FROM PILOT TO PERMANENT:
A CASE STUDY OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF A GRANT-FUNDED
TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES IN A PUBLIC RESEARCH INSTITUTION IN THE MIDWEST OF
THE UNITED STATES

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By
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This qualitative intrinsic case study explored the institutionalization of a Transition and Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant-funded program into a public four-year university in the Midwestern U.S. The study employed an ecological framework, and analyzed interview data from program stakeholders and artifacts associated with the program’s institutionalization.

The findings of this study suggested that program stakeholders sparked and fueled institutionalization because of their personal connections to disability and through their passion driven efforts and powerful stories. Institutional and program context also played critical roles in program institutionalization. These contextual elements included: student and parental influence; the institution’s history, priority of diversity, and profile; and the program funding model and options. Finally, the institutionalization process appeared to construct and galvanize components of the program’s identity including its role as change agent and system disruptor.

INDEX WORDS: TPSID Grant, Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability, Institutionalization, Intrinsic Case Study
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I stepped to the edge of a vast canyon and looked back across the great expanse. I had spent so much meticulous time walking, sometimes in the dark, across every inch of that now charted land. As I surveyed the distance, I saw that friends, family, and peers stood like sign posts along the road I had cut. With words, deeds, and care, they offered me guidance, support, and places to sit for a bit and rest while I prepared for the next leg of the journey. Somehow, now, even with all the words that will follow, these words fail me. I fear that I have built the ladders and bridges of this work from what little elegance I once had. I hope that I have told you along the way what I am afraid I will not be able to express here. I know that so many people have carried me to this threshold. Their contributions run deep and are more meaningful than I can describe. Please accept my apologies for failing, at this moment, to put my love and thanks into words. Nonetheless, onward to thanks.

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On to the next wondrous place and the path that takes me there.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

In 2010, the U.S. Federal Government began offering Transition and Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grants to higher education institutions. The U.S. Government offered these grants “to create or expand high quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities” (United States Department of Education, 2013, para. 1). A significant amount of research exists that seeks to understand the role, structure, and impact of transition programs. Much of this research highlights the many positive outcomes for students with intellectual disabilities who participate in transition programs on university campuses.

In general, these programs produce positive outcomes for both the students enrolled in the programs and for the traditionally-enrolled students who interact with transition program students. Typically-enrolled college students (degree-seeking students not enrolled in a transition program), who interact with students enrolled in these transition programs, come to believe that students with intellectual disabilities can participate in higher education (Griffin, Summer, McMillan, Day, & Hodapp, 2012). Typically-enrolled students also benefit from their interaction with students in transition programs. Izzo and Shuman (2013) found that typically-enrolled students who interacted with students with intellectual disabilities were better able to identify career goals specifically associated with work with individuals with disabilities and in general.
another study, typically-enrolled students who had close interactions with students with intellectual disabilities showed more positive attitudes regarding acceptance and diversity than their counterparts who did not have these close interactions (May, 2012). Some research even suggests that students in these transition programs experience developmental patterns similar to their typically-enrolled counterparts because of their participation in these programs (Hendrickson, Vander Busard, Rodgers, & Scheidecker, 2013). As one might expect, individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities who participate in these transition programs experience positive benefits themselves.

Benefits for program participants range across a broad spectrum. Researchers have shown that participation in these programs positively impacts employment outcomes. Migliore, Butterworth, and Hart (2009) found that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who participated in transition programs in post-secondary educational settings had higher rates of employment and higher earnings than those who did not. Grigal, Hart, and Migliore (2011) similarly showed that participation in these programs increased wage and job opportunities for individuals who took advantage of these programs but also showed that students with intellectual and developmental disabilities were far less likely to participate in programs in post-secondary educational settings than individuals with other types of disabilities. In a more recent study, Petcu, Chezan, and Van Horn (2015) found that professional development opportunities that lead to these outcomes vary across institutional type (e.g. two-year, four-year, and vocational) but not by institutional settings (e.g. urban, suburban, and rural).
Scholars have revealed that the benefits of these programs extend beyond the realm of employment. Kleinert, Jones, Sheppard-Jones, Harp, and Harrison (2012) identified increased satisfaction with life domains including emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships among students with intellectual disabilities who participated in these transition programs. Additionally, McMahon, Cihak, and Wright (2015) found that students who took part in a post-secondary transition program that incorporated the use of augmented reality realized enhanced independent navigation outcomes. While achieving these positive outcomes takes considerable effort, program staff and organizers also face a difficult task of establishing TPSID programs on college campuses both before and after initial grant funding is no longer available.

Despite their documented benefits, these programs may not become institutionalized after grant funding is no longer available. A confluence of factors fuels this uncertainty. Students with intellectual disabilities on college campuses may raise questions regarding issues including individual and institutional risks, the need for staff and faculty preparation, transition-related concerns associated with moving from the preK-12 educational system to higher education, funding logistics, and governmental and industry regulations. Given these complex dynamics, careful planning and consideration must drive the implementation and operation of the programs (Papay & Griffin, 2013).

Whereas a considerable amount of research has focused on the academic, employment, and social outcomes for students in these programs, much less research has focused on the planning and consideration that results in the institutionalization of these programs. Research has yet to describe sufficiently how TPSID program staff and
university administration traverse the complex and tenuous process involved in establishing a program within a university. Since 2010, despite the tenuous and complex nature of the institutionalization process, TPSID programs have generally seen increased integration and alignment with campus resources (Grigal et al., 2014). However, researchers have not yet sufficiently studied the path that the program staff has taken to build this alignment and accomplish institutionalization.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the institutionalization of a Transition and Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant-funded program within a public four-year university in the Midwest United States. The research focused on a single program that successfully transitioned from a pilot grant-funded experiment to an established institutional program. Specifically, this research drew on the perspectives of multiple program stakeholders involved in the move from a pilot to a permanent program as well as on insight gained from program and process related artifacts.

**Significance**

Individuals with disabilities have faced numerous educational barriers in accessing, persisting through, and completing higher education. These barriers exist in the physical, social, cultural, and academic dimensions. While barriers can exist for many students both with and without disabilities, individuals with intellectual disabilities, unlike even other individuals with disabilities, can face an additional barrier of often not being ‘otherwise qualified’ for admission into the institution (Hendrickson et al., 2013;
Kleinert et al., 2012). This additional barrier exists in part because qualification for admission rests on academic abilities that individuals with intellectual disabilities have not mastered. As they are not otherwise qualified, the universities may not only deny these students admission but the students would then likely have no legal standing under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990) (ADA) to claim discrimination. Thus, avenues for these individuals into institutions of higher education can be extremely limited. Transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities on college campuses offer a unique path to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Transition programs, like the TPSID program that served as the site for this inquiry, offer one avenue for these individuals to access the benefits and experiences that await qualified students who gain admittance to these institutions (Grigal & Dwyre 2010; Grigal, Neubert, & Moon, 2002; Neubert & Moon, 2006). However, to continue to offer this access, these transition programs must navigate complex student expectations and needs, institutional alignment issues, internal and external coordination challenges, and questions of financial sustainability (Grigal et al., 2014).

In this study, I could not ignore institutional alignment issues and the process of integration into the institution. These issues are critical elements of the concept of institutionalization central to this study. Institutional alignment and integration are important because “programs that create special policies and practices for students with ID (intellectual disabilities) for typical college interactions like admission, registration, and advising may perpetuate a feeling of separateness for both the staff and students
involved in the TPSID” (Grigal et al., 2014, p. 59). Programs can avoid this separation and accomplish integration by using “existing college systems, including academic advising, registration, tutoring, and disabilities services, as well as offering access to typical courses.” This alignment also helps “foster ownership for students’ success among IHE (institutions of higher education) staff and departments that are not directly involved in the TPSID program” (Grigal et al., 2014, p. 59). Through this study, I encountered numerous occasions where alignment issues affected institutionalization.

**Research Orientation**

As integration with the existing systems was a key to institutionalization and the success of the TPSID program, I found it useful to carry out this research through an ecological or systems orientation (Schram, 2006). Through this orientation, I approached my investigation with a holistic perspective that sought the relationships and connections across and between levels and structures of the university. This orientation also proved useful because important connections emerged during the study that extended to the larger community surrounding the university and the program. With these connections in mind, my focus was on “description and analysis aimed at identifying those contextual factors with the greatest influence” on the institutionalization of this program (Schram, 2006, p. 51).

**Research Questions**

At a high level, I explored the question: how did this TPSID program become institutionalized? Through this study, I explored the various elements and components of institutionalization as revealed by stakeholders involved with and by the artifacts
associated with the incorporation and integration of a TPSID program that resulted in the institutionalization. Through the study of one program’s progression from a pilot program to a federally-funded program, and finally to a standing program within an institution, I explored the features and factors of the journey that helped to carve a spot for the program within its home institution.

One primary research question, supported by two related questions that funneled into the primary question, drove this research. These questions were:

- How did this TPSID program become institutionalized?
- How did multiple stakeholders describe the institutionalization of the TPSID program?
- How did TPSID program stakeholders and artifacts related to institutionalization describe or reveal critical elements of institutionalization?

**Research Definitions**

In my exploration of the research questions stated above, I wrestled with and leveraged language specific to the program and the institution. Additionally, I drew on terminology that contained multiple meanings. Throughout this report, I attempted to avoid overly technical terminology to increase readability. However, a few terms required definition before I proceeded with further details of this study. These terms included:

- Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP): “Higher education programs that are able to provide certain forms of Title IV federal student aid to eligible students
with intellectual disabilities attending an approved program” (Grigal et al., 2014, p. 87).

• Institute of Higher Education (IHE): “An institution that provides education beyond the secondary level, e.g., an accredited college or university” (Grigal et al., 2014, p. 87).

• Intellectual and developmental disability (IDD): This term covers the range of disabilities of those individuals who participated in the TPSID program. An intellectual disability (ID) is “a disability [that originates before the age of 18] characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills” (Grigal et al., 2014, p. 88). Developmental disability is a component of this term because the program admitted students whose disabilities, including traumatic brain injury (TBI), may not have strictly fallen into the definition of ID.

• Typically-developing, typically-enrolled, and degree-seeking students: These three terms all refer to the same population of students. When I used these terms, I referred to degree-seeking students not enrolled in the transition program. Though these terms had varying meanings, participants in this study appeared to use them interchangeably. However, within the context of the discussion, the choice of a term did draw attention to specific characteristics of this population of students. For instance, ‘typically-developing’ drew attention to the developmental differences between typically-developing students and
students with IDD. Some participants used the term ‘neurotypical’ students as a substitute for typically-developing. Similarly, ‘typically-enrolled’ focused on the enrollment status and process of the student population, while ‘degree-seeking’ highlighted the educational outcomes available to the student populations.

- Program participants and program students: These two terms refer to the same population of students. When I used these terms, I referred to students enrolled in a PSEIDD. These students were individuals with IDD, which qualified them for participation in the TPSID program. I chose not to describe this population of students as non-degree-seeking or by using other terms that described their participation as less than that of their typically-enrolled counterparts. I made this choice as I did not want to inappropriately perpetuate a deficit model view of their experience.

- Postsecondary educational opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (PSEIDDs): A range of programs, experiences, activities, and initiatives that allow individuals with IDD, who could otherwise not secure admission to an institution of higher education, pathways to participate, learn, and socialize in higher education settings. This definition of PSEIDDs included TPSID programs.

- Transition and Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grants: Grants made available through the United States Office of Postsecondary Education to higher education institutions “to create or
expand high quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities” (United States Department of Education, 2013, para. 1). This was the grant used to fund the first four years of the transition program for students with IDD that served as the site for this inquiry. Once the federally provided TPSID funds cease as a source of monetary support for a program, one might no longer consider the program a TPSID program. Throughout this research, however, I used the term ‘TPSID program’ to refer to the program I studied regardless of its continued TPSID funding. I have made this decision for three reasons. First, even though funding may have ceased, a TPSID program has historical roots or ties to the TPSID grants, and therefore the TPSID label could still apply. Second, maintaining the TPSID program title allowed me to more seamlessly and clearly refer to the program I studied regardless of funding status. Third, by using the more generic label, “TPSID program,” I leveraged a general term that helped me avoid complications related to confidentiality. When possible and where it did not cause confusion, I sometimes referred to the TPSID program simply as ‘the program.’

- Institutionalization: “The process whereby specific cultural elements or cultural objects are adopted by actors in a social system” (Clark, 1968, p. 1). Clark’s definition of institutionalization is appropriate for this study in part because it evolved from research regarding the institutionalization of innovation in higher education. Additionally, it covers a wide range of activities and pathways by
which “cultural elements or objects” could become interwoven and integrated into an institution of higher education. Despite its rather broad coverage, defining institutionalization was crucially important. I discussed the importance of defining this term in my literature review. Here, however, I acknowledge the common meaning of the word in regards to disability. For some who study disabilities, institutionalization’s first definition is “the date when the person was admitted to a nursing home or a hospital providing long-term care” (Nuotio, Tammela, Luukkaala, & Jylhä, 2003, p. 757). The practice of institutionalizing individuals with intellectual disabilities is a hotly debated topic with strongly held arguments regarding multiple components of the debate (Iacono & Murray, 2003; Jansen, Krol, Groothoff, & Post, 2004; Mansell, McGill, & Emerson, 2001). It would be irresponsible and problematic for me not to acknowledge this definition. However, it did not advance this research for me to engage in the debates I have referenced above because the use of this term did not appear to affect my conversation with program participants after I briefly acknowledged its multiple meanings. Therefore, I proceeded with the use of this term throughout my study and defined it as Clark did in 1968.

**Research Site**

This study explored the unique setting of the TPSID program at Midwestern State University (MSU) (pseudonym). This program helped students who would not otherwise qualify for admission to MSU to navigate and benefit from the opportunities, structures, and resources of the university. The program implementers did not design the program
for participants to complete a college degree. Instead, the program offered a transition setting within a college campus for students ages 18 to 21 with intellectual, developmental, and other sometimes-severe disabilities to participate in the college experience through integrated (with other MSU students) and separate (only with other program students) experiences.

As a TPSID grant program, the program implementers designed it to meet the eight criteria established by the U.S. Federal Government. I included those criteria below in some detail because they set TPSID programs apart from other PSEIDDs, and therefore support the significance of this study. According to the federal government, TPSID programs should:

(1) serve students with intellectual disabilities;

(2) provide individual supports and services for the academic and social inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in academic courses, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of the institution of higher education's regular postsecondary program;

(3) with respect to the students with intellectual disabilities participating in the model program, provide a focus on --

(A) academic enrichment;

(B) socialization;

(C) independent living skills, including self-advocacy skills; and

(D) integrated work experiences and career skills that lead to gainful employment;
(4) integrate person-centered planning in the development of the course of study for each student with an intellectual disability participating in the model program;

(5) participate with the coordinating center established under section 777(b) in the evaluation of the model program;

(6) partner with one or more local educational agencies to support students with intellectual disabilities participating in the model program who are still eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, including the use of funds available under part B of such Act to support the participation of such students in the model program;

(7) plan for the sustainability of the model program after the end of the grant period; and

(8) create and offer a meaningful credential for students with intellectual disabilities upon the completion of the model program. (United States Department of Education, 2013)

It was not my intention to identify every way the program implementers at MSU designed the TPSID program to meet each of these criteria. These criteria were nonetheless critical contextual elements of the research site.

As stated earlier, the program officially began in 2010 when 20 students enrolled in it upon receipt of the TPSID grant. Note, however, that a pilot program funded by a National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) grant occurred
during the 2009-2010 academic year at MSU. This pilot program allowed the program administrators to develop an understanding and a framework on which they built the TPSID funded program. The first class of students completed the TPSID program in May of 2015. As for program administrators, there were several MSU employees, some of whom I interviewed for this study, and a host of graduate assistants, volunteer faculty, and volunteer students from MSU that oversaw the program.

Finally, a transition center in MSU’s College of Education initially housed the TPSID funded program during its pilot phase. As part of institutionalization, the program moved out from under the umbrella of the center. Although the program was a major part of the center’s work, the center staff members also administered several other programs and conducted broader research regarding the transition and employment experience of students with disabilities.

**Conclusion**

This case offered a strong opportunity to study a program that brought together the unique settings of MSU, a TPSID program, and the contextually dependent process of institutionalizing a program. Through the ecological orientation, I studied this unique confluence of guidelines, settings, and processes. Though the study focused on the process by which the program became institutionalized, the goals of the program to serve and advance the needs of individuals with IDD also added strength to the significance of the study as there were limited opportunities for this population in IHEs. Ultimately, by studying how this program came to be, I advanced understanding of how to develop more inclusive opportunities that expand access to higher education.
I have included, in the next chapter of this report, a summary of the literature related to PSEIDDs broadly and TPSID programs specifically where the literature existed. I have also included a short section wherein I explored research related to institutionalization and specifically institutionalization in the IHEs. From that review of the literature, I highlighted trends, critical elements, and conclusions that emerged from the literature. Ultimately, my literature review demonstrated how my research advanced existing research by filling multiple gaps in that research. After reviewing the literature, I presented the methods I leveraged in the execution of my research. In addition to details of my data collection and analysis methods, I explored issues including my research positionality and the trustworthiness of my research. In this report, I built a case for my research as well as provided relevant information from the existing research that set the context for my study. Additionally, I demonstrated a sound and thorough research methodology which allowed me to identify meaningful and significant research outcomes. Finally, I discussed the implications and recommendations of my findings.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

TPSID programs exist within a complex and deep context of disability in higher education in the United States. Within that context, there is a rich and equally complicated history of PSEIDDs. According to Neubert, Moon, and Grigal (2001), PSEIDDs in the United States have existed since the 1970s. Within this history, TPSID programs are relative newcomers.

In 2008, the United States Government, through the Higher Education Opportunity Act, reauthorized the Higher Education Act of 1965 and included several provisions that allowed for expanded access to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities (Smith Lee, 2009). One of those provisions was the allocation of funds for model demonstration college programs through the TPSID grants. The U.S. Government awarded these grants “to institutions of higher education or consortia of institutions of higher education to enable them to create or expand high quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities” (United States Department of Education, 2013, para. 1). In 2010, the government awarded TPSID grants to 27 institutions and consortia of various types, sizes, and locations across the United States (United State Department of Education, 2010). Then, in June 2015, the Federal Government offered a second round of TPSID grants (United States Department of Education, 2015a). While TPSID funded programs were not the first opportunity that students with intellectual disabilities have had to
participate in higher education, new interest in, research regarding, and writing on the experience of students with intellectual disabilities in higher education has accompanied the emergence of TPSID programs.

Even with the new research that specifically focused on TPSID programs, there remained a great deal left unstudied. As I argued and demonstrated through this literature review, one such understudied area was the institutionalization of these programs. Understanding the institutionalization of TPSID programs, however, first required an understanding of the research that existed around postsecondary educational opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities in the United States. With that in mind, this review addressed both the larger research body pertaining to PSEIDDs and the more specific research focusing on TPSID programs.

**Review Procedure and Outcomes**

I conducted an initial search for literature related to postsecondary education programs and experiences for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities at institutions of higher education. I conducted the initial search using my home institution’s library search tool that simultaneously searches over 280 databases and indexes, including ERIC, Academic Search Premier, PsycInfo, and Academic Search Complete. This initial search produced over 700 results, which included peer-reviewed research articles, policy and program documents, dissertations, and book chapters. In addition to my review of research related to PSEIDDs, I conducted an additional search for studies that explored the concept of institutionalization in higher education settings. As I discussed in the section of this literature review that summarizes the findings from
this secondary search, no research existed that specifically studies the institutionalization of PSEIDDS or TPSID programs. Therefore, the additional search was necessary to link TPSID programs and institutionalization and, in doing so, to create a framework on which I could build my study.

Even though I was most interested in peer-reviewed research articles and dissertations in both the primary and secondary searches, I did, on select occasions, include other document types for review and summary because of their relevance to my research interest. I also included articles of interest and relevance that appeared in the reference lists of documents that I directly retrieved using the library search tool referenced above. Literature reviews conducted by researchers other than myself (e.g., Plotner & Marshall, 2014; Thoma et al., 2011) were prime examples of documents that guided me to additional resources.

My review of this literature on PSEIDDS revealed that research fell into three overlapping categories: program components, descriptions, and categories; historical and political trends; and student, faculty, staff, and parent experiences and attitudes. Note that these categories overlapped and were not exclusive. For instance, the lines between categories blurred because in describing program components, the authors often noted the historical or contextual settings from which those components emerged. In other instances, the authors noted program components that affected the experiences of parents, students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders.

In addition to helping me identify the three overlapping categories of research mentioned above, my review of the research revealed a handful of scholars who have
themselves as significant contributors to this research cannon. Among others, these researchers include Hart, Grigal, Zimbrich, and Neubert. Some of these authors, like Grigal and Hart, have conducted research as part of their association with the Think College program. While not the only source of information for TPSID programs or PSEIDDs, I found it important to understand the role of Think College in the arena of PSEIDDs.

In 2010, the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education named Think College as the National Coordinating Center for the TPSID programs. Through this action, the Office of Postsecondary Education charged Think College with the duty “to provide support, coordination, training, and evaluation services for 27 Transition and Postsecondary Education Program (TPSID) grantees as well as other programs for students with intellectual disabilities around the country” (Think College, 2015). In fulfilling the evaluation portion of this charge, Think College and those associated with it have produced several white papers, research articles, and guidance documents regarding TPSID programs.

The Think College program produced a great deal of information. However, I was also aware of the possibility that research produced by Think College may both accentuate the benefits and positive outcomes of TPSID programs and may underemphasize the programs’ shortcomings. This is by no means an accusation. Rather, it is a recognition that the Federal Government funds Think College and that Think College does not exist without TPSID programs.
Even considering the work of Think College, however, my literature review uncovered comparably little research focused solely on TPSID programs. This was no surprise because of TPSIDs’ relative newness and because TPSID programs were initially started at only a small number of IHEs. What research did exist tended to lump TPSIDs with other types of PSEIDDs, essentially constricting or diluting our knowledge of the impact of the specific characteristics of TPSID programs. Again, the limited state of this research was another reason my research was important. Though it not only advanced the research specifically on TPSID programs, it also introduced the concept of institutionalization into the lens through which we view TPSIDs and PSEIDDs.

Finally, my additional literature review on institutionalization revealed that numerous investigations into topics in higher education previously incorporated the concept, however, the concept was missing from research on PSEIDDs. The definition of institutionalization varied greatly across the studies I reviewed. Similarly, scholars had chosen to study the concept using a variety of research methods. This additional review highlighted the lack of research on the institutionalization of TPSID programs. Of equal importance, the review of research in institutionalization revealed that previous studies on PSEIDDs had approached components of institutionalization. In approaching the concept, however, no research had connected PSEIDDs and institutionalization with the directness that I offered in this study.

**PSEIDDs: Program Components, Descriptions, and Categories**

Scholarly attempts to describe, categorize, and detail the components of PSEIDDs resulted in a variety of approaches to grouping programs together. For instance, a 2004
survey research project that focused on PSEIDDs at community colleges attempted to create general categories for these programs. In this project, Hart, Mele-McCarthy, Pasternack, Zimbrich, and Parker (2004) surveyed 25 PSEIDDs at community colleges in the United States that served students with learning, cognitive, and intellectual disabilities. Hart et al. (2004) termed these programs dual enrollment programs because the students in these programs remained enrolled in high school. The authors argued that, at the time, there was a “dearth of information on postsecondary programs…and minimal data on [their] effectiveness” (p. 54). A major result of this study was the creation of three categories of programs: substantially separate, mixed, and inclusive, individual support model.

Hart et al. (2004) built these three categories on factors including the students’ level of integration into the college community and the program’s focus on life skills. According to Hart et al.’s categories, the level of the students’ integration into the college community rose from substantially separate to mixed to inclusive. Furthermore, a program’s focus differed between these categories such that the emphasis on life skills (i.e., independent living and basic job skills) alone decreases from separate, to mixed, to inclusive. This means that students in the mixed and, even more so, the inclusive programs, experienced the same type of social and intellectual engagement as degree-seeking college students. Due to the complexity of these PSEIDDs, however, the separate, mixed, and inclusive labels alone could not capture or describe the intricate variety of PSEIDDs. Other researchers contended that additional categories and descriptions accounted for components not covered by the separate, mixed, and inclusive
In their 2013 research, McEathron et al. attempted to build a taxonomy that captured information that fell outside of Hart et al.’s (2004) separate, mixed, and inclusive categorical structure. McEathron et al.’s (2013) research occurred over two phases. In the first phase, the researchers gathered data from 21 programs by interviewing program directors and analyzing program documentation. In the second phase, in which the authors termed their validation phase, the researchers used information from the initial phase to develop a survey. After distribution, the researchers collected 47 useable responses.

Using data from both phases of the research, McEathron et al. (2013) then created a taxonomy that included four primary domains: organizational, admission, support, and pedagogical. The researchers argued that the taxonomy they presented improved on an earlier attempt (i.e., McEathron & Beuhring, 2011) they made at categorizing PSEIDDs. McEathron et al. maintained that this 2013 research improved upon the earlier attempt because it relied on measurable and reportable factors as opposed to what the programs hoped to accomplish. For instance, the 2013 “taxonomy characterize[d] how programs view student characteristics via criteria for admission in the Admissions Domain and institutional characteristics via measurable policies and practices in the Organizational Domain” (p. 316). Comparing this research to Hart et al.’s (2004) research, one of the greatest differences was that McEathron et al. covered a wider variety of institutional
types, which included both two-year and four-year institutions. Hart et al., alternately, only focused on PSEIDDS at community colleges.

Comparing Hart et al. (2004) and McEathron et al. (2013) began to reveal the importance that the institutional setting can have on how a researcher might look at PSEIDDS. In this case, by including a larger variety of instructional types, McEathron et al. (2013) relied on categories significantly different from Hart et al.’s (2004) to best describe the significant PSEIDD components. The impact of institutional type and program context became even more obvious when I considered the findings of Grigal, Hart, and Weir’s (2012) study of over 149 different programs.

Casting a wide institutional net, Grigal et al. (2012) leveraged a descriptive cross-sectional survey tool, to collect information on multiple characteristics of PSEIDDS. The researchers reported on characteristics including recruitment strategies, admission criteria, program supports and accommodations, funding structures and sources, employee structures within the program, and collaborations and partnerships with organizations outside of the program. Grigal et al. pilot tested the survey tool at programs across eight IHEs. After revisions based on the pilot testing, the researchers distributed the tool and obtained responses from 149 programs across 39 states. This study led the researchers to uncover an incredible diversity of program characteristics.

For instance, Grigal et al. (2012) found that PSEIDDS had existed for between five months and thirty-five years. The researchers also documented basic program characteristics including four-year institutions that housed 50% of the programs, two-year institutions that housed 40%, and trade and technical schools that housed 10%.
Additionally, 45% of the programs only serviced students with ID on campuses. Furthermore, 26% served dually enrolled students and the remaining 29% of programs served both types of students. By casting an even wider research net than McEathron et al. (2013), Grigal et al. noted contextual elements including programs that served both dually enrolled and on-campus students. These types of findings would not be less meaningful with a smaller sample size, but a smaller sample size might not have revealed some of the contextual intricacies of their findings. Even sample size, however, did not tell the whole story about the meaning of such findings. By focusing on PSEIDDs that only served dually enrolled students, Papay and Bambara (2011) drew conclusions that could be read as contradictory to Grigal et al.’s.

Conducting a very similar investigation to Grigal et al. (2012), Papay and Bambara (2011) surveyed PSEIDDs to “address some of the questions that remain about the nature of [PSEIDDs] and access to college classes through a national survey of these types of programs” (p. 80). Papay and Bambara received 52 responses to their survey, which was considerably smaller than Grigal et al.’s 149 responses. Despite the differences in the number of responses, the key difference between the Papay and Bambara research and the Grigal et al. research appeared to be that Papay and Bambara were only interested in programs that served students who were still receiving special education services through their high schools. Despite underscoring the obvious that research questions and parameters are of great importance, comparing the two studies also underscored once again that the complexity of the programs grew from contextual components like the institutional type.
Papay and Bambara (2011) found that two-year institutions, as opposed to four-year institutions, housed a majority (57%) of the PSEIDDs in their study of programs that served dually enrolled students. This finding was significantly different from Grigal et al.’s (2012) finding that only 26% served dually enrolled students. The differences in the findings suggested that two-year institutions might better serve dually enrolled students. This positive alignment could be a result of the two-year institution’s connection with the surrounding community, their connections with high schools, their missions, or a host of other possibilities. In addition to the differences between PSEIDDs at two-year versus four-year institutions, Petcu et al. (2015) found that “a larger number of students receive work-based experiences and training on selected vocational-related content at four-year universities compared to two-year community colleges” (p. 368). While the reason for these differences is unclear, if a factor like institutional type could stand as such a critical characteristic in the structure and outcomes of PSEIDDs, it would make sense that other contextual factors could be just as, if not more, important.

Despite the differences in findings, the studies addressed thus far focused on many of the same program characteristics including institutional types, program enrollment, and admissions. One commonality among all the studies on program descriptions, categories, and characteristics thus far has been that each has focused on data gathered from multiple sites to produce more generalizable data. Alternatively, researchers have also uncovered significant findings by focusing on the complexity of a single institution and creating deep and rich descriptions of those cases.
Kelley and Westling (2013), for instance, provided an in-depth description of the University Participant (UP) Program at Western Carolina University (WCU). According to the authors, the UP program was on the inclusive end of Hart et al.’s (2004) continuum as participants with ID lived, worked, and learned on campus alongside their degree-seeking counterparts. In their description of the UP program, Kelley and Westling focused specifically on the role and impact of ‘natural supports.’ Kelley and Westling applied the label natural supports to degree-seeking WCU students who provided support and assistance both to individual UP participants and to the program offering service and scheduling coordination. Kelley and Westling maintained that these natural supports were the key to building this inclusive program.

Kelley and Westling (2013) chose to look in-depth at a single program and identified and detailed a program component critical to the program’s success. Considering that their findings were not generalizable, Kelley and Westling highlighted a single component (i.e., natural supports) that larger survey research might overlook or miss altogether. My review also revealed that in-depth exploration of a program had the power to highlight very concrete and significant program characteristics. In contrast to the importance of the human element that Kelley and Westling note, Blumberg, Carrol, and Petroff (2008) highlighted structural components of a PSEIDD, specifically the design of three program courses, as keys to meeting program goals and building an inclusive experience.

Blumberg et al. (2008) focused on the Career and Community Studies (CCS) program at the College of New Jersey (TCNJ). Like the WCU UP program, the CCS
program was an inclusive experience in a liberal arts setting for students with ID who still received services and supports through their local high school. A key to the CCS program were the three program courses that created an environment for CCS students and degree-seeking TCNJ students to learn alongside one another. The authors maintained that by intentionally creating opportunities for degree-seeking TCNJ students to learn with CCS students, both groups of students benefited. The three-course structure, however, also came with considerable drawbacks.

Blumberg et al. (2008) documented the challenges that the faculty experienced in this program. For instance, the faculty had to consider the ways TCNJ students may be holding themselves back and deferring to their CCS counterparts. The faculty also worried whether this restraint was helping or hindering both groups’ intellectual journeys. Considering the focus of both the Blumberg et al. report alongside the Kelley and Westling (2013) report demonstrated that the focus on a single program allowed for deep drilling into critical program components and produced detailed descriptions of the complexity of PSEIDD execution.

A review of the research on program components, descriptions, and categories left me with questions like the ones posed by the faculty in Blumberg et al. (2008). This portion of my review also revealed program elements including recruitment strategies, admission criteria, program supports and accommodations, employee structures within the program, and partnerships with organizations outside of the program (Grigal et al., 2012) that I encountered in my study. Additionally, the research mentioned above revealed both the complex and contextually dependent nature of PSEIDDs. It was,
therefore, important that I recognized the impact of the program setting and the details of both the institution and the program structure itself in my research. For these reasons, the ecological or systems orientation I took in this research design aligned well with the issues the literature raised. Additionally, my literature review revealed that multiple sites and programs served as the settings for much of the descriptive work conducted on PSEIDDDs. Whereas there were examples of studies conducted at single sites, these case studies were certainly in the minority. Utilizing a case study approach allowed me to contribute to the literature base by adding to the smaller group of studies that leveraged qualitative case study methods. Like the other case studies, I created a similarly deep description of my case generated from thorough empirical research at a single program site.

**PSEIDDDs: Historical and Political Trends**

Researchers have documented the PSEIDDD program history and related politics by conducting comprehensive literature reviews. These projects added value to my research by summarizing and drawing connections between prior research on PSEIDDDs and by producing something of an historical progression of the research and the programs. For instance, Plotner and Marshall (2014) used existing literature to explore current issues like participant eligibility, admissions, institutional support services, and liability surrounding the implementation and execution of PSEIDDDs. Through this exploration, the authors provided experience-based recommendations, identified critical points of consideration for institutions considering the implementation of their PSEIDDD program, and discussed points of interaction between existing institutional structures and
program needs. Neubert et al. (2001) conducted a more traditional literature review and
focused their search on a period of time as opposed to focusing on current issues like

In the Neubert et al. (2001) literature review, the researchers focused on works
that spanned the 1970s through the year 2000 that discussed PSEIDDs. Neubert et al.
(2001) determined that the literature in this area began with programs focused on
providing ‘basic’ supports in PSEIDDs in the 1970s. In the 1980s, programs began
focusing on legislative compliance through PSEIDDs that were primarily separate from
the university community although they were located on college and university
campuses. Later, in the 1990s, PSEIDDs began to incorporate dual enrollment
individualized support models (Neubert et al., 2001). While their primary goal was to
document the historical progression of PSEIDDs, Neubert et al. also recognized the
political forces that affected the development of PSEIDDs. Later, Thoma et al. (2011)
built on Neubert et al.’s work by updating the review to include more recent research.

