A Qualitative Interpretive Study of Collaboration among Staff and Faculty at a Catholic, Marianist Institution

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ABSTRACT

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Collaboration among faculty and staff employees has been suggested as a means to attain a number of important outcomes to higher education such as student learning and institutional excellence. Studies conducted at large public institutions have pointed to a number of macro and institutional level features that promote collaboration among staff and faculty members. This study examined macro-level features that served as challenges to collaboration as well as features that facilitated collaboration among employees at a mid-sized, Catholic, and Marianist institution. Qualitative methodology was utilized to explore the experiences of staff and faculty members who had participated in a leadership development program and had experience working collaboratively. The results indicated that barriers to collaboration included: time/workload issues, senior leader influence, fewer numbers of vowed religious leaders as role models, and competing expectations of faculty work. Features that served to promote collaboration included: the mission and philosophy of the institution, relationships with vowed leaders, Leadership UD program, departmental subculture, and formative experiences. Among staff and faculty members, the Marianist mission and philosophy, as well as the leadership development program were central features that supported collaborative work. Common barriers included and time constraints and senior leader influence. While all of the factors played a role in
shaping the environment, the institutional mission and philosophy, as well as the leadership development program, were most important in helping participants to navigate barriers and successfully develop collaborative partnerships across campus. This study served to reinforce other studies that discovered the importance of a mission and institutional philosophy that support collaboration as well as mechanisms (such as leadership development programs or other networking programs) to help staff and faculty members to learn about collaboration. Further, the outcomes of this investigation would indicate that at smaller, private, religiously based institutions, mission and employee praxis surrounding institutional values are critically important features in promoting collaboration among staff and faculty members. Institutions seeking to create environments that support collaboration are encouraged to carefully examine these issues through the experiences of their staff and faculty members in order to develop a better understanding of collaboration within the context of their unique settings.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background

“No longer could nor would the old methods satisfactorily solve present problems.” (Father William Joseph Chaminade, founder of the Society of Mary, 1817)

Higher Education is facing a range of significant challenges in an era of increasing uncertainty and complexity where change happens much more rapidly than in the past. This is a serious concern for an industry that is known more for its resistance versus responsiveness to change. Challenges presented to contemporary higher education include changing demographics of students, student preparedness, and need for more responsive learning outcomes. Other challenges include rising costs, unstable economic conditions, and heightened expectations of higher education from all levels of government, accrediting agencies, governing boards, and the general public. Together these present a daunting test to leaders in higher education. If the United States is to continue its leadership in an interdependent, knowledge-based global society, higher education must find ways to better prepare students for the complex challenges they will encounter.

Collaboration among faculty and staff has emerged in the literature as a means to address a range of higher education outcomes from improving student learning to attaining institutional excellence (Blimling & Whitt, 1998; Cook & Lewis 2007; Elkins-Nesheim, Guentzel, Kellogg, McDonald, Wells, & Whitt, 2007; Kezar, Hirsch & Burack, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini 2005;
Ruben, 2004; Schroeder, 1999). While the value of collaboration has been exalted, there are powerful structural and cultural forces that affect the ability of staff and faculty to do this work and for higher education institutions to promote collaboration among their employees. More often than not, higher education is organized to facilitate individualized and specialized work, particularly among faculty. Staff and administration, while focused on institutional priorities, are no less fragmented, often working in functional silos (Ruben, 2004). These traditional models (hierarchical and decentralized) dominate the higher education landscape and present significant challenges to collaborative work (Kezar, 2005a).

In addition to the structural obstacles, cultural influences affect collaboration as well. Whether it is staff working with faculty or faculty from different departments working together, their interactions present complex cross-cultural challenges. Tensions between managerial, collegial, developmental, advocacy, virtual, and tangible cultures within higher education have become a powerful dynamic in contemporary higher education and significantly influence the development of relationships among staff and faculty (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). In their 2008 text, *The Six Cultures of the Academy*, Bergquist and Pawlak posit that the development of the managerial culture in higher education was largely initiated from within Catholic higher education. Thus, the tension between collegiality and managerial cultures within Catholic higher education presents leaders at those institutions with a unique set of issues in fostering collaboration.

The unique cultural tensions within Catholic higher education are further nuanced within a Marianist institution. In particular, the Marianist approach to higher education
emanated from a *Charism* or philosophy developed during the reformation period following the French Revolution.

Ministering under the ideal of what Marianists call "mixed composition," or a "discipleship of equals," members of the Marianist Family profess that there is only one Marianist vocation, lived out in a variety of complementary gifts and ministries. The concept started with Father Chaminade, who saw the Society of Mary as "an association composed of all talents and all states, priests and laymen...." In a radical departure from the male religious orders of his day, he formed a community in which ordained members have role, but no rank. In other words, the roles of priest, religious brother or sister and lay Marianist are not to be dividers or steps on a ladder of authority. Rather, all are seen as equals. Each Marianist is an apostle of Christ serving the community as he or she is called.

(Marianists at the University of Dayton website, 2008)

This philosophy and its distinct values were infused in the creation of the St. Mary’s Institute (later to become the University of Dayton). The Marianist’s philosophy of education called for the development of “genuine communities” as a central process (Characteristics of Marianist Universities, 2000). This process is grounded in the development of relationships “in the family spirit of religious and lay persons, faculty, and students working together to achieve lasting relationships of friendship and trust, supporting and challenging each other in developing their mutual gifts” (p. 6, Characteristics of Marianist Universities, 2000).
The Marianist focus on equality and the development of relationships as a core principles of education presents a contrasting feature to Bergquist and Pawlak’s (2008) description of the managerial cultural of Catholic higher education. While the extent of the relationship between the various cultures within Marianist institutions is unknown, when combined with various structural variables, the Marianist, Catholic higher education setting presents a range of interesting challenges and opportunities to those attempting to foster collaboration.

**Institutional Development of Collaboration**

Kezar has conducted several important studies on collaboration, change, and how institutions have been transformed. As a result of a 2006 study, she identified eight key organizational features that help collaboration to flourish. These features include: a mission that stresses collaboration, networks for staff faculty to build relationships, structures that support collaboration, incentives and rewards, senior leadership support, external pressures, campus values, and opportunities to learn about the value of collaboration (Kezar, 2006).

While all eight are important, Kezar (2006) discovered that relationship and network building are the “most prominent features in facilitating the developmental process” (p. 855). Kezar recommended the development of initiatives to help foster relationship building and formalize networking. However, these recommendations were derived from research at large public institutions. Kezar suggested that further study was necessary to explore these constructs and dynamics within other institutional contexts.
The process of relationship and network building is reflective of the culture of the institution. As Bergquist (2008) suggested, “Culture plays an important role in shaping people and the structures they create” (p.ix). Thus, this study seeks to explore collaboration within the unique context of a mid-sized, private, Catholic, Marianist institution through the experiences of former participants in a leadership development program.

**Description of the Leadership Development Program**

In 1999, the Associate Provost at the University of Dayton saw a need for a campus network of staff and faculty leaders. She learned about a faculty development program at Southwest Missouri State University while attending a professional conference and wondered if a development program of this type could be adapted to meet the needs her institution. With the encouragement of the Provost, the Associate Provost sought to create a program that would bring together faculty and staff to learn about the institution, one another, and leadership. From the beginning, she envisioned a program that would, over time, create a network of faculty and staff that had the ability to cut across institutional hierarchy, creating an institutional culture of collaboration (Deborah Bickford, personal communication, July 2007). In 2000, with the help of a human resources professional, the associate provost created Leadership UD which was described as:

Leadership UD is designed to cultivate leadership capabilities and a leadership mindset among high-interest and high-potential faculty and staff, regardless of career path or current position. In fulfilling this mission, Leadership UD brings
together a wide range of faculty and staff from across the campus to learn, share, and experience campus issues from the perspective of a leader. Participants explore topics such as leadership, leadership in higher education, leadership at UD, and formal and informal leadership structures on campus. The program also increases participant engagement with the University’s mission, including an emphasis on its Catholic and Marianist heritage. LUD begins with a ten-session, two-semester program, but its effects continue well beyond this initial programming. (Leadership UD Mission statement, 2003)

Two professionals, one staff and one faculty, collaborated to create and deliver a 10-session curriculum for 20 faculty and staff participants. While the initial mission statement only implicitly referenced collaboration, this purpose became more explicit in later versions of the mission statement:

Leadership UD builds leadership capacity and enhances leadership effectiveness at the individual and institutional levels by providing participants with the opportunity to:

1. Increase leadership self-awareness and competency;
2. Enhance knowledge of the essence of our Catholic and Marianist roots, the organizational structure of the University, and its unique contribution to the Dayton community;
3. Make personal and professional connections across campus, thereby increasing organizational value and work satisfaction. (Leadership UD Mission, 2005)
The program lists as its objectives:

1. Expose participants to broader university issues and how UD "works" formally and informally
2. Increase participant engagement with the University's mission, including an emphasis on its Catholic and Marianist heart
3. Explore leadership, leadership in higher education, and leadership at UD
4. Provide participants with access to ideas and people that shape the future direction of the University and higher education
5. Enhance the ability of participants to look at the University as a system
6. Empower participants to make further connections with colleagues across units and expand their networks
7. Provide opportunities for participants to engage in self-reflection and explore what it means to lead
8. Involve not only participants, but also, mentors and facilitators/session leaders in conversation and projects around issues important to our future (Leadership UD, 2008)

The program has continued for eight years in the 10-session, 2 semester format and a weekend retreat was added in 2001. The sessions are conducted on Friday afternoons, lasting approximately four hours. Session topics are generally aligned with the program’s mission and utilize different types of pedagogy including guest lectures, walking tours of campus, readings on leadership, group discussion, experiential activities, personal reflection, and multimedia.
Following year one, the two founders created a team approach to develop and deliver the curriculum. This team, referred to as the Development Team, is made up of participants from previous cohorts. The Development Team breaks into smaller working teams to plan each of the sessions and the retreat held prior to the first session. In recent years, these teams have planned events to help former Leadership UD participants continue their professional development and relationship building/ networking.

