand the academic life of faculty members who teach at a rural community college and at a rural, public, comprehensive university
Areas of Emphasis	Sources of internal and external pressures, out-of-class interactions with students and colleagues, effects of perceived institutional mission, teaching orientation, and student abilities
Methodology	Qualitative ethnography (audio-taped, face-to-face interviews and observations primarily)
Conceptual Framework	Organizational culture, institutional and neo-institutional theories
Sample	40 full-time female and male faculty representing several different disciplines and academic departments; must maintain at least half-time teaching responsibilities
Confidentiality	Pseudonyms will be used; participants will be known only to the Principal Investigator
Contact Information	Carol Burton <u>burton@email.wcu.edu</u> xxx.xxx.xxxx (H) xxx.xxx.xxxx (W)