Thoma et al. (2011) reviewed the literature from 2001 to 2010 that discussed the
participation of students with ID in PSEIDDs. These researchers acknowledged that part
of their research goal was to build on the earlier work of Neubert et al. (2001) by adding
a new decade of research. Thoma et al. added to this literature investigation not only by
including literature from the 2000s but also by organizing their findings, not around
decades but around three emergent categories of research: Program Descriptions;
State/Regional/National Studies; and Individual Student-Initiated Involvement. Using
terms including postsecondary, college, dual enrollment, inclusive postsecondary
education, intellectual disability, mental retardation, developmental disabilities, significant disabilities, and outcomes, Thoma et al. grouped the literature into these categories. By including the updated literature base, Thoma et al. identified similarities and divergences from the findings of Neubert et al. (2001).

For instance, like Neubert et al. (2001) much of the literature that Thoma et al. (2011) found on PSEIDDs included program descriptions. However, the 2000s added new dynamics and perspectives as the more recent research included student, staff, and faculty experiences as major foci. Additionally, Thoma et al. found that the updated literature began to describe the implementation process some of these PSEIDDs went through. The value of investigations like those conducted by Neubert et al. and Thoma et al. rested firmly in the understanding of the progression of research regarding PSEIDDs over time. By not situating programs in the historical and political context in which PSEIDDs exist, we limit our understanding of them. Therefore, research and writing that attempted to situate these PSEIDDs generally, and TPSID programs, specifically into this larger social context, helped build a more comprehensive understanding of PSEIDDs.

Rather than conducting empirical research, Stodden and Whelley (2004) reported and shared their professional opinions. This approach, nonetheless, added important information to my understanding of the larger political and legislative context of PSEIDDs. Stodden and Whelley, for instance, documented how the changing legislative landscape of the time with respect to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Olmstead Act all laid the legal groundwork for increased access to higher education for persons with disabilities. Like the Hart et al.
research referenced earlier, Stodden and Whelley explored the prevailing inclusive or individual support, mixed, and substantially separate models of the day.

As Stodden and Whelley (2004) discussed these models, they highlighted the issues of coordination and clarity among and across programs and stakeholders that serve students with disabilities. Specifically, they stated that “[s]tudents and families, particularly of youth with intellectual disabilities, [were] profoundly impacted by this lack of coordination after IDEA entitlement ends . . . and [were] struggling to overcome the barriers created by the lack of coordination of educational and related services” (p. 13). Though Stodden and Whelley were writing six years before the emergence of TPSID funded programs, they nonetheless identified a problem that would persist even as changing political winds opened the door for the TPSID experiment.

Indeed, the issues of coordination and clarity were present in the results of the Thoma et al. (2012) research. By conducting focus groups with 43 experts in the field of PSEIDDs, Thoma et al. concluded in part that “[a]ll stakeholders, including faculty, providers of disability services, parents, and young adults who are involved with a postsecondary program should have a clear understanding of the program and its expected outcomes for each participant” (p. 1126). In addition to the need for clarity and coordination, Thoma et al. also highlighted that although the political changes that allowed for the emergence of TPSID funded programs were a step in the right direction, effective implementation of these programs was incredibly labor intensive. Additionally, Thoma et al. maintained that the inclusive approaches leveraged by TPSIDs and other
PSEIDDs were not always based on research that documented the benefits of each approach.

Thoma et al. (2012) enhanced understanding of the historical context of PSEIDDs by noting that despite their over 40-year existence in IHEs, there still was a lack of empirical research in the field that investigated and documented best practices. Thoma et al.’s findings, however, should not suggest that there was a complete lack of this type of empirical research. Mock and Love (2012), for instance, used gatherings of PSEIDD stakeholders at four regional summits in the United States to conduct individual interviews and focus groups to “explore statewide policies, practices, and beliefs about access to higher education for students with ID” (p. 289).

Mock and Love (2012) discussed the political context of these PSEIDDs by highlighting the shared concerns that program stakeholders held regarding institutional, regional, and national politics. Mock and Love found that stakeholders identified a common need for improved information sharing with students and families interested in PSEIDDs. Stakeholders also shared a desire for increased collaboration and coordination among agencies and schools that aimed to serve or include students with ID. Mock and Love went beyond identifying the reoccurring issues including poor coordination and clarity found in earlier research. In this research, Mock and Love searched further to find that many of these concerns were based on poorly designed institutional, regional, and national policies that ultimately hindered students’ abilities to partake in PSEIDDs. In the context of this current study, institutionalization then was also likely to involve the navigation of politics and policies.
A review of the research on the historical and political trends surrounding PSEIDDs highlighted the challenges associated with institutionalizing these programs. This literature suggested that TPSID programs, like other PSEIDDs, might exist in an environment of limited clarity and coordination. Additionally, the literature suggested that critical to the institutionalization of these programs were the changing approaches to and structures of the programs themselves. The evolving legislative landscape that surrounded and guided these types of PSEIDDs was also of importance. Taking the time to review this literature allowed me to converse with program stakeholders with a good base of understanding about these programs. As I had seen through my pilot studies and pilot interviews, issues of legislative constraints and opportunities were ready points of conversation for the program staff. In part, my research expanded the understanding of these topics by including the perspective of other stakeholders beyond program staff, who potentially held different perspectives on the historical and political trends and how they affected institutionalization.

**PSEIDDs: Student, Faculty, Staff, and Parent Experiences and Attitudes**

As indicated in the introduction, there have been numerous studies that have documented the positive outcomes students have experienced by partaking in PSEIDDs (Griffin et al., 2012; Grigal et al., 2011; Hendrickson et al., 2013; Izzo & Shuman, 2013; Kleinert et al., 2012; Migliore & Butterworth, 2008). In addition to those studies listed in the introduction, other researchers have also used quantitative methods to track and document the social, employment, and life skills benefits students in PSEIDDs have experienced (Lynch & Getzel, 2013; May, 2012; Neubert, Moon, & Grigal, 2004; Ross,
Marcell, Williams, & Carlson, 2013; Zafft, Hart, & Zimbrich, 2004). As well as identifying the positive outcomes these students experienced, researchers have also captured students’ experience as they move through programs.

Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006), for instance, set out to explore and describe the experience of one student with Downs syndrome at a private four-year research university who was part of a pilot PSEIDD. Leveraging both survey data and interview data, the researchers captured the experiences of the student, a mentor/aid, the student’s mother, and the pilot program administrators. Given the design of the PSEIDD, the research specifically documented the experiences associated with the student’s participation in a speech communication course.

Considering that the benefits of these opportunities are important to highlight, investigations like this added some humanity to the research by showing that these experiences both provided “opportunities for interaction with age-appropriate peers and was a positive learning experience for all participants” (Casale-Giannola & Kamens, 2006, p. 344). Studies that focused on a single student or a single program, however, are not simple and unabashed endorsements of PSEIDDs. Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006) also noted critical challenges “related to assessment, expectations, and building relationships” in their study of the PSEIDD (p. 344). Though in the minority when compared to other research on PSEIDDs, the design of the Casale-Giannola and Kamens was not unprecedented. In fact, Casale-Giannola and Kamens referenced a very similar piece of research conducted by Hamill (2003), which also focused on a single program and a single student’s experience in that program.
Hamill’s (2003) research differed from the Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006) research in important ways. For instance, Hamill leveraged only qualitative data collection methods. Additionally, Hamill conducted research at a Jesuit liberal arts university as opposed to a research university (e.g., in Casale-Giannola & Kamens, 2006). As noted in earlier sections of this review, institutional context can have a profound impact on the program design and outcomes. In this case, both the Hamill and the Casale-Giannola and Kamens research shared some similar findings despite their methodological and contextual differences. Like Casale-Giannola and Kamens, Hamill documented the benefits for everyone involved in the PSEIDD, a finding also supported by Dolyniuk et al. (2002). Similarly, like Casale-Giannola and Kamens, Hamill highlighted the role that friendships played in the student’s experiences. However, there were critical differences between the 2003 and 2006 research findings.

Central to Hamill’s (2003) findings was the role of the student’s sense of pride in her positive experience, an element which was absent from Casale-Giannola and Kamens’s (2006) findings. Hamill also documented the major role the student’s friendships with classmates played in her positive outcomes, whereas Casale-Giannola and Kamens documented a distinct lack of meaningful friendships between the student and her classmates. If nothing else, these two studies considered together demonstrated that even when conducting similar studies in somewhat similar settings, results may vary greatly. Even considered together, however, earlier portions of this review suggest a single perspective cannot illuminate the full story of PSEIDDS. These programs were far
too complex and required additional points of view to approach a comprehensive understanding of this complexity.

In the two previous studies, the researchers’ primary focus was on the experience of the student. Other researchers have focused on the experience and attitudes of the parents of these students revealing distinct and varying experiences and attitudes. The addition of supplementary perspectives such as those of parents to the research cannon on PSEIDDs acknowledged the programs’ complexity because parental perspective might not appear to be critical given that they are not direct participants. These experiences and attitudes, however, were critical components in understanding PSEIDDs because parents and guardians also played large roles in work done through transition programs.

Martinez, Conroy, and Cerreto (2012) found through survey research, for instance, that parents’ desires and wishes played a role in whether their children with intellectual disabilities pursued higher education. The researchers also found that parents lacked knowledge and did not have substantial access to information about the transition process from high school to college. Findings in this study suggested that parents of students with intellectual disabilities wanted additional and more accurate information about transition options. Parents also desired better support in designing transition plans for their students. Also of additional significance was the fact that many respondents to Martinez et al.’s (2012) research had low expectations regarding the likelihood that their students would partake in PSEIDDs. This interaction of desires, wishes, lack of knowledge, and low expectations created a difficult reality for parents of students with ID
who on one hand wanted the best for their students, but on the other hand doubted that their student could succeed.

As students with ID often must rely heavily on their parents or guardians to navigate program admission, registrations, and other processes, the parents’ experiences and attitudes can have a profound impact on their students’ attitudes and experiences. Whereas the experiences and attitudes of parents and guardians were important, so too were the attitudes and experiences of other stakeholders like the college students who learned and attended their institutions alongside participants in PSEIDDs (Griffin et al., 2012; Izzo & Shuman, 2013; Ryan et al., 2015), and the attitudes of the service providers who helped students navigate the PSEIDDS (Sheppard-Jones, Kleinert, Druckemiller, & Ray, 2015).

Of the three sections of this review of the literature on PSEIDDs, this last area appeared to be the most developed. Certainly, this research focused on experiential and attitudinal issues and trends, was of great importance to understanding the outcomes of these programs. However, I chose to spend the least amount of time on this section of my review because these findings, while related to PSEIDDs and TPSID programs, did not appear to advance my understanding of institutionalization. Although the researchers had sufficiently studied the experiences of students, the researchers completed less work that had explored the experiences and attitudes of faculty, parents, and staff associated with the program. By including the voices of staff, faculty, and a parent of a program participant, my research bolstered the representation of their voices in the literature. By including the voices of other administrative stakeholders associated with the institution
where the program lives, my research made space for a range of voices of those involved in institutionalizing a TPSID.

**PSEIDDs and Institutionalization**

After having established a solid understanding of the literature base regarding PSEIDDs, I now turn to their institutionalization in higher education settings. As I have briefly discussed in chapter one, Clark’s (1968) conceptualization of institutionalization in higher education played a large role in my approach to this project. Therefore, I reviewed that concept in some further depth before I engaged with the points where prior research explored PSEIDDs and institutionalization.

Again, Clark (1968) stated that “[i]nstitutionalization, most broadly conceived, is the process whereby specific cultural elements or cultural objects are adopted by actors in a social system. It is thus a process basic to all social organizations, particularly formal organizations” (p. 1). Clark went on to specify that he was writing on the institutionalization of ‘innovations’ which he argued “are restricted to new forms of knowledge that result in structural change. The innovations [he considered] are neither simply new knowledge without any structural change, nor structural change without new knowledge; both elements are necessary for innovations as [he] discussed” (p. 2). Also, essential to Clark’s concept was “growth in complexity, systematization, and strength of the basic ideas on which the innovation is founded” (p. 2).

Clark (1968) argued that even though his writing specifically focused on the institutionalization of innovations in higher education, his models of institutionalization had application beyond higher education. Although this broader application may be
relevant to other investigations, for this research, Clark’s focus on higher education was welcome because the higher education setting housed the TPSID program. In addition to his focus on higher education, Clark’s conceptualization of institutionalization contained other elements that were important to connect to my research, demonstrating how Clark’s concept aligned with this study.

First, note Clark’s repeated use of the word culture. The TPSID program in my study represented the specific institutionalized ‘cultural element.’ By labeling the program as a cultural element, I acknowledged not only that the program itself had cultural components but also acknowledged the role of culture in its institutionalization. The role of culture in the institutional change that accompanies the institutionalization in a higher education setting has been well documented (Bergquist, 1992; Eckel, Hill, & Green, 1988; Kezar, 2001; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1988).

The literature on this role of culture highlighted that “[t]he distinct nature of the campus cultures cannot be overlooked in trying to understand how change processes unfold” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 456). Clark’s (1968) focus on culture combined with the relationship between culture and change in higher education demanded that I account for the role of culture, both on an institutional level and at subcultural levels that exist among campus groups, departments, programs, and divisions. I most directly addressed this acknowledgment in the interview protocol I used to guide my conversations with participants. This protocol included direct questions about the impact of culture in the institutionalization of the program.
Again, in Clark’s (1968) terms, study participants played the part of the ‘actors’ who have the active function of adoption. This adoption, according to Clark, takes place in a social system. To account for the influence and impact of this social system, I chose to employ the case study approach from an ecological or systems orientation. Combining the case study approach with the systems orientation allowed me to explore the ‘growth in complexity, systematization, and strength’ of the innovation and the structural changes that took place through the institutionalization of the TPSID program in MSU’s social system. This combination also allowed me to account for the “[t]he distinct nature of the campus cultures” referenced earlier (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 456). Establishing the clear link between this specific conceptualization of institutionalization and my project was by no means trivial. The clear link is necessary because other researchers have explored institutionalization in the higher education setting through different lenses.

Research that studied institutionalization in higher education covered a wide range of topics. Innovations including sustainability (Lozano, 2006; Wals, 2014; Yarime et al., 2012), institutional environments and resource dependence (Tolbert, 1985), a community-engaged scholarship faculty development program (Jaeger, Jameson, & Clayton, 2012), service learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000), university governance (Waugh, 2003), internationalization (Qiang, 2003), industry and university knowledge transfer activities (Santoro & Gopalakrishnan, 2000), interdisciplinary health professions (Clark, 2004), and distance education (Berge & Muilenburg, 2001) have all, for instance, been researched in higher education settings through the lens of institutionalization.
Even though all the studies in this set of research investigated institutionalization in higher education settings, there are few commonalities between them. Of these few commonalities between the researchers’ description of institutionalization as a concept, the idea that institutionalization is a process was one. In all the research on institutionalization referenced above, the researchers either referred to institutionalization specifically as a process (e.g., as in Yarime et al., 2012) or used words like “routinizing” (e.g., as in Santoro & Gopalakrishnan, 2000) to define the concept as something active that happens over time. Additionally, in all the research, the scholars discussed barriers or complications to institutionalization. Many of the researchers also broached the subjects of organizational culture, systems change, and the connection between institutionalization and the idea of program sustainability.

Another commonality was that most of the research defined institutionalization as a positive and a pinnacle point. In Lozano (2006), for instance, institutionalization was the final step in a four-step process whereby an idea became fully incorporated into an organization and permeated all aspects of the organization. However, in stark contrast to the idea that institutionalization was something to pursue, Waugh (2003) noted how institutionalization has the potential to complicate university governance.

Insomuch as these similarities and differences underscore the complexity of the concept in the research cannon, there were two conclusions of direct consequence for my study. The first conclusion was that studies on institutionalization in higher education did not share a common understanding of institutionalization as a concept. The second
conclusion was that prior research on PSEIDDs or TPSID programs did not explicitly study the programs through the lens of institutionalization.

As for the first conclusion, not only was there no single, explicit, complete definition or understanding of institutionalization shared across the set but also the conceptualization of institutionalization used by the researcher varied considerably. One potential contributor to this variation was the lack of shared references. In fact, across all eleven studies cited above, there were only two examples of references that appeared more than once: Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) “Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony” and Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978) *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence approach*. Given that varied disciplines produced these studies, I might have expected this variety. However, I could not overlook these variations in the ways researchers understood and viewed institutionalization. It was from their views on what institutionalization means and how it occurs that their research methods and findings emerge. These multiple understandings of institutionalization appeared to exist on a spectrum based on the level of formality and specificity with which the research approached the concept.

Considered in terms of a spectrum, at one end, there were studies that purported to investigate institutionalization, but that made little attempt to define or put bounds on the concept. Studies like Clark (2004), Jaeger et al., (2012), and Wals (2014) fell on this less-defined end of the spectrum. In these studies, the authors used terms like developing, designing, implementing, integrating, and sustaining as almost synonyms for institutionalization. The researchers described specific components of the
institutionalization process they studied regarding their respective innovations but did not either initially or ultimately explore a general or universal understanding of institutionalization.

Moving towards the middle of the spectrum where there was increased structure but where the lines of institutionalization as a concept are only lightly drawn were studies like Berge and Muilenburg (2001) and Bringle and Hatcher (2000). In these studies, scholars argued that outcomes indicated the innovation’s successful institutionalization. For instance, Berge and Muilenburg argued an IHE had institutionalized distance learning if “[p]olicy, communication, and practice are all aligned so that business objectives are being addressed” and if the IHE “established a distance learning identity and conduct[ed] systematic assessment of distance training events with an organizational perspective” (p. 2). In their research on service learning, Bringle and Hatcher separated the outcomes of institutionalization by stakeholders including faculty, students, and community supporters. The outcomes included components like a “campus mission statement,” “broad administrative and staff understanding of and support for [the innovation],” “infrastructure,” “course and curriculum development,” faculty “expectations for recognition and rewards,” student “service and service learning scholarships,” “co-curricular transcripts that document service,” and “enduring, and diverse partnerships that mutually support community interests and academic goals” (p. 275). While these researchers did not go as far as to establish a definition of institutionalization that could apply in any setting, they did discuss components and guidelines that created more structure around their use of the term.
At another end of this spectrum were studies that went to great lengths to clearly define and bind the concept of institutionalization. Lozano (2006), in a study of sustainable development in higher education, continued this trend of describing institutionalization by its outcomes. Lozano argued that idea acceptance among organizational stakeholders and idea incorporation into the institution’s culture and day-to-day operations were indicators of institutionalization. Lozano went further, however, by providing a concise definition of institutionalization stating that “[t]he institutionalization of an idea . . . refers to the process in which the idea passes from individual efforts and attitudes to changes in the system” (p. 789). Lozano also argued that in the move from individual to system change, institutionalization was, in fact, the final of four steps of a process (the other three being intuition, interpretation, and integration).

Waugh (2003) applied a similarly high level of structure to the concept of institutionalization. Waugh argued that “[t]he processes of institutionalization, bureaucratization, and professionalization change the character and the culture of the organizations” (p. 86). These three concepts, according to Waugh, were interrelated in a system where one leads to another. Specifically, regarding institutionalization, Waugh wrote that innovations,

become more institutionalized as their structures become more differentiated.
Lines of authority become more clearly defined. Tasks become more specialized. Relationships become more formal. Hierarchy grows as spans of control shrink and the needs for supervision and coordination increase. The institutionalization
process makes for a much more complex organization, which in turn requires more accountability. (p. 86)

Waugh’s (2003) research centered on university governance, but this complex understanding of the institutionalization process demonstrated the depth of understanding Waugh believed was necessary to understanding the connection between governance and institutionalization.

The choices that a researcher would make around the depth of explanation regarding institutionalization likely revolved on several factors including the field of research, centrality of institutionalization as a concept to the research question, the researcher’s assumptions about the common understandings of institutionalization, and the research base from which the researcher was drawing, among others. As a researcher, I needed to not only account for these factors in my research, but I also needed to determine how I would incorporate these previous investigations of institutionalization in higher education settings into my project. This brought me to the second critical conclusion that scholars had not explicitly studied PSEIDDs or TPSID through the lens of institutionalization.

My review of the literature on PSEIDDs and TPSID programs revealed no instances of the term ‘institutionalization’ appearing in research regarding these programs. However, given the other research covered in this chapter that applied the concept of institutionalization to innovations in higher education, it was not enough to look for the word ‘institutionalization’ alone. Applying a broader understanding of institutionalization and understanding where some research might use terms like
implementation, incorporation, and development in the place of the term institutionalization, I found that although no research on PSEIDDs contained the term institutionalization, research had applied many of the concepts covered above. Plotner and Marshall (2015), for instance, contained examples of this application.

In this research, Plotner and Marshall (2015) surveyed 79 PSEIDD program directors and coordinators from 30 states across the United States. “The purpose of this study was to survey all existing non-dual enrollment programs in the United States . . . in order to gather information about the perceived barriers and supports encountered by the programs during their development and across time” (p. 60). The programs Plotner and Marshall studied ranged in terms of size, location, type, funding sources, and duration.

Plotner and Marshall (2015) built the survey used in this study on information from previous research on barriers and supports experienced by new PSEIDDs programs (Folk, Yamamoto, & Stodden, 2012; Getzel, 2008; Hafner, Moffat, & Kisa, 2011; Neubert & Redd, 2008; O’Connor, Kubiak, Espiner, & O’Brien, 2012; Plotner & Marshall, 2014; Stodden & Whelley, 2004; Thoma, 2013; Thoma et al., 2011). Through their review of the existing literature including the research that informed the development of their survey tool, the scholars determined that “data on best practices for the development and implementation of PSE programs is largely descriptive and typically reflects one program’s experience” (Plotner & Marshall, 2015, p. 60).

Through this survey research, Plotner and Marshall (2015) uncovered some compelling trends. For instance, they concluded that institutions and stakeholders became more supportive over time and the perceived weight of institutional, policy, and
organization barriers decreased over time. Additionally, they found that program stakeholders viewed faculty members as predominately supportive, with only 3% of survey respondents identifying resistance from faculty. The roots of this resistance were increased workloads associated with their participation in the program as a major barrier to program implementation. As other researchers had found (Mock & Love, 2012), Plotner and Marshall also found that funding sources and their relation to the continued sustainability of the program were the primary concerns and barriers for survey respondents. In discussing these findings, Plotner and Marshall echoed other researchers discussed above who studied institutionalization in the higher education setting by using terminology including ‘implementation’, ‘barriers’, ‘development’, and ‘integrate’.

Although Plotner and Marshall (2015) and others who have written on the development of PSEIDDs (Folk et al., 2012; Getzel, 2008; Hafner et al., 2011; Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Plotner & Marshall, 2014; Stodden & Whelley, 2004; Thoma et al., 2011; Uditsky & Hughson, 2012) do not purport to investigate the institutionalization of PSEIDDs, their research on PSEIDDs and supports and barriers to implementation were still useful to note in this study.

This earlier research, for instance, provided me with insight into topics I encountered through my investigations. Based on the previous research, I anticipated that interviews and documents would reference issues including institutional and personal liability, concerns about student (both degree-seeking and program) safety, questions about funding sources (institutional, grant, personal, financial aid), and academic topics (faculty workload and preparation, academic standards, course development and
approval). This earlier research also helped me predict the stakeholders who might have valuable insight to add to my study. From the prior work, I anticipated that representatives from various university departments and functions (e.g. university administration, academic leadership, academic departments, campus safety, disability services, university housing, university bursar, financial aid, and the registrar) might provide unique and valuable insight into the institutionalization process. As some of the research was longitudinal, the prior research also helped me recognize the fluid and changing dynamics of the programs and institutionalization process over time.

Though some researchers have looked at aspects of institutionalization, no researcher has approached the topic of institutionalizing a single TPSID funded program that had gained official recognition by the home institution. Some of this prior research, which scholars conducted before the introduction of the TPSID grants, (Getzel, 2008; Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Stodden & Whelley, 2004) could not capture an accurate picture of the unique aspects of institutionalization associated with the clear and distinct TPSID design and outcome requirements. Similarly, other researchers (Thoma et al., 2011) could not focus on the uniqueness of the institutionalization of the TPSID programs because of their broad inclusion of many types of PSEIDDs. Other research (O’Connor et al., 2012; Thoma, 2013) did not include a wide range of program stakeholders’ perspectives, beyond those directly associated with the program, whose insight provides valuable perspective on institutionalization.

Finally, although information existed on critical components of institutionalization of TPSID programs, it existed in the form of professional guidance
based on experience designing a program or on review of existing literature (Hafner et al., 2011; Plotner & Marshall, 2014; Uditsky & Hughson, 2012) and was not empirical research. Closest to my study was the Folk et al. (2012) study. This research included a focus on a single TPSID funded program and inclusion of multiple stakeholders’ perspectives.

I was particularly interested in Folk et al. (2012) because it not only focused on a single program and on the implementation process of the program but also because, unlike other work, the program was TPSID funded. Focusing on the TPSID program at Honolulu Community College, the researchers leveraged interviews with both program participants, project partners, and institutional and program staff. Ultimately, Folk et al. produced a rich description of program components, of the Dual Enrollment with Individualized Supports Project (DEIS) model that served as the framework for the program, and the voices of the program participants, partners, and administrators. Again, this was important work in the context of my study because it provided something of a research model both in how the researchers conducted and reported their findings.

However, there are critical differences between the Folk et al. and my study that demonstrated that room still existed between existing research and my study. First, Folk et al. (2012) completed their study after only one year of the project’s existence when TPSID funding was still in place. My study, on the other hand, explored program institutionalization after TPSID funding was no longer available and the program and institution have had to face the decision of creating or continuing a program that had lost this critical funding source. That is, I was interested in the institutionalization process as
opposed to its initial implementation. Different from the community college setting used by Folk et al., my research site was a four-year research university. As discussed earlier in this chapter, institutional setting matters. Thus, studying a four-year research university had the potential to uncover findings that a study of a community college could not.

The value of understanding the components of institutionalizing PSEIDDs was evident in the multiple studies and guidance documents that existed. The earlier research and mine considered many aspects of the programs, the institutions that house them, and the dynamics of institutionalization. This literature review revealed that aspects of leadership, institutional organization, interpersonal communication, funding models, and trends would all likely emerge through my investigation. This review also revealed the critical role that Clark’s (1968) concept of institutionalization would play in my research. I strengthened my knowledge and research by reviewing literature both on institutionalization in higher education broadly and on the previous work conducted on aspects of institutionalizing PSEIDDs.

**Conclusion**

Through this literature review, I covered a wide range of research and other writings that detail PSEIDDs and institutionalization both broadly and specifically. I have shown that the history of PSEIDDs is both long and complex. PSEIDDs have existed on an array of IHEs both in the U.S. and beyond in a variety of formats serving a diverse range of students with ID. The literature that existed on PSEIDDs was almost as diverse as the programs themselves and included literature reviews, empirical studies,
and guidance documents produced by individual program implementers and by national coordinating organizations like Think College. This varied literature has produced multiple categorizations, taxonomies, and labels that attempted to simplify the complex collection of PSEIDDs. It was the conversation that included this long and complex history that I joined through this case study.

Through the study of these programs, researchers have underlined the importance of context in understanding these programs and their outcomes. Studies and their findings demonstrated that factors including program structure, institutional setting, target student population, and length of time the program has been in existence determine a great deal of the programs’ outputs and outcomes. Studies have also demonstrated that there is value in studying PSEIDDs both as a connected network of programs and as individual and unique programs. By conducting a case study, I built on the demonstrated value gained by studying a program that existed at a single site.

My review of the literature showed that in the continuing evolution of PSEIDDs, TPSID programs were newcomers, but were also part of the progression of these programs that came in reaction to societal, institutional, and legislative trends. TPSID programs were unique as compared to other PSEIDDs and came with the strict guidance associated with federal money. The evolution of the programs themselves and the context surrounding them indicated that both as a collection and as individual programs, PSEIDDs were not static and unchanging. The emergence of TPSID programs was representative of these changing dynamics. The emergence of TPSID programs also
indicated that societal, institutional, and legislative trends created both opportunities for advancement and pathways wrought with barriers for navigation.

The literature revealed that navigating these barriers and pathways had a great deal to do with the context that surrounded the program. Whereas literature already existed that documents these navigations in terms of implementation, development, and other related topics, no studies existed that approached PSEIDDs from the standpoint of institutionalization. Furthermore, few studies existed that explored these matters specifically in TPSID programs. The research that did exist studied the programs in their infancy. Additionally, these investigations relied almost solely on the input and perspectives of program staff and, on rare occasions, on the faculty connected to the PSEIDD. I found no examples of studies of PSEIDDs that included input from institutional administrators who undoubtedly played critical roles in the institutionalization of the program. My study then continued the conversation that existed but also expanded on it in unique and necessary ways.

Despite the complexity and difficulty of institutionalization, the positive outcomes for students in the PSEIDDs, for degree-seeking students who encountered a program student, for program staff and administrators, and the parents and loved ones of students in PSEIDDs were overwhelming. The positive outcomes were not alone, however, and the programs experienced a multitude of challenges. To understand and document the outcomes of these programs, researchers studying PSEIDDs have employed a variety of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative. Researchers studied PSEIDD outcomes by investigating experiences of and outcomes for large groups of program
participants and for individual students. They also studied outcomes in a range of institutional settings and across a diverse set of PSEIDD types. Unlike the study of program implementation and development, these studies have included a wider range of stakeholder input including both parents and the university administration.

As stated above, the study of program outcomes appeared to be the most developed area associated with PSEIDDs. Both because of the advanced stage of this portion of the literature and its lack of relevance to my research questions, my study did not explore program outcomes specifically but instead drew on some of the valuable practices associated with these studies like the inclusion of the program stakeholders beyond the program staff.

I strengthened my study through the knowledge I gained during my review of the literature. Clark’s (1968) conception of institutionalization also strengthened my study and provided it a firm base. The literature not only showed a lack of research on the institutionalization of TPSIDs but also showed that the way a researcher defined institutionalization as a critical element in the exploration of the topic. By filling the holes identified above, I advanced the conversation regarding PSEIDDs broadly and TPSID programs specifically. My case study of the institutionalization of a single TPSID program explored how a program became part of its home institution through critical formal and informal pathways. As the Federal Government rolled out the second wave of TPSID grants, the continued conversation about these programs and their institutionalization remained relevant and necessary.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In 2010, when the U.S. Department of Education awarded the initial 27 TPSID grants, it may have been impossible to fully anticipate the complex process those programs were going to undertake towards institutionalization (United States Department of Education, 2010). According to Clark (1968), institutionalizing programs in the political and structural environment of an IHE means navigating issues of timing, personal characteristics, leadership, decision-making, funding, value climate, and competition. The TPSID program at MSU, which successfully became a standing component of MSU by navigating these political and structural factors along the path to institutionalization, offered an ideal opportunity to research the program stakeholders’ perspectives on this process. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand these perspectives regarding the move from a pilot to a permanent program.

Pilot Studies

Before I begin outlining the methods associated with this study, I must first acknowledge the earlier pilot studies I conducted at this site. I had not intended on studying the TPSID program when I initially contacted its program staff. Still, it took some time to build rapport and trust with the members of the project team. During the time it took to get to know the staff and the program, I developed a research interest at this site and subsequently conducted two pilot studies with the program staff. The first study was an instrumental case study investigating the program’s and the program staff’s
role in the identity development of its participants. The second study was phenomenological in nature as I explored the essence of the experience of being a staff member in the program.

In writing about case study research, Stake (1995) stated that “[t]here is no particular moment when data gathering begins” (p. 49) and that “[t]here is no particular moment when data analysis begins” (p. 71). With Stake’s comment in mind, I recognized that for me to claim that my pilot studies were something different from the current study would be to claim that data gathering for this current study did not begin with these initial studies. That claim would be entirely false as I openly admit that the data that I gathered during those initial pilot studies allowed me to build an understanding of the program that carried me through the entirety of my investigation. I believed that the knowledge and access I gained through these studies allowed me to produce richer and more complete outcomes in this research. In fact, without the extensive effort I put into building connections and knowledge of the program, I did not believe I could have undertaken this study. As I discuss later, my initial meetings with the program staff revealed that any newcomer to this program needed to build trust with the staff and establish that the newcomer’s intentions were not exploitative. Admittedly, the influence of these earlier studies was present for me throughout this study; however, I deployed strategies (such as researcher journaling) to mitigate potential biases with this case study research project. I outlined my approach to accounting for and managing this influence in the section on trustworthiness in this chapter.
Case Study Research Design

Case study research can take on many forms and utilize many methods. Whereas some scholars may hold that the case study method involves certain participant selection guidelines or other necessary characteristics, the bounded system characteristic seems a universally agreed upon defining characteristic of this type of research. Merriam (2002) described a bounded system as “a single entity, unit around which there are boundaries...that] has a finite quality about it” (p. 178). In this study, the bounded system included the program at MSU, a four-year public university in the Midwestern United States, as well as its stakeholders, and considered the institutional and regional context in which the process of institutionalization occurred. Furthermore, the case was time bound for this project.

This investigation focused on experiences and documentation from 2010 through 2016. By beginning with 2010, I included consideration of the initial TPSID grant application and the associated application process and experience. By concluding in 2016, I incorporated all four initial academic years of the program as outlined in the TPSID grant, the graduation of the first class of program participants, formal university review of the program by Faculty Senate and the university’s governing board, and the first full year of the program after its incorporation into the university structure. Drawing once again on Clark (1968), institutionalization typically completed after “a period of restricted trial, if the trial is considered successful adoption . . . will usually follow” (p. 24).
The TPSID grant-funded phase of this program matched nicely with Clark’s concept of a restricted trial. Moreover, continued operation of the program after the TPSID funding phase completed and after review from the Board and the Senate indicated adoption into the institution. For practical purposes, defining clear time bounds for this case was necessary. The program was still very dynamic and fluid as it evolved and responded to the changing institutional environment. Therefore, defining the time boundaries of the study not only defined the research focus but also allowed for the feasible execution of the project and study of this case.