A review of the literature and search among higher education institutions, only a small number of programs like this one exist in the higher education community (University of Washington, Virginia Tech, University of North Florida, Southwest Missouri State, Cornell University, and the State of Ohio’s Inter-University Council). Most of the programs involve the development of faculty or staff independently, or are contained in one unit or division of the institution. The Cornell University’s Developing Leadership Program is most similar to Leadership UD, but focuses primarily on faculty and administrative staff in academic areas. The program at the Ohio IUC draws academic leaders from various public campuses in the state for leadership development.

Programs to broaden the understanding of Catholic higher education and are available through the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (e.g. national meetings). The Marianists institutions conduct semi-regular conferences on the characteristics of Marianist institutions. At the University of Dayton, a Marianist Educational Associates program was developed recently to educate the campus community on the Marianist philosophy of education. While there may be some overlap,
these programs are less about leadership and collaboration and more focused upon institutional mission and values.

Thus, Leadership UD’s uniqueness lies not only in its intentional inclusion of staff and faculty from across the campus, but also in its attention to developing capacity for leadership and collaboration within a Catholic and Marianist context. Since over 170 employees of the institution have participated in the program, a rich collection of experiences are ripe for investigation.

Statement of the Problem

Collaboration among faculty and staff are important for the future success of student learning and higher education in general. The cultural dynamics of Catholic, Marianist higher education present significant and unique challenges and opportunities to the development of collaboration. How then can organizations support and nurture development of staff and faculty toward collaborative leadership? Kezar’s research (2005, 2006) suggests a number of important considerations for moving to collaborative models. However, outside of Kezar’s work, there is little empirical research on creating effective networks and how formal development programs can best prepare staff and faculty for working collaboratively, particularly within the unique context of mid-sized, private, Catholic, Marianist institution. Based on the demands placed on Catholic, Marianist higher education, there is an urgent need to better understand how faculty and staff can develop strong working relationships for a number of outcomes important to the future viability of higher education.
Purpose of the Study

This study sought to add to knowledge about collaboration among faculty and staff members within a unique higher education context. This study focused narrowly on a private, mid-sized, Catholic, and Marianist institution and the results are indicative of this setting, however the results of this study may be useful to other contexts as well. While a more thorough definition of collaboration is presented later in this chapter, for the purposes of this introduction, I borrow from Rhoads (1997) to define collaboration as an interactive work process among professionals that involves some level of mutuality: reciprocity among participants and joint development of goals and outcomes.

In this study, I researched the experiences of former participants in a faculty/staff leadership development program to better understand their experiences working collaboratively. Analysis of their experiences may help build an understanding of how institutions can develop and sustain collaborative leadership within a mid-sized, private, Catholic, Marianist institutional context. The lessons learned may point to deeper issues inherent in the process of individual and/or organizational development in these contexts.

Guiding Questions

How did staff and faculty working within the unique context of a mid-sized, private, Catholic and Marianist institution describe their experiences in collaborative activities and leadership? From these experiences, what lessons may be learned about collaboration in this context? To what extent did Leadership UD or other programs factor into their experiences? What were the differences among staff and faculty in the context?
Research Questions

1. What are the structural and cultural institutional features that have served to facilitate staff and faculty collaborative experiences?

2. What are the structural and cultural institutional features that have served as challenges, barriers or obstacles in staff and faculty collaborative experiences?

Significance of the Study

As referenced in the background section, a number of important higher education outcomes depend upon collaboration among staff and faculty. The knowledge gained from this study may provide insights, theoretical as well as practical, to understand and improve collaborative work within the context of a mid-sized, private, Catholic, and Marianist institution.

On the theoretical side, a context-specific description of the elements that foster and inhibit collaborative leadership with in a Catholic, Marianist institution is presented. I will also develop themes around the convergence or divergence of participant’s professional backgrounds, identity, culture, and roles. Knowing how staff versus faculty came to engage in collaborative leadership may inform a better understanding of important issues for each sub-group.

On the practical side, participants’ experiences may provide insights on their motivation and influences on their collaborative work. Specific knowledge of the employee development process has the potential to guide higher education practitioners and faculty in developing “best practice” programs to foster employee development.
Delimitations

The study involved the perceptions of faculty and staff at one institution. The meanings participants attributed to their experiences were grounded in the context of the institution at the time of the study. The results then may not be generalizable to other time periods, groups, populations, or institutions.

Limitations

In qualitative research, the researcher collects data through a relationship with the participants. Through a constructivist framework, the researcher analyzes the data and presents concepts that emerge inductively. This process involves the researcher’s interpretation of the data at each step. Although measures are taken to reduce the influence of the researcher’s bias, such as triangulation and source checking, data gathering and analysis is inherently influenced by the researcher’s frame of reference.

Defining Collaboration

The term collaboration is commonly used in the modern higher education vernacular. Its use has become so ubiquitous that any work among different groups or individuals may be labeled as collaboration. For the purposes of this study, it is important to discuss the definitions of this term. Collaboration is referenced and defined in many disciplines including communication, sociology, organizational development, leadership studies, and education. Use of the term collaboration in the higher education context incorporates many of these definitions and focuses on an interactive process that involves the development of shared purpose, norms, and outcomes. Chrislip and Larson (1994) take this idea a step further:
“Collaboration is more than simply sharing knowledge and information (communication) and more than a relationship that helps each party achieve its own goals (cooperation and coordination). The purpose of collaboration is to create a shared vision and joint strategies to address concerns that go beyond the purview of any particular party” (p. 5).

In the higher education literature, the terms collaboration and partnership have been used interchangeably in the context of faculty and staff initiatives. However, the term collaboration has received more specific attention. In Kezar’s in-depth examinations of collaboration (inclusive of, but not limited to staff and faculty work) within higher education, the definition of collaboration emanated from organizational studies literature and particularly Wood and Gray’s (1991) description: “a process in which a group of autonomous stakeholders of an issue domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (p. 437, cited in Kezar p. 833, 2005). While Wood and Gray’s definition assumes that participants use “shared rules, norms”, etc., caution should be used regarding the assumption of inner subjectivity in their work considering the diversity of various professional sub-cultures within higher education. Individuals may develop shared norms as their work progresses, but it cannot be assumed that a set of common working principles exists at the outset.

Finally, the concept of mutuality posited by Rhoads (1997) offers additional insights to the idea of collaboration. Working from a service-learning perspective, Rhoads suggested that mutuality involves not only reciprocity, mutual benefit, but also a
process toward developing a shared purpose and agreement on how best to achieve that purpose. While Rhoads was thinking of this definition in the context of volunteers and those they serve, the idea of mutuality has a broader application in this context as collaborators are also in service to one another. This idea was reinforced Clayton-Pederson & Dungy (2007) “…working together to determine mutual goals, retaining a focus on desired outcomes, and committing to shared responsibilities… through a common vision” of student learning and success (p. 272). Thus, an operational definition of collaboration for this study is activity wherein two or more parties work together toward an overarching vision, goal(s), or strategies within a spirit of mutuality.

Other Definitions

The Marianists:

The Marianists are a worldwide family of Catholic brothers, priests, sisters and committed lay people. The Society of Mary (Marianists) is an international religious order of brothers and priests. More than 600 Marianists serve in the Province of the United States, which includes Eastern Africa, India, Ireland, Mexico and Puerto Rico. In the United States, Marianists sponsor the University of Dayton in Ohio, St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Chaminade University of Honolulu, 18 high schools, 12 parishes and five retreat centers. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade founded the Society of Mary in 1817. Marianists have had a U.S. presence since they first arrived in Cincinnati in 1849. Other parts of the Marianist family include the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, Marianist
Sisters; Lay Marianists; and the Alliance Mariale, a secular organization (The Marianist Province of the United States, 2009).

The Marianist Charism:

The order is distinguished by certain Charisms, or gifts given by God for the benefit of the Christian community. These Charisms guide all Marianist ministries and programs:

People of faith: As spiritual individuals, Marianists carry out God’s will in their service to others.

Followers of Mary: Marianists view Mary as the model of discipleship. Just as Mary gave birth to Jesus, Marianists seek to bring the presence of Jesus to life within themselves and others.

People of community: Marianists believe that living, praying and supporting one another in community enriches their faith and strengthens their ability to meet world challenges - especially problems associated with poverty and ignorance.

Discipleship of equals: Brothers and priests share equal status within the Society of Mary.

Leaders in mission: The Marianist mission is to bring Christ to the world and to work for the coming of His kingdom (The Marianist Province of the United States, 2009).