In general, my interest in this specific case led me to the case study approach. However, the case study design also permitted valuable latitude in my research design (e.g., data collection and analysis methods). The case study design, and the latitude it permitted meant “any number of qualitative strategies [could be] combined with the case” (Merriam, 2002, p. 179). In fact, Hatch (2002) went as far as to state “it is not perfectly clear that qualitative case study research is distinct from ethnography or participant observation studies” (p. 30). That is, what defines case study is not the data collection process, but the study’s focus on a bounded system. What one intended to study in or about that system and how one intended to represent the study’s outcomes was also of consequence. This consequence was central in the distinctions Stake (1995) made between instrumental and intrinsic case study research.

For Stake (1995), an intrinsic case study was one in which the researcher was interested in the case “not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case” (p. 3).
Alternatively, an instrumental case study was one where the “case study . . . is instrumental to accomplishing something other than understanding” something particular (Stake, 1995, p. 3).

On the one hand, the intrinsic label seemed to fit my research because the case itself was of interest and I could argue for a greater understanding of the case on its merits. Conversely, the instrumental label might have been appropriate if my goal was to generate theory or draw generalizations from the research. As a point of clarification, I had little doubt that other PSEIDDs moving through potential institutionalization processes could look to this study for insight into this process. However, given my need to acknowledge the “uniqueness, complexity, and contextual embeddedness” of the process involved in moving from a pilot to a permanent program, the focus of the study was on this particular program (Schram, 2006, p. 107).

Supporting my decision to conduct an intrinsic case study was the large extent to which I felt aligned with Grandy’s (2010) description of an intrinsic case study. Grandy contended that intrinsic case studies focus on “particularities” and “context,” are “exploratory in nature,” and “strive to capture richness and complexity” (p. 3). As I have already described in chapter one of this report, it was exactly the complex details of the TPSID program and the institutionalization process that were of interest to me.

Regarding the potential applicability of my findings to other programs and their institutionalization processes, Grandy argued that:

Researchers adopting an intrinsic case approach do not avoid generalization. The focus, however, is on offering the reader thick description of the case so the
reader can draw his or her own interpretations about the particularities of the case and the transferability of the findings to other cases . . . The intrinsic case attempts to generalize from within, rather than from case to case. (p. 5)

The intrinsic case label then aligned with my approach to this study because it allowed me to focus on the details of my case and to then present those details to my reader so that they can determine the applicability of my findings to their situation. Given the flexibility in method that case study research allowed me as a researcher, its focus on a bounded system, and the alignment I felt with the approach and outcomes of intrinsic case study research, the case study approach emerged as a match for my research. After having established the case study approach as a major component of this qualitative research, I turn now, for a time, to my role as a research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002).

**Research Ethics and Trustworthiness**

Four topics related to research ethics and trustworthiness are particularly relevant to this study. The first of these matters is my prior relationship with study participants. Related to these relationships, is the positions I occupied throughout the study as either an insider or outsider depending upon the study setting. The final two areas of import are my ability and attempts to maintain confidentiality and trustworthiness in my study. In this section, I discuss my approaches to strengthen this study through successful negotiation of potentially problematic dynamics related to each of these four areas.
Prior Relationship with Participants

As I begin the coverage of my role as a researcher in qualitative research, it is important to expand on my previous relationship with many, if not all, of the individuals I interviewed in this study. The relationships I formed with many of the individuals identified as stakeholders in this study began between three and four years prior to the start of data collection for this study.

I first met and connected with the program staff, for instance, over the two years prior to the beginning of this study. In one of my first interactions with a group of the staff from the program we discussed my interest in learning more about the program students. The program staff met my interests and intentions with what I believed considerable resistance and skepticism. As I came to find out later, this reaction was in part motivated by a desire to protect the program participants from exploitation and overburdening associated with multiple research projects that may not have ultimately helped the students in any way. As I continued to express interest and had additional interactions with the program staff and eventually with students in the program, the staff’s negative feelings dissipated. Certainly, my relationship with the program staff was still developing, but I worked hard to develop a “relationship based on trust” and one that “assumes a fair bit of reciprocity” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 36). Merriam (1998) commented on this trusting relationship, noting that “[e]mpathy is the foundation of rapport” and “[a] researcher is better able to have a conversation with a purpose . . . in an atmosphere of trust” (p. 23).
The trust building work I did to strengthen these relationships with the program staff had an undeniable impact on my data gathering and analysis. In fact, without the work I did to build a trusting relationship that involved mutual respect, reciprocity, and empathy prior to beginning this study or any of the pilot studies I have discussed, I doubt if many of the participants from the program or even the institution would have agreed to participate in this study. To discuss my relationship with the institutional stakeholders who were not part of the program staff, I must also discuss my shifting insider-outsider role.

**Insider- Outsider Researcher Dynamics**

Given that I was an insider at the institution at which I conducted this research, I knew and was known by many of my participants through my professional position and my close working relationship with them. Researchers dub this scenario “research in your own backyard” (Malone, 2003, p. 800) or “insider research” (Asselin, 2003, p. 100; Mercer, 2007, p.1). In this research scenario, there was a range of considerations, pitfalls, and benefits I considered. First, however, I must acknowledge that qualitative research (and likely all research) contains some level of the insider dilemmas I discuss here.

As Mercer (2007) described, the distinction between insider and outsider is not static, and it exists on a continuum with many dimensions.

Some features of the researcher's identity, such as his or her gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation are innate and unchanging; other features, such as age, are innate but evolving. These features provide one dimension to the insider/outsider
continuum. Other dimensions are provided by the time and place of the research (at both a micro and a macro-level); the power relationships within which the researcher and the researched co-exist; the personalities of the researcher and specific informants; and even the precise topic under discussion. (p. 4)

Following Mercer’s (2007) description, the label of insider and outsider can change throughout a study. Moreover, given that topic, time, and place are unavoidable aspects of any research, be it qualitative or quantitative, Mercer’s logic points to insider/outsider dynamics at play in all research to varying degrees. In my research, I gave great consideration to my insider/outsider roles.

My insider role within MSU carried with it both positive and negative impacts on my research. Though it may have caused some discomfort among potential participants, as they could have felt pressured into participating, my professional position also allowed me great access and enabled me to form trusting and credible relationships with participants. Still, participation in this study was on a voluntary basis and participation was unlikely to evoke any harmful reaction or discomfort. I must admit that I did not see evidence that my professional role caused participants discomfort. That is, no participants directly addressed concerns of this nature to me. However, I by no means overlook the potential that my professional role could cause some potential participants to feel pressured into participation or to feel limited in their ability to speak honestly. That said, in many ways, I also sat in an outsider role in this study.

For instance, I did not identify as a person with a disability or as a service provider for individuals with disabilities. My identities as an individual without a
disability and as someone who was not acting as a service provider for persons with disabilities, like my insider role, had both positive and negative impacts. These identities provided me some distance from the work conducted at my research site, which allowed me to offer a unique perspective on the institutionalization process. Admittedly, this distance was somewhat complicated by the connections I made with the program and its staff through the pilot studies I referenced earlier.

Regardless, these identities, however, also created barriers to my ability to access and identify with the TPSID program and its goals. Considering that I have spent multiple years working with disability related issues in higher education, I have not taken lightly the task of trying to understand experiences far beyond my own. To that end, I have sought to build a greater appreciation for a variety of disability-related social, economic, media, and cultural issues.

One resource that I used in constructing a frame of reference to this variety of issues was Stone’s (2005) collection of essays regarding culture and disability. This piece brought to light multiple culturally anchored perspectives on disability. These perspectives helped me to see that both societal and personal dynamics culturally frame and inform viewpoints on disability, including those held by my participants. Developing this and similar filters helped me view my work and interactions with research participants with the type of empathy and bias sensitivity that Merriam (1998) described as hallmarks of quality and ethical research. In this same vein, Carey’s, (2009) book, On the margins of citizenship: Intellectual disability and civil rights in twentieth-century America, helped build my perspective that the United States has a specific and sometimes
disturbing history of treatment and approach to individuals with IDD. The historically rooted undertones that permeate the current social-cultural climate in the U.S. related to IDD were an overarching force in this study.

Even considering the critical perspective I tried to develop, I needed to remain diligent about issues like making the research accessible and ethical practices associated with disability-related research given the program’s work with individuals with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, I identified works by Olkin (2004) and Cornish et al., (2008), which, respectively, provided guidance on making research accessible and on ethical practices associated with disability-related research. Confidentiality was another aspect of ethical research associated both with issues of disability and my insider-outsider role that I felt inclined to address.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality proved to be problematic given the unique nature of this case. Whereas the case study design provided a great possibility in the focused exploration of a unique setting and experience, it can also raise confidentiality issues as it did in this setting. Merriam (1998) noted that in case study research “[e]ven when names are changed, some people are easily identified by the details of their messages” (p. 132).

Given that there were less than 30 programs across the country that received the first round of TPSID grants, simply changing names would not suffice in disguising the case under study. Furthermore, the initial set of TPSID grant recipient sites varied in distinguishable ways including institutional size and type, location, and program design. I attempted throughout my report writing process to limit enough details of the case and
specific participant roles to protect identities while still maintaining the accuracy and utility of my report. However, the unique nature of the case limited the extent to which I could be confident that I had sufficiently obfuscated identifiable information.

Additionally, there existed a balance between masking identifying information in that if I withheld too much of the detail, I would have limited or even destroyed my ability to report accurately findings in a useful and complete manner. In the end, I relied on the open and frank conversations I had with study participants. In those conversations, I was clear about the nature of my work, the uniqueness of the program, my role as a researcher and a professional, and the potential issues of confidentiality. Through this open disclosure, I felt secure with the steps I took to protect their identities and maintain their trust.

**Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness concept and techniques outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) encompassed many of my attempts to establish trustworthiness in this case study. The data collection method section of this report outlined some of the trustworthiness techniques, suggested by Lincoln and Guba, including the use of multiple sources and methods to triangulate findings and researcher journaling. My prolonged engagement with the program also enhanced the trustworthiness of this study. Through this extended engagement, I interacted with the program participants, built trust with the participants, participated in several program events and milestones, and established enough comfort between the study participants and myself to elicit honest responses from interviewees (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also incorporated member checking (Charmaz, 2006;
Creswell, 2014) to ensure the credibility of data by giving my participants the opportunity to review their interview transcripts and provide changes as they saw fit. In addition to these techniques, I established trustworthiness using expert or peer debriefing, which I also discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Additionally, I engaged throughout my research in a collaborative analysis as described by Van Manen (1990). As I discussed earlier and detailed below in my section on data collection, I identified sources of expert debriefing and collaborative analysis points in the forms of knowledgeable faculty members and multiple TPSID program directors. Interactions and conversations with these experts about my research, in conjunction with feedback from my dissertation committee, allowed me to “[convene] and [gather] the interpretive insights of others [regarding my] research text” and data (Van Manen, 1990, p. 100). This technique helped increase the level of trustworthiness of this research in that multiple voices and lenses beyond my limited view generated and checked my descriptions and findings. As this case study was full of confounding logistic and ethical issues, I relied on these feedback points to help navigate the research process and to provide alternative perspectives and opinions. I am confident that through the techniques I have described throughout this report I was able to produce trustworthy and useful results.

**Data Collection Methods**

Interviews and artifacts served as the two primary sources of data for this study. To understand and appropriately describe the institutionalization of this program, I needed to study the case from a variety of angles. The multiple data points I gathered
also helped build the trustworthiness of the study by providing a variety of points for triangulation. In this section, I described my approach to the multiple in-depth semi-structured formal interviews I conducted in this study. I then reviewed my participant recruitment and selection methods which led into brief biographic vignettes that provided background information of the 12 study participants. Next, I presented information regarding my collection of institutionalization related artifacts. Finally, I discussed my approach to researcher journaling and reflection. The data I generated through journaling became part of my overall data set and added to the strength of the study as I used journaling to document emerging ideas, record critical elements of the research process, and think through preliminary findings.

**Multiple In-depth Semi-Structured Formal Interviews**

As Hatch (2002) explained, interviews help the researcher “uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds” (p. 91). As a reminder, I was interested in the institutionalization of this program and the stakeholders’ perspectives on this process. Therefore, interviews were a clear data collection choice and proved to be a necessary technique to address the research questions of this study.

The in-depth, semi-structured interview approach involves planned interviews that build a deep understanding of participants’ perspectives in a flexible format that allows for the investigation of topics that emerge during the study and the interview (Hatch, 2002). I conducted an initial in-person interview with each participant (see Appendix A). I either completed a full transcription of my data or reviewed the transcript
I obtained from a contracted transcriptionist for accuracy and completeness as soon as was possible. Upon review of the interviews, I found, on a few occasions, that I needed to clarify the interview data with a participant. I clarified that information either through emails, phone calls, or brief in-person conversations.

I recorded all interviews with participants using a digital recorder. During each interview, I took field notes which included, among other elements “specific terms, labels, words, and phrases used by the interviewee” (Yin, 2011, p. 158). Within 48 hours of each interview, I entered a note in my research journal which captured my initial reactions, emerging questions, and follow-up ideas related to the interview.

As for the interviewing style, Rubin and Rubin’s (2012) responsive interviewing with conversational partners best described the approach I maintained in these interviews:

*Responsive interviewing* is a style of qualitative interviewing. It emphasizes the importance of building a relationship of trust between the interviewer and interviewee that leads to more give-and-take in the conversation. The tone of questioning is basically friendly and gentle, with little confrontation. The pattern of questioning is flexible; questions evolve in response to what the interviewees have just said, and new questions are designed to tap the experience and knowledge of the interviewee. Even within this style of interviewing, there is room to adjust what you do and how to present yourself according to your own personality, the topic at hand and the needs of your interviewee. (p. 36)

A full discussion of my appreciation of this approach was beyond the scope of this report. However, given the relationships I have discussed with the interview participants, Rubin
and Rubin’s emphasis on trust fits with my approach to this project. Additionally, by incorporating flexibility into my interviewing style, I navigated the influence of insider and outsider dynamics as I responded to, for instance, differing power dynamics and familiarity from interview to interview.

I modeled my approach upon the responsive interviewing technique I used as an interview protocol but stayed flexible in the interview to explore unexpected topics and themes that emerged. Although I constructed and pilot tested an interviewing protocol, the goal of the interviews was to let the stakeholders talk about their perspectives on the institutionalization of the program and prompt participants to explain a topic further or react to an observation. Accordingly, I was flexible in each interview and allowed the participant to direct the conversation as needed. Additionally, each interview was a bit different as my personality and style interacted with the participant’s personality and style.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

To achieve a mix of participants who could provide a variety of perspectives on the institutionalization of this program, I employed a two-phase participant selection and recruitment process. I built an argument for this range of perspectives in my literature review by highlighting that studies focusing on a specific type of program in which the stakeholder produced valuable information (Casale-Giannola & Kamens, 2006; Griffin et al., 2012; Hamill, 2003; Izzo & Shuman, 2013; Martinez et al., 2012; Sheppard-Jones et al., 2015). I also observed that these studies could not fully describe institutionalization. Yin’s (2011) concept of purposive sampling accurately describes phase-one of my
recruitment and selection process. In this phase, I sought to identify participants who could provide the “most relevant and plentiful data, given [the] topic of study” (p. 88). Therefore, I targeted key program personnel listed in the original TPSID grant proposal. I categorized these individuals as ‘the program implementers.’ I obtained interviews from all but one of these individuals, the TPSID job developer.

While I successfully contacted the TPSID job developer, I never secured an interview with that individual. Still, I did conduct interviews with seven key program personnel as I interviewed two faculty members instead of the minimum of one that I initially targeted. As expected, these individuals provided the relevant and plentiful data Yin (2011) referenced because they had access to insight and information from the time of the program’s conception. By targeting individuals critically engaged with the grant-funded program from the start, I gained access to perspectives of those steeped in the institutionalization process. However, as I found, these individuals could not institutionalize the program on their own because the hierarchy of MSU was complex and deep. The second phase of the recruitment and selection process allowed me to explore the deep and complex institutional dynamics and systems involved in institutionalization.

In the second phase of my recruitment and selection process I leveraged a snowball sampling method. Yin (2011) defined this technique as “selecting new data collection units [participants] as an offshoot of existing ones” (p. 89). Therefore, in addition to other interview questions, I asked each of the participants from phase-one about who else, beyond themselves, was critical in the institutionalization of the program and might have key insight into institutionalization.
Phase-two participants, as planned, came as I employed a snowball sampling approach (Yin, 2011) and garnered recommendations from phase-one participants. I referred to the study participants recruited in this phase as ‘the institutional partners.’ As anticipated there were both unique and crossover suggestions between participants. To keep the number of final participants manageable, I only recruited additional participants who could foreseeably provide new insights into the institutionalization of the program. As Yin (2011) noted, snowball sampling becomes ineffective if the researcher undertakes it without purpose. Therefore, I selected additional participants for recruitment from the recommendations based on the criteria that they would be able to illuminate a component of the institutionalization process that I had not previously explored with other participants. In deciding who of the recommended phase-two participants to interview, I also noted individuals that several phase-one participants recommended as multiple recommendations suggested to me that these individuals had multiple and critical points of influence.

I conducted all interviews between June 2016 through the end of October 2016. In total, I recruited and interviewed 12 stakeholders involved in the institutionalization of the program and conducted one interview with each participant with each interview ranging in length from forty-five minutes to two hours.

Participant Profiles

Both because of the design of this study and by the nature of institutionalization, the voices of the program stakeholders were essential in accurately telling the story of this program’s move from a pilot program to a permanent program. The stakeholders’
insights alone lacked the necessary background information that informed their perspectives. In a sense, one could not know this case without knowing the stakeholders. In this section, I briefly outlined pertinent components of my stakeholders’ backgrounds. Even though I shared additional information about the stakeholders, I obfuscated clearly identifiable information yet still provided critical contextual information to situate their perspective and thus situate my description of the case. In an attempt to further conceal their identities, I asked each interview participant to choose their own pseudonym, which I have used in this report any time I referenced a study participant. The stakeholders’ backgrounds added an important framework to the comments and dynamics that ran throughout my findings.

**Phase-one participants: Program implementers.** As described above, the common characteristic shared by all study participants I described as program implementers is that each was listed in the original TPSID grant proposal. This group includes the director of the transition center, a member of the university executive team, the TPSID project director, an emeritus professor, a director of one of the schools within MSU’s College of Education, and two faculty members from MSU’s College of Education. I categorized a total of seven participants as program implementers.

**Harry.** Harry was a professor emeritus at MSU and was a project evaluator on the grant. Harry may be the study participant with the longest history at MSU. He started his career at MSU in the late 1970s as an associate professor in the area of special education. Though he retired and became a professor emeritus within the last 10 years, Harry was the project director for the transition center at MSU at the time of this study.
He described his role with the program as “mostly fiscal management,” “provid[ing] some leadership” and as “a part of the process in terms of the design and execution and not management so much, but more of a consultant.” Many participants in this study described Harry as the visionary for the program.

**Heather.** Heather was a TPSID project director during the grant phase of the program. At the time of this study, Heather was the director of the program, and with two other non-tenured faculty members, she staffed the program. In general, Heather’s role included the overall coordination and administration of the program. In its grant phase, Heather was one of three directors in the program. During the grant phase, her primary responsibility was program development, which included oversight of the daily operations of the students’ experiences, working to build the necessary connections across the institution and curriculum development. Heather initially joined MSU as a doctoral student working with Harry. She completed her Ph.D. in the final year of the program’s TPSID grant.

**Josie.** Josie was one of five faculty members spanning multiple MSU colleges who assisted in curriculum development and field experiences. Her primary teaching focused on math education. As a member of MSU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) team, Josie consulted with the program staff on various IRB issues related to the program. In addition to participating in the program development, Josie also taught a math education course offered to the program participants and degree-seeking students.

**Joy.** Joy was another of the five faculty spanning multiple MSU colleges who assisted in curriculum development and field experiences. Joy had been a professor in
MSU’s College of Education for almost 20 years. She taught in the area of leisure and recreation and had considerable experience with and knowledge of issues related to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities specifically around issues of access related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Joy was one of five faculty spanning multiple MSU colleges who assisted in curriculum development and field experiences. Because of issues related to funding, Joy was no longer teaching in the program.

**Mark.** Mark was the director of a center at MSU focused on transition issues for individuals with disabilities at the time of this study. He was also a co-principle investigator on the TPSID grant. In the mid-1980s, before joining MSU, Mark was working at a not-for-profit agency focused on ID when he met Harry. After Mark had joined MSU, he and Harry worked on several grants, totaling over $20 million, targeting students with intellectual and developmental disabilities on the MSU campus. Describing his role with the program and with the various other projects he worked on with Harry, Mark said that “[Harry] . . . wrote the music and I wrote the lyrics.” Describing these roles another way he said that “[Harry] was sort of the strategist and I was sort of the tactician.”

**Peachy.** Peachy was, at the time of this study, a school director in MSU’s College of Education. In this role, she worked with several different academic programs and specifically provided leadership in recruiting and retaining good faculty and supporting quality teaching and research. As for the program, Peachy was a co-principle investigator through the grant phase. She saw her role during the grant phase as helping lay the foundation but was also quick to point out that Harry, Mark, and Heather carried a
greater portion of the weight when it came to day to day operations, planning, and developing. After the program had split from the transition center, it came under her supervision, and Heather became one of her direct reports. Peachy identified that in her new role with the program, there were still some critical financial and structural issues that she and the program needed to navigate.

**Sam.** While Sam no longer worked at MSU at the time of this study, he was a crucial part of the institutionalization of the program. Sam was a vice president at MSU and named as a co-principal investigator on the grant. Sam’s role at MSU included oversight of enrollment and the non-academic portions of student life at MSU. In addition to his leadership role at MSU, Sam’s close to 30-year tenure at MSU augmented his influence at the institution. Early in his career at MSU, Sam began his working relationship with Harry. Sam described his role with the program primarily as one of a liaison with the MSU College of Education.

**Phase-two participants: Institutional partners.** As described above, the common characteristic shared by all study participants I described as “institutional partners” is that each illuminated a component of the institutionalization process that I had not previously explored with other participants. This group included the staff representatives from various areas of the university including student affairs, financial aid, the bursar’s office, university housing, the provost’s office, and a faculty member from MSU’s College of Education. I categorized a total of five participants as institutional partners.
**Betty.** At the time of this study, Betty was a non-tenure track faculty member who had taught in the areas of special education and early childhood development within the MSU College of Education. She had worked at MSU for almost 20 years and began as an adjunct faculty member. Her role as a mother to a student who participated in the program informed Betty’s connection to the program. Her role with pre-service students, who occasionally fulfilled part of their field experience requirements through work with the program, and the fact that her office was in the same building as the program also informed her understanding of the operations of the program. In addition to supervising the pre-service students who interacted with the program, Betty also acted as an informal sounding board for the program staff as they navigated various issues related to parents. She was also involved in the search processes for the faculty who would eventually lead the program after its grant phase ended.

**Hannah.** Hannah occupied a unique role in higher education as she “straddle[d] the registrar’s office and the provost office” facilitating a range of processes that affect curriculum. This range included curriculum review and approval processes across the university and changes to academic structures. Occupying this unique role made Hannah an invaluable part of the program’s institutionalization. She described this role as one of guidance. Hannah also described her role with the program as one of wanting to see the program succeed but see it succeed in such a way that did not undermine the integrity of the institution.

**Icy.** Icy worked on “the administrative side of the university . . . in the student services area” working with student billing and associated collections. Icy supported the
program through its development as students of the program were eligible for federal Pell
Grants and her functional area was responsible for the disbursement of the refunds
associated with those grants. Icy had to work directly with the program to ensure that she
and her staff kept appropriate records, that communication between her area and the
program was clear and accurate, and that there was no or little disruption in service. Icy
also worked directly with students and families to provide additional information or
services as needed.

**Sara.** Sara was the executive director of MSU’s residence life program, which
was the largest department at MSU. As program staff emphasized and took pride in its
residential options, Sara’s involvement in the grant phase and beyond was critical.
Before the program began its grant phase, however, Sara worked in residence life but was
not the executive director. After she passed direct oversight of the program’s residential
component to a subordinate, Sara stayed connected with Heather and checked in
occasionally to ensure the student experience was positive. Moreover, Sara worked to
involve her staff in, and make them aware of, the program to help create a positive
student experience.

**Shelley.** Shelley worked in financial aid at MSU. Shelly played a key role in
assisting the program to achieve certified by the Department of Education so that students
were eligible for federal Pell Grants. She was also vital in the program’s successful
application for the Department of Education’s experimental site designation, which for a
period of time made it possible for the “parents of students in the program to be able to
apply for a federal parent loan through the direct loan program.” Shelly also had direct
contact with program students, acting “as a resource for students and families who have financial aid questions . . . whether they need help filling out their FAFSA forms, finding resources, [or] understanding what they are eligible for.”

**Program and Institutional Documents and Artifacts**

Given the unique and diverse nature of TPSID funded programs in the United States higher education system, the context that surrounded and situated the program was an important piece of this study. Therefore, a review of related documentation and artifacts, both paper and electronic and including statements of program goals and structure, grant applications, and promotional materials, provided important context for the program. These artifacts provided critical insight into program structure and the institutionalization process which aided in answering my research questions.

Artifacts, as a form of “unobtrusive data . . . are powerful indicators of the value systems operating within institutions” (Hatch, 2002, p. 117). These data improved the trustworthiness of the research findings as “[t]riangulating unobtrusive data with data from other sources is one way to improve confidence in reporting findings based on such information” (Hatch, 2002, p. 121). Equally as important, however, was the fact that these artifacts allowed me to create a holistic view of the case under investigation.

My search for artifacts related to the institutionalization of this program produced over 115 artifacts of varying types. My primary approach to gathering artifacts was to compile artifacts provided by or directly referenced by participants. Additionally, however, I also conducted secondary searches to find materials referenced in the documents provided by my participants and to find information that clarified or provided
additional context to those participant-provided artifacts. These primary and secondary approaches allowed me to gather artifacts including:

- email communication between program stakeholders
- program planning documents
- committee rosters
- recordings of presentations by program staff
- minutes of institutional meetings
- PowerPoint presentations
- draft and final versions of curricular and grant proposals
- multiple versions of program brochures and marketing materials
- program web pages
- communication with MSU professors and administrators requesting student participation in specific courses
- draft and final versions of family / student handbooks
- unpublished manuscripts
- government records related to the administration and record keeping of the TPSID grants
- annual reports and other information compiled and published by the Think College National Coordinating Center

I created a “field note” for each of the artifacts that emerged during the data collection process. In these notes, I placed emphasis on “capturing the exact words and phrases in the written material” and “attended[ed] not only to the contents of the document but also
to the details [I] will need to cite it” (Yin, 2011, p. 160). These field notes captured specific areas of interest that mirrored the topics that I covered with each participant (see Appendix B for an outline of the artifact review protocol). This note-taking process assisted both in synthesizing the artifact and in folding its contents into my data analysis.

These artifacts and the corresponding field notes I created for them proved to be incredibly important. As Merriam (1998) noted, artifacts in case studies are “nonreactive and grounded in the context under study” and therefore “can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (p. 133). The data from these artifacts produced a unique perspective from which concepts emerged. These concepts also exemplified many of the elements shared by my interview participants, provided critical contextual information and points of triangulation across data, suggested connections between multiple concepts, and at times contained information that I could directly incorporate into my findings.

**Researcher Journaling and Reflection**

The final elements of my data collection process were my early and frequent reflective processes and techniques. Merriam (2002) described that an initial reflection would allow the researcher to “explore [his] own experiences, in part to examine dimensions of the experience and in part to become aware of [his] own prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions” (p. 94). Therefore, even before I began data collection as an official part of this research, I had begun journaling. Through this journaling, I explored both the complexities of the research process as well as noted my own prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions. Again, even as I was building the structure of
my study and had not yet begun data collection, I engaged in journaling and reflection to check and identify the intellectual and emotional baggage I was bringing to my work. In addition to an initial reflection, that is reflection before I officially began my research, I continued my journaling throughout the research to record and work through my thoughts regarding my role, concepts of power, points of frustration and concern, and other researcher specific elements.

I mentioned my journaling and reflection in this data collection section because journal entries, like my field notes, became part of the data I considered in my analysis. My reflective process was a part of my overall research technique, and I incorporated the data I generated through that process in my analysis phase. By incorporating that reflective data in my analysis, and thus conducting my analysis in full view of my positionality, I increased the ethical strength and trustworthiness of my research.

**Data Analysis**

Two of Stake’s (1995) observations on data analysis set the prolog for this section on data analysis. The first observation, which I referenced in my section on pilot studies, is that “[t]here is no particular moment when data analysis begins” and the second is that “[a]nalysis goes on and on” (Stake, 1995, p. 71). Given that there were certainly periods when I focused directly and intensively on actions, like writing field notes or memos, reviewing artifacts and documents, and putting notes in margins of transcripts, I did not approach analysis “as separate from everlasting efforts to make sense of things” (Stake, 1995, p. 72).
The efforts I made to examine this program through the pilot studies I have referenced, also complicated the idea of a new and fresh beginning to data analysis. Even as I was developing the structure of the study, I found myself thinking about my potential data, participants, and knowledge that I already had on my topic. I could not help but formulate quick summaries or concepts that contributed to the analytical process. As anticipated this “off-line” thinking helped me formulate the conclusions drawn from the new data I gathered. I also took direct systematic steps to review and analyze my data through the framework suggested by Yin (2011).

**Yin’s (2011) Five Phases of Analysis**

I choose to align my data analysis approach with Yin’s (2011) five phases of analysis: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. This approach fits both with my proclivities as a researcher and with the nature of this study. Yin was clear that in this analytical model “[y]ou should . . . see how [the five phases] do not fall into a linear sequence, but have recursive and iterative relationships” (p. 179). Whereas researchers consider qualitative research to be iterative and recursive, I believed Yin’s explicit acknowledgment of the repetitive and cyclical nature of research and analysis fits with this intrinsic case study. As stated earlier, the intrinsic case study model is exploratory. As such, I needed to repeat and revisit my analytical assumptions, and processes as new documents, suggestions for interview participants, and concepts emerged.

Additionally, I believed Yin’s (2011) approach fit with this research as it fit with the ever-present nature of analysis I experienced. Yin acknowledged that during analysis
“your exposure to other experiences unrelated to your study might serendipitously affect your thinking about one or more of these phases” (p. 179). I appreciated Yin’s inclusion of the role of serendipity as I experienced the unexpected yet fortunate ways that concepts and conclusions came together in this study. Noting my attraction to Yin’s comments on the recursive, iterative, and serendipitous nature of analysis, I also appreciated the analytical framework his approach provided. As a researcher, I gravitated towards and leveraged the nonlinear and flexible process that Yin (2011) espoused.

**Memo Writing.** While Yin (2011) did not officially reference memo writing as part of the analytical process until the second phase of his approach, I used this technique throughout my analytical process and recorded memos in my research journal. As I have mentioned, journaling cut across multiple aspects of my research. For Yin, memos were imperative in that they allow the researcher to document and begin to work through developing ideas. Where these ideas became relevant in this study, I had a record in the form of a memo of the progression of the idea or, at the other end, the eventual dismissal of an idea through reasoning as the data moved me away from the idea. Given the invaluable nature of memo writing in Yin’s approach, I used the memo writing technique early and often. I have chosen to address the issue of memo writing before I detail Yin’s five phases of analysis, because though it is part of his analytical approach, I departed from Yin’s model in that I used it in every phase of my research.

**Compiling.** The compiling phase was the first step in Yin’s (2011) approach. Compiling consisted of gathering and sorting the data that emerged from participant interviews and artifacts. Yin suggested that through data collection, a researcher may not
sort data in any way other than in the chronological order in which the researcher
gathered it. Therefore, an initial task in Yin’s method was to organize data
systematically. As a first step, I reread the field notes on interviews and artifacts that I
created during data collection. Additionally, I listened to each interview while
simultaneously reviewing transcripts.

During this phase (and in fact in all phases) of analysis, I continually referred to
Yin’s (2011) three directing questions:

• “What are the distinctive features of [my] study?”
• “How might the collected data relate to [my] original research questions?”
• “Are there potentially new insights that have emerged?” (p. 183)

Keeping these questions in mind helped me to stay focused on the essential features of
my study and questions as I worked through the surfeit of data.

Finally, in this phase, I attempted to create consistency within and between data
sources. For instance, in field notes where I used different words or phrases to refer to
the same subject, idea, or concept I noted commonalities. To create consistency across
data records, I sorted information by type (e.g. interviews with interviews, interview field
notes with interview field notes, and artifacts field notes with artifact field notes). This
process not only increased my familiarity with the data but also helped me create a
“database” of information that I could more reliably draw upon and analyze (Yin, 2011).

Disassembling. Disassembling, the next phase of Yin’s (2011) approach,
contained at its core a decision to disassemble or break apart data with or without coding.
Yin suggested that the researcher can either follow a structured formulaic approach
involving multiple levels of coding similar to the approach used by grounded theorists, or
the researcher can use a less structured more creative but no less rigorous approach.

Considering that I had experience with formulaic coding through previous pilot
studies, I leveraged the less structured disassembling approach in this study. I pursued
this approach specifically because Yin suggested that this approach “has the potential to
be more thoughtful and insightful” (p. 188).

Within this less structured approach, Yin (2011) maintained that a researcher
could create his or her own approach, but Yin also outlined a few options researchers
might follow. Instead of creating my own approach, I leveraged one that Yin (2011)
presented. In this approach, Yin (2011) directs the researcher to create “substantive (not
methodological) notes” where the researcher is “essentially taking notes about [the]
original data” but “cover[ing] the data in some different order or under different concepts
and ideas” (p. 188). I placed these notes either in the margins of my transcripts using a
function of my word processing program or in a spreadsheet I created to manage artifacts.
All of these notes did not persist throughout the analytical process. That is, I discarded
some notes, modified others, or combined notes together through the analytical process.

Through this process, I heeded Yin’s (2011) warning that by leveraging this
disassembling style I needed to be consistent in challenging the accuracy of my data, in
being complete and thorough, and regularly checking the influence of my own bias of the
analytical process. As I have described, I stayed close to my bias and thinking through
my memos and journaling. Even though this style is less formulaic, I believed it fit better
with my identity as a researcher and allowed me to navigate the complex and fluid data I uncovered more creatively.

**Reassembling.** According to Yin (2011), the major element of the reassembling process were arrays (or orderly arrangements) to help reassemble the information from the disassembling process. Yin contended that not all researchers or research projects require lengthy reassembling efforts or even any reassembling effort at all. I needed to spend considerable time reconstructing my data. Yin presented several arrays that a researcher might choose to use to order their data. These arrays included hierarchies, matrices, flow charts, concept maps, and other formats. Like in the disassembling process, Yin stated that in the reassembling process researchers could use approaches ranging from highly formal to incredibly informal and creative. However, the key in this process was to identify emerging patterns.

**Reassembling interview data.** I returned to the interview data numerous times and sorted the information into arrays organized by several different categories. Because of ease, I initially organized interview data by source, i.e., I began analysis of each interview noting unique, important, or interesting components within each interview. Next, I organized interview data by question. As I conducted these interviews using a somewhat consistent interview protocol, I sorted data across interviews by the question I asked. Next, I sorted interview data by topic. For instance, participants discussed similar events, people, and subjects. After identifying the presence of a specific topic, I compiled portions of interview data to consider the multiple perspective participants shared on the topic. Finally, I sorted the interview data by argument. The primary
difference between this organizational approach and sorting the data by topic was that the arguments were based on perspective, sentiment, or conclusion as opposed to a set subject matter. These multiple organizational arrays allowed me to test the consistency of emerging patterns, generate new themes to explore, explore consistencies or inconsistencies across artifacts, and identify what Yin (2011) termed rival explanations.

**Reassembling artifact data.** Like data from my interview, I found it necessary to go back to the artifact data multiple times highlighting the recursive nature of this analytical approach (Yin, 2011). Specifically, I analyzed the artifact data from three organizational arrays. Again, because of ease, I began review of my artifacts by source. That is, I sorted the artifacts first based upon from where the artifact came (e.g. interview participants, website, and originating organization).

A second sorting method was by generation date. The lack of clearly identifiable generation dates across all artifacts complicated this method. Instead, some artifacts contained context clues including who generated it, or who it referenced, which allowed me to identify a narrow range of time during which I could be fairly confident it was generated. A final sorting method was by type (e.g. PowerPoint presentation, government report, meeting minutes, and email). Similar to my process with interview data, using these three different sorting arrays allowed me to apply different lenses to the data to test the consistency of emerging patterns, generate new themes to explore, explore consistencies or inconsistencies across artifacts and identify what Yin (2011) termed rival explanations.
Reassembling both interview and artifact data. In reassembling both the interview and artifact data, I used Yin’s (2011) three tactics to revealing and minimizing bias. These tactics are “making constant comparisons, watching for negative cases, and engaging in rival thinking” (p. 196). As Yin explained, because this phase involves discretionary choices the researcher needs to incorporate precautions to ensure that they are staying true to the data as opposed to letting their own biases lead to desired outcomes. This point again highlighted the necessity of my attempts to stay reflective and introspective through this process and to leverage my memos and journal to capture that thinking. Conversations with peer and expert debriefers, which I also addressed in the interpreting section, aided in my recognition of my bias and provided a testing ground where negative cases and rival thinking became apparent. Ultimately the goal of this reassembling phase was recognition of “the broader themes or outline of your entire study” (Yin, 2011, p. 199). Yin suggested that failure to recognize these themes or outlines

Though broad sets of findings emerged during my first attempt at reassembling, I found it necessary to return to my disassembling phase. Debriefers also encouraged me to return to the disassembling phase. Returning to the disassembling phase and then once again reassembling the data helped me to refine and create more clearly articulated findings.

Interpreting. Once I successfully moved through the reassembling phase, I came to the interpreting phase. Let me begin discussion of this phase by highlighting Yin’s (2011) observation that initial research questions can help produce good interpretations.
Therefore, in this interpretation phase, my initial research questions were at the forefront of my mind as I “connect[ed] ideas of interest…with [my] reassembled data” (Yin, 2011, p. 219). Yin continued by presenting three primary “modes” of interpretation: “description; description plus a call for action; and explanation” (p. 208). Regardless of the interpretation mode, Yin argued that signs of quality interpretation include: “completeness,” “fairness,” “empirical accuracy;” “value-added,” and “credibility” (p. 207). Given that I was, at the core of this research, interested in the how and why of the institutionalization process of this TPSID program, my interpreting phase aligned most closely with what Yin labeled the explanation mode of interpretation. In this mode, two components stand above the rest as essential: rival explanations and expert/peer feedback.

First, Yin (2011) suggested that in the explanation mode, the researcher must be aware of, if not directly acknowledge, explanations that stood apart from or counter to the explanation that the researcher moved forward as most plausible. In accounting for this rival thinking, Yin suggested the following tactic,

You should formulate and present evidence related to realistic or plausible rivals, seeking to show how the evidence might favor the rival, as if it were your primary explanation. Ideally, the compiled evidence should of its own weight then dispel the rival, without your having to make any strong expository argument. The overall result should be the presentation of a sound and plausible explanation for your findings. (p. 218)
I formulated arguments for my own conclusions and for the rival conclusion following Yin’s (2011) process of explanation building which included the help of experts and peers.

I strategically built a network of advisors and expert contacts, some of whom helped with this process. I made some of these contacts by attending and taking part in a national conference which brought together many of the TPSID program staff and Think College staff. I maintained these connections both through email communication and by involving some of these individuals in the pilot testing of my interview protocol for this study. With the connections firmly established, it was critical in this interpreting phase for me to test my explanations with and force myself to formulate sound interpretation for these experts as well as with peers and colleagues. Although some of this testing came from the feedback process built into the dissertation process and the work I did with my dissertation committee, there was ample room for other voices to contribute to my thinking.

These expert voices included one faculty member associated with the TPSID program implementation from my home institution and a faculty member with experience in ID and transition from another institution who conducted research aligned with my project. Along with the multiple other tactics to building trustworthiness into this study, I believed these feedback points served to support that end.

I end the discussion of this phase with Yin’s (2011) notion that interpretation does not necessarily happen as a step along a linear path. As a researcher, I engaged in interpretive thinking before the interpretation phase of my analysis. Stake (1995)
expressed a similar concept when he posited that there are no specific beginnings to either the data collection or data analysis phases of research. Thus, I felt compelled to at least acknowledge these nonlinear components of the analytical processes. That is, my analysis and in turn, the interpretation phase did not begin with some arbitrary “interpreting phase.” In fact, I began interpretation even before I planned this project.

**Concluding.** Given Yin’s (2011) concluding phase of analysis, concluding informed the contents of the fifth or final chapter of this dissertation research. In Yin’s explanation, concluding includes some combination of or focus on calling for new research, challenging conventional understanding of a topic, moving forward new concepts or theories, making substantive propositions, and/or generalizing. Yin maintained that the approach one takes to concluding is a product of the analytical process that brings the researcher to a conclusion. That is, the format and content of one’s conclusion must fit the data, themes, and patterns one discovered along the way.

Ultimately, I drew data-saturated conclusions from this research which supported the significance of my research findings. In chapter five I presented recommendations for both practice and research, as suggested by Yin. However, I did not attempt to present generalizable conclusions because the context within which institutionalization occurred uniquely situates these findings. Instead, in chapter five I discussed findings that, if applied in full consideration of the case’s context, others might transfer to another setting, program, or period of time.
**Conclusion and Limitations**

Despite the strengths of this study that I have described thus far and reiterated below, I must also acknowledge the limitations of this study and its design. The first and clear limitation of this research was the use of a single case and the lack of generalizability associated with single-site case studies. While I note that generalizability is not always the desired outcome of qualitative research and is even less so in intrinsic case studies, it was nonetheless a limitation of this study. This limitation was unavoidable because of the nature of single-site case study research methods. Because the data that emerged in this study came from only one system, they do not allow for direct analysis against other comparable data. A researcher, then, at best can build in techniques to ensure trustworthiness of the data and present conclusions that, with extreme caution, others may transfer to different cases. I have outlined above the techniques I employed to increase trustworthiness. However, I have also shown in my literature review that there was value beyond generalizability and that the thick and rich descriptions that resulted from case study research advance understanding of PSEIDDS. This value outweighs the lack of generalizability inherent in this intrinsic case study.

The fact that this study was not a longitudinal study of institutionalization presented another limitation. Institutionalization admittedly contains time-orientated components best studied over time. That is, institutionalization does not appear to end but instead adjusts as the program and the institution change. Institutionalization of an innovation is a complex enough phenomenon that it also necessitates study from a single
point of time. Surely, researchers should conduct future longitudinal studies of institutionalization of this or other TPSID programs.

Also, limiting this study was the research bias connected to my acknowledged positionality within the institution that housed the TPSID program and that results from my prior relationship with potential study participants. I have also acknowledged my belief in the value of comprehensive transition programs like those funded by TPSID grants. At the same time, I provided support for that belief presenting in my review of the literature, the existing research on the positive outcomes of these programs. I have addressed the issue of researcher bias at length in this chapter. By incorporating trustworthiness tactics including triangulation, researcher journaling, member checking, and peer and expert debriefing, I limited the impact of this bias. Ultimately, however, I could only limit my bias to a reasonable extent and must acknowledge that as a researcher conducting a qualitative study my positionality, the impacts of insider-outsider dynamics, and my role as research instrument came with limitations. These same dynamics carried exceptional power and access that without which the knowledge gained through qualitative study would be impossible.

A final limitation of this study came from the sampling methods I leveraged to identify my participants and the artifacts relevant to the case. Again, the benefits I gained in my study at least equaled this limitation. In the first situation, I employed a purposeful sampling technique by targeting the program implementers listed in the initial TPSID grant. This method allowed me to gain the perspective of those initially associated with the program. However, given that these individuals’ relationships with the program
evolved over time and some of the program stakeholders no longer worked at MSU, I was not able to secure participation from all targeted participants. In phase-two of recruitment, I targeted individuals suggested by participants interviewed in phase-one.

Phase-two of recruitment leveraged a snowball sampling technique. This allowed me to garner insight from voices of individuals not directly associated with the program and that other researchers had not included in similar investigations. However, this technique also allowed me to potentially miss voices vital to institutionalization as I relied on the suggestions of participants. Participants’ suggestions presumably steered me away from certain voices that phase-one participants did not want heard or towards voices they did. Phase-one participants were in the position to identify other stakeholders who had additional value to provide because of their intimate knowledge of the institutionalization. This demonstrated the clear benefit of this two-phased method.

Associated with the sampling methods was the fact that by the design of the study, the direct student voice was mostly absent, save a few examples. Acknowledging that a few participants were students pursuing advanced degrees, their identities as students were purely coincidental and not criteria for recruitment. Though the program participants’ voices were critical in the overall story of this program, I decided not to interview the program participants because I judged their roles not to fit the institutionalization perspective I was targeting. In my view, the program participants acted more as recipients or clients of the program. Program students’ needs and experiences were certainly influential, but the program students did not appear to be directly involved in the institutionalization of the program.
I strengthened the research I have outlined by acknowledging and mitigating the effects of the limitations I have mentioned. Additionally, I supported the study with a comprehensive review of related literature and built it with intentionally chosen and thoroughly explained research methods. In my review of related literature, I covered literature related to PSEIDDs broadly, to TPSID programs specifically where literature existed, and to institutionalization in higher education and the limited application of that concept to PSEIDDs. After identifying the gaps in this literature base that allowed space for additional study, I presented a thorough explanation of research methods that filled a gap that exists in the literature.

Rooted in an ecological research orientation, the qualitative case study approach allowed me to study the institutionalization of a single TPSID program in a bounded system defined not only by institutional location but also by time. Exploring the perspectives of multiple stakeholders and multiple related artifacts, I studied the relationships and connections that existed across and between levels and structures of the university and to a lesser degree the larger community surrounding the university and the program. To facilitate this exploration, I employed both multiple in-depth semi-structured formal interviews and artifact analysis. I identified both the interview participants and the artifacts that I mined for data through a two-phase selection and recruitment process that utilized both purposeful and snowball sampling techniques. I analyzed the data that resulted from these interview and artifact reviews through a detailed process based on the techniques proposed by Yin (2011).
Ultimately, I gained insight that revealed many of the critical components related to the institutionalization of the TPSID program under study. To this end, the research methods specifically allowed me to explore how stakeholders involved with the incorporation and integration of a TPSID program and the artifacts associated with that institutionalization revealed the various elements and components of institutionalization. In chapter four, I presented the resulting research findings in the thick and rich descriptive style typical of qualitative case studies and in chapter five revealed compelling elements of the institutionalization of the TPSID program worthy of additional research and consideration.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the institutionalization of a Transition and Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant-funded program within a single public four-year university in the Midwest in the United States. To delve deeply into the complexities and uniqueness of this case, I focused on a single program and site that successfully transitioned from a pilot grant-funded experiment to an established institutional program. In this research, I drew upon the perspectives of multiple program stakeholders involved in the move from a pilot to a permanent program, as well as on insight gained from program and process related artifacts. In the preceding chapter, I explained my approach to gathering and analyzing data from participants and artifacts. In this chapter, I will detail the findings from analysis.

I divided this chapter into three primary sections. First, I describe the people, structures, and forces that catalyzed and fueled this program’s development and institutionalization. This discussion includes my acknowledgment of those the program implementers who provided the guiding and sustaining catalyst for the program. It also covers those components that fueled institutionalization including passionate champions, impassioned advocates, stakeholders’ personal connections to disability, opportunities for collaboration, and powerful storytelling. In the next section, I describe contextual elements that emerged as meaningful to the program’s institutionalization. The context
for this case included student and parental influences, the institution’s history, priority on diversity and its profile. In this section, I also discuss how the institutional and program context drove and confined program funding. Finally, I identify how the institutionalization process constructed and galvanized specific program characteristics. These characteristics include the program as an agent of social change, system disruptor, and a small and elite program.

**Catalyzing and Fueling Institutionalization**

Institutionalizing this program at MSU took considerable effort from individuals filling a variety of roles across the university. In Mark’s summation, “it’s sort of like you need the catalyst but you also need the fuel or the raw materials.” Mark’s chemical reaction analogy divides this effort into catalyst and fuel. In this section, I describe how some of those closest to the program acted as catalysts for institutionalization. I also describe the roles of stakeholders and the approaches used by the program implementers that fueled and provided the raw materials for institutionalization.

**The Catalysts**

Harry and Heather’s roles stood apart from the others’ and they provided much of the catalyst through their passion, commitment, and belief in the program. Analysis revealed that others close to the program echoed this passion which spread quickly and rippled through the institutional partners. While stakeholders revered Harry’s and Heather’s individual efforts, they were also not without faults that could have slowed the chemical reaction behind program institutionalization. Harry played the role of “wise sage” (Hannah). As a passionate “story-teller” (Icy), he “shared the vision” (Heather) for
the program with Heather and others. He also brought with him to this project a useful history at MSU that allowed him to know “all the key gatekeepers” (Mark). Sam shared that Harry’s career accomplishments, including the number of grants he successfully obtained, added to his revered reputation at MSU. Mark, additionally, noted that Harry’s skills as a “great synthesizer of . . . information,” and “great consumer of research” were beneficial both in his career and in the institutionalization of the program.

As a catalyst, Harry’s greatest contribution though may have been the drive he applied to the program which Heather described as his “life’s endeavor.” Harry’s strength lies in his ability to both create and passionately share a vision for the program that was central to his being. He also demonstrated his value through his ability to successfully obtain grants. Mark commented that Harry “really is a great synthesizer of all the information out there [and] he knows what direction policy is going.” Mark said that because of Harry’s knowledge and anticipation, the program implementers started preparing to apply for the TPSID grant before the Department of Education announced it publically. Mark also credited Harry with helping the program implementers work with university leadership by leveraging the network of trusting relationships across the university that took Harry “decades to develop.” Although he was a notably positive force in the institutionalization of the program, Harry was not without tendencies that may have hindered the progress of the program.

Stakeholders identified a number of Harry’s character traits including his lack of a killer instinct, impractical views, and occasional disposition towards isolated work which worked against the program’s progress. These weaknesses did not prevent others from
viewing him as a positive and influential force in the institutionalization. These weaknesses left some room for stakeholders to question how his attributes may have hindered the process. Sam thought that under Harry’s leadership, the program was occasionally “just…floating out there” which could have slowed the program’s institutionalization. Sam suggested that in these moments Harry needed to “go for the jugular” and advocate for the program with clearer conviction. Peachy also added some concerns about Harry’s potentially unrealistic expectations about who would fund the program. She also added that Harry’s strong personality and tendency to work in a “silo” might cause conflicts with others. Given that these tendencies were present in Harry’s approach to institutionalization, his drive and passion outweighed their potentially negative impact. Stakeholders characterized Heather in a similar way to Harry as others spoke very highly of her powerful influence on the program but also acknowledged her weaknesses.

Betty, for instance, described Heather’s strengths using terms which paralleled Harry’s strengths including “persistence, determination,” “belief in,” and “passion for” the program. Hannah described Heather’s “dedication” and “her passion, her love, her wanting to” see the program succeed. With these attributes in mind, Hannah argued that without Heather’s work, the program may have failed and may still fail if she leaves and no one of her caliber and dedication fills her place. Harry spoke of how Heather was “unstoppable” and “worked her ass off” for this program. Icy added that Heather’s strength came in that she was a “trooper” who could admit when she needed help and guidance from others and did not pretend “she knew what was going on” when she did
not. Peachy added that she had the utmost confidence in Heather. Like Harry, Heather emerged as a catalyst for the program. Among her other characteristics and strengths, Heather's passion, dedication, and persistence provided the catalyst that initiated movement in others and in the program.

Like Harry, however, Heather was not infallible or without weakness. Harry, for instance, commented that Heather faced issues by overworking herself. Supporting this concern, Heather noted that during institutionalization she experienced “a lot of sleepless nights just sitting there, putting the puzzle pieces in my head.” Although these sleepless nights could have taken a toll on her, Heather cited her “hardworking background being raised that you just stick your head down and keep trudging away” as an approach to work that allowed her to push through. Icy also noted that Heather seemed so focused on the administration of the program that at times Heather may have thought “I just want to run my program, why do I have to worry about this stuff, can’t you just do [the work in the university systems]?” If this was a view shared by the institutional partners, Heather might have offset this perspective through her approach to working with these partners with an attitude that she described as “tell me how to do it so I can do it your way” (Heather).

Similar to Harry, any character flaws Heather may have had did not seem to affect her positive influence on the program or her reputation as a solid program leader. As catalysts for institutionalization and champions of the program and its cause, Harry’s and Heather’s roles stood apart. The catalysts that other stakeholders provided were no less critical for the program’s progress. Stakeholders also described other the program
implementers and the institutional partners like Peachy and Sam as lynchpins to the institutionalization of the program without whose efforts that program would certainly have failed. Harry’s and Heather’s impact on the institutionalization of the program stand above the rest as the presence of their impact cut across all stakeholder perspectives. In full view of the variety of characteristics, Harry and Heather brought to their work, the passion and conviction with which they presented the program to others. This carried significant weight in the effort to gather the necessary fuel or the advocates to their cause.

The Fuel

The fuel for institutionalization came in several forms, but at its core, people were the fuel of institutionalization. Passionate champions, impassioned advocates, stakeholders’ personal connections to disability, opportunities for collaboration, and powerful storytelling all provided the raw materials that sustained the program through institutionalization. Passionate champions provided the initial energy that fueled the efforts of impassioned advocates. Personal connections to disability that the program implementers either enhanced or built in order to strengthen the advocates resolve for the program furthered the commitment of impassioned advocates. Program implementers also utilized and created a number of opportunities whereby stakeholders could see themselves as collaborators with the program implementers and with each other. Finally, seeing themselves are integral contributors to the program, stakeholders also became storytellers and evangelists for the program telling powerful stories that advanced institutionalization efforts. As I just highlighted the recognition of passion within the
program staff, however, it is useful to share specific examples of how the program
implementers used this passion to build advocates and secure the efforts of key
contributors.

**Passion among champions.** Harry knew that the weight of this program and the
work needed to institutionalize it was too great for any one individual. As such, he
acknowledged that achieving success in the program would require the passionate efforts
of other champions. Harry shared this view as he explained Heather’s critical role:

> I think finding somebody who I had some confidence would carry through what
my vision was, and [Heather] always . . . introduces [me] “this is the man who
had the vision” . . . so finding someone to work with that, ’cause you can’t do all
that work [by yourself] and I wasn’t even a full-time employee for God’s sakes. I
was doing this as a hobby.

As a retired professor, Harry knew that if this program was to make it, he would need
others who could execute that vision. Harry saw Heather as another program champion
who could fit that role. Harry, however, acknowledged that even Heather alone could not
and did not carry the weight of the program or its institutionalization. Continuing from
his earlier comment about not doing all the work himself he said, “so finding that energy
and that passion and somebody that would buy in. That wasn’t just [Heather] either, I
mean, it was the whole [transition center], I mean, everybody was . . . balls to the wall.”

In Harry’s estimation, though Heather might have been able to carry his vision forward,
he recognized that institutionalizing the program took an extraordinary effort from all the
program implementers. Harry was not alone in sharing his belief that institutionalization
would not have occurred without the efforts of many. Other stakeholders also spoke to
the presence of multiple project champions who displayed passion, dedication, and
commitment to the program.

As Peachy described the institutionalization of the program, she gave credit to
Harry, Mark, and Heather for their incredible work. She also spoke often of Heather and
one other director in the program as the ones who carried the program forward. She
likewise acknowledged Heather and this other director as keys to the program after it
moved out from under the structure of the transition center. Josie described Heather and
another director as the “front-line” staff who implemented the program as Mark and
Harry provided the background support. Although Shelley highlighted individual efforts
in her interview, she also acknowledged that the program came together through
extraordinary efforts of the program team:

[Heather] and her crew are forces of nature. There was no way they were ever
going to take ‘no’ as an answer for anything at all. They were so passionate about
this program that you couldn’t help but to buy in with the concept and the idea.

It was not clear from my investigation whether any of the passion or drive that so many
stakeholders acknowledged in the program staff predated their connection to the program
or whether this passion emerged during institutionalization. The power of demonstrating
a passion for and commitment to the program, however, did have identifiable impacts on
the institutional partners.

**Fueling impassioned advocacy.** The institutional partners, who provided much
of the fuel for institutionalization, often gave so willingly of their time and effort after
hearing the passion with which others spoke of and approached their own work with the
program. As a vocal advocate of the program, Icy occupied a unique position in that she
not only supported the program through her professional role in MSU’s bursar’s office
but was able to study the program through her own pursuit of a Ph.D. Icy’s advocacy for
and belief in the program were clear as she described it as “this is the coolest thing I have
ever heard of.” She identified that the energy she witnessed in others significantly
influenced her passion for the program.

Icy explained the genesis of her perspective as she detailed a meeting she attended
about the program as it was first emerging:

Well, I think why I was very excited about [MSU] bringing this program was the
passion around the room for those who were applying for the grant. You know,
the advocacy for the students and the importance of being able to provide some
sort of, getting them ready for the world of work . . . I remember thinking that was
so cool but also just the passion of the people around the room, to say this is why
we want this program, and I remember [Sam] being like so excited about it
because . . . I’m assuming he felt like the rest of us, that they’re passionate and
this is something new for us and there was an opportunity to truly say that . . .
college is for everybody.

In this example, the “they” Icy refers to were the same program staff that Hannah would
reference as a “force of nature.” Icy described the contagious nature of their passion for
the program. She highlighted that this passion captured her attention and posited that the
positive energy associated with this passion also influenced Sam, augmenting his
enthusiasm for the program. Without Sam matching the passion for the program that people like Harry and Heather had, the numerous student services staff under Sam’s supervision may not have come along so easily and fueled, through their efforts, the program’s institutionalization. Similarly, without the efforts of faculty, like Josie, offering opportunities for the program participants to join the MSU academic program, program implementers could not have integrated the program into the fabric of the institution.

Josie sums up nicely the perspective that many program supporters expressed regarding the impact of passionate advocacy. As she commented on factors that made the program successful, she identified that the drive and energy of those closest to the program motivated and inspired confidence in the program supporters. As she described the efforts of the program implementers, she noted that “They never let up . . . It was like always they were on . . . And I have no doubt that in four years . . . it will still exist . . . they see it as their life mission. They see it as a vocation versus just a job.” By approaching their work with the passion that accompanies the pursuit of a life’s mission, the program implementers gave Josie and others the confidence in the staying power of the program. This type of commitment and passion was no doubt an internalized driver. Passion, though not easily taught, was something that reached deep to the core of the person and helped secure the institutional partners’ support and effort.

Those the institutional partners who joined in the institutionalization effort identified the enthusiasm expressed by the program implementers as a motivator and as key to engaging their support. Many the institutional partners also identified ways in
which the focus of the program tapped into core components of their own beings. The presence of personal connections to the mission of the program within the institutional partners represent another component of the raw materials needed to move the program forward. It was not entirely clear that identifying supporters with their own passion for the needs of students with disabilities was a conscious tactic of the program implementers. These connections were vital to securing the efforts of others.

**Pre-existing personal connections.** Institutional partners and the program implementers self-disclosed a variety of professional and personal connections to disability at large and to IDD specifically. These personal connections drove passion for and commitment to the program. Additionally, circumstance, coincidence, and serendipity linked the program with the stakeholders who disclosed these connections. Their connections to disability also proved to be a point of reference and a base from which the individual gained familiarity with the experiences of the program participants.

Icy’s excitement for the program and her desire to see it succeed had roots in her family history. Icy revealed not only that her husband was a teacher who worked in K-12 education with students with intellectual disabilities, but that her family’s connection to disability goes back generations. Icy explained that growing up,

I always hear[d] stories about my grandmother who was very passionate about people with intellectual disabilities because when she was little, they were chained outside in farms and she would tell us horrible stories . . . and my grandfather was actually a huge supporter, gave thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to create special programs.
In part, Icy’s family history drove her excitement for the program and her desire to see it succeed. In a way, it may have provided her an opportunity to engage in work that connected to her upbringing and her current life. It was exciting for her to think that MSU, and she as an employee of the university, would be involved in such an innovative program. The power and influence of family connection to disability were also present in the experiences of other stakeholders.

Sara, Shelley, and Hannah also shared family connections to disability that seemed to influence their view of the program. Sara discussed a number of connections including her undergraduate degree in special education, her student-teaching experience with students with ID, her sister’s works with a county developmental disability service agency, and Sara’s own guardianship of an individual with an intellectual disability.

Referencing the background created by these connections, Sara discussed her recognition of the magnitude of the program’s goal of integrating individuals with IDD into an institution of higher education:

I remember it being very exciting, I thought, “oh my gosh, this is cutting edge, this is exciting” . . . ‘cause that’s the moment of inclusion. But then I also started to think, “oh my goodness, I can’t imagine the vulnerability of some of these students.”

Sara saw her background as influencing and informing her perspective on the program. Because, for instance, she knew some of the struggles that individuals with IDD may face, she had some concern tied to their vulnerability. She also suggested that this background potentially allowed her to more easily navigate trepidation that may have
been more problematic for her residence life counterparts at other universities who did not have her background. In similar ways, Shelley and Hannah’s backgrounds influenced their approach to the program.

Shelley disclosed her family connection when she spoke about her brother-in-law. She identified him as an individual with an ID and noted conversations she had with his parents about the program and whether similar experiences might be available for him. Hannah shared a similar family connection when she noted that her sister struggled in college because of “learning difficulties.” Hannah added to the depth of her connection to disability noting that her father was a director of hospitals for individuals with disabilities. She explained that she spent a portion of her life living on the grounds of these institutions. As she shared this history, she also discussed the complexities and difficulties of her father’s work. In discussing these connections, both Shelley and Hannah were making a case for their knowledge of and familiarity with the world of disability. This knowledge and familiarity aided their professional work with the program as it provided a frame of reference from which they could better understand and then serve the students and the program. As Hannah, Icy, Sara, and Shelley highlighted their personal connections to disability and the program, they also identified that these connections informed and enhanced their professional roles as administrators at MSU. These professional roles and not their connections to disability, however, appeared to be the factors that initially led the program implementers to recruit Hannah, Icy, Sara, and Shelley into the institutionalization process.
The responsibilities associated with Hannah’s, Icy’s, Sara’s, and Shelley’s professional roles were the circumstantial reasons they became involved with the institutionalization of the program. Program implementers recruited these institutional partners into the process or sought their efforts because they controlled institutional functions including those of financial aid, the bursar, curriculum services, and residence services respectively that were key to institutionalization. Their connections to disability and the positive impacts they had on their work with the program, therefore, seem to be serendipitous as I found no evidence that the program implementers specifically sought their support because of a familiarity with or tie to disability. It is possible, though it is only speculation, that their commitment to the program persisted because of this connection. Whereas this connection was beyond the scope of their professional roles and not the reason the program implementers sought their support, Hannah, Icy, Sara, and Shelley all identified that their connections informed their professional identities and approaches.

For other stakeholders, their stated connection fell squarely within their professional lives. In fact, this connection had manifested in a professional life committed to an array of service and study in the area of disability. For instance, Harry and Mark had both dedicated their careers to work in intellectual disabilities in higher education and not-for-profit arenas. Their work to enhance the lives of individuals with IDD not only drove their professional lives and decisions but also brought millions of in grants to MSU. This brought them together as faculty members at MSU who formed a deep professional partnership. Other faculty members had also committed part of their
professional lives to working in the disability arena as demonstrated by Joy’s coordination of the disability certificate in her academic program and Josie’s academic focus on underrepresented groups including individuals with disabilities.

For Harry, Josie, Joy, and Mark their connections were clear drivers and reasons for their involvement. Harry and Mark were at the head of the effort to apply for and obtain the TPSID grant that funded the grant phase of the program. Josie and Joy were faculty members recruited to be part of the grant and teach in the program because of their teaching, research goals, and proclivities. Harry’s, Josie’s, Joy’s, and Mark’s involvement related to their connection to disability and IDD. While all the connections I have identified thus far contain some bleed between the personal and professional life, no one’s personal connection to IDD was more equally planted in both their professional and personal lives than Betty’s.

Betty’s perspective and connection demonstrated a straddling of the personal and professional realms. She maintained the unique and sometimes problematic role of a faculty member at MSU, who was also a parent of a child with Downs Syndrome who participated in the program. This combination of roles gave her great access to the inner workings of the program and allowed her to assist in the program’s institutionalization in both formal and informal ways.

Her intimate knowledge of MSU and its opportunities for individuals with IDD helped her know about the program before her daughter enrolled. This knowledge also helped her to navigate some of the more intricate details of her daughter’s participation in the program, including the precarious situation of her daughter’s dual enrollment both in
the program and in high school for the first year of the program. These sometimes complicated personal and professional connections were also problematic for Betty in that they created a situation where she was very aware of some of the difficulties experienced by the program at the beginning. Betty explained some of the pros and cons of this situation as follows:

And I also think our family was at a great advantage because I work here and [the program] happens to be housed in this building so there was that security level . . . There were a lot of negatives with that . . . I heard about stuff every day . . . it was stressful that I was here and knew so much. So that was a difficult position to be in. But I felt more comfortable with her being here with me being here.

Betty understood her personal and professional connections to be stressful, helpful, problematic, and beneficial to the program. Unlike the serendipitous or intentional connections described earlier, one may best describe Betty’s connection as coincidental. Though it was coincidental, her connection came with by a concern and passion for the program that only someone who has the deep intimate connection of a parent to a child might experience. Acknowledging this parental concern highlights that Betty’s connection to disability, made it impossible for her to avoid the influence of her personal link to the program in her interactions with and support of the program.

Many program stakeholders, to varying degrees, possessed a connection to disability and IDD that informed and influenced their work with the program. Whether these connections were coincidental, circumstantial, or serendipitous they all had an
impact on the approach of the stakeholder to the program. These connections were also
deep in that they drew on the person’s family history, professional pursuits, or both.

Accordingly, these connections linked to the person’s passions. As I have
described, these passions paralleled those of the program implementers. These passions
also fueled the institutional partners’ commitment to the program and enhanced their
personal connection to it.

**Building and enhancing personal connections.** Personal connections, as an
element of the fuel that powered the program’s institutionalization, required nurturing
and enhancement to reach maximum effectiveness in the effort toward program
institutionalization. The program provided multiple opportunities for the stakeholders to
both build and enhance the stakeholders’ connections to disability thus furthering their
commitment to the program’s cause. Sam’s experience demonstrated this dynamic well.
Like others who were involved in the institutionalization of the program, Sam also
identified some educational and family connections to disability. Though these
connections may have made him more amenable to the program’s cause, the experiences
he had with students with IDD at MSU and with the program buttressed those
connections, reinforcing his desire to see the program succeed.

Through his interactions with Harry and with students with IDD at MSU, Sam
built a stronger connection with the program and the students served by it. Sam detailed
that Harry personally contacted him to become a partner on the program and listed as a
co-principle (co-PI) investigator alongside Mark and Peachy on the TPSID grant. Being
a co-PI linked Sam in partnership to the program but his connection to the goals of the
program had deeper roots. As he stated, the opportunities he had to work with students with ID and DD that were at MSU informed his perspective on the program. “I’ve known [Harry’s] students, for the 28-year period [I was at MSU]. I’ve worked with them in the residence halls. I got to see what they did. What the value of [Harry’s] programs did for students” (Sam). Having seen and experienced the impact of the opportunities Harry and others were providing to students with IDD at MSU, Sam said that as Harry approached him to become part of the project team “I was sold on this from the get-go.”