Vowed Marianists:

Persons who have professed a public religious commitment before God. Priests and brothers in Catholic orders profess vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.
Marianists also profess the vow of stability, which reflects their special devotion to Mary.

Lay Marianists:

Include non-vowed members of the Marianist community. The Society of Mary originated within lay communities of faith. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, Father Chaminade, a diocesan priest from Bordeaux, France, and Marie-Thérèse gathered a group of men and women to form a community of Christian outreach and support. They thought the community would attract others to follow Christ and would revive the religious spirit in France. This initial group became known as The Sodality of Bordeaux — the forerunner of today’s lay Marianist communities (The Marianist Provence of the United States, 2009).

Organization of Dissertation

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one includes a backdrop to the issues affecting higher education and the need for collaboration among faculty and staff. Chapter two describes the landscape of literature surrounding this topic in order to ground and reinforce the research agenda described in chapter three. The research agenda outlined in chapter three includes a description of the methods this study used in order to pursue specific research questions. Chapter four presents a description of each participant using “thick description” (Merriam, 1998) of the participants’ experiences and analysis of those findings. Cross-participant themes are presented along with the results for each the research questions. Finally, Chapter five offers a discussion of the themes, suggests
recommendations for practice, describes limitations of the study, and proposes ideas for future research.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The system of Higher Education in the United States has experienced remarkable accomplishments in its first 350 years. With its unique public/private system of higher education, the US has led the way toward great advances in teaching, learning, research, and service. The post-industrial trend toward greater global competition and need for knowledgeable and skilled citizens have fueled much of the growth and achievement in the US post-secondary educational system. However, recent reports on the health of the US system of higher education warn of serious threats to our nation’s “crown jewel”.

In 2005, this topic was the subject of timely book and television series developed by a former college president and journalist on higher education entitled *Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk*. This collection of concerns from a range of pundits warns of an “insidious erosion of quality that… places the nation at risk” (Hersh & Merrow, p. 2). Concerns around the decline of quality continue to emerge from national reports warning the general public that “…the sectors past attainments have led to an unwarranted complacency about its future” (Spellings, 2006, p. ix). Other reports, such as *Measuring Up 2008* which sought to develop state-by-state accountability measures, echo these concerns: “The current level of performance will fall short in a world being reshaped by the knowledge-based global economy” (Volkwein & Tandberg, p. 5).

With each new generation, the need for adaptation and innovation has intensified as the challenges facing the country and the world have grown more complex and the peoples of the world become more interdependent. The challenges and pressures higher
education faces today were summarized in *Greater Expectations* and include: changing student demographics, new enrollment patterns, the information explosion, the technological revolution, greater governmental regulation, changing needs of the workplace, global nature of major problems, renewed emphasis and need for civic engagement (Schneider, 2002). These challenges have arisen in a time of decreasing funding of public institutions and rapidly increasing internal costs for all sectors of post-secondary education. Although these challenges are daunting, the stakes could not be higher as the US will depend upon its postsecondary system to provide future leaders, expand knowledge, and serve the needs of the populations of the planet.

Collaboration has emerged in the twentieth century as a powerful force in response to the chaos and uncertainty of the postmodern era. Solutions to the world’s challenges may only be solved though diverse and interdependent people working in partnership to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Kezar, Hirsch, and Burack (2001) suggest that collaboration has emerged in response to the recognition of the “power in collaboration over individualism” and “the necessity of collaboration for worldwide stability” (p.1). These essential partnerships will be necessary to address everything from the impending environmental crisis to peacefully solving disputes in the troubled regions of the world. Valued principles such as the “common good,” traditionally thought of in communitarian terms, have been challenged by increasing levels of individualism. Simultaneously, people the world over are increasingly experiencing a shrinking world and interdependence as signs of the times. In response to these forces of the postmodern epoch, the importance of working together to attain mutual goals has never been so
imperative. However, “The potential and power of collaboration remains unrealized and is one of the primary challenges of this century” (Kezar, Hirsch & Burack, 2001, p. 1).

Leaders within higher education are realizing collaboration as a means to address internal as well as external issues in integrated and complex work. For example, “academics, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and professionals are realizing that the issues they care about—inhventing a miraculous product, improving inner-city schools, protecting animals on the verge of extinction, saving a unique business- cannot be solved without partnerships.”(Kezar, Hirsch, & Burack, 2001). In addition to external challenges, higher education is also being called to be more accountable particularly in the areas of performance and student learning (National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, 2005; US Department of Education, 2006).

Internal and external calls for reform such as Wingspread Group’s *An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education* (1993) and the various Kellogg Commission Reports influenced a joint dialogue between the American Association of Colleges and Universities and American College Personnel Association/ National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. The resulting report: *Powerful Partnerships* (1998) was an important step in legitimizing partnerships between academic and student affairs under the banner of improving student learning. The report called for a uniting of various groups within higher education in order to meet the challenges ahead. The report cited various case study examples and offered collaboration as the central means for future success. The authors suggest that collaboration is vital for situations when “…the job they face is too big, is too urgent, or requires too much knowledge for
one person or group to do alone” (American Association for Higher Education, 1998, p.1).

**Collaboration and Student Learning**

Collaboration is vital for a variety of higher education learning outcomes, but perhaps none as important as improving student learning. In recent years, practitioners and scholars have been taking part in a “quiet revolution” from teacher centered to learning-centered paradigms (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 645). Thus, the subsequent literature appears to be increasingly focused on learning, learning outcomes, and models for promoting learning in the first decade of the 2000’s (2005). Leaders from those most directly involved in the learning enterprise, academic and student affairs have begun to broaden and redefine learning to include a much more diverse set of outcomes requiring more intentional partnerships between staff and faculty. These outcomes maintain a focus on cognitive and intellectual development, but begin to become increasingly inclusive of student identity development. The philosophical underpinning of this new vision of learning was constructed by Keeling and Associates in the 2004 publication *Learning Reconsidered*. The development of the largely philosophical and theoretical *Learning Reconsidered* was complemented by a more pragmatic and programmatic treatment in *Learning Reconsidered II* (2006). Together these documents provide an opportunity for higher education leaders to close the gap between student and academic affairs by providing a common language and purpose for their work.

Early philosophical direction for this shift specific to Student Affairs and Academic Affairs was described in Schuh and Whitt’s (1999) *New Directions for Student*
In this monograph, it is suggested that collaboration is important to promote seamless learning (Schroeder, 1999). While this monograph does not provide any empirical evidence surrounding collaboration, it does argue for the importance of building stronger ties among faculty and staff. The authors provide various anecdotal accounts of “best practices” and suggestions for building and evaluating sound partnerships. The timing of this monograph helped document a quickly emerging reform movement occurring in higher education during the late 1990’s.

The ideas put forward by Schuh and Whitt were further developed in the New Directions for Higher Education monograph *Achieving Student Success: Collaboration Between Academic and Student Affairs*. This monograph pulled together both empirical evidence surrounding the prevalence of collaboration among student and academic affairs nationally, and case study examples of institutions that have fostered a variety of collaborative programs. The essence of this collection of essays was that institutions focus on learning and student centeredness as unifying themes; dedicate resources and design structures to develop and sustain partnerships; cultivate relationships across campus; and use assessment as a means for institutional learning (Kezar, Hirsch, & Burack, 2001).

Cook and Lewis (2007) returned to the theme of collaboration between student and academic affairs in an edited book, *The Divine Comity: Student and Academic Affairs Collaboration*. This collection of best practices served as a companion piece to *Learning Reconsidered I* (2004) and *II* (2006) with the same spirit of linking theory and available...
research with examples of practical application. The editors of *The Divine Comity* constructed a framework of nine levels or elements central to understanding and promoting collaboration among faculty and staff members. Each of the chapters in this volume addresses specific issues such as assessment of collaboration, gaining senior leader support, communication strategies, coordinating collaboration, and institutional examples of promising practices. While this text does not present empirical evidence, it provides strong anecdotal evidence and examples of how institutions are helping to foster collaboration and assist staff and faculty with negotiating various barriers that are encountered in collaborative work.

While many in higher education have advocated collaboration for its apparent and theoretical merits, researchers with the Boyer Research Assessment Project empirically examined the impact of partnership programs. In the first national investigation of its type, Elkins-Nesheim, Guentzel, Kellogg, McDonald, Wells, and Whitt (2007) conducted a large qualitative study of learning outcomes associated with faculty and staff partnerships. In this study, partnerships are defined as collaborative relationships among student affairs and academic units. They found that partnership programs between faculty and staff enhanced student learning in a variety of ways including “acclimation to the institution, engagement, learning, and academic and career decisions” (p.450). With these recent findings, the importance of developing partnerships takes on new level of importance. With the growing significance of collaborative partnerships, how do institutions address the various factors that foster its practice? The next section explores various factors that influence collaboration.
Structural and Cultural Institutional Factors That Influence Collaboration

With such monumental challenges facing higher education, the need for collaboration among various key players is even more critical than in the past. Is higher education organized and prepared for such critical work? While the need for models of collaborative leadership appears paramount, higher education has inherited a system of structural and cultural dynamics that pose significant challenges to reform. As Kezar (2003) suggests, structural and cultural barriers are the two primary overarching factors in understanding and addressing organizational change.