Similarly, Icy spoke of the unique opportunity the program offered the stakeholders to connect to it and grow from their interactions with its students while furthering their personal and emotional connection to it.

Icy explained that by working with the program, the institutional partners connected with students personally and in ways that were not regularly available in the more transactional functions of the university like the ones Icy oversaw. Icy described that because of the needs of the program and its students “we now were able to do something, and we don’t usually get to . . . This was different for us and it hit, I mean that’s why I think the stories [of student’s successes in the program] help.” Even though Icy and other stakeholders possessed deep connections to disability, this program engaged her and others on a new level as it allowed them to directly aid students with IDD in their professional roles.

For example, Icy suggested that in her typical interactions, there may have been more distance between her and the students who benefited from her work. However, as the program student and family situations presented new needs that required manual
manipulation of university systems and more personal and detailed interactions. Icy
needed to deal directly and sometimes frequently with students and their families. Both
Icy’s and Sam’s examples demonstrate the intricate links between the meaning and power
of their connection and the opportunities they had to see, firsthand, the impact of their
own and the program’s work. For other the institutional partners, the program enhanced
their connection simply by keeping them informed and involving them in program
decision-making.

Hannah noted that she was intentionally involved in the program stating that, “I
think they always kept me in the loop. I felt like . . . they weren’t making decisions or
going off in a direction without talking to me.” Similarly, Shelley stated, “I had a seat at
the table with a lot of those discussions so I was aware of it, of what issues they were
having. They weren’t just financially related. It was more far reaching than that.” As
the program implementers involved the institutional partners at every turn and even
beyond the scope of the partner’s specific job function, they were developing lasting
connections.

Sara summed up the staying power of these connections well noting that even as
her professional role had advanced and was no longer involved in the daily residential
operations of the program, she still stayed in close contact with Heather. Sara stated,

Now I stayed pretty connected with [Heather]. Anytime a new year starts, I meet
with her and I don’t know if that’s because her and I have developed that
relationship or because she sees that as part of the success, I don’t know, but
because I want it to be successful I’ve never [missed it].
Sara’s comment highlighted that the work the program staff did to involve the stakeholders had both immediate and lasting positive effects. The examples above also underscored that the stakeholders benefited from and were personally enhanced as they found meaning and fulfillment in their connection to the program. Beyond the individual experiences, the opportunities that the program provided the stakeholders to collaborate produced similar outcomes which also fueled institutionalization.

**Opportunities for collaboration.** As the program implementers leveraged their own passion and the personal connections of others to secure commitment, they at the same time provided the institutional partners and those closest to implementation with opportunities to collaborate. These collaborations fueled institutionalization both by drawing the stakeholders even further into the process and by providing benefits to them for their investment in the program. Moreover, Harry identified that the program implementer’s ability to collaborate with the institutional partners was vital because the TPSID requirements and the program design demanded that implementers answer the question, “How do you involve the University staff, faculty, administrators, etcetera?” Moreover, opportunities for the stakeholders to become invested in the program served not only to involve the institutional partners but also to expand their connection to the goals and mission of the program. Collaboration across functional and academic lines resulted in similar effects.

Analysis revealed strong evidence of the program implementers’ intentional use of collaboration. As Joy noted, the institutionalization of the program “was a very collaborative move.” The implementers’ use of committees stands as a prime example of
the intentional nature of this collaboration. As both a technique to build advocates and to provide opportunities for partnership to develop among the program stakeholders, the program implementers leveraged a committee structure through the grant phase of the program which matched the goals of the program. As Mark explained, he and other implementers,

created committees . . . of course the research committee for the faculty who wanted to do research related to this, we had the residential or independent living committee that focused on the residential and social aspects and then we had the academic committee and then we had another committee that was what we called the access committee but it was like an executive committee and it was [Sam] and all the key people and pretty much those people made a lot of the key decisions.

Mark described these committees as a platform for communication and information dissemination. A review of the program artifacts outlining the membership of these committees revealed cross-college and cross-divisional membership that included a broad range of MSU community members. These committees also provided an opportunity for researchers to meet and connect around potential research topics or projects and advance their own professional goals. The opportunity related to research bore some fruit as Harry, Heather, Josie, and Joy all commented on research that either resulted from or was in progress because of their connection to and work with the program. Sam offered another example of how collaboration with the program provided him a professionally valuable, but potentially elusive benefit.
Sam demonstrated his belief in the program and his motivation for seeing the participants grow and develop referencing on several occasions how the stories of students’ successes “pulled at his heartstrings.” Whereas Sam’s altruism motivated some of the energy he invested in the program, with so much weight on his division to make this program work, the implicit payoff associated with his collaboration also swayed him towards supporting the program:

I remember one of the things, and being selfish in regards to our division, perfect opportunity to [do] what we learned again in higher ed classes, to bridge that gap between faculty and student affairs. “Are you kidding me? What a great idea, right? They’re coming to us.” Too often in this industry, we go to them and they look at us like we’re crazy. I’ve been there many times. This time they’re actually coming to us. I thought that was great. So, I was, those were the things that were going through my head. And thinking “this is, it is a great idea.”

Sam saw this as an opportunity to build a sometimes-elusive coalition with faculty members, and the fact that faculty were coming to him was also important. Other stakeholders identified approaches they used to collaborate with the program implementers that also provided benefits to the institutional partners and connected them more deeply in the program.

Both Hannah and Icy, for instance, referenced how the program implementers regularly joined scheduled meetings coordinated by functional units like the financial aid and the bursar’s office. These meetings provided a platform for the program implementers to present and work through operational questions regarding the program
participants’ integration into university systems. These meetings also served to build cooperation with the institutional partners. The program implementers also engaged the institutional partners like Hannah and Icy in institutionalization efforts in meaningful ways that not only helped the partners complete their work more effectively but also made them feel as if they were part of something. Sam, for instance, called meetings similar to the functional meetings described above which involved a variety of the units under his supervision.

By engaging the institutional partners through structures directly tied to their functional responsibilities, the program stakeholders created a pathway that provided the partners permission to work with this program. With this permission, the partners engaged in critical work, sometimes beyond the scope of their roles, related to the program. For instance, some stakeholders mentioned both Hannah and Shelley as going above the call of duty in their efforts. Peachy described with conviction the “wonderful” and “huge” efforts of Hannah and the extensive work that Shelley did that those closer to the program could never have done on their own. The institutional partners may not have given this additional effort if the program implementers had not personally engaged the institutional partners in the work of the program and in collaborative approaches intentionally designed to enhance stakeholder investment. As we consider the different approaches the program staff took to include various institutional stakeholders, we approach the presence of the underlying story of the program that the stakeholders simultaneously told and created throughout institutionalization. The program implementers not only leveraged this story as a means to encourage others’ commitment,
but the story also offered yet another opportunity for program supporters to become connected to the program.

**Storytellers and Powerful Stories**

Simply put, the program could not have become institutionalized without inspired storytelling. In that way, storytelling was a necessary fuel for institutionalization and helped carry the day of this program. Underneath the simplicity, however, lies the complex dynamic of the story to build on its momentum that separates it from the other institutionalization fuel. As the institutional partners heard about and then committed to the program, they became part of the program story. A key dynamic in the story was that the program implementers helped create an environment that made room for more characters to join and play significant roles in the story. The stakeholders described this environment as one that engaged personal connections, built partnerships, and facilitated collaboration. This setting also allowed those directly and indirectly affiliated with the program to find excitement, a sense of investment, belonging, and partnership. Once inside, the institutional partners then assumed the responsibility of advocate and storyteller, promoting both the benefits of the program and the opportunities for others to get involved. Program implementers consciously acknowledged the power of the story that fueled the program’s institutionalization and that grew within the institutionalization environment.

Referencing the arguments of one of Harry’s contemporaries and of P.T. Barnum, Harry explained the need for a powerful program story:
[Plotner’s] main point was that you have to be very, very marketing and educationally committed . . . it’s interesting because I love P.T. Barnum and . . . he had three little rules . . . Marketing, marketing, marketing was one of them . . . But the marketing I wasn’t so hot. And [Plotner] . . . he talks a lot about the need to make sure people understand the idea. So, I would say some barriers are either resistance to the idea, or we don’t do a very good job of explaining the idea. Sometimes the idea, if somebody hasn’t thought of it before, “Nah, I’ve never heard anything,” which we found out when we went to [Faculty Senate leadership], we got a lot of that kind of reaction. “What do you mean? People with mental retardation in college,” . . . So barriers are not necessarily resistance, but lack of understanding.

For Harry, a key to negotiating resistance to this program came in the form of a clear and convincing promotion of the program and its goals. In contrast to his claim that he lacked the ability to market the program, however, several stakeholders hung significant weight on Harry’s ability to sell the program.

Sam’s summary of Harry’s capacity to sell the program captured an idea shared by a number of stakeholders:

Well, I give a lot of credit again back to [Harry] . . . I know his passion . . . And you get to the point then where you emotionally become involved in it. And emotionally involved in something, and if you make the commitment, then you're in. And I think, again, [Harry] was able to do that with me from the get-go.
Sam believed that Harry’s passion for the program allowed him to secure other’s commitment to the program by selling them on its benefits. Moreover, Sam described that the story he heard and contributed to was one that engaged him emotionally:

The emotional, as I said before, tie in. You know I thought was very important. This is a, I think, an emotional topic. I mean these are students who have, you know, they’re talking about emotion all the time. You know, good, bad, and indifferent. That’s part of this program. Definite. And I think [Harry] and [Heather], especially in this part because she did a lot of work with the parents, really pounded home how much this meant to the families. You know, and this is after we’re already into it. And how that makes you feel good that you’re able to really impact a family on this.

As Heather and Harry described the benefit of the program for participants and their families, they reinforced Sam’s support. As he described, the emotional cord the program struck with him promulgated Sam’s support of it. This quote from Sam also introduces Heather as another effective storyteller and salesman.

Program stakeholders also established Heather as a key storyteller, in addition to Harry, helping to promote the program’s integration into MSU. Harry, for instance, describe her as “quite a salesman.” Heather, in turn, gave credit to Harry for helping her to understand and believe in the program:

Well, I gotta give [Harry] credit that he and I spent so much time talking together. . . . when we first uh, started talking about this and planning, he really gave me the
vision what do we want it to look like . . . and we both agreed. We wanted it to look like what most four-year college students get to do.

So, although Harry may have had the vision from Heather’s perspective, it appeared that the two of them came together to build the story they would tell others. Only two people, no matter how committed and passionate they were, could not have marketed this program alone. In fact, others including Icy, Peachy, and Shelley saw it as part of their roles with the program to help convince others that the program was worth their support. Additionally, the program participants themselves were also a large component of the storytelling effort.

One manifestation of the program participants’ role in storytelling came in the form of a program brochure. One version of this brochure seemed to send the message that the program wanted the university community to view the program participants as much a part of MSU as any other student. In the image on the front of the brochure was a program participant standing underneath a large banner containing images of MSU graduates dressed in commencement regalia. On the banner were the words, “You belong here.” Underneath the banner, a program participant stood as if to say that not only was this student ‘here’ at MSU but also that he belonged at MSU and would one day graduate himself.

Insomuch as the brochure sent a message, Heather also believed that the program participants’ voices and actions had a large role in supporting the inclusion and belonging elements of the program’s story. Heather said, “so it was really important for our
students to be ambassadors of the program as well. . . We have to put a face on this; it can’t be just me out there talking or Harry or others. . . the students have to be out there.”

I saw this use of the student voice in action when I attended a program fundraiser where both parents of the program participants and the participants spoke to the benefit and impact of the program in an attempt to raise philanthropic funds. Given that the student voice was a key, the faculty contributions to the powerful story of the program were no less critical.

Faculty who were willing to advocate for the program represented another critical and unique voice of support, which carried weight in ways that no other community members could. Both Joy and Josie, two faculty members who had the program participants in their classes, readily identified the potential and actual benefits of the program for its participants and for the MSU degree-seeking students who interacted with the program participants. While both Josie and Joy identified ways in which the program could improve, that did not prevent them from expressing their belief in the goals and work of the program. This advocacy was invaluable to the program because, without faculty willing to allow the program participants in their classrooms, the goal of inclusion in campus life would have been severely hampered.

An episode from a Faculty Senate meeting that Hannah and Peachy described captured a good example of the power of the faculty voice, beyond that of individual testimonies in study interviews. According to Hannah, when Heather first brought the program’s curriculum to the Faculty Senate for review and approval, Heather was not ready for the type of scrutiny she might face in that setting. According to the minutes
from that first meeting, senators raised questions including whether the program was sustainable, why implementers were proposing it as a four-year program as opposed to a two-year program, and whether there were liability concerns that individual faculty members would need to consider when working with individuals with IDD. These concerns about this program prompted Senate leadership to “invoke the ‘two-meeting rule’” which guaranteed that the Senate would discuss the matter over two meetings providing additional time for Senate investigation and consideration (MSU Faculty Senate Minutes\(^1\)).

Even though this first meeting was not disastrous, Heather came to the second Faculty Senate meeting with a different approach. According to Hannah, “I think [Heather] . . . brought a couple faculty members who have had students in their classes to give testimonial.” Peachy reflected on the importance of the senators’ testimonials stating that “some of the senators who had direct experience with the program because they had students that were in their classes could let their other fellow senators know . . . it really helped a lot.” The Faculty Senate approval was an important step in the institutionalization of the program. The faculty who were willing to tell stories about the program, to advocate for it, and to share their positive views and experiences helped to assuage the concerns of the Faculty Senate members and others that might have otherwise stalled or even killed the program.

\(^{1}\) The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
An equally important step in the institutionalization process may have been the review of the program by the university’s governing board. The documents submitted to the governing board contained yet another example of the powerful story the program implementers were attempting to present. The following excerpt, from the documents submitted by the program implementers as part of the university’s governing board’s review process, highlighted what the program implementers argued were the primary benefits of the program:

The [program] is designed to benefit the university, students with disabilities, and the community, and aligns with the university’s goals of promoting diversity, research, and effective degree programs to meet regional and national needs. The program promotes diversity by exposing [MSU] students and faculty to individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, improving sensitivity to the aspirations and supporting the needs of students with disabilities. The program provides opportunities for students and faculty to conduct research . . . [and] . . . serves the community by preparing these young adults (ages 18-26) for adult life through academic pursuits, peer socialization, and career discovery, and preparation. (MSU Governing Board Meeting Materials)²

The materials presented the argument that the program provided beneficial opportunities for the students who participated in it. However, the materials first presented the benefits for the larger MSU community, including MSU faculty and degree-seeking students.

² The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
Knowing that altruism may only take the program so far, the story of the program crafted for the governing board put the interests of the institution first and highlighted the ways this program would advance the university as a whole. Analysis revealed no information regarding the effectiveness of this presentation of the program’s benefits as the meeting minutes did not contain any discussion from members of the university governing board on the matter. At a later meeting, however, the board did approve the fees associated with this program signaling, if nothing else, their lack of objection to the program. Even with all of these examples of the power and use of the program story to gain and involve advocates and secure support, the stakeholders also shared examples of continued need for additional and more convincing storytelling.

**Expanding the scope and scale of the story.** Early on, the program implementers might have avoided initial skepticism from potential advocates and may have provided a better experience for program participants through better communication. Shelley’s first encounter with the program, for instance, made this point well.

Well, the way I learned about it is I got a call from the college of education, and they wanted to know what the university’s taxpayer ID number was because they were trying to log into a federal web portal that I use . . . pretty exclusively . . . So, when they asked me for it, every hair on the back of my neck stood up, because nobody should be in messing with that information. Out of the gate, it would have been better if we had known what it was and hadn’t started with ‘what’s your federal taxpayer ID number?’ . . . Because the program went a year
with no Pell grant money available to the students as a result of that. And I’m not saying they might not have known at that point that it was a possibility . . . [because] . . . at an institution this size, nobody can know everything that’s going on. So, I wish we would have [known more] because I started off with a very high level of skepticism with the program and not that I was going to throw anything in their way, but I questioned every single thing down the line.

Shelley readily acknowledged the difficulty in ensuring full and effective communication to all concerned parties at a complex organization like MSU. At the same time, the key stakeholders before acting, the program created skepticism where it did not necessarily need to be. Heather reinforced the need for more communication. She acknowledged that though she worked hard to get the word out and had already reached out to numerous areas of the university, she still had work to do to tell the story of the program and communicate its goals and points of intersection across the organization.

Joy, Sam, and Sara all supported the point, to varying degrees, that the program staff still had work to do to inform the university community. Sam specifically wished that the program would have followed up with him and others at the university to share data regarding student outcomes and stories of the program post-participation successes.

Sam noted that powerful storytelling that engaged him emotionally brought him into the program. In asking for follow-up on the program outcomes, Sam suggested that there may be more powerful stories about the wonderful effects the program had on its participants about which he and other stakeholders should hear. Joy thought that more “pro-activeness” regarding a “PR campaign” targeted at the MSU community could have
mitigated an “attitudinal barrier” that she saw negatively affect the program participants and the way some students and faculty treated them. Joy seemed to argue that because some faculty and students viewed the program participants as less than their degree-seeking counterparts, these same faculty and students might overlook or even ridicule the program students.

Review of the program artifacts exposed multiple public-relations products including stories in university wide-publications, the program web pages (containing descriptions of the program, its benefits, and profiles of participants) and multiple versions of the program brochure. These items, however, missed the mark of creating a clear and effective story for which Joy was advocating as they did not explicitly place program participants on equal ground with degree-seeking students. The public-relations techniques leveraged by the program implementers might have had only limited success in the challenging communication environment of a complex institution like MSU. The program’s message may have drowned in the congested institutional milieu, where multiple competing messages from a variety of MSU community members campaign for the valuable and limited institutional resources and support.

Overall, the program implementers made many attempts to craft and tell a positive and supportive story about the program. They used multiple methods of communication and leveraged the voices of a variety of the stakeholders. Despite these efforts, not all stakeholders believed the program implementers had done enough to market the goals and benefits of the program. Success in this area may be difficult to achieve as effective storytelling and marketing would appear to require relentless and
continuous effort. Additionally, MSU’s large and complex institutional profile might have also complicated effective messaging. As I discuss in the next section, knowing, and then using the elements of MSU’s institutional context and profile to benefit and advance the program was another key element of this program’s institutionalization.

**Navigating and Leveraging Context**

Just as MSU’s large and complex nature, a contextual element, impacted the program implementers’ ability to effectively communicate with the community. Other contextual elements also drove or affected the progress of the program’s institutionalization. In this section, I discuss the ways in which context affected program institutionalization. For instance, as an institution of higher education, students and their experiences stood among the most basic of contextual elements that affected the institutionalization of the program. Even within the most cynical arguments that maintain that higher education is simply a business, students remain at the core of the educational mission. I begin this section, therefore, with a discussion of how institutionalizing this program naturally assumed the student, as a contextual element, influenced the progress and design of the program. Then, I move beyond the student influence to discuss how parents influenced institutionalization. Next, I shift to the discussion of the contextual influences of the history of the university, its commitment to diversity, and elements of the institution’s profile. Lastly, I detail how the program funding represented a final influence on institutionalization. These influences did not all present obstacles to institutionalization and in many cases served to facilitate and advance institutionalization efforts.
Student Influence

The case of institutionalization of this program was full of the influence and work of students. Numerous stakeholders noted that the work and contributions of MSU student employees and mentors were keys to the operations of the program. Joy, for instance, noted that “the role of typically developing peer mentors was critical in the [program] students’ success in the classroom.” Harry also acknowledged the contributions of doctoral students, like Heather and others, who were the key, both in the institutionalization of this program and in many other efforts to bring students with IDD to MSU.

In addition to playing key roles during the grant phase, Heather and her two fellow program directors were also pursuing their doctoral degrees in related fields. Harry went as far as to say that the experiences for individuals with IDD at MSU were “built on the backs of doctoral students.” An institutional partner, Icy, was also pursuing her academic pursuits at the same time she was providing support to the program through her professional role. Icy recalled a particular academic assignment that she completed that focused on the program as “one of [her] favorite papers to write.” Icy spoke at some length about the ways her student perspective influenced her professional work with the program and vice versa.

Despite students’ presence in the institutionalization process, no stakeholders suggested that I speak with an individual specifically because of their perspective as a student. This may suggest that the student perspective did not rise to a level where the stakeholders saw it as a key to institutionalization. Still, the student voice and influence,
as well as the benefits of this program for degree-seeking MSU students and the program participants, were abundant.

**Varying benefits for MSU and program students.** As one might expect in the case of any educational opportunity, the stakeholders showed great concern for the benefits of the program for participants. This concern caused the stakeholders to question and argue for the value of the program for both MSU and program students. The program’s value drove institutionalization as it drove the rationale for the program. The program participants and MSU students were realizing the benefits of the program at the same time that the program implementers were negotiating various elements of institutional context. In fact, the process of defining and identifying these benefits itself acted as a contextual element that required negotiation. As the stakeholders realized the impact of the program on students, they placed value on those benefits or lack thereof which informed their approach to the design of the program and its fit within MSU. The Department of Education specifically designed the TPSID grant to create beneficial opportunities for students with IDD on college and university campuses.

Though many stakeholders supported this argument, there was also significant support for the idea that the learning and growth experienced by MSU degree-seeking students who interacted with the program participants were on par with if not greater than that of the program participants. An unpublished manuscript provided by Harry (obtained as part of data collection) summarizes the benefits to the MSU degree-seeking students as:
• Exposing degree-seeking students “to students that have intellectual and developmental disabilities”;
• providing opportunities for degree-seeking students to improve “sensitivity to the aspiration and support needs of individuals with IDD”;
• and “[i]n particular, a positive impact is realized for students preparing to become teachers, related service providers, and health care and human services professionals.” (Unpublished Manuscript, Harry)³

Peachy’s justification for its existence at MSU supported the argument that these benefits for degree-seeking students might outweigh the benefits for the program participants.

Peachy stated that as she and other program stakeholders attempted to institutionalize the program and convince various university leadership groups of the value of the program for MSU. They focused on the benefits for the MSU degree-seeking students. Specifically, she saw the program as helping MSU degree-seeking students “dismiss the stereotype that [the program participants were] retarded.” She also argued for the value that MSU degree-seeking students would gain by participating in “mentor roles” with the program and in completing “independent, individual investigations or independent studies” with the program. From Peachy’s perspective, the MSU degree-seeking students were the major beneficiaries because she had not yet seen enough convincing data on the program participant outcomes and post-program effect.

³ The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
Peachy expressed this belief with some regret because she had hoped that a convincing argument regarding the benefits for the program participants would have emerged by the time the grant ended. Although Peachy maintained this disappointment, Heather offered some evidence of positive outcomes for the program participants.

Citing national employment averages for individuals with IDD, Heather made the case that the program was making a documentable and positive impact on the employment outcomes for the program participants. Heather stated,

> Of our 18 students that graduated 17 of them are now employed. Competitive employment, part to full-time national averages are, they vary, 14% to 25% one year after graduating from a school that students are employed . . . We are at . . . 94%. So that’s promising.

She acknowledged, however, that this data was relatively weak as it was only based on a single program cohort and participants’ self-reported employment only one year out of the program. As Heather underscored, however,

> That was the whole experiment, if they had additional time and some intensive training, can we get them to where they’re competitively employed and ultimately, hopefully using less resources in supports and adult agency type things. We’re still young yet. We don’t have that longitudinal study, but it’s promising.

Heather did not see employment outcomes as only an outcome of participation. Instead, she viewed the institutionalization of the program as a chance to test the idea that students with IDD could achieve greater outcomes with additional support. For Heather,
“the whole experiment” and then the work to institutionalize the program were inseparable from its outcomes. The numbers she offered began to make a case for positive employment outcomes for students and demonstrated her belief in the success of the effort to institutionalize the program. Heather’s comments also acknowledged that employment would be an ongoing program and research focus which would represent ongoing work to build and institutionalize the program.

Complicating the success of the program and the employment outcomes for students, however, were the actual experiences of the students and their parents. Betty explained, for instance, that program staff counted her daughter as one of the “successfully employed” program students. Betty clarified this, however, saying that her daughter “got a paying job but she works one day a week and for four hours. She started out two days a week but she got her hours cut. So now she's in the process of looking for other jobs.” Betty added that though she was disappointed by the employment outcome for her daughter, she approached it with some understanding. She stated, “I do think that her experience [in the program] and her skills that she's gained here certainly have helped her résumé and employers are impressed. It would have been very nice had she done an internship . . . and moved into a job from that.” Even though Betty cited an improved résumé and enhanced skills as benefits of her daughter’s participation in the program, her comments indicated that she believed the program did not do enough during institutionalization to incorporate the necessary job preparation experiences.

The stakeholders also stated that factors beyond the program implementers’ direct control limited other post-participation benefits the program could provide to its students.
These factors played an important role in institutionalizing the program because while their effects were real, the program implementers either did not or could not mitigate the effects of these factors on their institutionalization efforts. Icy, Sara, Peachy, Joy, and other study participants, for instance, shared the concern regarding limitations on the post-participation outcomes for these students. These the institutional partners feared that the world of work that awaited the participants post-program was not designed for their full participation. Expressing her concern that the program participants would not be able to fully participate in the world of work, Peachy stated “I really hope . . . that society really recognizes these people . . . and they don’t end up doing . . . those three “Fs . . . I can’t say that I’m sold that’s really gonna happen.” Invoking the three ‘Fs,’ Peachy referenced a common set of jobs in food, filth, and factory that other stakeholders described as the work settings to which individuals with IDD were often confined. Unfortunately, Peachy was not convinced that society would recognize program participants and allow them to participate in the world of work beyond the spaces to which they had typically been steered.

The stakeholders expressed the need for societal expectations and perceptions to change if the program participants would be able to experience the full benefits of their time in the program. Peachy’s comment above would indicate that she saw the need for change in societal expectations around how individuals with IDD can contribute in the workplace if the program participants were going to see improved employment outcomes. Joy added that the program itself might need to shift its design to account for the current set of societal expectations that disadvantage individuals with IDD by creating a more
cohesive academic experience for students in their chosen field which would also make the experience more understandable for potential employers. In Joy’s view, “the academic track for the [program] student is extremely varied. It’s not cohesive.” Joy expressed that this lack of cohesion did not allow the program participants to develop the depth of understanding or skill set that degree-seeking students receive as they pursue a degree. Some, like Mark, even added that the program had a degree of responsibility to create, for instance, a clearly understandable explanation of the program and its benefits that participants could provide potential employers in place of the more recognizable diploma that degree-seeking students could leverage.

If, as the stakeholders’ comments suggested, accounting for these forces limited the effectiveness of the program, then they represent forces that the program implementers either did not or could not account for and address in their institutionalization efforts. In that way, these external forces and their negative effects on the program participants’ job prospects suggest contextual elements that weakened the effectiveness of institutionalization, leaving the program vulnerabilities that might jeopardize the program’s future. Current concerns about the employment outcomes for any student across the higher education spectrum in the United States reflect this focus on jobs and employment outcomes for the program participants. This parallel was just one of the examples noted by the stakeholders which demonstrated how, through institutionalization, the program facilitated the stakeholders’ and other MSU community member’s reconciliation of the presence of student difference.
Reconciling the presence of student differences. Program stakeholders, directly and indirectly, drew attention to the parallels between MSU degree-seeking students’ and the program participants’ experiences. The parallels between the degree-seeking students and the program participants were pieces of the intended fabric of the program.

Therefore, the program acted as a force that prompted those within the MSU community to reconcile, if needed, their concept of higher education to include the participation of individuals with IDD. As such, reconciliation became a component of the evolving context that emerged during institutionalization.

By design, a TPSID program should set out to “provide individual supports and services for the academic and social inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in academic courses, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of the institution of higher education's regular postsecondary program” (United States Department of Education, 2013). As noted, Peachy thought that by exposing a degree-seeking student to students with IDD, the degree-seeking students might “dismiss the stereotype that [program participants were] retarded.” Thus, as the program sought to include students with IDD in a “regular postsecondary program,” it was also working to reconcile their presence in that setting by challenging the assumptions that make their presence less than normal. In support of this progress towards this reconciliation, the stakeholders shared examples of incredible student growth. Other examples along the path to reconciliation highlighted the ongoing need to attend to the opportunities in which these two populations interact and to the outcomes for the program participants.
Reconciling the role of students with IDD at MSU included, as the grant language suggested, inclusion in the social settings of the institution. In this case, the program participants’ experiences outside of the classroom paralleled, in many ways, that of degree-seeking students. In the residence halls, for instance, students experienced social difficulties that could be typical of any student’s experience. Noting that it was not something that she was expecting, Heather spoke of the “social drama among the students . . . Boyfriend/girlfriend, girls fighting over boys, boys fighting over girls, I think it was their first experience with having some freedom . . . and they just didn’t know how to handle that.”

No doubt, higher education professionals have spoken similar words about college students’ first experiences living away from home. Yet, these unexpected social conflicts presented challenges that the program implementers needed to attend to if they hoped to institutionalize the program and integrate the program participants into the social context of MSU.

Sam similarly noted that the staff in the residence halls dealt with the program participant behavioral issues, but that the staff was almost seamlessly able to apply the standard policies and approaches they would use with any student in a similar situation. This seamless application of established practices suggests at least one area in which the program implementers may have avoided friction in institutionalization and the reconciliation of differences. This lack of friction may have sprung from the similarities between the experiences of MSU degree-seeking and the program students.
Putting his spin on the program’s goals, Mark commented on the matter of behavioral issues and the prospect that both student populations should be able to equitably test these issues in a college environment. As Mark saw it, the program was in part designed as,

a chance for students with intellectual disabilities to grow up in a supportive environment before going out into the world. Very much what it does for our college students . . . I mean so much of college . . . was it’s a time when you can take those risks, you can try out different identities, you can do all these kinds of things, and you don’t go to jail for it, usually.

Reconciling any difference that may exist between student populations, Mark aligned the goals of the program with the goals of any college experience. The program highlighted natural links between student experiences by allowing participants to benefit from the developmental risk taking space that Mark suggested was both a program goal and a typical college experience.

Sara added that she saw a program participant become involved in residence hall programming and governance, which was an example of the program participants’ inclusion in the institution through another typical college experience. Betty supported the idea of this parallel as she reflected on the experiences of her two daughters, one who participated in the program and one who recently started college as a degree-seeking student. “I have a younger daughter that just started school. And I'm hearing all, like the same. You know the same things, just on a different level.” Both through their first-hand knowledge, and as they consciously compared the experiences of the program
participants and degree-seeking students, the stakeholders tendered examples that supported the idea that program participants experienced many of the same things as their degree-seeking counterparts. Creating the context that supported reconciling multiples student experiences did not, however, guarantee equitable experiences in every regard.

Not all stakeholders believed the program participants had fully integrated into the university social system. Joy expressed concern that the program participants predominately spent time with each other, as opposed to branching out and connecting with degree-seeking students. Though Sara had stated that one student’s participation in residence hall governance gave her hope that students were integrating into the institutional network, she too acknowledged concern about whether the program participants were staying on campus over the weekend or returning to the familiar confines of their homes. The concerns expressed by Sara and Joy, while potentially limiting, are not entirely out of the ordinary when compared to similar concerns that higher education professional express about typically-developing college students. Sara presented a roommate situation that highlighted this point.

Sara described a roommate conflict between a degree-seeking student and a program participant that also supported how program institutionalization helped the staff reconcile their views of the student experience. As Sara explained:

[The program participant] . . . didn’t understand boundaries very well, so she was kind of attaching herself to the roommate. The roommate was just a sweet, shy individual, didn’t give her those boundaries, just kinda let it happen but then was
calling home and saying ‘you know this student’s really needy and she’s always here, and so dad calls me.

Sara continued to explain that the father detailed the situation, questioned the legitimacy of the program participant’s ability to live in the residence hall, and highlighted the stress this situation was causing his daughter. Reflecting on this situation Sara said, “It’s very similar to the conversations I was having with parents 15 years ago . . . with students who are living with a student who is gay, with a student who has a different race, different religion.” Even at a point such as this where the program participants’ ability to assimilate in the social-cultural environment of MSU appeared to be complicated, Sara’s reflective point suggests that complicated does not necessarily mean different. This situation also demonstrates that Sara, as a residence life professional, was viewing the experience of the program participants in the same light as she had viewed the experiences of students with a range of othering identities.

The differing outcomes open to the program participants and the degree-seeking students stood as undeniable differentiators between the two groups. As Hannah and Joy pointed out, the degree-seeking students could leave their academic programs with a degree where that was not an option for the program participants. Hannah and Joy expressed their concern related to the program participants’ abilities to gain degrees through the program, questioning whether the time and money spent was worth it. Putting developmental and social growth aside for a moment, the concern over whether the program could help students obtain gainful employment post-participation emerged. Even with a degree, however, a college graduate might “not get a job in what you want to
get a job in” (Betty). Thus, considering that Hannah and Joy were correct that the matter of the degree was a true difference that highlights divergence in the student experience, Betty’s point suggests that a degree does not absolve typically developing students from some of the same post-college struggles that the program participants without a degree might face. As I discuss in the next section, the reality of this struggle weighed heavily on the minds of the program participants’ parents and underscored but one of the ways that parents presented another contextual factor that influenced the institutionalization of the program.

**Parental Influence**

Parents represented a constant and strong contextual force whose voices and influences caused lasting change in the program. As I detail in this section, parents expressed concern for issues ranging from lack of promised career development opportunities for their students to concerns with the program staff performance. Though only one of the stakeholders who took part in this study, Betty, was a parent of a program participant, the impacts of the parents on institutionalization, nonetheless emerged as a strong contextual force. In expressing their concerns, parents influenced the program institutionalization by forcing the program stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of and sometimes altered the program structures and practices. The perspectives of the program stakeholders shared below suggested that the intense and energized parental influence connected to the roles parents assumed in their children’s lives as they moved through the K-12 education systems and to the new less involved role that the program implementers were pushing parents towards. Ultimately, parents’ close and emotional
ties to the program participants, in addition to their natural desires to see what they believed were the best outcomes for their children, motived their involvement.

One issue raised by many stakeholders was the failure of the program to deliver on its promises regarding career development experiences for its participants. This issue was particularly frustrating for parents because of its negative impact on their children. The analysis did not reveal a comprehensive understanding of the expectations that participants and their families had regarding career preparation. Analysis did, however, reveal that parents believed that the program staff had not satisfactorily met expectations. As Betty explained, this career development issue upset many parents of students in the program, and they appeared to blame a single individual for the shortcoming:

I think that the work piece and internship piece, I mean that was definitely the most disappointing piece for us. But I also attribute that to an individual, not the whole program . . . You know it was a matter of somebody not doing their job. That I think was very very unfortunate for the program. If someone else had been in that position, I'm very confident that it would have gone better than it did. So that's a very big disappointment. I think that was a difficulty. I think it created a lot of [problems] for the program . . . I think that was a lot of the parent issue, which I understand.

Parents’ frustration and disappointment in what Betty and others believed was one individual’s poor performance forced the program implementers to react. As Mark noted, “[w]e did have one staff person that the parents did not like. And so, I had to deal with a lot of issues around that.” Given that the staff person remained in their position for some
time, it was telling that this staff person did not continue to stay involved with the program beyond the grant phase. The connection between this staff person’s departure from the program and the parent’s expression of disappointment may be tenuous. However, by Mark acknowledging that parental influence forced him to react, the parental voice did register with the program implementers during institutionalization. As Betty described the parents’ expression of frustration, it seemed that the parents were not going to let their voices go unheard.

As an example, Betty spoke about a rather intense conversation she joined involving numerous participants’ parents and the program staff where the parents directly expressed their view that the program was “not making connections in the community” and therefore not building relationships with potential employers or disability services agencies. Betty also spoke of how she came to dread regularly scheduled meetings set up by the program to keep parents informed on program related matters. Betty stated that at some of these meetings, “a group of parents . . . were very adversarial and they teamed up together [because] they felt like they were sold a bill of goods that didn’t get delivered.” Though the analysis did not clearly reveal all that this bill of goods included, at least a significant portion of it related to job development opportunities.

Betty labeled some of the parents involved in these examples as “heavy-hitters.” Shelley shared a similarly energized characterization of a program participant’s mother who contacted her regarding her desperate search for funding. Shelley described this parent as “a firecracker of epic proportions.” Regarding this same parent, Shelley added that there was “nothing [the mother would] stop at to advocate for her son.” These
characterizations shared by Joy and Shelley illuminate the intensity of the involvement of these parents. With their strong personalities, parents like the ones described above influenced the program, forcing the institutional partners and the program implementers to consider and reconsider how they were supporting students and the students’ families.

The influence and impact of parents were not only a surprise to the program implementers but also had lasting impacts on the design of the program. As Mark explained:

The parents turned out to be a bigger stumbling block than we thought. We didn’t prepare. We figured they’re getting this program for free. They’re gonna be very happy with it. And they’re gonna get us through some of the rough periods.

Well, that didn’t quite work like we thought.

Mark continued to explain that many of the problems that they experienced with parents, in his opinion, related to the fact that the parents did not want to give up control of their children’s academic experience.

Josie shared her view on this matter, suggesting that parents may not be aware of how their controlling approach may have negatively affected their students’ developmental progress. As Josie shared,

The problem I find most often is the parents. Um, and they don’t even know that they are enabling, but they do. And so, it’s like, you can say things here and there and there, and then all of a sudden, they go home, and they’re put back into that role of, you know, autistic child, right as we’re trying to get them something to really meet their full potential.
The intentional or unintentional nature of this influence aside, the program staff again had to adjust their approach based on the parents’ influence and enabling.

Although Heather was sympathetic to the difficult situation parents may have found themselves in given the potentially uncomfortable position the program was asking them to assume in regards to control, she nonetheless stayed true to her view that the program participants needed to be self-determined and given the space to make their own developmentally appropriate decisions. Heather described the difficult position that parents were in and how that difficult situation affected and required a significant amount of time from the program implementers.

For parents to get used to, to say you’re no longer in the driving seat, you now have to get behind and be . . . [in] a supporting role and you have to let go of those reigns, it’s very, very difficult [for] parents. And then they get angry at the ones that are telling them they need to do that . . . That consumed a lot of time.

(Heather)

Heather likewise described how she had to adjust her approach to parents to head off some of their detrimental influence. Heather noted how the program had adjusted to account for the parents:

Um, we’ve gotten better at that because from what we’ve learned during that pilot program, that when a student is applying to be in the program, I interview parents now. And say this is what’s happening, these are the expectations, are you understanding this because if this isn’t what you’re going to do, then this is not the program for your student.
This direct and firm approach that program staff took with parents did not suit all parents of program students.

Mark shared examples of parents threatening to remove or removing their students from the program because they were not comfortable with the program staff not including the parent in decisions the program was leaving up to the students. The trouble caused by the parents’ desires to be intricately involved in their students’ experiences and decisions in the program caused the program to move away from an initial structural mainstay. As Mark explained, “Initially we said, [the program participants] can still be in high school and still have an IEP . . . What that [did was] basically give the parents veto power over whatever we [did] here at the university.” Because of the problems associated with having students on IEPs, and after weighing the financial benefits and limitations that IEPs presented regarding student funding options, the program decided to stop the practice of allowing students on IEPs to participate.

As Mark reflected on the impact of the parental voice on the program and its institutionalization, he identified issues both with meeting parental expectations and with appropriately and effectively communicating these expectations. He identified the issues related to students on IEPs and both the conflict regarding control and funding that dually-enrolled students can create between the parents and the program. He also identified the program’s lack of preparation to handle these concerns and the influence parents had and expected over the program. While the consternation of the program implementers may be understandable, intense parental involvement is not unheard of in higher education.
As Mark pointed out, even degree-seeking students had ‘helicopter parents.’ The root of the intense desire of many parents of students with IDD to be inextricably involved in their child’s education both sets this approach apart from parents of typically-developing students and deserves additional discussion. Given the experience that these parents have in the K-12 education system, their reactions in regards to this program may be understandable. First, as Mark explained by allowing dually-enrolled students to participate in the program, the program staff invited confusion regarding the parent’s role. As Betty explained it:

I think what people don't understand and perhaps maybe some of the families have a hard time understanding is your individualized education is an entitlement. You know under IDEA until age 22. When you come to college, your IEP doesn't follow you to college. So, I think that's the best thing that they did was when they made a decision [to not allow students on an IEP to participate in the program].

Even with Betty’s explanation, the fact remained that during the program’s grant phase, it did allow students with IEPs to participate and put parents and students in the situation of having to navigate the confusion. Notwithstanding the IEP confusion, parents presumably would want the best for their children and getting that, in their experience, may have required them to be forceful in the past.

Betty’s comments suggested that in the world of disability, parents learn the need to act forcefully to get the best for students with disabilities. Betty recalled an experience she had attending a session on IEPs as her daughter was first entering the K-12 educational system. She described a setting where other mothers told her about how
difficult the IEP process would be and how she would have to protect herself and take precautions to ensure that the school administrators treated her daughter fairly. She said that she was “terrified” of the IEP process because of this session. She also added that she believed the extreme environment thrust the intense need to protect children with IDD upon parents. She stated, “Certainly I think it [is] sent out and then I think also that turns into that idea that we have to forever protect them as individuals because nobody else is.” Whereas one could debate the effectiveness of a hardened, relentless, and calculated approach, it is also easy to empathize with and see the origins of this approach.

Therefore, almost by default, the influence and involvement of parents of students with IDD in educational settings appears to be inevitable. Although the program staff may not have planned for it appropriately at first, parental influence on this program was persistent and its impact had lasting effects on the program’s design and the staff’s approach.

The Impact of History

The historical context of the institution, specifically as it related to work with individuals with disabilities, represented another factor that shaped the institutionalization process. As reflected in the TPSID grant proposal, the program staff believed that many of the historically established institutional elements made MSU an ideal location for the grant. The proposal indicated, for instance, that prior to the beginning of the grant, the staff had met with and began securing commitments for potential institutional allies, representatives from the state Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and contacts in the local school districts to discuss the project. The proposal also described the campus as
“fully-accessible to students with disabilities” and discussed several structures (e.g. disability services office, health center, and transition center) that serve degree-seeking MSU students with disabilities. The proposal detailed the transition center staff had built critical institutional relationships over the years that would serve the program staff as they attempted to institutionalize the program (MSU TPSID Grant Proposal). The transition center and the work done through it at MSU was a critical institutional and foundational element in the institutionalization process.

Both Harry and Mark explained that their work through the transition center had established an extensive history at MSU of serving individuals with disabilities. The transition center, which had operated at MSU for over 20 years, focused on creating transition programs, practices, and experiences for individuals with disabilities. Again, during their time working together at MSU, Mark and Harry had secured over $20 million in grants. Their grant projects laid a groundwork for the TPSID program and other programs that served and will serve students with IDD, introducing students with IDD into the campus culture and creating an institutional history of serving students with IDD.

One grant in particular, an NIDRR grant, laid the critical framework for the TPSID program. As Harry explained:

We had the pilot; we had a three-year NIDRR grant. I can’t emphasize how important that was. If we would have got[ten] that TPSID grant cold, [Pause]

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4 The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
well I don’t know if we would have gotten it if we wrote it cold. I think the reason we got it is we had been doing some work. We probably showed a lot more understanding and sophistication than a lot of [other applicants].

The expressed goals of the project developed through the NIDRR grant were to provide “improved opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) to develop self-determination skills” and “to provide rich opportunities for exploration and development for students with intellectual disabilities as they transition into adulthood” (MSU NIDRR Grant Proposal). 5

This NIDRR grant-funded program in many ways paralleled the work that the TPSID project would take on. Heather pointed out, however, that the program developed under the TPSID grant was a four-year program as opposed to the one-year program piloted under the NIDRR grant. Heather emphasized another difference between the two programs highlighting that the TPSID program became much more inclusive, integrating students even more fully into the college experience than the NIDRR funded program. Regarding the work done through the NIDRR grant, Mark summarized how the grant served as scaffolding for future work including the TPSID grant: “And so we call that agenda building, and we take something, and then we tweak it, and the idea is to build on whatever we’ve done before.” This scaffolding served as a critical support structure for the institutionalization of the TPSID program.

5 The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
Additionally, Sam’s comments reinforced the idea that by bringing students with IDD to campus, the programs that came before the TPSID program gave the MSU community the opportunity to see the progress these individuals could make and how they could become part of the MSU community themselves:

You know, I got to see them when I was a very young professional, and the work that they were doing. You know the students at that time, the high school students, kids, working with supervisors on campus. Working in custodial. Working in the cafeteria. Those types of jobs. And as time went on, those jobs got a little more complex. And these were great kids . . . you realize you’ve got parents involved, families, and how much this developmentally can help a student as well as a family. And so how can you not like it. (Sam)

Here Sam identified an interesting parallel between the developing and expanding roles that these students took on and the mindset of administrators like Sam whose understanding of the capacity of the students also grew and expanded. Through agenda building and a commitment to the work of serving students with IDD, dedicated individuals at MSU were laying programmatic and practical groundwork while also introducing the MSU community to the idea of students with IDD as an accepted part of the institutional and cultural context of the institution.

**Institutional Priority of Diversity**

Another contextual element of MSU that served to support the institutionalization of the program was an institutional priority of diversity. The stakeholders identified a culture of openness to difference and diversity as fertile ground within MSU in which a
program like this not only made sense but could also thrive. Noting support from the former and current president of MSU, Hannah believed support came from the top for an institutional culture that prioritized diversity and inclusion. With support from institutional leadership, MSU had established a culture that had also permeated the university, and that was present in the minds of the program stakeholders who viewed this institutional priority both as a point of pride and as a key to institutionalizing the program. Josie reflected this idea, stating,

I love [MSU]’s diversity . . . It’s definitely an important piece of who we are and how we should be as a people and as a university . . . and . . . this program is just such an important piece of what it means to be a good university, you know, a university citizen, . . . we talk about diversity to so much of an extent, and yet we don’t operationalize it, and here is an opportunity to operationalize it.

Josie saw the program both as fitting with the institutional priority on diversity as well as advancing the university’s commitment to that priority. Shelley also reinforced the idea that MSU’s culture was an important supportive element in the program’s institutionalization, but drew a distinction between MSU’s culture and the culture in higher education generally.

Shelley commented that MSU’s commitment to inclusion and diversity counteracted a prevailing culture in higher education that prioritizes a traditional view of education that may exclude students with IDD. Shelley stated “our culture as a higher ed. institution, a traditional higher ed. institution, made things rocky for them at the beginning . . . I think the culture here at [MSU], we are open to differences and such and
made it possible.” Similarly, Joy agreed that the institution’s commitment to diversity “had an influence in that we want our students to be accepting of others with differences.” Both Joy and Shelley argued that this program challenged members of MSU’s institutional community to think even broader as an institution and industry. Joy stated,

It’s broadening our understanding that there is a range of abilities and it’s ok. You know that the opposite to that argument is well not everyone gets to go to college. Not everybody has the intellectual capacity. And that’s true, of course, that’s true. But for those people who can and want it, the opportunity should at least be available.

Both Joy and Shelley built arguments contingent upon the idea that the design of higher education does not allow students with IDD to fully participate. This argument also seemed to undergird the TPSID grant because if there were naturally space in higher education for students with IDD, there would be no need for the grant program. Icy commented on this concept when she observed that by offering this program, MSU was away from a place that “didn’t have any programs for students with these type of disabilities” and “towards a system where we will allow them to participate.”

Underpinning the perspectives shared by Shelley, Icy, and Joy was the idea that within higher education there should be space for students with IDD.

For some stakeholders, this space was not simply a luxury but instead was the program students’ cultural and legal right. Joy stated, for instance, that the program’s
existence at MSU was “a matter of social justice and it’s a matter of equal rights.” Betty added:

I think it's the right thing to do . . . it's about equal access . . . I think disability is just another area where people are discriminated against. And so, I think with equal rights, and [the] disability rights movement dovetailed off the civil rights movement . . . I think it's equal access.

These concepts of social justice, equal rights, and equal access aligned well with what many described as an institutional culture that supported diversity and acceptance. In fact, the stakeholders may not have built arguments for the program’s existence at MSU if the institutional culture did not support diversity. This institutional commitment to diversity did not, however, prevent other elements of MSU’s institutional profile from hindering the institutionalization process.

**Institutional Profile**

Working against the positive force of a university setting where the institutional commitment to diversity made room for a program like this, MSU’s institutional profile also contained elements that had negative repercussions on the program’s institutionalization. Established and accepted elements of the institutional profile served as counterweights to the institutional commitment to diversity and other institutional elements that support institutionalization. These profile components included established pedagogical approaches that devalued the participation of students with IDD and an MSU student population that included individuals who had not developed the capacity to accept students with IDD as peers. MSU’s status as a research university also presented
challenges to institutionalization as it prioritized the production of research and placed significant value on faculty who held terminal degrees. Though these institutional components did not present insurmountable challenges, there was evidence of their negative impacts on the program’s institutionalization and its participants.

Established pedagogical approaches, for instance, resulted in isolated yet still discouraging and disappointing examples that negatively impacted the program students’ in-class experiences. Summarizing sentiments shared by other stakeholders, Joy stated:

The culture of higher education and expectations of faculty also worked against the program. I think the majority of faculty who have the [program] students in their courses were accepting, but there were some that were condescending and placating. And didn’t really value that student’s participation in their classroom.

Joy supported this claim as she presented examples of faculty ignoring students in classes, not grading or appropriately evaluating assignments, or even giving assignments back at all after submission. Joy seemed to be referring to a cultural and potentially philosophical assumption that leads faculty to devalue the contributions and participation of students with IDD in the classroom, almost questioning these students’ place in the classroom altogether.

Joy expressed similar concerns about MSU students’ readiness or ability to accept students with IDD as peers. For Joy, this lack of readiness and ability led to at least one situation where a program participant “was met with some pretty harsh resistance from the typically developing students in a course that he was enrolled in” (Joy). Though she did not provide specific details regarding this resistance, Joy did add that she believed
some typically-developing students needed to come to see the program students as peers. More specifically, she stated that typically developing students needed to realize that they “don’t have to take care of [the program students].” She explained that “maybe they would need a little help here or there . . . [or] a ride to a service project site or something like that.” Ultimately, Joy argued that many of the more difficult interactions between the program students and degree-seeking students stemmed from the fact that some degree-seeking students did not view the program participants as peers, but instead viewed the program students’ participation at MSU as less than their own. Among stakeholders, and even as Joy presented them, negative reactions to the program participants were rare. As rare as they may have been, their impacts were no doubt felt by the program participants and then were dynamics that the program implementers must have accounted for and addressed. Negative faculty and student attitudes and actions towards the program participants were not the only contextual hurdle for the program.

Additional institutional components woven into the fabric of MSU presented obstacles and hurdles for the program and its implementers. As a research university, Peachy, Harry, and Heather all acknowledged that they felt continued pressure to produce research based on the program outcomes and participants’ experiences. Considering that this pressure may not in itself have been negative, it presented another outcome on which the program implementers must focus. Without unlimited resources and time, it is possible that focusing on this pressure may have diverted attention to other critical needs like attending to the complicated culture dynamics Joy presented above.
Related to the institution’s status as a research university and the weight that status placed on a terminal degree in such an institution, Hannah, Peachy, and Betty all expressed concern that in the setting someone without a terminal degree like Heather might not get the respect she deserved. Though Heather obtained her Ph.D. prior to the end of the program’s grant phase, she admitted that she “wanted this degree not so much ‘cause I wanted to be [doctor], but because I knew that’s what was gonna open doors to have people listen to me.” Many in the field of higher education share the cultural value of terminal degrees. Heather saw her lack of a degree as a hurdle to her ability to advance the program and noted that her partnership with Harry with his cultural capital across the university was one way she navigated the dynamics she felt not holding the degree

**Program Funding**

Finances were a consistent point of emphasis throughout the program’s institutionalization. While some components of the issues surrounding the program, finances related to the institutional context, others stemmed from the TPSID grant itself and its requirements. This section will cover issues related to MSU’s institutional characteristic including, but not limited to its status as a public university and its budgeting model. Additionally, the section details the institutional partnerships and agreements that were vital in initially obtaining the TPSID grant and in the continued operation of the program. The section also includes discussion of the underlying concern for the student’s ability to pay for the program. This concern prompted scrutiny of the program design and motivated action on the part of the program implementers. Finally,
in this section, I outline the impact of the program funding on institutionalization through the lens of the institutional and external practices that defined the funding sources that were available to the program students and their parents.

Beginning with an element of the institutional profile, the stakeholders identified that MSU’s status as a public institution linked to both the how and why of funding this program. Public money, for instance, was an inherent component in the argument that the program fits into MSU’s educational mission because the institution “serve[d] the public” (Hannah). Public money, links an institution of higher education to the goal of serving the public. Both Joy and Harry identified the presence of this public and tax money at MSU as justification for the program’s presence at MSU. In their estimation, a public institution should be open to this type of program because the program participants and their families contribute to one of the institution’s funding sources through tax dollars. As Joy put it, “I think people with intellectual disabilities have the right to come to a public university, that their . . . state taxes are helping to pay for.” Also, bolstering this argument, both Sam and Hannah identified that MSU offered many other resources, programs, and opportunities that were open to the public. Sam and Hannah countered this program as just another program that reasonably falls into a similar category. Hannah shared examples like MSU’s “kids camp,” its “cheerleading camp,” and its “childhood development center” which she viewed as analogous to the TPSID program. She viewed these examples as proof that MSU existed in part to “serve the community.” Squaring the public nature of the institutional setting with the program’s goals was an important step in the institutionalization of the program. From the very beginning, the
program implementers had to consider not only how to use grant funds would, but how to link MSU financially to this program.

To receive the TPSID grant, the program had to meet the grant’s matching requirement which stated that the program must commit “non-federal funds” in the form of “a matching contribution equal to at least 25% of the cost of the project” (Alston, 2010, p. 5). The program’s grant proposal accounted for this match by asserting, “The match is provided through cost share for involvement of faculty, the school director’s time, use of residences for training, provision of services without charge and doctoral student program coordinators” (MSU TPSID Grant Proposal). Harry stated that one portion of this match came in the form of “buying-out faculty” and that “one large amount of money for the matching was a match provided by Sam’s office . . . So that was basically the fees” that were charged by units under Sam’s supervision (Harry).

Even with Sam’s willingness to commit resources to the program, he said, “[t]he hard part then is to get everybody on board and in line and go from there.” Take, for instance, the example of the student wellness fee which Sam waived for program participants. This student fee gives students access to MSU’s recreation center. When he discussed this fee, he noted that even though the recreation services staff became invested in the program’s success, they did show some initial resistance to the idea of waiving this fee. Sam explained that getting beyond this initial resistance required him to draw a hard line on his decision. He justified this decision in part by the fact that with so few students

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6 The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
in the program, the fee did not amount to much. Therefore, the financial loss was something he was willing to assume for the sake of the program’s and the students’ success.

Program implementers used arrangements like the one described above with Sam as they built sections of the TPSID proposal to make arguments for “the extent to which the budget is reasonable” and for a situation where “continued commitment and support [would continue] after funding ends” (MSU TPSID Grant Proposal). In their description of how the program would use the TPSID grant funds, the program implementers stated that they would use grant funds to:

- develop the program of study, recruit and train mentors,…evaluate participating graduates before and one-year after graduation….establish a [program] office,
- [run] the person-centered planning retreat, [explore] activities on the [MSU] campus, [train] and [support] mentors … [provide] a summer independent living program … [train] faculty in universal design … [consult] in developing benchmarks and evaluations for participating students with ID … reimburse families for mileage and travel expenses related to involvement in project activities. (MSU TPSID Grant Proposal)

Furthermore, the program implementers rationalized their allocation of these funds noting that grant phase of the program leveraged multiple collaborative efforts. Specifically, the program implementers cited the “8% overhead rate and [provision of] office and

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7 The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
classroom space in-kind” agreed to by MSU administrators. Additionally, the program implementers noted “50% of project costs [during the grant phase would] be required to startup the project and develop a program of study” and that after the grant phase ended the cost per student per semester would be near $12,000 (MSU TPSID Grant Proposal).

Though it would be interesting to consider the extent to which the program was able to deliver on the projections in its grant proposal, that analysis was beyond the scope of this project. Furthermore, the validity of these projections that were beyond the grant phase did not affect the stakeholders on-going concern regarding the program finances.

Hannah, for instance, identified that part of her concern came from the fact that the program was “relying on the generosity of others.” To explain, students registered for a class under a different course number than the degree-seeking students seated next to them. An alteration to MSU’s budget model, another contextual element impacting the program and its financial stability, allowed the program to receive student course fees associated with that program version of the course as opposed to directing those fees to the department that offered the course. Accordingly, the department did not get any financial credit for the student’s participation in the course. The program implementers controlled and restricted the number of program students who participated in any course in an attempt to minimize the risk of taking seats away from degree-seeking students and considerable money away from departments. Still, the program relied on the unguaranteed generosity of those academic units that let the program participants attend class.
Adding complexity to the issue of relying on the generosity of others was the unionized nature of the MSU faculty. Joy suggested that for the program to reach more secure levels of sustainability the faculty union would have to decide to acknowledge faculty participation in the program towards the faculty’s overall teaching load. Joy identified that her decision to no longer teach in the program was in part motivated by the fact that her participation in the program would not count towards her teaching load. The matter of financial burden was not only a concern on an institutional level but was also a concern from the perspective of the program participants and their families.

Students’ and families’ abilities to cover the cost of the program was one issue that crossed the grant phase and beyond. This concern motivated the program implementers to apply for and ultimately obtain CTP status during the grant phase. As Heather explained, by attaining this status, participants in this program could apply for Title IV aid, a right they would not have had without this CTP status. Even with CTP status and the access it gave families to Title IV aid, the concern over costs given that the students would not leave the program with a degree, arose both in conversation with Joy and in the conversation captured in the Faculty Senate meeting minutes. For instance, when the program implementers presented the program to the Faculty Senate leadership, the senators inquired about:

program funding . . . types of jobs for which students would be prepared as a result of participation in the [program] . . . attempts [that] were being made to secure financial assistance from grants, private donations or other potential sources of funding for students . . . success rate of students finding employment
after graduating from the pilot program . . . and . . . how businesses and agencies are being informed about the program, so graduates are better positioned to enter the workforce. (MSU Faculty Senate Leadership Meeting Minutes)\(^8\)

These types of inquiries, while not at all unreasonable, demonstrated the Faculty Senate members’ concern that a program which targets individuals with IDD may not be able to guarantee the students a reasonable return on their investment. Whereas this conversation with the Faculty Senate leadership occurred during the grant-funded phase when the financial burden on students was much lighter, the more pressing financial concern arose as the program transitioned off the grant funds.

As grant funds were decreasing, the financial burden of the program shifted to the students and their families. According to one program related document, the estimated cost per year for a student who chose to live on campus was over $25,000. This cost included: $10,012 tuition, $9,908 room and board, $4,000 support fees, $1,500 - $2,000 independent living assessment, and other undisclosed fees (2015 Profile of State PSEIDDs).\(^9\)

\(^8\) The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.

\(^9\) The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
The support fees stand out among these charges because they represented a fee unique to the program. The program implementers provided the following rationale for this fee:

The . . . special course fees of $2,000 per semester for the 42 students projected to be enrolled in year 4 will generate a total of $168,000 in fee revenue for the [program]. The experience with the students who participated in the grant-funded program demonstrated that these [program] students will require an average of 10-12 hours per week of individual mentor support. At an estimated total cost, of $10/hour for a paid mentor, approximately $3,800 per year will be required to cover projected average costs of paid mentors for each [program] student (Rationale for Program Fee).\textsuperscript{10}

Program implementers justified this course fee citing that “day activity programs,” which exist as an alternative option for individuals with IDD “cost from $15,000 to $20,000 per year” (MSU TPSID Grant Proposal).\textsuperscript{11} Limited funding options available to these students for participation, especially as the program was non-degree granting, exacerbated the burden of program related costs.

\textsuperscript{10} The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.

\textsuperscript{11} The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
Shelley provided a clear description of how this current funding environment negatively influenced families’ abilities to obtain funds to help pay for the programs participants.

If [a family is] lucky to be eligible for a Pell grant, and I wouldn’t ever call any family lucky to be eligible for a Pell grant because that means financially that family is struggling . . . the Pell grant is aid programs that we have to fall back on for this, because even the experimental site for the [Parent] Plus loan ended, with little notice . . . the lenders don’t understand this program. So, we’ve tried to intervene where we can. (Shelley)

The lenders likely assumed that without a degree, the program participants might not find gainful employment. Then, with potentially limited income, the loan recipients might be more likely to default on loans. Therefore, the lenders hesitated to fund a program that did not grant degrees. Program stakeholders also expressed concerns regarding the program’s ability to set participants up for gainful employment post-participation. In addition to the complex and difficult individual funding situation for students and their families, the funding environment within which MSU exists may have also complicated the program’s existence.

This funding environment consisted of forces internal and external to the institution. Sam noted, as an external force, how the shifting nature of state support for public higher education away from enrollment and towards completion would jeopardize the future of this program. He pointed out that because these students would likely never attain a degree, the institution would in turn not be able to count the enrollment of the
program participants towards the state’s completion metrics. Therefore, the institution would not receive state support for these students. Sam and Hannah raised a similar concern regarding state support. As many of the courses that the program participants would take as a cohort would likely be considered remedial, they wondered how the state’s approach to defunding remedial education might have a negative effect on the institution’s bottom line. At the state disability services level, Joy and Mark both spoke of the future work that needed to explore state-funded developmental disability and vocational rehabilitation services programs as potential funding partners to offset the cost to the program participants and their families. As an example, after admitting that she did not know all the guidelines that local vocational rehabilitation agencies needed to follow, Joy commented that “vocational rehabilitation . . . support[s] students who have visual impairments to come to college. They pay their tuition. Why aren’t they doing that for people with intellectual disabilities?” Joy viewed this lack of support on the part of a state-run vocational rehabilitation services for the program students as a contradiction that she believed the program implementers needed to investigate further as it could lead to financial support for the students. Betty, Heather, and Peachy also referenced a funding confounder internal to the institution. All three brought up the issues raised by the current university employees over the institution’s interpretation of its tuition remission policy.

The interpretation of this policy, as not covering dependents of university employees who are participating in this program, eliminated another potential funding option for the current and prospective program participants. Whereas current and future
financial issues have impacted and will have an impact on the development and sustainability of the program, an analysis revealed evidence that finances have also influenced its development thus far.

**Constructing and Galvanizing Program Identity**

The development of the program’s identity accompanied institutionalization. The program implementers and the institutional partners constructed and galvanized elements of the program’s identity as they moved the program through institutionalization. As the stakeholders responded to the forces that affected institutionalization and wrestled with who they were becoming because of their participation in institutionalization, components of the program’s identity emerged and solidified. Specifically, the program became an agent of social change that challenged the status quo on both individual and institutional levels. The program was also becoming a system disruptor, causing alterations in both university and program level structures in response to the needs of a new student population. Finally, the program solidified its identity as a small and elite program through the institutionalization process as it produced positive outcomes for a limited number of participants.

**Change Agent**

Throughout institutionalization, the program prompted numerous cycles of change. As the program was developing through institutionalization it, at the same time, was affecting the environment and people around it, acting as what Mark terms an “agent of social change.” As I discuss in this section, this social change occurred as interaction with and the presence of the program participants challenged personal beliefs and notions
of institutional purpose and values. The findings below demonstrate how the program prompted social change or at least furthered the consideration of the truth and legitimacy of these preconceived notions by challenging the stakeholders’ and MSU community members’ assumptions and expectations of the abilities and place of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, as change occurred on both the personal and institutional levels, it also occurred to various degrees from the grand and dramatic to modest and subtle.

**Personal beliefs.** As an example of the change this program caused on a personal level, Mark shared a brief history of what he termed his ‘evolution in thinking’ that accompanied various professional experiences throughout his career. In this evolution, he moved from believing that individuals with IDD would have the greatest quality of life living in institutions to seeing their ability to contribute in sheltered workshops. As he continued evolving, he later recognized the value of the ‘dignity of risk’ for these individuals, and finally saw the possibilities that individuals with IDD could realize in integrative programs like this one. Mark described this progression as follows:

> So, I think I evolved kind of along with the program . . . as they say in behaviorism when you do something, your attitudes change along with it, and I think that’s sort of what happened . . . So, I started doing these things and as I started doing them my attitudes were changing . . . But each one was a logical step from the previous step.

Mark connected his evolution of thinking to his work with individuals with IDD and with the growth of the program. From his explanation, this evolution appeared to be fairly
smooth, containing a logical growth in perspective, that built, like the program, on the scaffolding of prior belief sets. Mark was not the only stakeholder or member of the MSU community who had his perspective shifted as the program acted to bring out social change. Other stakeholders also experienced personal growth as they interacted with this agent of social change.

Josie, for instance, said that she once again became a ‘learner’, her perspective and approach changed because of her teaching experience with the program participants. Betty identified that she, too, learned about compromise, alongside her degree-seeking students who had to navigate their emotions and responses to a controversial decision regarding a graduation ceremony. Joy shared the story of a student demolishing the assumptions that those around him had made about his abilities. Joy recalled that “there was this one student and his high school teacher said he can’t talk…As in he doesn’t have the ability to talk. And not only could this man talk, he had a lot to say.” In these examples, the program offered opportunities for those who encountered the program participants to question preconceived and societally supported notions. Some experienced the program’s role as a social change agent through emotional shifts that shook core beliefs.

Betty, for example, discussed the emotion-laden perspective shift she experienced regarding her view of her daughter’s abilities and future opportunity. As she reflected on the competing forces that had built her view of her daughter’s potential future, she shared her belief that because many people in her daughter’s life had gone to college and that Betty worked at a college, her daughter believed that she would also go to college.
Conversely, she recalled that her accountant advised against Betty and her husband putting money away for her daughter to participate in higher education because her accountant maintained that Betty would never be able to use it. Similarly, Betty recalled, the K-12 teachers and administrators who encouraged her to accept the fact that her daughter would never go to college.

As Betty spoke about the development she saw in her daughter that resulted from her participation in the program, she began to cry. When Betty commented on the point where her daughter’s development affected Betty’s view of her, she focused inwards sharing how the program altered Betty’s expectations, “It's about opportunity . . . That in and of itself is so big for families. And I would have never thought . . . that is something when she was born; I said she's never going to college. That is the first thing I said.”

Many moments and influences brought Betty and her daughter to the program, but the program also presented an opportunity for both that was somewhat unexpected. For Betty, the program was an opportunity to see her daughter go to college and for her daughter, it was her chance to go herself. Many individuals in their lives, including themselves, may have thought neither was possible. Unlike Mark who saw his contact with the program as a progressive step that contributed to growth in an ever-building belief set, Betty experienced the changing power of the program as a dramatic resolution of competing beliefs.

Betty argued, however, that individuals across the MSU community did not always easily accept these shifting perspectives. She argued that parents had to face, and to varying degrees, address fears related to letting go by their children’s participation in
the program. “And I think that's been the parents. That's the biggest thing with the parents you know. It’s the dignity of respect. Like letting them go. And I get that’s scary” (Betty). Betty shared her experience wrestling with this concept of letting go and letting her daughter experience the dignity of risk to which many parents of individuals with IDD learn to avoid and be averse.

Betty shared how scared she was to learn about an incident when her daughter was traveling on a campus bus to class. During this trip, her daughter missed her bus stop, and the appropriate program supports were not in place to help her daughter navigate the situation. In the absence of these supports, her daughter became scared and ended up exiting the bus in an area that she was not familiar with and accepted a ride back to campus with an individual that her daughter did not know. Her daughter made it back to campus without further issue but also Betty reflected on how “very, very bad” that situation could have been. Ultimately Betty saw this incident as a chance to learn.