Structural Factors

Higher Education’s organizational make-up has largely been inherited from the pre-industrial era. Hierarchical and decentralized models dominate the higher education landscape. Unfortunately, these organizational models are largely inefficient and ineffective in meeting the modern demands placed upon higher education. Much of higher education remains compartmentalized as traditional “silo” models dominate higher education. In many cases, there are fierce tensions between espoused institutional values and actual organizational make-up. As Buller (2007) observed: “Although higher education institutions places a great deal of emphasis on decentralized governance and respect for individual voices, their actual organizational charts are surprisingly hierarchical” (p.1).

In early American collegiate history, higher education was operated by priests and/or faculty; administration typically consisted only of a president (Brubacher & Rudy, 2005). Their institutional missions were narrowly focused (by today’s standards) and there were few, if any, staff. With such an uncomplicated purpose and singular
profession, there was little need for collaboration. As US higher education was shaped by the Enlightenment and eventually the industrial revolution, a number of factors began to increase the size and complexity of higher education, especially the diversification of knowledge and the development of academic disciplines. These factors continued to intensify in the 19th and 20th century as research emerged and in some cases surpassed instruction as the primary work of faculty. The development of tenure in the early 1900’s served to codify the work of faculty based on institution priorities. Together these factors have resulted in a professoriate that is formed, oriented, and organized by discipline resulting in individualized and highly specialized work.

While academic affairs has been historically focused on discipline-based and teacher-centered paradigms, the student affairs profession emerged largely to fill the void left as faculty became more focused on scholarship. Although it was reported by Roberts (1998) that Student Affairs has been oriented toward partnering with faculty since its inception; in practice, Student Affairs has largely been disconnected from academic affairs (AAHE, ACPA, & NASPA, 1998). In contemporary higher education, these structural forces have presented significant obstacles for faculty and staff to build collaborative relationships.

**Cultural Factors**

Another significant factor described in the literature centers around aspects of the campus culture that serve to affect collaboration as a barrier as well as a change agent. The study of institutional culture is richly enhanced from contributions from the fields of anthropology, sociology, communication, and in particular business/organizational development. A definition of culture is difficult, as it is as intangible as tangible.
However, Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) “invisible tapestry” is a useful metaphor in describing this concept. Most frequently culture is described using concepts such as norms, values, beliefs, purposes, assumptions, myths, rituals, symbols, narratives, language and behavior common across a given organization (Kezar, 2001; Schein, 1985; Toma, Dubrow & Hartley, 2005). Kuh and Whitt (1988) include much of this definition, but provide an important addition in that they also describe culture as a “frame of reference” by which members interpret events and actions.

A significant investigation of organizational culture comes from the organizational development literature and the work of Edgar Schein. Schein’s *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, while outside of the higher education literature, provides a foundation for much of our current understanding of organizational culture by calling leaders to develop a more anthropological view of organizations (Schein, 1985, 1992, 2004). Using this lens, Schein describes culture as a collection of shared assumptions learned by the organization and shared with its members as a way to think, perceive and feel in relation to challenges the organization experiences. Beyond defining its features, Schein provides a more complex way of examining organizational culture through a conceptual hierarchy of how culture reveals itself to the observer. Schein’s levels of culture include artifacts: those features most visible such as structures and processes; espoused values: strategies, goals and philosophies; and basic assumptions: core beliefs established over time and largely unconscious and unchallengeable in day-to-day life of the organization (2004). Within this deepest, most fundamental level of culture, Schein describes several factors critical to collaboration, including the nature of
human relationships (how we interact and relate to one another) and human activity (what we do based on these relationships). These core factors, while operating below the daily “radar screen” of leaders, are the central forces of institutional culture. Schein posits that culture and leadership are symbiotic forces as leaders operate within the cultural context and the cultural context is largely shaped by its leaders. Thus, leaders are as much products of the organizational culture as they are shapers of the culture. While Schein provides a critical descriptive analysis of the functional side of cultural theory, more contemporary anthropological treatments of cultural investigation have turned to more interpretive and meaning-making processes of participants and particularly leaders (Tierney, 1986).

Very little, if any, examination of culture within higher education existed before the 1980’s (Toma, Dubrow & Hartley, 2005). Since the mid-80’s, researcher’s have produced a growing body of literature on cultural components higher education. Three significant works, Tierney’s (1988) Organizational Culture in Higher Education; Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) monograph The Invisible Tapestry; and Bergquist’s (1992) The Four Cultures of the Academy (updated in 2008 to include 6 cultures), all written during the last half of the 1980’s and early 1990’s, have largely shaped our understanding of organizational culture in Higher Education.

Tierney (1988), following a year-long investigation of institutional culture within American higher education, utilized an anthropological lens to describe organizational culture. Drawing upon the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, Tierney emphasizes that culture is developed through a process of symbolic interaction where meaning is
interpreted and transmitted through common assumptions of individuals in the organization (Tierney, 1988). These assumptions serve as the basis for culture and can be understood through exploring members’ stories, language, norms, ideology and attitudes.

Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) monograph *The Invisible Tapestry* was also published during the 1980s and provided an important contribution to the burgeoning exploration of culture with higher education. With *The Invisible Tapestry*, like other works of that time, Kuh and Whitt provided a rich description and definition of higher education organization culture within the context of higher education. This work also examines the growing salience and divergence of subcultures within higher education such as student, administrative, and various levels of staff subcultures. In spite of this rich diversity, Kuh and Whitt cite a lack of definition of subculture and specific research on subcultures. The authors suggest a need for further study on the complex nature of the various sub-cultures within higher education environment. Kuh and Whitt conclude this monograph by offering suggestions for working within cultural contexts including conducting a cultural audit and techniques for assessing institutional culture.

Bergquist’s *The Four Cultures of the Academy* (1992) and *The Six Cultures of the Academy* (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008) provide a multidisciplinary exploration of higher education culture grounded in history (premodern, modern, and postmodern influences), anthropology, sociology and psychology. The identification and description of four (1992) and later six (2008) cultures within higher education serve to further develop earlier works (particularly Tierney, 1988). Bergquist and Pawlak contend that cultures within higher education have developed in response to the demands of the times from
pre-modern to modern to post-modern. While higher education started with a collegial culture in its colonial colleges and soon after a managerial culture emerged in its Catholic colleges and eventually community colleges; over time, additional cultures have developed typically in response to or as a result of the positive and negative influences of other cultures (e.g. the rise of a tangible culture relative to the virtual culture). Thus, the six cultures exist in some form within every college system. The six cultures include:

Collegial: faculty (scholarship, teaching, and service) focus, shared governance, rationalism, develop character of students

Managerial: goal and measurement oriented; values competence, efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and effective supervisory skills; develop professionalized students (knowledge, skills, and attitude)

Developmental: fosters personal and professional holistic growth, values open and transparent governance, and service to others

Advocacy: seeks to develop equitable policies and procedures, values faculty voice and collective bargaining and seeks liberating structures and attitudes; arose in response to managerial culture’s inability to meet the needs of faculty and to a lesser extent staff

Virtual: relationship to fragmented and ambiguous nature of post-modern world, open systems, loose organizational boundaries, and knowledge created as connections among people
Tangible: based on reflection and search for deeply rooted identity, a supportive and appreciative community; rebirth of spiritual versus secular values, connection to the past and local perspective (Berquist & Pawlak)

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) provide important insights into the purposes served by culture. They cite Schein’s (1992) contention that the primary purpose of culture is to contain anxiety. Anxiety among employees in higher education is generated from changing internal and external forces. When these challenges arise, underlying assumptions (Schein, 2004) of various members are brought to the surface and may collide with others’ assumptions. This collective anxiety creates or reinforces assumptions and these forces shape culture. This culture then, in turn, shapes its members ways of "perceiving, thinking, and feeling" (Bergquist & Pawlak, p.11).

According to Bergquist and Pawlak (2008), one feature of the postmodern era is the hybridization of culture within higher education. While Tierney (1988) suggests that leaders within higher education should work toward a congruent or aligned overarching culture, Bergquist and Pawlak contend that hybrid cultures are simply a function of the times. Rather than attempting to align these various cultures, the authors suggest appreciative and ironic perspectives as ways of bridging the various cultures within higher education. The appreciative perspective comes from appreciative inquiry: a process of reflection on organizational strengths and improvement as a means for betterment. The ironic perspective involves recognition of the evolving nature or contingency of beliefs and the process of the individual beginning to see other cultural perspectives within themselves. It involves the individual allowing “multiple
perspectives, multiple truths, and multiple narratives” to enter our consciousness despite the fact that these realities might be contradictory” (p. 228). Transformational growth is possible through understanding and embracing the ironic nature of culture.

Due to the limited ability of any single cultural perspective to address anxiety and fear, Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) call for higher education leaders to bring together diverse perspectives of their staff, faculty, students, and administration and address “the patterns of interpersonal and group relationships” (p. 44). The six cultures can provide insights and may alleviate symptoms, but “will only be fully addressed when people feel they are freely served with the skills, knowledge, strategies, and resources of all members of the academy—regardless of culture” (Bergquist & Pawlak, p. 13). A goal for higher education then includes the development of staff and faculty in order to foster professional and organizational transformation.