Betty’s personal history with education, having a professional role in higher education, and disability likely informed her capacity to see this incident as a learning experience. Other parents without the unique perspective Betty had may not have reacted as well. Thus, the power of the program as an agent of social change connected to the capacities of the individuals experiencing that change to accept and integrate that change into their perspective. Betty told Heather that she “was lucky” that the incident involved her daughter and not another parent’s child because she could imagine that another parent may not have reacted as calmly. Regardless of their reactions, participation in the program inevitably forced parents to confront at least situations where they had to decide
how and if they were willing to allow their students the dignity of risk. Although
individual parents may experience the perspective-altering effects of their child’s
participation differently, we see from Betty’s account that the potential for change exists.

While not herself a parent of a child who went through the program, Icy
nonetheless reflected on the dramatic effects having a child participate in this program
could have on parents’ perspectives. Icy reflected on how shifting parental expectations
might feel:

And I always remember thinking the parents must be so proud of their students.
Saying you know what, the student, going through high school, as my husband
likes to say, there is no push to say oh, you’re gonna go to college one day,
because we knew no one was going to college right, and the parents must be
thinking oh my child will never have the opportunity to go to college . . . So, I
remember thinking the parents must think this is like the coolest thing ever. They
never thought their kids were gonna have an opportunity to go to college, but now
they’re gonna be in the environment, they’re gonna live in the dorms, they’re
[gonna] have a meal card, and realizing that their students, their children… like
may have some sort of workable future where they contribute.

Icy maintained a belief both that parents would see the program as an incredible benefit
and that it would profoundly affect the expectations they held regarding their children’s
abilities. Icy also referenced the larger societal and systemic forces that reinforced
parents’ beliefs that college was not a likely option for their students with IDD. By
working to counteract these larger forces, the program, as a change agent, was working to
shift not only personal but also societal expectations, eroding the argument regarding the limited abilities of individuals with IDD. This erosion also applied to belief systems tied to the purpose and value of MSU as an institution of higher education.

**Institutional purpose and values.** At its core, this program’s presence brought about questions regarding the very purpose of public higher education. Some stakeholders, for instance, justified the program’s existence at MSU citing the institution’s status as a public university providing service to the surrounding community. Hannah underscored this argument stating, “We are here to serve the community. So, there’s this other responsibility we have. We are responsible for students getting these degrees, these advanced degrees, and going out and getting amazing jobs; but we’re also here to serve the community.”

Implicit in Hannah’s statement was the assumption that higher education’s primary role was to grant degrees. In acknowledging the responsibility to ‘serve the community,’ Hannah was making room for programs like this to fit within the acceptable scope of a public university. As Icy pointed out, however, the institution’s responsibility to the community and individuals with IDD did not previously include the experience this program offered. Icy said,

We truly always say that higher ed, you know, anybody can go to get an education right. That wasn’t really true because we didn’t have any programs for students with these types of disabilities. That was no longer the case, so when we say anybody could get a degree, this was moving to say can we move towards a system where we will allow them to participate.
A move like the one Icy described was complicated because higher education is a system built upon tradition. Few institutional practices are more steeped in tradition than commencement. The experience of the program stakeholders and participants as the first cohort of participants completed the program was emblematic of how difficult shifting accepted institutional mainstays might be.

The situation regarding the graduation of the first cohort of the program participants was complex and referenced by several study participants. In summary, institutional leadership did not permit the first cohort of students who completed the program to participate in the university commencement ceremony in the same manner as their degree-seeking peers. Though the program participants could attend the university ceremony and receive recognition for their accomplishments, they could not walk across the stage and receive their record of completion at the event. The stakeholders acknowledged that the university had precedent in this area as it treated other university programs where students were not receiving a degree in a similar fashion. Betty cited that the institution, for instance, does not allow ROTC students to participate in commencement when they complete the Army ROTC program. According to several stakeholders, as the program was not a degree program, university officials did not think it was appropriate to have the program participants partake in the ceremony in the same way as those students who had gained a degree. Heather, for instance, recalled that her superiors informed her that “[the program students] don’t fit into the graduation ceremony as it is, as far as walking across [the stage] on the big graduation day, but the university was willing to do our own graduation where students could walk, a different
Thus, in addition to allowing the program participants to attend and recognizing them at the university commencement, the university also supported a separate completion ceremony for the program participants.

Acting as an agent of social change, the program provided a venue and a unifying focal point from which the stakeholders could express their disappointment in the decision to not allow the program participants to participate fully in commencement. Many stakeholders, including parents, participants, the program implementers, the institutional partners, and even some degree-seeking students expressed their disappointment.

The stakeholders sent communications to express their feelings to top university officials including the university’s President and Provost. As Peachy explained it,

That was really tough. Because the parents really, really, really wanted the kids [to participate]. It just didn’t seem correct that here they were in this four-year inclusion experience and then they didn’t get to go through graduation. And so, I think the President got lots of letters and emails and so did [the school Dean] and it’s lucky it worked out the way that it did . . . because we thought we were gonna have a real lot of angry people, didn’t wanna disappoint the students, but it would be real blemish you know, on [MSU’s] reputation. But it got worked out. Peachy’s reference to the situation working outcomes in part from the fact that the separate graduation went so well.

As I attended this ceremony as a guest of the program, I can attest to the emotional and engaging nature of the overall ceremony experience. From my
perspective, the ceremony had an incredibly intimate and personal feel that can sometimes feel absent in larger university ceremonies. Harry’s account of the ceremony seems to reinforce my perspective.

As Harry described it, he saw that the university had dedicated a lot of time and resources to this event. Additionally, he noted that the President attended the completion ceremony and that he was very impressed with how comfortable and engaged the President was with the program graduates. The effort that went into this completion ceremony seems to have gone a long way in assuaging the initial anger expressed by those who wanted to see the students at the university commencement ceremony. The effort that went into the completion ceremony and the participation of top university officials in it also suggested the impact of the program as an agent of social change.

Whereas the program participants did not achieve full participation in commencement, by committing time and resources to the completion ceremony, university officials were signaling their view of at least some value and appropriateness of the program participants’ integration into the university. At the heart of the arguments for the program participants’ inclusion in the university ceremony was the idea that both the program specifically and the university at large purported to support diversity and inclusion, but then seemed to act counter to that commitment in this decision. By not allowing the program participants to celebrate their accomplishments alongside their degree-seeking classmates with whom they had spent so much time, the institution seemed to turn away from a full commitment to inclusion. In creating the situation that forced consideration of this contradiction, the program as an agent of social change
brought into question and disrupted the values of the university and its adherence to those values. Institutionalization of the program required such disruptions and alterations to both social practices like commencement ceremonies and to operational systems, policy, and practices.

**System Disruptor**

Institutionalization required the program to act as a system disruptor. The new constituencies introduced by the program to MSU, disrupted and altered both internal and external systems and structures. Whereas not all disruption was problematic, an analysis suggested that disruption was necessary for the resulting growth and advancement of the program and the institution.

**Program systems.** In addition to the program alterations already discussed in this chapter, including the move away from admitting students on IEPs and changes to the program staffing, the program also experienced a significant shift in its split from the transition center. Internal staff dynamics that arose during institutionalization among implementation were major forces in this restructuring.

Heather explained that part of the reason the program split off from the transition center was that during the grant phase two perspectives, or ‘camps’ to use Heather’s term, emerged around the approach and goals of the program. As Heather saw it, “the one approach, the camp that I was in, was it’s a four-year college experience that’s holistic, all-encompassing . . . The other camp seemed to be more of let’s just get them into a job.” Eventually, the program committed to the four-year approach and thus split from the
transition center. The tension that motivated this change at the end of the grant phase was also present and active throughout institutionalization.

As the program staff navigated the tension between these two competing directions, it manifested to the institutional partners as “miscommunication between the three directors” (Betty). Team dynamics and competing passions and beliefs emerged as the driver of this tension and miscommunication. Key stakeholders close to this program, including Betty, Harry, Mark, and Heather, all discussed that team dynamics were a problem.

Harry expressed the greatest regret regarding these staff dynamics. He said he found these negative staff dynamics difficult because he was close to all the parties involved. Despite his best efforts, Harry believed that the internal issues the team experienced were partially due to his inability successfully to manage the team. Harry was remorseful that the staff under his supervision did not connect as well as they could have and this dynamic seemed to erode Harry’s positive image of self.

At the same time, Harry acknowledged that innovation can cause unavoidable stress, or can ‘be messy’ to use his term. In this matter, the strain and imbalance the program caused as staff came to terms with the ultimate direction of the program exemplified its identity as a system disruptor. Harry also maintained that the same passion and characteristics that give people the drive to innovate could also create conflict. As such, the same scenario that allowed this program to progress also created the space for the program dissonance that contributed to disagreements,
miscommunication, and the program implementers inability to deliver on all the audacious goals they set out to accomplish.

The disruptions to the program systems and structures also provided the space for the program to advance. In fact, those who approved the program did so with full knowledge that the program would exist as a stand-alone program no longer under the structure of the transition center. For some stakeholders, this split contributed for the potential for continuing the program success. As Peachy put it “[the program is] even gonna be more institutionalized, I think in a good way because [Heather] is independent of the transition center.” In Peachy’s estimation, though potentially disruptive, the split from the transition center created an opportunity for the program’s growth and even more integration with the university. Accomplishing this integration required alterations and disruptions not only to the program but also to university systems that accommodated the program and its participants.

**Institutional systems.** The stakeholders who served in varying institutional roles detailed how the program’s presence disrupted MSU’s operational systems, policies, and practices. Icy’s summary of the convoluted and manual processes tied to issuing refunds, offered one example of how the program altered and disrupted an established university process to accommodate the program participants.

Financial aid would put the Pell out there and then they would let me know . . . because we would find them on no reports because [they had] no class schedule . . . So, I would have to tell my staff, here’s the ID, please issue this refund, and it had to be issued in a paper check because we can’t send a file to our third-party
servicer because [program participants] have no class schedule . . . So, it was totally manual from A to Z because again, there was nothing in the system that we used from a financial aid and registration perspective to allow things to flow in a normal way. So usually they would pick up the check, which we didn’t even allow but we only had two. (Icy)

Though convoluted, Icy noted that her staff only employed this manual process for two program participants, a fact that likely decreased the overall impact of this disruption on the refund process. As the program’s success required similar disruptions across multiple systems, that impact would multiply across the university as a whole. Sara and her residential services staff also had to implement manual procedures to process housing assignments for the program participants who did not exist in the university data systems in the same way as degree-seeking students. As these disruptions became more complex, they demonstrated the need for new or altered operations. Disruptions to other university systems required subtle and more nuanced shifts in practice as the program intended to and worked within the bounds of some systems that were already in place with little if any alteration.

Sara shared a sequence of emails that documented one such situation. There was an exchange of emails from Heather to Sara requesting physical modifications to a bathroom that a program participant who was living on campus would use. The emails showed that Sara alerted her staff to this request, at the same time referring Heather to the university’s disability services staff. From that point, the request appears to have progressed through the established University process. In this case, the program acting as
a system disruptor may have done nothing more than adding an email to an established chain of events. More importantly, however, this additional step may have raised awareness among those staff involved in the process that a new population of students may be requesting accommodations related to their disabilities.

In their interviews, both Sara and Heather referred to a student conduct situation that involved similar subtle disruptions to standard university practices. In this specific situation, a program participant’s behavior violated the institution’s conduct policy. As Heather explained, however, the student conduct staff came to her looking for input on how to handle the student and the situation. She asked that they did not make an exception to their standard protocol, but that they consider the student’s ability to process information in how they communicated with the student:

I remember one of our students got into some trouble and um, [the student conduct staff asked] . . . what do we wanna do? And I’m like, treat him the same way as you would. That’s all we want. We just want the opportunity to have a learning experience here and a chance for our students to grow up and learn the same thing as their peers are, but that also includes, we want the good, but it also includes we want the other end of it too.

As she went on to explain, the only alteration in this situation was a procedural change whereby the student conduct staff would inform program of any future situations that involved the program students. Program staff did not request this alteration in order to have control over the outcome. Instead, the program staff sought to prepare the student conduct staff to have an effective conversation with the program students that took into
account the students’ disabilities. As Sara noted, this situation “was another moment where [the program participants] are students just like any other [degree-seeking student] who have policies that they must follow” (Sara). Here, even in light of the slight alterations to established practices, the program was not seeking changes that would jeopardize its role in helping the stakeholders reconcile the presence of student difference, but in fact sought changes that would support that reconciliation.

The disruptions caused and experienced by the program would appear to be unavoidable. As Harry observed, the “toughness [of institutionalizing this program] comes from your inserting a, a customer base that is not typically served.” Systems that were not designed to accommodate these program participants could not be expected seamlessly to incorporate them. People who had little or no exposure to individuals with the type of needs these students possessed may understandably need time and education to adjust. And while it was not always smooth, there were positives that came from this disruption. In fact, the overall effect of these disruptions was an improved program set on an established and relatively stable trajectory and an expanded and more inclusive university systems that accommodated a larger proportion of the university community. Without disruption, the program and the university may have missed an opportunity for growth. Ongoing financial issues and issues related to cultural and institutional dynamics may mean the program’s role as disruptor is likely to continue.

**Small and Elite**

The final element of the program’s identity galvanized during the program’s institutionalization was its nature as a small and elite program. The stakeholders, for
instance, viewed the creation of a small and elite program as the resulting impact on many of the institutional influences discussed in this chapter. The stakeholders also identified a tension between the small and elite nature of the program. By design, it was intentionally small. Although the elite label signaled program quality for some stakeholders, others viewed the program as elite in that poor and insufficient funding options restricted access to the program. Though there was debate over whether the program needed to or would remain elite and small, these characteristics were consequential and so to would be any changes made to them.

The program implementers made a conscious choice, documented in the TPSID grant proposal, to only recruit 20 students to the pilot phase of the program (MSU TPSID Grant Proposal). Then, according to the approved institutional catalog copy, once the program moved out of the grant phase and gained institutional approvals, “[t]he program [would be] limited to 12 students each fall” (MSU Catalog Copy Containing Program Structure). The program implementers designed the program with a limited student capacity, in part, because of the desire to incorporate the concept of “individualization” into the student’s experience.

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12 The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.

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Through application of this concept, for instance “at most, one-two students may be participating in a given course with peers” (Program Summary Submitted as part of Approval Process). The application of this concept and others inherent in the program design appear to necessitate small cohorts so the relatively small program staff can manage the program operations. As Hannah observed because the program was so “labor intensive,” . . . “[y]ou’re gonna keep the enrollment really small, and also you need a lot of staff members to run it.” Even with the program’s reliance on undergraduate and graduate students to fill the necessary mentoring roles, the management of those students required considerable effort. Though the small cohorts and the program size may stem from intentional design, this program characteristic also aided the program’s institutionalization. The small number of students through the grant phase allowed for more palpable alteration of university systems. It is unknown whether the program implementers intentionally designed the program to be small to help ease the burden on the program stakeholders who aided in institutionalization. Regardless of intent, the beneficial impact was evident.

Even though the small size of the student cohorts may have made it easier to justify manually processing operations related to these students and other operational modifications, the small size also limited the reach and impact of the program. Shelley, for instance, shared that this program was not something that university staff often

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14 The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants.
discussed during admissions and financial aid visits to high schools with parents and prospective families. Not only do staff working these events not have a great working knowledge of the program in part because of its small size, but also the small cohort size made it difficult to incorporate such a specialized program into the overall university recruitment strategy. The small size of the program, both at the university and the fact that the program was new and not widely present in higher education, caused additional issues.

Shelley, for instance, noted that unlike with other programs that have U.S. Department of Education approval, she had not seen the typical follow-up:

What I think is that there are very few select individuals at the Department of Ed. who were involved in the setup and they have nobody following up on them at all…I’ve just always been struck by that. There’s never been any follow up on it at all.

This lack of close oversight from the DOE may have allowed the program a little relief from strict governmental oversight. Lack of investment on the government’s part may also have contributed to ending the experimental site program which, according to Shelley, “allowed the parents of students in the program to be able to apply for a federal parent loan through the direct loan program.” As discussed above, Shelley said that this program ended with “little notice” and contributed to a student dropping out of the program due to financial issues. So, while keeping the program small led to more individualized attention for students and may have eased the program’s
institutionalization, it also limited the program’s reach and influence. The small size also connected to the stakeholders’ fears regarding access to the program.

The situation Shelley described exemplified Mark’s concern with what had become an elite program in regards to who can afford to participate:

Right now, if you are a parent and you can’t afford to pay the tuition and the support costs, they aren't going to get into the program. So, we created sort of this elite program but now the question is, how can we make this available to more people.

Like other stakeholders, Mark was proud of the state of the program even given the limitations related to access. As Mark said, “We are one of the best, if not the best in the country right now, so I’m sort of proud of that.” Though he may have been proud of the elite nature of the program related to its quality, Mark’s concern that as an elite program it was also excluding families in need related to the justice and access arguments other stakeholders were using to justify the program.

Mark’s concern also connected to the small size of the program and its focus on individualization because these characteristics limit the programs ability to leverage economies of scale and potentially reduce student cost. Given that expanding the cohort size might allow the program to reduce costs, increases to the program cohort would likely necessitate costly increases in the program staff and structures or could jeopardize the effectiveness of the program by eroding its commitment to individualization.

Moreover, increasing the cohort size could add untenable stress to already modified university and program systems.
Even with these dangers in mind, there was no guarantee that this program would stay small. As an example, Heather mentioned her vision of “expanding the program to other [MSU] campuses.” Whether this move would drive down costs is debatable, but Hannah warns that expansion to other campuses could result in the unintended consequence of the loss of control of the program operations and potential degradation of the student experience. An expansion, however, could certainly raise awareness of the program and broaden the reach of the program including the scope of who the program could serve. With all of these factors at play, the size and elite nature of the program will likely continue to need attention and careful consideration if the program is to survive and thrive.

**Conclusion**

The perspectives of the stakeholders and the program implementers who fueled and catalyzed its progress were vital in my understanding of the case of the institutionalization of this TPSID program. Artifacts produced along the way also informed, expanded, and enhanced my understanding of this case.

Key the program implementers ignited the charge towards institutionalization leveraging their passion and commitment to the cause. Stakeholders and the institutional partners who, with impassioned advocacy, worked to bring the program from grant phase to its current status as a stand-alone program with institutional approval also fueled institutionalization. In the pursuit of this end, the stakeholders expressed their personal connections to the program and disability at-large. Program implementers built upon
these connections by offering opportunities for the institutional partners to become meaningfully engaged in the work of the program and to collaborate with one another.

Key also in this process was the power of storytelling and its effective influence on the stakeholders. Even though work remained to tell the whole story of this program, the influence of storytellers in the positive stories they told was apparent.

Along the way, the program implementers and the stakeholders alike navigated institutional, social, cultural, and other contextual elements that both aided and complicated institutionalization. These elements included the students themselves, parents and families of the students, the history of MSU and its commitment to diversity, and other institutional particularities. Finally, the findings of the study revealed that the institutionalization process brought forth and galvanized elements of the program’s identity.

The complex network of influences, the stakeholders, context, and the program identity all combined to bring about institutional approval for this TPSID program. Additionally, this network set the stage for the program’s future work and progress. These findings also inform future research and provide transferable guidance for future TPSID the program implementers.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this final chapter, I present a discussion of the findings, significance, and implications of this study. I begin by summarizing the study and my findings, commenting on the intersections between my work and previous research. I organize this summary around the three major headings of chapter four: Catalyzing and Fueling Institutionalization, Navigating and Leveraging Context, and Constructing and Galvanizing Program Identity. Next, I briefly comment on Clark’s (1968) definition of institutionalization in light of the findings of my research. Then, I present three recommendations for practice regarding credentialing, parents, and storytelling. I also present three recommendations for future research related to institutionalization. These recommendations involve political and social forces, measuring the effects of a program, and the influence of context. Lastly, I present final thoughts on the significance of the case and the transferability of its findings.

Summary of Study and Findings

The U.S. Government has issued two rounds of TPSID grants allowing over 50 institutions of higher education across the nation the opportunity to build model transition and postsecondary programs for students with IDD (United States Department of Education, 2015b). The program that served as the site for this inquiry was a recipient of the initial four-year grant issued in 2010. Through the grant phase, the program stakeholders at MSU worked to institutionalize the program and secure its place in the
institution after no more grant funding would be available. After four years of successes and complications on the path to institutionalization, the program received the necessary institutional approvals and successfully established itself as a stand-alone program with an approved curriculum and plan for the continued existence at MSU.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the process by which this TPSID grant-funded program became institutionalized at MSU. I focused on this single program and site to explore, in-depth, this complex and unique case. Perspectives of multiple program stakeholders and insight from program and process related artifacts served as the two sources of study data. Additionally, I conducted this study from an ecological or systems orientation (Schram, 2006), paying attention to the various systems and networks at play in the case that both were affected by and affected institutionalization. This approach provided me a holistic perspective on relationships and connections across and between levels and structures of the university. Moreover, this orientation aided my analysis and conclusions which sought to identify “those contextual factors with the greatest influence” on the institutionalization of this program (Schram, 2006, p. 51). Using the intrinsic case study research design situated within the ecological research orientation, I discovered that the program implementers and the institutional partners, who dedicated significant effort and passion to the program, catalyzed and fueled the institutionalization of the program. I also uncovered the significant role context played in both assisting and hindering the program’s progress through institutionalization. Finally, I identified that as the program moved through institutionalization, components of its identity took shape and became more defined.
Catalyzing and Fueling Institutionalization

The first section of findings in chapter four of this report, “Catalyzing and Fueling Institutionalization,” focused primarily on the work of the stakeholders, or actors, involved in institutionalization. Institutionalizing this program required that the program implementers leveraged their passion for the mission and goals of the program. Insomuch as passion is a characteristic that may be difficult to develop in others, the data generated through this study highlighted, nonetheless, that passion drove commitment and persistence in program stakeholders. Passion invigorated the stakeholders to dedicate time, resources, and energy to the program.

In fact, the program implementers leveraged their passion to elicit the support and investment of the institutional partners. These partners identified, however, that they were not ignorant of the needs of the student population served by the program. Instead, the institutional partners acknowledged their predispositions, often informed by their histories with individuals with disabilities, to embrace the aims of the program. This copasetic situation, which existed because of this predisposition, occurred through coincidence, inevitability, and serendipity.

Program implementers also involved the institutional partners through intentionally collaborative tactics. Program implementers use of a committee structure may have served, as Papay and Griffin (2013) suggested, as a way to “maintain consistent leadership” (p. 113) through the institutionalization of the program. This case, however, demonstrated that committees served multiple roles, beyond those described by Papay and Griffin (2013), which assisted in the program institutionalization. For one, the
committee structure used by the program implementers provided opportunities for the stakeholders to collaborate with each other, building on their professional goals. Additionally, the committee structure augmented the stakeholders’ commitment to the program helping the stakeholders see themselves as invested contributors who also benefited from their participation. Through these collaborative opportunities, the stakeholders built on their research goals, improved institutional systems, and improved the student experience for both the program participants and MSU students.

Whatever their path, once connected with the program, the institutional partners found the space wherein they felt they had become part of the fabric of the program itself. Participation in the program institutionalization brought benefits to the stakeholders, but this study does complicate the finding in Hamill (2003) that “everybody benefits” from their participation in a PSEIDD. Hamill found that the “college experience” of a student in this 2003 study “was clearly positive and beneficial for all involved” (p. 349). Though the stakeholders in my study identified benefits connected to their roles in institutionalization, there were also difficulties associated with their participation. Confounding issues like the funding complications that drove Joy to decide to no longer participate and the stress Harry experienced managing staff suggested that while there are many benefits to participation in the institutionalization of a program, it may not in every situation be the “win-win” that Hamill described (p. 351).

As they engaged in the institutionalization process, the stakeholders became not only parts of the story of the program and the participants’ successes but also tellers of the stories of that success. As evangelists, the stakeholders helped spread the word about
the program and its impact. Heather’s experience with the Faculty Senate spoke to the power of these evangelizing voices. After running into considerable resistance, the first-time Heather presented the program to the Faculty Senate for their consideration; Heather recruited sympathetic faculty members to aid her in selling the program’s benefits to the institution and the students. Program implementers did not ultimately address all the concerns raised by members of the Faculty Senate, including the concern about the burden of cost placed on the program participants. Still, the voices of faculty colleagues that Heather recruited to help support the case for institutionalization helped Heather and the program implementers clear the obstacle of the Faculty Senate approval.

This experience with the Faculty Senate also demonstrated that the various marketing and storytelling approaches used by the program implementers aligned with guidance offered by Papay and Griffin (2013) that when “making a pitch” for the program, implementers should ensure that “all information is created specifically for the audience receiving it” (p. 115). The program implementers failed to create the specifically targeted message that would resonate with the Faculty Senate members during their first meeting. Noting what changed between the first and second meeting, this case adds to the guidance provided by Papay and Griffin by specifically highlighting the significance of in-group support.

Enlisting the help of sympathetic faculty who were also peers with faculty senators or even senators themselves, the program implementers went beyond just creating a message that would resonate with senators but enlisted the help of members of
the group they were trying to convince. This finding suggests that one way to clear institutionalization hurdles is to recruit those who control those hurdles.

The stakeholders’ and the institutional partners’ advocacy for the program did not mean, however, that they believed the institutionalization process or the program and its implementers were flawless. The stakeholders identified, for instance, that one major deficit in implementers’ approach to institutionalization was the failure to effectively tell the story of the program’s goals and benefits through research, advertising, marketing, and other intentional and targeted tactics. This failure, according to Peachy, remained an issue that program staff needed to address even after the program gained official university recognition and approval. Still, the powerful stories that the stakeholders told proved to be a necessary and strong force in the institutionalization of the program.

These stories, however, drew energy from the human and emotional connections and reactions of the stakeholders. It may seem obvious that the human element of this case, those individuals who played so many different roles and who engaged in institutionalization for numerous positionalities, was integral throughout. What I could not have anticipated, however, was the variety and depth of the stakeholders’ involvement. Equally as integral was the context within which these actors carried out their adoption of the program.

Navigating and Leveraging Context

The stakeholders both navigated and leveraged institutional, societal, historical, social, and other contextual elements throughout the institutionalization process. These contextual elements often acted both as a barrier and a facilitator of institutionalization.
For instance, students as contextual elements facilitated institutionalization. MSU students played significant roles as mentors providing support for the program participants. The roles of these mentors aligned with the “natural supports” model that Kelley and Westling (2013) reported. Kelley and Westling described natural supports as student “volunteers [who] provided necessary assistance in typical environments” (p. 67) for the program participants. These natural supports received training and coaching to prepare them for the role. Additionally, these supports slowly removed themselves from intense involvement in the program participants’ daily activities as the participants gained confidence and enhanced social skills (Kelley & Westling, 2013). Despite the positive roles MSU students played, the stakeholders also shared examples in which some MSU students displayed immature and sometimes exclusionary attitudes towards the program participants. Though Kelley and Westling do not directly address it, an important component of natural supports’ roles may be to offset some of the negative interactions the program participants will almost inevitably have with degree-seeking students.

Considering the negative contributions of some MSU students and other contextual factors, the social system of the institutional environment still provided fertile ground for the stakeholders to reconcile the presence of difference between degree-seeking and the program students.

Benefits for typically-developing students like those cited by Izzo and Shuman (2013) and May (2012) also emerged from this study. Harry, Heather, Peachy, and Joy all identified, for instance, the critical roles typically-developing students played in the program and how through these roles MSU students developed professional skills and
expanded their cultural competency. Through this case, however, I also uncovered that these benefits were primary to the argument that the stakeholders created for the program’s existence at MSU. Peachy went as far as to argue that the benefit for MSU typically-enrolled students outweighed the benefits for the program participants. This argument is somewhat troubling as it presents the opportunity for the program students to become tools used for the benefit and advancement of degree-seeking students. Scholars have not commented on this dynamic or warned against it (e.g. Izzo & Shuman, 2013; May, 2012). Although the dynamic may not be problematic in itself, it would become exploitative if the program participants’ role in the development of degree-seeking students occurred to the detriment of the program students. This exploitative dynamic would hinder institutionalization as it would likely raise the concern of parents and institutional advocates who would struggle with the imbalance of benefits.

Though studies, including my own, discuss the benefits of PSEIDDs for typically-developing students, there are also potential problems for these students associated with PSEIDDs. Blumberg et al. (2008) identified that faculty held concerns about the impact of these programs on the typically-developing students who interacted with students with IDD. In the Blumberg et al. case study, the faculty feared that typically developing students were holding back and deferring to students with IDD at the expense of the typically developing students’ learning. In my study, the faculty did not share this concern but instead were concerned about what Joy outlined as “attitudinal barriers and lack of understanding and knowledge” held by typically-developing students who hindered the program participants’ full inclusion in courses.
Institutional partners expressed another concern connected to inclusions related to the program participant safety. Sam and Sara, to name a few, expressed concern that program students may not be safe in MSU’s complex social environment given the program participants’ capacities to manage interpersonal boundaries and norms. Plotner and Marshall (2015) reported that their investigation produced no findings to support the idea that students with IDD were less safe than their typically-developing peers. Findings in my study both support and clarify the Plotner and Marshall (2015) finding by underscoring the parallel experiences of degree-seeking and the program students.

The stakeholders in my study identified numerous examples of close parallels between the experiences of the program participants and their typically-developing peers. The recognition of these parallels drove many stakeholders to the conclusion that the differences between the student groups fit within the understandable range of a diverse student body. As such, the stakeholders found that the program students navigated the social environment with relative ease and did not, with a few notable exceptions, find themselves in less safe settings. The example of the incident involving Betty’s daughter getting lost while trying to navigate campus transportation challenges the idea that the program participants are no less safe. However, examples like this were very rare.

Furthermore, combined with the concept of parallel student experiences shared by the stakeholders, it is reasonable to think that completely avoiding hazardous or occasionally risky situations may be an unavoidable part of the college experience. Therefore, findings like these support the Plotner and Marshall (2015) conclusion that
students may be no less safe but clarifies it by suggesting that the lack of a difference in
the student experience expands beyond just the realm of student safety.

In addition to working through concerns about safety through institutionalization,
the stakeholders also wrestled with the question of the value of the program for
participants. Numerous stakeholders expressed concern for the overall value of the
program for the participant which, if not addressed, could lead to an erosion of the
argument for the continued existence of the program. This general concern manifested in
more targeted concerns for the post-participation employment outcomes for participants.
Whereas Heather cited positive employment outcomes for participants, similar to those
stated by Migliore et al. (2009), concerns over the definition of employment and
participants’ abilities to stay employed over time weakened the impact of those
outcomes. Again, Heather stated that 94% of the program participants had secured
employment one year after completing the program as compared to the 14% to 25%
employment rate Heather cited as a national average for individuals with IDD. Though
promising, Heather noted that she only had one year’s worth of post-participation
information. Furthermore, Betty eroded the power of these numbers when she identified
that the program staff counted her daughter as employed although she was only working
two days a week. This question of the true value proposition of the program remained
after the grant phase of the program ended and will continue to be an issue for the
program implementers until they can compile more accurate longitudinal outcome data.
The value of post-participation employment, and therefore the importance of the
program’s ability to institutionalize the program and deliver on the promise that
participation would increase employment outlook for participants, was of great concern for the program parents.

Parents also operated as a contextual element through institutionalization that carried significant and specific weight based on their experiences in the K-12 education system. Again, these parents both positively and negatively influenced the progress of the program. As parents expressed their frustrations, fears, and perceptions about the program and its operations, the program implementers responded and adjusted the program practices and individual approaches to address those concerns raised by parents. Scholars have documented the changes that occurred over time that came in response to the pressure applied by various contextual elements in the cases of numerous other PSEIDDs (e.g. Thoma, 2013). Not all contextual elements, however, changed the program during institutionalization. That is, some contextual elements served as groundwork laid prior to the program receiving the TPSID grant.

The institution’s history of serving students with IDD and the institutional priority on the diversity it represented, for the most part, provided positive contextual influences on the program’s development and institutionalization. These two contextual elements offered a solid foundation and cleared the path for the program. They also aligned with Plotner and Marshall’s (2015) hypothesis that “it is not time itself through which…barriers are addressed, but rather the effort and preparation of the program developers tackling initial barriers that allowed [barriers] to diminish in influence” (p. 66). Because of work done prior to attainment of the TPSID grant, which developed a history of serving students with intellectual disabilities and established an institutional
commitment to diversity, key institutional stakeholders were already either in place or ready to commit resources to the program. Additionally, the program implementers like Harry and Mark had already introduced the population of individuals with IDD in the institutional setting and worked to integrate them into the daily life and operation of the campus. The program implementers utilized the established presence of individuals with IDD on campus and the alignment between the program’s mission and goals and the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusion to make their case more easily for the program’s institutionalization within MSU. Additional contextual elements including unionized faculty, institutional budget model, and the public nature of the university played roles in institutionalization.

Program funding, as is the case across numerous PSEIDDs (Mock & Love, 2012), presented difficulties for implementers, partners, parents, and students. Situating the program funding as a contextual element, however, acknowledges that funding issues are experienced and navigated differently depending on the social system and institutional context which surrounds the program. Researchers that have cited funding as a concern for PSEIDDs (e.g. Mock & Love, 2012) have not explored the intricacies of the program funding as an issue tied to institutional context. As seen in the findings of my study, the program funding as a hurdle to institutionalization is not a general concern but instead, emerges from specific structures and elements of the institutional and the program design.