**Academic and Student Affairs Culture**

Throughout the 1990’s and 2000’s the study of cultural perspectives has become more fully developed though examining contemporary issues such as campus identity and brand equity (Toma, Durow & Hartley, 2005). Several authors have written about organizational culture in light of specific sub-cultures within higher education such as faculty culture (Amey, 1999; Austin, 1990) and the culture of student affairs (Kuh, 1993; Love & Estanek, 2004; Love, Kuh, MacKay, & Hardy, 1993; Mathews, 1997), while others have explored the influences of cultural variables in collaborative projects where staff and faculty attempt to work in partnership for specific programmatic outcomes (Lamarid, 1999; Martin & Samels, 2001; Philpott & Strange, 2003). More recently,
Magolda (2005) and Whitt, Elkins-Nesheim, Guentzel, Kellogg, McDonald, & Wells (2008), have offered cautionary advice for those entering into collaborative relationships in light of cultural and contextual factors. These authors suggest that context is critical and implore future collaborators to recognize both their institutional context as well as their own professional culture as they consider collaborative work.

Since the early 2000’s Adrianna Kezar from the University of Southern California has explored the interplay between structural and cultural variables as they relate to collaboration among staff and faculty. In partnership with the Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse on Higher Education, ACPA, and NASPA, Kezar (2001) developed the first national collection of empirical evidence regarding collaboration among student affairs and academic affairs. Using survey methodology of senior student affairs administrators, Kezar examined the prevalence and influence of both structural and cultural factors that affect collaboration within various organizational contexts. Kezar (2001) reported that collectively “human and cultural characteristics best defined reasons for success” in collaborations among staff and faculty (p.44). Kezar goes on to suggest that while leaders should not ignore structural strategies, cultural strategies are most critical. She encourages leaders to create “environments of cooperation develop cross institutional dialogue…conduct staff development” (Kezar, p. 49).

In a separate article (Kezar, 2003) based on the 2001 data, Kezar sought to better understand how campuses were transitioning from individualistic to collaborative models. In this study, she confirmed that institutions attended to both structural as well as cultural issues. She recommended that case study research be used to explore how the
nuances of institutional culture impact change. Following this research path, Kezar and Eckel (2002) set out on an important case study examination of change strategies at a variety of institution types. The results of this investigation revealed significant relationships between institutional culture and change and suggest that change in, and of itself is a cultural process. The researchers suggest utilizing Bergquist’s (1992) typology as a framework for understanding these relationships. However, Bergquist’s archetypes may be limited in their ability to account for the rich complexity of various types of institutions and their unique qualities. Finally, the researchers suggest that institutions engage in examination and reflection on their own specific cultural tensions as means to facilitate the change process (Kezar & Eckel, 2002).

**Other Research on Collaboration in the Higher Education Context**

Following the success of her first qualitative investigation of the change process Kezar turned next to a more macro level examination of collaboration by exploring how higher education institutions made the transition to models that support and foster collaborative work. Her empirically driven “best practices” case study research in 2006 examined four large, public institutions that had successfully transitioned to collaborative models. As a result of this study, Kezar (2006) identified eight key organizational features that helped collaboration to flourish. These features included a mission that stressed collaboration, networks for staff faculty to build relationships, structures that support collaboration, incentives and rewards, senior leadership support, external pressures, campus values, and opportunities to learn about the value of collaboration (Kezar, 2006). While all eight were important, Kezar notes that the prominence of
relationship development and networking are unique and distinctive features of the higher education context (Kezar, 2006).

In a separate article from the same study, Kezar (2005b) developed a three-stage developmental model based on the same outcomes. In this organizational schema, Kezar posited that relationship and network building were the “most prominent feature(s) in facilitating the developmental process” (p. 855). In stage one, the networks provided an avenue for building support and grounding ownership of the process (Kezar, 2005b). At the second stage, networks helped provide a “critical mass” of energy in moving collaboration forward even when other strategies waned. In the third stage, the networks served to sustain previous work and generate new collaborative ventures. In addition to sustaining collaboration, the networks also helped the campus to overcome various barriers. Thus, regardless of stage of development, the attention to relationship building and networking was critical. Kezar recommends the development of specific initiatives such as hosting events on topics related to collaboration to accomplish this important process.

Kezar’s body of research provides a comprehensive contribution to the literature on collaboration, institutional culture, and organization change studies. Her work provides an important grounding for this study as she recommends greater exploration of these themes, constructs, and dynamics within other institutional contexts such as smaller, private institutions (Kezar, 2006). The mid-sized, private, Catholic, Marianist context is of particular interest as its setting involves a number of unique characteristics yet to be specifically explored in the literature on collaboration.
The Catholic, Marianist Institutional Context

The unique context of Catholic higher education has structural and cultural features influenced by and parallel to, but also distinct from much of the rest of US higher education. Thus, an examination of collaboration within this specific higher education setting requires consideration of these amalgamated features. Further, the site for this investigation is not only Catholic, but also a mid-sized, research intensive Marianist institution setting; as such, there may be unique tensions among a number of organizational characteristics similar to and divergent from other Catholic contexts (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008).

The modern American Catholic college inherited a rich tradition of serving the poor and immigrant population largely centered in urban areas of the US. The initial focus of these institutions was largely pragmatic and vocational—helping those most in need of upward social mobility to gain the knowledge and skills to find employment (Bergquist, 1992). The University of Dayton would fit the profile of many Catholic post-secondary institutions that emerged in the mid to late nineteenth century. These institutions emerged largely as extensions of secondary schools, and like the secondary schools, had clear designations of authority and designated clerical administration. Over time, these factors led to the development of a largely managerial culture within Catholic higher education (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). The managerial culture is defined by Bergquist and Pawlak as:

A culture that finds meaning primarily in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of work that is directed toward specific goals and purposes; that values fiscal responsibility and effective supervisory skills; that holds assumptions about
capacity of the institution to define and measure its goals and objectives clearly; and that conceives of the institution’s enterprise as the inculcation of specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes in students so that they might become successful and responsible citizens (2008, p. 43).

While Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) attribute managerial culture as the dominant culture in Catholic higher education, the collegial culture (developed largely within the early Protestant colleges) and developmental culture are also present and influential in this setting. The collegial culture focuses on the cultivation of knowledge and rationalism largely disseminated through the academic disciplines. The developmental culture advocates for attention to personal and professional development as well as values service to other and inclusive decision making. Components of collegiate and developmental culture were present in Catholic higher education from the start such as a focus on holistic student development (particularly character and moral development). Alongside the collegial and developmental culture, the advocacy culture has emerged in Catholic higher education as faculty have become increasingly secular and the professoriate has gained a stronger voice in the governance of institutions. The growing influence of collegiality, advocacy, and developmental focus has created powerful tensions within a system that was dominated by the managerial culture—structured hierarchically and values uniformity of roles. In order for collaboration to flourish in such an environment, specific strategies may be needed to address these tensions. Could lessons be learned from other Catholic institutions?
In respect to the complex managerial-collegial-advocacy-developmental tensions, the University of Dayton has a unique balance as a result of its Marianist character. As contrasted with other orders within the Catholic spectrum, especially the Jesuit order as the major influence in the development of the character of Catholic higher education, the Marianist approach to higher education is influenced by a distinct set of values that originated with the founding of the order during the reformation period following the French Revolution. These values, particularly “educating in the family spirit” appear to align more closely with Bergquist and Pawlak’s developmental culture (p. 12, Characteristics of Marianist Universities, 2000). The Marianist “family spirit” institutional value and resulting institutional culture involves an inclusive process of building “genuine communities” (Characteristics of Marianist Universities). This value is grounded in the development of relationships “in the family spirit of religious and lay persons, faculty, and students working together to achieve lasting relationships of friendship and trust, supporting and challenging each other in developing their mutual gifts” (p. 6, Characteristics of Marianist Universities). To achieve this ends, the Characteristics of Marianist Universities describes a need for forming “collaborative processes and structures” including shared responsibility for decision making, good communication, and cooperation with a wide range of constituents (p. 13, Characteristics of Marianist Universities).

The tension between the managerial, collegial and advocacy cultures has potentially played out at the University of Dayton in a narrative similar to, but also quite distinct from other Catholic institutions. This storyline continues to evolve as the
institution attempts to maintain its identity in the face of significant challenges including decreased numbers of active vowed influences, increasing numbers of lay leaders, and attracting students, staff, and faculty from diverse backgrounds and religious traditions.

Three constructs in exploring collaboration within mid-sized Catholic, Marianist institutions have been promoted thus far: first, understanding institutional culture is critical. Second, institutions must attend to the development of relationships and networks among their employees. And third, the Catholic and Marianist institution has its own unique features influencing collaboration. The last section will explore how the development of staff and faculty may be a way to promote collaboration within mid-sized Catholic institutions.

**Personal Development and the Shift to Collaborative Models**

Complex historical features have formed higher education as we know it today. While most sectors of industry (from business to health care) have shifted toward collaboration and organizational models that support collaboration, post-secondary education has been slow to follow (Kezar, 2001). From a cultural point of view, Schein (2004) suggests that the key to shifting organizations toward collaboration is related to addressing the meaning staff and faculty attribute to the organization. The professional formation process, particularly surrounding issues of collaboration and leadership may unlock the potential for staff and faculty to navigate the complex institutional system and build productive relationships. Ruben (2004), in *Pursuing Excellence in Higher Education*, suggests that while staff and faculty may be trained in their specific areas of knowledge, attending to the ability to collaborate within increasingly complex organizations is an essential leadership skill in need of development. Ruben suggests that
institutions need to go beyond simply locating strong leaders; they need to “encourage, facilitate, and reward” staff and faculty to do this important work (p. 289).

For collaboration to flourish among staff and faculty, as well as others within higher education, specific attention needs to be directed to developing institution-specific initiatives to address collaborative competence (Ruben, 2004). As described by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008), higher education leaders need to help their constituents to develop the knowledge, skills, talents and feelings such that they are able to be culturally competent and meet the demands of the modern workplace. Meeting the demands of the modern higher education workplace requires nothing short of institutions helping to facilitate developmental transformation of their employees. Argyris’s (1977) Single and Double Loop Learning as well as Mezirow’s (2000) transformational learning models provide a framework to understand and advance this process.

**Argyris: Double Loop Learning.**

Emerging from the organizational development literature in the late 1970’s was Argyris’s (1977, 1991) concept of single and double loop learning. Single loop learning involves a basic problem-solving approach—simply identifying the issue and fixing it. Professionals become particularly adept at this process as it becomes a standardized cognitive operating procedure without much depth of thought or reflection. These procedures become reliable frameworks of understanding that function so long as the framework satisfactorily solves the problem. When these frameworks fail to work, the professional often fails to see that the problem is the mental framework and often attributes the problem to other causes. As a result the employee does not engage in a reflective investigation of the framework itself (Argyris, 1991). Double-loop learning
involves introspection and reforming the frameworks one uses to solve given problems. Argyris suggests that the key to helping professionals shift to this learning process involves teaching them to reflect on their own behaviors and to shift their attention to meta-level and process-oriented thinking. With the ability to engage in this level of thinking, individuals, as well as teams, are able to learn about and address various work dynamics. The key with this theoretical construct is “they are not just solving problems but developing a far deeper and more textured understanding of their role as members of the organization… they are learning how to learn” (Argyris, 1991, p. 109).

**Mezirow: Transformational Learning.**

A theory of transformational learning was conceived by Mezirow (2000) in a study of adult students returning to school after a significant time away. His study provided an empirically grounded theory of how the adult learning process unfolds:

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken for granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight” (p. 8).

At the core of Mezirow’s theory is the structure of meaning—the frame of reference or its earlier term, meaning perspective. Frames of references are constructs we use to make sense of the world around us. They are complex combinations of “cognitive, affective, and cognitive dimensions” that develop through experience (Mezirow, 2000, p.
21). These constructs may exist inside or outside our perceptive consciousness and are both products of, and creators of our sense of reality.

Mezirow (2000) defines two major components of the frame of reference, the habit of mind and the point of view. The habit of mind includes a set of assumptions (sociolinguistic, moral, ethical, philosophical, epistemic, psychological, and aesthetic) that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of a given experience. These can be described as orientations, as they direct how an individual approaches any given situation. For example, an employee’s religious (or lack thereof) background would shape how they make meaning of an opening prayer before a meeting at work.

The expression of habits of mind comes in the form of points of view. Points of view are comprised of collective meaning schemes, largely unconscious reactions based on “expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and judgments” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). While grounded in the frame of reference, the meaning schemes tend to be “more specific, less global and refer to a particular belief” while frames of reference are “global and metaphorical, reflecting a more inclusive worldview” (Taylor, 2000, p. 296).

The frame of reference houses one’s value system and personal identity. It is through one’s point of view that the person engages the world. A personal development challenge of adulthood is the development of frames of reference that are more “dependable” for the individual (Mezirow, 2000). A more dependable frame of reference is one that is “more inclusive, differentiating, permeable, critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience” (Mezirow,
More dependable frames of reference allows for the individual to better understand and flourish in increasing challenging environments.

As compared to additive learning within a given meaning scheme, the transformation learning process involves more fundamental change and becomes the means to more dependable frames of reference. This fundamental change is defined by developmental psychologist Robert Kegan as epistemological change: the alteration of not only what one knows, but also how one knows (Kegan, 1994). In transformational learning, the actual “form” of knowing is altered. This new form helps the adult to be “adaptive” to the challenges of modern work by encouraging a more reflective and objective relationship with those around them. This shift helps employee to act upon his or her own voice (values, beliefs, ideas, etc.) versus being subject to, and following others’ influence (Kegan). Working within the increasingly complex demands of higher education, particularly collaborative work, will require a more sophisticated way of negotiating relationships. Staff and faculty are more likely to be successful if they can make this developmental transformation.

The interplay between critical reflection and affective learning are additional components of the transformational change process (Taylor, 2000). Critical reflection involves reassessing the ways problems are posed as well as “our orientation toward perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting” (Mezirow and Associates, 2000, p. 13). Critical reflection involves a deeper “premise level” internal process: “…transformation deals with subjective reframing (critical reflections of one’s assumptions) as opposed to objective reframing (critical reflection of others’
assumptions)” (Taylor, 2000, p. 298). Affective learning adds a critical dimension to the transformational process that involves how emotions influence critical reflection and ultimately the transformation process. A study of a leadership development program by Neuman (1996) identified interdependent relationships between affect and critical reflection where emotions served to influence the critical reflection process and in turn, the affect was further developed as an outcome of the critical reflection process.

**Leadership Development Programs**

If attention to transformational learning and developmental processes are critical to building staff and faculty’s ability to collaborate, then how have programs similar to Leadership UD managed this process? A search in the literature turned up a thoughtful narrative case study description by Warinski and Chabot (2004) of the Discovering Leadership Program (DLP) at Cornell University. The DLP sought to build leadership capacity of its faculty and academic administration to better meet the challenges encountered at their institution. While the original audience was primarily faculty, the program has more recently evolved to include staff from other divisions such as information technology and business affairs. The goals of the program are to foster: “self awareness around values, mission, vision, and impact on others; a set of competencies and capabilities for communicating, building relationships and teams, and managing performance; a set of roles and activities to effectively lead change and counteract organizational mindsets, structure and politics; and a performance management accountability system” (p. 323). To achieve these goals, DLP incorporated several developmental strategies into an 11-day, three course curriculum that takes place over a five month period. The curriculum includes an individualized learning plan, group
development sessions, and follow-up reflection and consultation sessions on specific issues/challenges that participants identified.

While other leadership programs, such as the faculty leadership development program at the University of Washington, the leadership development program at Virginia Tech, and the State of Ohio Inter-University Council’s leadership program, are designed to develop faculty and administrators, programs like these are rarer in Catholic higher education. This is a real concern as Catholic higher education faces a shift from fewer vowed (taken religious vows and ordained by the church as a brother, father, or sister) leaders to increasing numbers of lay (have not taken religious vows) leaders. This issue is described in detail in Anthony Cernera’s book *Lay Leaders in Catholic Higher Education*, “Catholic colleges and universities will need to develop programs for students, employees, faculty, parents, and trustees that promote theological education, spiritual development, ethical reflection, leadership development, and mission effectiveness” (2005, p.57).

**Summary**

The literature on collaboration within higher education is continuing to evolve as the higher education community attempts to meet the challenges of the day. The higher education community has a better understanding of structural and cultural variables that impact the work of staff and faculty. The cultural considerations are of particular importance within Catholic higher education. While Kezar’s work has been critical to understanding many of the issues at hand, as well as pathways for transitioning to collaborative models, there exists a need for better understanding and fostering the transformational process described by Argyris, and Mezirow. Ruben (2004) calls the
higher education community to be as responsive to its own needs as it has been for others. “A new leadership paradigm is needed, one that uses the academy’s core educational values and competencies and allows those of us within the academy to benefit from the kinds of developmental experiences we have long advocated and provided for others” (Ruben, 2004, p. 386). Further exploration into the experiences of faculty and staff within a private, Catholic, Marianist institution provided a means to better understand developmental and formation processes related to collaboration.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design

Basic Interpretive methodology was selected for this study in order to investigate collaborative experiences among faculty and staff at a Catholic and Marianist institution as described by former participants in a leadership development program. Basic Interpretive, the most commonly used qualitative method in educational research studies, draws its approach largely from symbolic interaction and to a lesser extent phenomenology (Merriam, 2002). The symbolic interaction theoretical perspective introduced the importance of “symbols and the interpretive process that undergird interactions as fundamental for understanding human behavior” (Patton, 2002, p.112). Phenomenology attempts to explore the essence of an experience through exploring participants’ interpretation and meaning making process. Basic Interpretive draws upon these two methods of qualitative inquiry to explore “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, p.38). Understanding the subjective meaning staff and faculty attribute to their experiences related to collaboration and developing collaborative leadership competence may help to shed light on the research questions defined in Chapter one.

While the focus of this research agenda is not a case study, per se, the leadership development program provided a bounded system by which to locate the research frame of this study. As described by Stake (2000) in Lincoln and Denzin’s Guide to Qualitative Research, a bounded system provides specific and identifiable boundaries of the research
frame. The unique staff/faculty development program described in detail earlier provided an entry point to explore the collaboration formation process of staff and faculty within a specific organizational context.

An important feature of Basic Interpretive methodology is that this inquiry is “always framed by some disciplinary-based concept, model or theory” (Merriam, 2002, p.39). The underlying framework of this study was shaped largely by Kezar (2001, 2003, 2005, and 2006); Bergquist and Pawlak’s (2008) cultural models of higher education; and Mezirow’s (2000) concept of Transformational Learning. The managerial-collegial-advocacy-developmental tensions described by Bergquist and Pawlak presented unique challenges to those working in higher education, particularly those working in Catholic higher education. For staff and faculty working in Catholic and Marianist higher education to be successful in developing collaborative relationships, they may need context-specific professional development. Mezirow’s concept of Transformation Learning suggests that in order to become more adept in complex environments, participants must alter not only what they know, but the form of how they know.