These institutional, cultural, and societal elements that comprise the context within which institutionalization occurred were unavoidable. Therefore, one would
anticipate that similar contextual elements would be present in the institutionalization of any program. As Clark (1968) argued, actors adopt a program, or in his terms an innovation, into a social system, and therefore the context of that system will affect institutionalization. Institutional and program context contributed to and provided the setting for the stakeholders and members of the university community to raise realistic concerns regarding both program participants and degree-seeking students. The presence of these actually or potentially detrimental effects on students raises some questions about the appropriateness of PSEIDDs existence on college campuses. If the program implementers do not address contextually linked issues including the cost burden for the program participants, the negative and potentially exploitative nature of interactions between degree-seeking and the program participants, and the adversarial relationship between parents and the program staff, the institutional administration should raise serious questions about dedicating institutional resources to such a program. The way in which the program implementers both navigated and leveraged these contextual elements suggests that implementers need not and cannot avoid context, but rather they should identify contextual elements as part of the planning process to determine approaches that allow implementers to negotiate them most effectively.

**Constructing and Galvanizing Program Identity**

Through the institutionalization process, the program constructed and galvanized its identities of change agent, system disruptor, and of a small and elite program. The nature of this program as a change agent demonstrated the program’s evolving role as a contributor to the stakeholders’ changing perceptions of individuals with IDD. Similar to
findings from Folk et al. (2012), the faculty who interacted with students with IDD in their classes came to believe that with proper support, these students could be academically successful and had a place in higher education. In fact, Folk et al. found that many of those individuals who interacted with PSEIDDs’ participants began to define inclusion in their own organizations specifically to include individuals with IDD. Again, my study produced similar results, as multiple stakeholders described changing perceptions that grew to incorporate individuals with IDD as another group of diverse students who belonged at MSU. My study expands on the Folk et al. findings, as I identified the opportunities that led to these changing perceptions. In addition to contact with the program participants and their development that drove the changes documented by Folk et al., I found that involvement in the institutionalization efforts and the challenges of altering institutional systems also created opportunities for change to occur in individuals and institutional belief systems. Notwithstanding these positively changed perceptions, not all faculty, for instance, converted to a place of acceptance. Joy described how some faculty members patronized the program participants, treating their participation in class with less regard than other degree-seeking peers. Faculty perspectives on the program students’ participation is an important factor in institutionalization because of the control the faculty has over the academic the program that the program participants are attempting to join.

As some stakeholders experienced an expansion in their own perspectives, they also began to challenge and question the institutional values and the execution of those values. The change on the institutional level, however, appeared to be less dramatic than
the changes experienced on the individual levels. The refusal on the part of the MSU administration to allow the program participants to participate fully in the university commencement stood as an exemplar of the type of systemic change the program was not able to affect through institutionalization. That is not to say that university administrators did not have sound reasoning for their decision in this matter. Instead, this example highlights the difficulty programs like this face in integrating into established university systems. However, by calling into question how institutional practices and policies did or did not reflect a commitment to inclusion and diversity, the stakeholders were laying the groundwork for future advances in the university level approaches to including individuals with IDD in every aspect of the MSU experience. As an agent of social change, the program provided the setting wherein the program implementers reacted to and affected cultural systems, demands of individuals who interacted with the program and shifting institutional dynamics. This dynamic, in turn, led to shifts in the stakeholders’ belief systems and connected to changes in the program structures and practices aimed at guaranteeing the program’s continued existence.

As a system disruptor, the program disrupted and altered both the institutional and the program systems throughout institutionalization. The program sought alignment with the university systems in order to reap the benefits associated with such alignment described by Grigal et al. (2014): “ensur[ing] that students have access to everything that other students receive, and also that the program is not duplicating or supplanting services and supports that already exist on campus” (p. 59). My case demonstrated that alignment with these systems might require varying levels of system disruption that
Grigal et al. (2014) did not reference. As Harry noted, these systems with which the program sought alignment were not necessarily designed to accommodate the needs and experiences of the program participants. Moreover, alignment with university systems and with the expectations of the stakeholders also caused shifts in the program structures and implementers’ approaches. The disruption caused by the program and experienced through its institutionalization was not always painful or overly problematic but did appear to be necessary for the growth and advancement of both the program and even to MSU where institutionalization took place.

Finally, the program’s identity as small and elite was both affected by and grew from the program’s institutionalization. In both the grant phase and its approved structure, the program staff designed the program to be small to deliver individualized and developmentally appropriate experience the program implementers intended. The small size of the program also influenced institutionalization as it allowed the institutional partners to more easily navigate the stress that the program applied to their systems. That is, though the program required alterations to systems and processes that increased, for example, manual insertion of data or individualized tracking, the small cohort size meant that while the program required more work from the institutional partners, it was never overly significant. The elite nature of this program connected to its small size and stemmed primarily from the financial burden placed on program participants once the grant funding was no longer available. Though financial concerns are a consistent source of concern for PSEIDDS (Mock & Love, 2012), findings of this study suggest that the very design of this program exacerbates this concern. Resulting in
a somewhat exclusionary program that was inaccessible to students and families with significant financial need, the program’s elite nature as an opportunity that may not be available to all interested students with IDD challenged its identity as a high performing and elite experience. Though the stakeholders continued to create funding opportunities for current and future students, institutional and business practices presented hurdles that remained after the grant phase of the program ended.

**Clark’s (1968) Institutionalization**

As I have briefly summarized the findings of this study, situating the findings where applicable in conversation with the research that came before it, it is also illuminating to briefly describe how this study is situated in Clark’s (1968) concept of institutionalization. As I stated in chapter two, the way a researcher views institutionalization affects the design and findings of the study. As Clark’s (1968) definition of institutionalization provided a foundational structure in the design of this study, it is important that I comment on the influence of that frame on my findings.

Again, Clark (1986) defined institutionalization as “the process whereby specific cultural elements or cultural objects are adopted by actors in a social system” (Clark, 1968, p. 1). This definition presents interesting though unintended parallels between three of its components (actors, social system, and cultural object) and the elements of the case I studied.

For instance, the stakeholders, or *actors* to use Clark’s (1968) term, catalyzed and fueled institutionalization. Clark’s (1968) definition assumed that actors had an active role in adopting the cultural object. Presumably, adoption can take on numerous forms
from a very formal action like voting on a matter as a governing body to the much less formal process of coming to an understanding with colleagues about the direction of a program. The active role the actors played, tended towards the less formal as they sought formal adoption by high-level university structures like the Faculty Senate. The type, intensity, and level of role actors play in institutionalization is a component not specifically cited by Clark (1968) but is an element of focus that my study introduces in the concept institutionalization.

Additionally, the *social system* within which the program became institutionalized also presented several factors that emerged as critical in this case. The social system in which the actors adopted the program emerged as the interconnected set of contextual elements that were part of the environment surrounding the developing program. The contextual elements of the social system consisted of both human elements and the social-cultural agreements that exist between members of a group. Acknowledging the complexity of this social system and those contextual elements that played such crucial roles in this case again adds some depth to Clark’s (1968) definition.

Finally, one could categorize the program itself as a *cultural object*. As a cultural object, Clark (1968) acknowledged that innovations are not sterile objects devoid of the influence of forces like language, norms, and customs. Furthermore, by linking the concept of culture to the innovation, object, or in this case the program, Clark made room for but did not cite, the concept of program identity. As culture is a primary and necessary locale for identity formation and development, it stands to reason that characteristics of the program’s identity would emerge and galvanize during
institutionalization. These connections are not inconsequential. Instead, by recognizing these connections, I acknowledge that the definition I chose to frame my research had an influence on the study. As such, I support my earlier argument that the way in which a researcher studying institutionalization chooses to define that process will have unavoidable consequences on the study. I have also presented findings that enhance or complicate Clark’s (1968) definition of institutionalization. Not setting out to redefine institutionalization broadly, I will not enter into a lengthy conversation around a re-conceptualized definition of institutionalization that incorporates generalizations extracted from my findings. Instead, I will state that my study suggests that scholars could undertake such an exercise in future research focused explicitly on such a goal. As I have both summarized the findings and discussed the study given the institutionalization frame I chose for it, I will turn now to those recommendations for practice and research.

**Recommendations for Practice**

In this section, I present three recommendations for practice that connect to the findings of this study. These recommendations involve the need to identify a suitable credential that the program participants can obtain, the advantages associated with intentionally involving parents in institutionalization, and benefits of enhanced storytelling efforts through the institutionalization process. Though others may draw additional recommendations from my findings, I have chosen to comment on these three because of the extent of their impact on the institutionalization of this program.
**Credentialing**

The fact that the program participants did not obtain a degree as a result of their successful completion of the program connected to difficulties related to institutionalization. For instance, not granting degrees to the program participants contributed to controversy regarding graduation, to continuing issues related to funding and lenders’ reluctance to give loans to the participants and families, and stood as another roadblock to integrating the program participants into the university system to the greatest extent possible. It is unlikely that granting a degree for program participation is in the foreseeable future, given the mismatch between generally acceptable degree requirements and the program participants’ abilities. There is, however, hope that the program and PSEIDDs nationally can put effort into a recognizable certification that can communicate to potential employers and organizations the value and impact of the program participation. Think College has advocated for the value of this credentialing in multiple reports (e.g. Grigal, Hart, Smith, Domin, & Weir, 2017; Shanley, Weir, & Grigal, 2014). Think College staff posited that an understandable credential, accepted by other institutions of higher education, by disability services agencies, and by employers, could only improve post-participation outcomes. Program stakeholders called upon these types of outcomes as the needed next steps for the program.

The need for these credentials is not new, however, as “a meaningful credential for students with intellectual disabilities upon the completion of the model the program” had always been a requirement of TPSID the programs (United States Department of Education, 2013). Mark, as a participant in this study, acknowledged that the program
implementers were aware of the work still needed in this regard: “Well, I suppose we have to develop some kind of a recognizable certificate or that somehow was integrated into the university system.” In addition to the benefits cited by Think College, a translatable and understandable certification would help the program navigate an institutional culture that values degree completion.

Advancing the work of institutionalization, recognition by state higher education systems of the program may help to convince faculty unions to recognize the program courses as part of faculty teaching loads, to convince state systems to count the program courses in calculations for state funding, and to convince institutions to allow university employees to use tuition remission for the program participation. Before recognition could occur at a system level, however, MSU or any individual institution that houses a PSEIDDD would first have to support the credential itself.

Grigal et al. (2017) support this contention stating, “Credentials that are only recognized by the TPSID program and are not officially granted by the IHE may have limited meaning to both employers and to future IHEs” (p. 46). If designed correctly, however, an institutionally supported credential could allow the program participants’ leverage in conversations with financial lenders ultimately helping these participants manage the over $25,000 in potential costs of the program (2015 Profile of State PSEIDDDs). A credential may also help the program implementers tell a more

\[\text{The materials to which this passage refers are not fully cited in order to protect the identity of the institution and the confidentiality of study participants}\]
convincing story about the program’s value and more effectively spread the word across institutions.

The fact that programs across the country have different designs and goals complicates the goal of a translatable and understandable credential accepted by all PSEIDDs or even all TPSIDs. This variety diminishes the likelihood that programs could establish an agreed upon credential that would carry the weight of multiple programs. Unfortunately, Grigal et al. (2017) cast a dark shadow over the possibility of a shared credential stating: “There is currently no standard credential awarded by TPSIDs, and it is doubtful that there ever will be” (p. 46).

In this case, even among the stakeholders, there was no clear definition of the standards and competencies that would comprise such a credential. Hannah suggested that the experience in the program would “get students prepared enough to actually take college level courses . . . and then, big leap- you know, [obtain] an associate degree.” Heather, on the other hand, did not come close to suggesting that program participation could parlay into any currently established degree. She alternatively mentioned a set of competencies based on learning objectives specific to the needs of students with IDD that could serve as the basis for the credential, and which would focus on developing participants’ independent living, socialization, and self-determination skills. The distance between these two concepts of a credential illuminates how complicated the path to a recognizable credential would be. Grigal et al. (2017) suggest that one way to bridge this distance could be to start by “[c]larifying the expected courses of study [and] connecting
these to recognized skills or labor market standards” (p.46). Regardless of the starting point, without a credential, sustainable funding options for students, consistently positive employment outcomes, and comprehensive program integration into the institution’s impassable hurdles. Therefore, creating an agreed upon credential that supports institutionalization and increases benefits for the program participants is necessary, but will require substantial effort within and between institutions.

Parents

Parents represented one of the most problematic forces for the program implementers through the program’s institutionalization. Nonetheless, parents had lasting impacts on the program and contributed, at times, to positive alterations to the structure and design of the program. Multiple levels of the university’s administration also noted parents’ influence. Although the program implementers attempted to keep parents informed of the program progress and operations, as evidenced by the regular meetings Betty referenced, parents appear to represent an untapped partner in the program institutionalization.

Noting the success that the program implementers had in drawing in the support of the institutional partners provides insight into how implementers might similarly engage parents. Program implementers, who through their own passion, demonstrated that the program was worth investment of time and energy, brought the institutional partners into the institutionalization process. These partners also saw that through their engagement with the program, they had the opportunity to build something they too could
be proud of and that, about which, they wanted to tell others. The program staff could use parents of both current and former the program participants in similar ways.

Parent participation in the fundraising effort referenced in chapter four of this report represented one small example of the power of incorporating parents into the program’s efforts. Involving parents in a program advisory board, leveraging parents of former participants in the orientation process for new parents, establishing a parents’ mentor or resource program, or using parents to advocate on behalf of the program to public officials, institutional leadership, or with disability services organizations represent but a few examples of the other ways parents could become involved in the program institutionalization and progress.

The key is to turn a powerful source of frustration into a powerful force for the program progress. Doing so requires that the program implementers acknowledge the difficult position that parents are in as they transition from the K-12 system, where their close involvement and constant advocacy seemed necessary, to a university environment where their involvement hampered their child’s educational experience. Findings in this study were consistent with the findings of Martinez et al. (2012), Mock and Love (2012), and Thoma et al. (2012) that the stakeholders, and specifically the parents, expressed a desire for increased communication regarding the program implementation and transition services available to their children. These findings support my recommendation that programs may ease institutionalization by securing parental involvement in institutionalization efforts while at the same time providing them more information about the program’s role as a component of the network of transition services.
This involvement would likewise address another of Mock and Love’s (2012) findings that parents want more coordination across the various support systems that serve their children. In this case, parents, participants, and the program all struggled because of the challenges associated with the move from high school to college. Certainly, K-12 and higher education institutions need to remedy these challenges through cooperation and collaboration between the two systems, but by involving parents more in program institutionalization, PSEIDDs can better and more quickly identify problems and potentially even reduce the impact of these problems on the parents and participants.

By turning the parents’ attention and energy away from the daily concerns of their students and towards advocacy for the program as a whole, the program implementers make more room for the participants to realize greater self-determination gains while also creating advocates they can call upon to support institutionalization efforts. As parents see themselves as impassioned storytellers for the program, they would join the ranks of the institutional partners whose contributions of time and energy were invaluable for program institutionalization. This recommendation represents another effort, like that associated with establishing program credentials, which would require significant work but also would produce equally significant benefits in and through institutionalization.

**Advancing Storytelling**

Storytelling may, in turn, have represented the most persistently positive force in institutionalization. Yet, Heather identified that the program needed more recognition. Joy thought that because community members were under-informed about the program,
they were also underprepared to interact with the program participants. Shelley admitted that ineffectual marketing contributed to her initial skepticism regarding the program, and Peachy noted the need for more research to come forth from the program. This case then demonstrates the invaluable impact impassioned storytelling from dedicated stakeholders may have on institutionalization in addition to underscoring the relentless need for continuous storytelling efforts. As this program looks to the future, and as other TPSID and PSEIDD programs emerge, noting the dual nature of storytelling will benefit the program implementers.

Beyond the benefits realized in this case, like building advocates and convincing faculty that there were value and justification in this program’s existence at MSU, storytelling could address further issues. For instance, concerted efforts to pitch the program and its benefits to local and national legislators, representatives of faculty unions, and employers internal and external to the institution could help build alliances that would address numerous unresolved institutionalization issues. These constituent targets represent some of the parties who control or could influence issues related to employment prospects for participants, program credentialing, and access to expanded funding options for participants. Advancing the storytelling effort might also advance and be an outcome for research. Certainly, the opportunities for research with the population of students with IDD and the program are expansive. The lack of available effort given everything the program implementers needed to do just to get the program running, however, contributed to the challenge of this program and limited the effort the program staff could give to research.
Prioritizing the research outcomes with dedicated staff time and by recruiting the institutional partners who might help with the research lift might alleviate the strain and pressure felt by the program implementers. As a quick editorial note on the research effort, as noted above, if the program implementers allow for exploitative research that does not benefit the program and its participants, or that even puts the participants at risk, research efforts could have a negative storytelling effect and create a harmful reputation for the program.

The case of this program also highlighted the point that no single individual could have told or would be able to tell the complete and comprehensive story of this program. Therefore, storytelling, a vital component of institutionalization, required effort from a range of the stakeholders including parents, students, the institutional partners, and the program implementers. Even with this range of storytellers onboard, there is room to advance the story by identifying the groups of potential advocates and evangelists that the program implementers have not yet included in this effort. This may include, as I have suggested above, that the program staff enhance the parents’ role in storytelling. It may also mean that the program staff enlists community members and disability advocates outside of academia or K-12 educators to develop the story of the benefits of this program in the support network that individuals with IDD access.

As a final note on storytelling, the story may only be as effective as the storyteller’s ability to both cater the message to the audience (as suggested by Plotner and Marshall, 2015) and more specifically to the reward system that the audience understands. The program implementers had success in institutionalization by selling the
program as something that would benefit the various stakeholders either through the
promise of collaborative research, connections between the faculty and staff, or benefits
for degree-seeking students. Therefore, the storytellers’ capacity to highlight not only the
admirable work of the program but also how that work aligns with the rewards systems in
which potential advocates operate determines the effectiveness of the story.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

In this section, I present three recommendations for future research. Specifically, I outline the need for additional research which better captures the influences of political and social forces on institutionalization, which more effectively measures and accounts for the impact of program institutionalization on the stakeholders and institutions surrounding the programs, and which appropriately acknowledges the influence of context on institutionalization. Though this study contains findings that suggest additional recommendations, I have chosen to comment on these three because of their potential to advance understanding of PSEIDD program institutionalization.

**Political and Social Forces**

The emergence of TPSID programs occurred in the context of larger societal and political trends. The very fact that TPSIDs are federally funded programs suggests as much. Furthermore, previous literature reviews (Neubert et al., 2001; Thoma et al., 2011) also documented the presence and impact of these trends. Given their presence, societal and legislative trends create both opportunities for advancement and pathways wrought with barriers for navigation.
Throughout program institutionalization, the role and influence of government impacted the program’s progress. Not only did changes to the Higher Education Opportunity Act and the allocation of federal funds lay the path for the program, but issues related to state funding of remedial courses and of state-supported higher education more generally presented points of context for the program stakeholders to navigate. Just as a combination of political process and actions brought about the TPSID grants, so too will the political environment continue to affect the way PSEIDDs exist.

The work of Neubert et al. (2001) and Thoma et al. (2011) to track the historical progress of PSEIDDs allows implementers to recognize that social-political trends affect the progress of this work and anticipate how the current climate might affect their goals and approaches. Stodden and Whelley’s (2004) application of a political and legislative lens to their study highlighted clear family and system needs, including the need for increased communication and system integration, around the transition from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004). Researchers need to update this stream of research and to expand our understanding of how decisions made by the new presidential administration are reshaping and will reshape the political landscape of the United States in 2017 which will affect the outlook for PSEIDDs.

Researchers need to conduct additional literature reviews and research in the vein of Neubert et al. (2001), Stodden and Whelley (2004), and Thoma et al. (2011) that incorporate political and historical lenses to the investigation of PSEIDDs. My study highlighted that historical and political forces have significant influence on program institutionalization. My study also suggests that in addition to national level politics
already incorporated in previous investigations of PSEIDDs, future investigations must include local level politics like those that drive state budget models which determine funding levels for public higher education. This recommendation both encourages that periodic updating needs to occur in research to keep information current, as well as advocates for scholars to expand the way they define historical and political trends to include the broad ranges of the influences that I found at play in my study.

**Measuring the Effect**

This study documented the program’s capacity, through its role as agent of social change, to alter the perspective of the stakeholders and to change systems around it. Examples abounded of how this program changed and challenged people, processes, and practices. Note the evolution in thinking that Mark described as occurring in himself or the addition of manual data insertion into the bursar and housing processes, or the move by the program away from including students still on IEPs as individuals eligible for the program participation. The measurable effect or impact of these changes, however, was beyond the scope of this study. Research that identifies, categorizes, tracks, and measures this change on individual, institutional or systems levels could add valuable information to our understanding of the effects of programs like this one.

Efforts to track the employment outcomes for individuals with IDD stands as an example of the power of this type of research. As I cited in chapter two, the literature that documents outcomes for participants in PSEIDDs were the most robust and developed portion of the literature regarding these programs. Through this research, we have come to recognize the considerable employment obstacles and outcomes faced by
individuals with disabilities. Note, for instance, that at least one study determined that the employment rate for individuals with IDD who leave high school and enter the workforce with no experience in higher education was 38% (Newman et al., 2011). Additionally, researchers have shown that participation in PSEIDDs increased an individual’s likelihood of employment by over 25% and increased weekly earnings by more than 70% (Migliore & Butterworth, 2008). Peachy noted that the program at MSU had not yet done a sufficient job of gathering this type of data. Heather agreed that this type of data was necessary but underscored that the program was still relatively new and therefore had not yet been able to produce the data that would fuel longitudinal research. Even without the program specific student outcomes already prepared, this study captured the stakeholders use of these types of data to argue for the benefits of institutionalization. Program stakeholders directly articulated the need for the program staff to gather this data. However, in this recommendation, I argue that in addition to student outcomes data, these programs have the capacity to affect other institutionally relevant outcomes that deserve attention.

Little data exists, for instance, that tracks other the program impacts including the program effects on the institutional bottom line, on funded research and grant dollars associated with the program and its implementers, enrollment trends, campus climate, and institutional reputation and ability to draw high-performing faculty and researchers. Knowing the measurable difference programs like these make on the institutions that house them can help the program implementers plan to maximize and leverage this change. This information could also help determine the potential benefits or even
potential drawbacks of these programs and help administrations determine whether programs like these belong at their institutions.

As discussed in this report, no one has universally guaranteed the existence of these types of programs at institutions of higher education. Arguments for these programs have been based on the outcomes for students who participate in them or who interact with the program participants. The other components of the argument for this program came in the form of tertiary and poorly defined benefits for researchers, like opportunities for collaboration, and for administrators, like the opportunity to expand staff cultural competency. If these programs are going to continue and thrive, researchers and the program implementers must track strong and verifiable data that measure the impact of the program on the host institution and on all who encounter it. This is not an easy task given, for instance, difficulties across higher education to truly measure objectives like learning and developmental growth and given the already taxed resources with which the program implementers must work. Nonetheless, if those individuals who care to advocate for the continued existence of PSEIDDs cannot identify and clearly document the range of benefits and outcomes associated with these programs, it is unlikely that programs will move beyond their relatively small and tenuous position in higher education.

**Influence of Specific Contextual Elements**

Ultimately, institutional culture, context, and history acted as double-edged swords for the program. The institutionalization of the program was both hampered by and benefited from components of the university’s setting over which the program
implementers likely had little control. The success of a program then may lie on the
program implementers’ abilities to acknowledge and then limit or leverage the influences
of these elements. Thus, although the program implementers and those engaged in
institutionalization efforts would ease the path towards institutionalization by
incorporating context into their planning, there also needs to be additional research
efforts that informs this planning.

Given the importance of a variety of components of MSU’s institutional profile,
incorporation of profile characteristics into future surveys of PSEIDDs could add
additional insight into how institutional types and profiles affect the program
development and institutionalization. Surveys such as those used by Grigal et al. (2012)
and Papay and Bambara (2011) have included limited variables (i.e. two-year or four-
year institution) that define institutions. Researchers have missed valuable information
by not including additional institutional variables in their surveys.

For instance, Grigal et al. (2012) identified the various sources of funding for
these programs (i.e. private payment, funds from local developmental disabilities
provider agencies, financial aid). The institutionalization of the program I studied
highlighted that student access to various funding sources and a program’s ability to
secure or leverage these sources connected to components of the institutional profile.
Likewise, unionized faculty, commitment to diversity, and other components of the
university played critical roles in the institutionalization of this program. By including
more information on institutional components, surveys will provide a more holistic view
of the environment that surrounds and drives program development and
institutionalization. Studies like mine that leverage qualitative research techniques and produce detailed descriptions of institutionalization uncover the influence of institutional context. In addition to expanding the scope of survey-based studies, replicating my study at numerous other institutional settings would allow for a conversation across research around the potentially differing effects of institutional contextual factors based on institutional type. Though it was not empirical research, Raynor, Hayward, Francis and Campisi (2016) reported on a PSEIDD named the College to Career (C2C) Program which was a partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation and multiple Community Colleges in California. In their report, Raynor et al. (2016) found many components of the California Community College System that were integral to the evolution of the C2C programs. For instance, the authors described how the California Community College Chancellor’s Office contracted out technical and assessment services for the C2C program. An intrinsic case study that explored the institutionalization of the C2C program would uncover what other contextual elements were at play in this case and would identify how the unique combination of forces in the California Community College System affected the development of the C2C program. Therefore, uncovering the complex influence of context on the program institutionalization from case to case and across the PSEIDD landscape will require future studies that utilize a variety of research methods.

Designed as an intrinsic case study, my study focused on particularities and context, was “exploratory in nature,” and “[strove] to capture richness and complexity” (Grandy, 2010, p. 3). Therefore, this case study cannot produce generalizations. As
such, this research may fall into the category of what Plotner and Marshall (2015) described as studies on PSEIDDs which produce findings that are “largely descriptive and typically reflect one program’s experience” (p. 60). Though Plotner and Marshall (2015) argued that these types of studies had dominated the research cannon and provided best practice insight for future PSEIDDs, the very nature of PSEIDDs as unavoidably distinct and unique requires their individual investigation. Further, case studies like mine can uniquely explore the intricate process of institutionalization and advance, challenge, and support prior research on PSEIDDs. Case studies also present, as I will argue in the final section of this report, transferable findings that if used with care can provide invaluable guidance for others engaged in institutionalization efforts.

**Final Thoughts**

Case studies, like this one, do not aim to produce generalizable findings. Noting the large impact that institutionally specific context had on this program’s institutionalization, I would argue that scholars should not view the findings of this research as generalizable. Also, TPSID programs vary in their goals and structures in mind, and therefore, the program implementers should not view the institutionalization of any single TPSID as a template for the rest. Much of what I have found, however, may be transferable. To restate, the focus of an intrinsic case study is on “offering the reader thick description of the case so that the reader can draw his or her own interpretations about the particularities of the case and the transferability of the findings to other cases” (Grandy, 2010, p. 5). In providing a thick description of the case of institutionalization of this program, I have come upon forces and influences on institutionalization that, if
considered within full view of the surrounding context, provide points for consideration
to implementers of other TPSID programs or potentially other types of grant-funded
programs. Transferable findings come in the form of the power of storytelling, the
influence of external constituents like parents, the need to account for contextual
confounders and facilitators, and the need for passionate and committed advocates to see
the program through institutionalization.

The design of this study naturally led me to proponents of institutionalization. I
sought the voices of those most closely linked to that process. By acknowledging and
reporting the stakeholders positive and negative perspectives on the program, by
triangulating data, and by consulting with peer and expert debriefers, I am confident in
the validity and trustworthiness of these findings. Still, the design of my study naturally
excluded some voices. Studies like the one conducted by Sheppard-Jones et al. (2015)
demonstrated that perspectives of disability service providers not directly associated with
PSEIDDs but who facilitate the transition to and from PSEIDDs could lend valuable
insight into how individuals access PSEIDDs and therefore into how PSEIDDs may
continue to exist and expand in higher education. The design of my study and my
participant recruitment methodology did not prompt me to include service providers who
operate outside the institution in my study. Moreover, the voices of individuals excluded
from my study may be of those very individuals who would argue against the
institutionalization of a program for individuals with IDD. Even though future
researchers may seek out those voices, I was not interested in the failure of the program,
but instead curious in how a program so vulnerable to question and attack persisted
through institutionalization. That said, this case does not represent a flawless execution of program institutionalization. The stakeholders, instead, readily produced the issue both addressed and unresolved that occurred during institutionalization. TPSID and PSEIDD advocates should not use this case, and my findings, to argue for the unquestioned existence of PSEIDDs in higher education. The study of institutionalization of this program through the research design set forth uncovered evidence of the value of the program for many of those involved, the major influences both positive and negative on its institutionalization, and the fertile ground that PSEIDDs offer for future research.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

At the start of each interview, start the recorder, and then state the date and the time of the start of the interview.

Next, hand the interviewee the consent form, read the consent script:

Just to be sure that you understand the study and your part in it, I would like to quickly work through the consent form. The title of my study is from pilot to permanent: A case study of the institutionalization of a grant-funded transition program for individuals with intellectual disabilities into a public research institution in the Midwestern United States. My faculty advisor, Dr. Susan Iverson, and I are the principle investigators on this project. The consent form you have invites you to participate in the study also states that your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty.

Please let me know if you would like me to turn off the recorder at any time and know that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to.

The purpose of this case study is to use qualitative methods to understand the process by which a Transition and Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant-funded program in the United States is institutionalized.

I will aim to conduct at least one interview with you and with each participant.

Interviews should take between 30 and 90 minutes each. All interviews will be
taped and transcribed. Throughout all interviews, I will collect interviewer notes for review during later interview data analysis. Only individual interviews will be recorded and transcribed. You will be allowed to listen to recorded interviews or read interview transcriptions at any point during the research project.

This research may not benefit you directly. However, participation in this study may help us to better understand how a program like the one under study is successfully institutionalized. I do not anticipate risks for you beyond those encountered in everyday life.

Your study related information will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. Research participants will not be identified, by name or by any explicitly identifiable information in any publication or presentation of research results.

Continuing on the topic of confidentiality, programs like TPSID are not common and the program under study in this project may be easily distinguished from others. Therefore, there may be a possibility that some people may be able to identify you or the institution you serve.

At the bottom of the form I have provided you contact information for the principle investigators and for the university institutional review board.

Do you have any questions about their informed consent form or the project before we get started?

Answer any questions.

If there are no questions (or no more questions), please sign the form and I will keep it with the research materials.
Get the signed consent form from the participant.

1. Thank you for the consent form and for agreeing to participate in this study. Before we get started talking directly about the program can you please select a pseudonym for me to use for you throughout the study?

2. Next can you describe your position at the institution (or in the program if applicable).

3. We are going to use our time together to discuss the evolution of the TPSID program that has developed at this institution. I am using the term institutionalization to name the program’s move from the pilot program to a permanent part of this institution. However, before we begin discussing institutionalization, I would like to hear how would you briefly describe the program?

4. Tell me about the first time that you remember hearing or thinking about this program. What were your initial thoughts about the program?

5. Moving to institutionalization, how would you describe this program’s move from a pilot program, a grant-funded program, to the established part of the institution that it is today?
   a. Tell me about your role in that process.
   b. Describe any major hurdles to this program’s institutionalization.
   c. Describe anything that occurred that made the institutionalization process easier.
   d. Describe anything that could have occurred that would have made the institutionalization process easier.
e. Describe anything from this process that was unexpected.

f. Describe any concerns that you had along the way.

6. Were there any specific moments, experiences, or interactions that you believe were critical to the institutionalization of the program? If so can you describe it and how you approached it? Why do you think that was critical?

7. How, if at all, did institutional cultural play a role in the institutionalization of this program?

8. How, if at all, did the purpose of the program play a role in its institutionalization?

   a. Do you recall any resistance or cooperation because of the fact that this program involves students with intellectual disabilities?

   b. Have any aspects of the purpose been challenged, or changed, as the program moved to institutionalization?

9. Ultimately, how do you justify the program existence within the context of the institution? Another way of saying that is how do you build an argument for the program’s existence?

10. What still needs to happen to bring the program into further alignment with the institution?

11. What have I not asked you about that you would like to share?

12. What documents or artifacts do you think I should gather/review related to this program’s institutionalization?

   a. What insight might I get from reviewing these documents or artifacts?
b. Are you able to provide me with access to those documents or do you know where they might be
APPENDIX B

ARTIFACT REVIEW PROTOCOL
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ARTIFACT REVIEW PROTOCOL

- Is it Primary (related to research question) or Secondary (provides context)?
  
  Primary – Is this about institutionalization? Secondary – Is this contextual?
  
- What are the distinctive features of the artifact?
  
- How does the artifact relate to my research questions?
  
- Who authored the artifact?
  
- When was the artifact authored?
  
- What does the intended purpose of the artifact seem to be?
  
- What does the artifact reveal about this program’s move from a pilot program, a grant-funded program, to the established part of the institution that it is today?
  
  - What role might this artifact have played in that process?
  
  - Is this artifact associated with a specific moment, experience, or interaction that was critical to the institutionalization of the program? If so, what might the role of the artifact have been in that moment? Does the artifact signify why the event was critical?
  
  - Does the artifact reference or reveal anything about institutional cultural and the role it played in the institutionalization of this program? If so, how?
  
  - Does the artifact reference or reveal anything about how purpose of the program played a role in its institutionalization? If so, how
• Does the artifact reference or reveal anything regarding aspects of the program’s purpose that may have been challenged, or changed, as the program moved to institutionalization? If so, how?

• Does the artifact justify or build an argument for the program existence within the context of the institution? If so, how?

• Does the artifact reference or reveal anything that still needs to happen to bring the program into further alignment with the institution? If so, how?

• Are there any other unique features of the artifact that should be noted?

• Does the artifact reference or point to any other artifacts that I should investigate? If so what are they and what might they reveal about the institutionalization of the program?
REFERENCES


McMahon, D., Cihak, D. F., & Wright, R. (2015). Augmented reality as a navigation tool to employment opportunities for postsecondary education students with