In January of 2008, the Leadership UD development team conducted 2 focus groups with former participants. The participants were asked to discuss outcomes of participating in the development program. Participants’ comments were summarized into four broad themes in the order of the importance and salience for participants. The four themes included:

1.) Understanding and valuing the Marianist culture

2.) Creating powerful and long-term relationships across campus
3.) Providing greater awareness of all that goes on at UD

4.) Enhancing knowledge about self and others

In addition to reviewing the focus group findings (conducted by Leadership UD), I also conducted three pilot interviews with former participants, two faculty members and one staff member, in order to further sensitize myself to the subject and explore various general experiences and outcomes. While I started off concentrating on how the leadership program influenced their work, what I discovered was a broader set of experiences that shaped their work. Thus, the pilot interviews and focus group data reinforced the potential for further exploration into experiences inclusive of, but not limited to Leadership UD, thus providing me with an entry point for the study. The two preliminary data sources supported one another and oriented me to the research question described in chapter one. My research agenda for this study was to identify participants from Leadership UD who had experiences working collaboratively and, through interviews, explore the meanings they attributed to these experiences as a way to explore institutional influence on collaboration. Additionally, I sought to explore differences in the experiences among faculty and staff, as well as how participants navigated the various structural and cultural dynamics of working in a Catholic, Marianist setting.

Participants

For inductive studies to be thorough, they require information rich cases from enough sources to reach redundancy (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2003). In order to identify information rich cases within the Leadership UD setting, I utilized two common purposeful sampling techniques: criterion and snowball sampling.
The first step in sampling involved selecting a set of criteria by which to select participants, referred to as criterion-based selection by Patton (2002). The criteria were derived from the purpose statement of the study and direct identification of participants (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the two primary criteria for selection involved having participated in the year-long Leadership UD program and engaged in collaborative work during their professional career at the University of Dayton. These criteria inherently included only faculty and staff working at the University of Dayton for at least two years.

In order to explore the research questions, I sought out participants (from the pool of past participants) willing to discuss their experiences engaging in collaborative work. I queried the Leadership UD Development Team for names of individuals that meet the two criteria. I identified a small number (2 staff and 2 faculty members) of former participants and through snowball sampling identified 2 additional participants. Snowball sampling is a commonly used purposeful sampling technique in case-study methodology. Patton (2003) describes snowball sampling as finding additional participants by asking current participants to identify others with the potential for information-rich cases. This strategy will be particularly helpful in this study as many of the participants know one another from their respective cohorts and be able to readily identify other participants (See Appendix C for a list of participants).

Data Collection

My data collection goal was to explore the experiences of faculty and staff members in order to inform an inductive process of data analysis and ultimately answer the research questions described in Chapter 1. To accomplish this goal, I used a general interview guide approach to interviewing (Patton, 2002). This protocol involved the
development of specific areas to be covered in the interview and even some broad questions to be explored. The guide helped to ensure that the same areas of interest were covered with each participant. However, the interview guide was not a script. It was designed to be flexible and fluid enough to allow the interviewer to explore the subjects at hand in an open and conversational atmosphere. The Interview Guide included three areas 1) opening questions, 2) collaborative experiences, and 3) closing questions (see Appendix A for the Interview Guide).

Under opening questions, I asked the participants to describe examples of their experiences working collaboratively within the UD context. Next, I explored how participants’ described their understanding of collaboration and how participants described their formation process including the extent Leadership UD may have factored into that process. Under closing questions, I asked participants to suggest others with whom I should speak to better inform this study.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis with Basic Interpretive methodology “involves identifying reoccurring patterns (presented as categories, factors, variables, themes) that cut through the data” (Merriam, 2002, p. 38). The patterns became the basis for the results and outcomes of the study. As typical with inductive research, qualitative methods may be nested within other methods and even within various approaches (Merriam, 1998). While was the primary methodology, tools from other forms of qualitative research were utilized to enrich the study.
The data analysis stage drew from grounded theory methodology’s constant comparison as a primary means of organizing and contrasting the data (Glasser & Strauss 1967; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Tesch, 1990). In this process, the comparison and contrasting of a variety of data sources began with examination of the first transcript and continued through saturation of themes. Tesch (1990) suggested that comparison, as defined in Grounded Theory, is the main intellectual tool in the various stages of qualitative analysis. For example, it was used in forming categories, establishing boundaries of categories, assigning segments to categories, summarizing content and examining negative evidence. For this study, I followed three steps in the comparison process. First, I conducted comparative analysis within the single interview. Second, I compared interviews within the same group (faculty or staff). Third, I compared interviews across groups. To help manage this process, I utilized an electronic data management system in coding, organizing, comparing and analyzing the data. Finally, I developed conceptual categories and compared the experiences and outcomes of the participants with the literature on collaboration in higher education.

Qualitative studies depend upon trustworthiness of data collected, analyzed and presented. A number of empirically sound practices have been identified in order to better assure the trustworthiness of the reports and claims of the researcher. The constant comparison method helps to address internal validity by surfacing variation, the commonalities and differences in behaviors, attitudes, etc. (Boeije, 2002). I also triangulated findings using multiple perspectives, checking my observations and interpretations with participants and development team members, conducted follow-up
interviews, checked the outcomes with my dissertation adviser, and clarified my own bias and theoretical orientation (Merriam, 1998). The data management software improved the dependability and fidelity of my interpretation of the data by providing an electronic audit trail, access to the original raw data, and pathways through the analysis and reporting.

**Researcher Reflexive Statement**

What follows is a description of my experience with the issue of collaboration in higher education. These experiences provide a lens through which I view this phenomenon. Awareness of my perspective will help in reducing the potential for bias.

For better, and at times for worse, the entirety of my thirteen years in higher education has included working on the borderlands between student and academic affairs. From my first job working in a residential, interdisciplinary studies program to my current position as an Assistant Dean of Students, negotiating faculty and student affairs culture has been an integral part of my professional life. While at times, I have felt disconnected from traditional notions of both areas, reading Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt’s *Student Success in College* (2005) reinforced my belief that bridging the gap between student and faculty affairs is absolutely essential to promote student achievement and ultimately for higher education to thrive in this century. As Kuh et al. posited in this text, “…high-performing organizations are marked by partnerships, cross-functional collaborations, and responsive units…” (p. 311). While the importance of collaborating is evident, much of the challenge for today’s faculty and staff lies in negotiating the complex human processes that comprise collaboration.
When explaining the nature of faculty/staff collaborative relationships, I often refer to Robert Rhoads’ (1997) concept of mutuality as a philosophical grounding. While Rhoads used this term in describing collaboration in a service-learning context, the concept is germane to other collaborative environments. This concept blends principles of reciprocity (benefits for students, staff and faculty), common focus or goals, and mutual construction (each party is valued as a partner with unique perspectives) (Rhoads, 1997). Through my work at the Western College Program at Miami University, I was fortunate to have the opportunity for many partnerships with faculty. I was one of two individuals with joint staff and faculty appointments working for an academic department within a residential college setting. Both formal structures inherent in the program (faculty-in-residence, residential college setting, and interdisciplinary curriculum) and our perceptions of our hybrid professional roles provided fertile ground for collaboration within the college. Looking back, I believe that our perception that we were not quite faculty and yet, not quite staff, actually helped us embrace the ambiguity of our unique positions and our partnerships with other faculty. Many faculty in our department felt similarly, as they were members of a residentially based interdisciplinary program, yet trained in singular disciplines with little experience in residential college settings.

While our program and roles were largely unconventional, I firmly believe this helped us better question and identify who we were professionally and culturally, as well as how our collective backgrounds influenced what we brought to the program.

According to Peter Magolda (2005) in *Proceed with caution: Uncommon wisdom about academic and student affairs partnerships*, self-awareness of our professional culture and
its goals, assumptions, and values is a critical first step prior to understanding the culture of the “other.” This important groundwork was also emphasized in Philpot and Strange’s (2003) discussion of their case study of faculty and student affairs collaboration: “One of the strongest impressions that emerged in these data is the hegemony of professional and organizational cultures in shaping the expectations and the defining of members’ roles” (p. 90). Having cultural and communication dynamics out in the open allowed the faculty and staff at the Western College Program to engage in more genuine and at times, productive partnerships. From this experience, I gained a better appreciation for approaching these partnerships as true cross-cultural experiences.

Another lesson I learned from my experience at the Western College Program and subsequently reinforced in my work at the University of Dayton, was the importance of creating formal structures to enable partnerships between faculty, staff and students to flourish. Formal structures such as mission statements, job descriptions, program objectives, incentives, or tenure requirements can serve as a catalyst for promoting partnerships. These structures sustain or help bridge the rift between traditional student, faculty and staff domains.

I find it paradoxical that in spite of the growing body of literature supporting collaboration for student success, the field of higher education is slow to create formal structures to establish and sustain partnerships. At the University of Dayton, I have observed faculty frustration over increased expectations (such as working with students outside of class and collaborating with staff) without changes in the formal structure of faculty workload. I have worked with pre-tenured faculty who attempted earnestly to
collaborate with staff and students, only to be instructed at mid-tenure review to curb these superfluous activities in order to spend more time publishing. As Kezar, Hirsch and Burack (2005) noted, lack of time was the most significant obstacle to faculty and staff partnership. Clearly, for collaborative partnerships to happen, let alone be successful, the structure of faculty expectations requires retooling to encourage and support their participation in these ventures.

The cultural and structural aspects of partnership development present critical challenges to the higher education community in institutionalizing the practice of collaboration. As Magolda (2005) emphasized partnerships must be “meaningful, reciprocal and responsive” (p. 21). I would add to Magolda’s list that partnerships must also be valued by the institutions such that the structure of faculty and staff work is adjusted to achieve these goals in order to provide students with powerful learning environments. With a finite amount of time and energy available, and no shortage of work, progress on this important goal must involve integration of curricular with co-curricular and/ or redefining faculty work as described previously. Both deserve consideration at the highest levels institutionally. The Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility (1998) joint report, as well the Student Success in College (2005) text have been guiding examples of promising practices and models.

The core desire of this researcher in conducting this study is to improve student learning. To achieve this end, I seek to delve further into individual and institutional transformation issues in order to help understand the challenges in context and develop strategies to help staff and faculty build meaningful and productive relationships.
Through these relationships, staff and faculty improve their ability to build powerful learning environments.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

In this chapter the results of the interviews are described. In the first section, each individual participant’s experiences are documented to provide an understanding of the individual experiences within this setting (See Appendix C for a list of participants). Second, cross case analysis is presented for the major two groups of focus for this study: faculty and staff. These themes include structural and cultural influences including the Marianist Philosophy/Charism and mission, Leadership UD as well as components of the institutional structure such as scale of the institution and organizational features. Finally, results related to each of the two research questions are explicated. The research questions address cultural and structural features that helped or served as barriers to collaboration within the context of a mid-sized, Catholic and Marianist institution.

Paul Wideman

Paul began at the University of Dayton in 1980 after working at three other institutions (public and private) of higher education. Early on in his career at UD as a business officer, Paul was reviewing bids for a custodial contract. His supervisor, a Marianist brother, asked him to go back to the winning bidder and see if they would be willing to make adjustments to the contract in order to provide health benefits for their custodial workers. Paul cited this as a significant collaborative event that shaped his understanding of the values of UD and the application of those values even in the business aspects of University operations.

That spoke very highly of a Marianist belief of social justice and how important it is to treat people equally. Being within a community, even though they were a
contractor, even though they were a third party provider, they are part of this community and it was my first experience where I knew that I was at a different place, a different way of thinking and this was probably one of the most profound examples for me of collaboration, if you will, even though it was not necessarily just internal collaboration, but also collaborating with a third party provider.

Based on early positive experiences with his Marianist supervisor, Paul sought out other Marianists, and discovered not only do the Marianists "look at every individual as being equal" but also “that everyone is a gift and has something of value to offer." These Marianist influences helped Paul come to understand “that the basis of collaboration is a willingness to listen and be open to other's points of view." Paul went on to describe the Marianist influence on his notion of collaboration as a "willingness to challenge yourself in how you think and perceive things."

Throughout our interview Paul talked about collaboration and Marianist values as being intertwined. He defined collaboration as people “who are willing to look at many options and then implement options that will move the institution forward, even in cases where one area might benefit more than another.” He felt that collaboration involved learning to see "a bigger picture beyond what you believe" and not being afraid of asking questions such as "How does this benefit the university?"

The theme of “openness” came up at several points in our time together. Paul cited the founder of the Marianists, Father Chaminade’s belief in the importance of remaining open to possibilities. Paul attributed the practice of inviting everyone, even
non-experts and people lower in the organizational hierarchy, to the decision-making process to the Marianist value of openness, community, and family spirit.

In describing how this value system manifested, Paul talked about the culture of UD as promoting collaboration by encouraging employees in "putting feelers out there" and that there were many opportunities to work across departments. He acknowledged that there were silos, but there were less rigid boundaries at UD than other places he had worked. Paul admitted that at UD “the culture of inclusivity and desire for consensus slowed down the process,” but that this value helped those involved see the bigger picture and support the decision for the "overall benefit" or "greater good of the university."

As Paul discussed barriers to collaboration, he cited a concern related to Fr. Chaminade's idea of "reading the times." He described the tension surrounding, on one hand, protecting the Marianist values (with fewer vowed leaders) while, on the other hand, being responsive to the demands of the times which may require a more nimble, less inclusive, decision-making process. He suggested that there was a perceived need to "move the university forward or die.” Further, he offered, "I think that's going to be one of the greatest challenges as we move forward, is how do you keep the Marianist spirit, Marianist values, and tradition alive..." He expressed concern that senior leaders might be changing the decision-making process (to a less inclusive and more responsive/rapid/unilateral process) and thus impacting the culture of collaboration. Paul feared that a "major culture change" may occur if too many decisions are made unilaterally by (lay) leadership without inviting feedback. If this happens, he feared that UD could travel the road of many religious schools that have lost their connection with their core beliefs,
"conceivably we could just become another Catholic institution and miss the Marianist way of life."

Paul explored how working at UD had impacted his professional development. In reflecting on his experiences he described various ways and offered that he had done much “self-exploration and reflection.” He recalled reflecting on the questions: "how I treat other people" and "how I react at certain times." Paul described several self-reflective experiences where he learned to "listen a little better," “be more open,” "know that I'm not always right," and to consider "what's best for the university as a whole." Paul also cited examples of helping others “who may or may not be collaboratively-minded” to understand and be open to other perspectives. When asked about the influence of Leadership UD, Paul offered that it provided “an opportunity for self-reflection” and learning about the university, the surrounding community and work of others in the university: "understanding the operations across campus." He offered that he gained a great deal from his work on the Leadership UD development team (following his first year in Leadership UD), especially in being reflective in his work and interactions with others. For example, he mentioned his increased ability to empathize with others: "putting myself in other people's shoes as we are walking together" and “being more open to other points of view.”

Tyler Hughes

Tyler works in [name withheld], an administrative area and has been at UD for three years. His work has involved collaboration with others in the department and division, as well as work outside the division, primarily with academic areas. He reflected on a process of gradually “working outward” as his time at UD progressed, first from the
department then to eventually working with others across campus. He suggested that the realignment of his administrative unit has only increased collaboration with others outside the division.

In his present work situation, Tyler described collaboration as a "job requirement" and that this expectation has served as a "jumping off point." While this gave him a starting point and initial motivation, "The things that kept me going were the relationships that developed as a result of the work." This work and particularly the positive relationships that he has developed have helped him to develop a "solid reputation in the community" as a person who is open to collaboration. When asked about the relationship-building process, Tyler suggested that beyond the basic expectations of collaboration, due to the culture and values of UD, “I don't think you can be successful in this environment working in a silo." He went further to suggest "in order to be successful and accomplish your goals professionally... you have to do that in partnership with other people." Unlike other schools where Tyler worked where "you are pretty much confined to your area," at UD "you are expected to work across the department... the division... creating opportunities for students."

The theme of collaborative work for the benefit of students was important for Tyler. Several times in the interview Tyler discussed this idea: "Having relationships with other people strengthens your audience." Tyler used the term "audience" to mean a broader group of students to work with. As an example of this ability to more broadly reach students, he mentioned that "I would have never worked with students in the [name
withheld] without this partnership... My work outside the division has definitely created opportunities for me to engage students in a different setting."

As we discussed these partnerships, Tyler offered a definition for the term collaboration as a process of "people coming together, bringing their skills set, bringing their experiences together... as a partnership... an equal partnership... where we bring different perspectives... a work ethic... an ability to contribute significantly to the actual project." Tyler thought the resulting work “…is better and stronger when you have more minds and perspectives and more experiences coming together to create something." In describing his own involvement Tyler offered "in a lot of ways it’s like doing a dance... There are lots of times when I’ll be called to step forward and to take the lead and there are lots of times when I need to step back and give support."

Tyler offered several examples of lessons he had learned from being engaged in collaborative work. In the context of his work with [program name withheld], he described the importance of being reflective about his own behaviors and remembering "to check your ego, to remember that your way is not necessarily the only way or the right way of approaching the work." He offered,

When you become so invested, it’s so easy for your ego to take over and that the way in which you want to do it is the right way and so it’s very easy for your good intentions to fall by the wayside because now your ego has taken over because you’re determined this is the way in which the project needs to work or the partnership needs to work, when in reality you just need to step back and
reevaluate and refocus yourself and remember you’re doing this for the incoming students.

Another lesson Tyler described was that in spite of "working together for a common cause," he experienced that:

Politics still exist, so there are definitely people sitting around the table who have more experience, a better title, make more money, rest higher in the hierarchy than you and there are times when you may have to defer to that individual or those individuals even if you think that their way of approaching it is wrong.

In spite of this dynamic, Tyler's attention remains focused. "My commitment to the project is to make sure that the experience with the students is meaningful and that those moments where politics creep in there don’t have to ruin the overall project." In reflecting on this example, Tyler returned to the importance of relationships:

Because there’s still a relationship that needs to be intact even after the project has come and gone and that’s one of the things I’ve learned as well. It’s important not to destroy relationships and burn bridges in that moment because it’s that relationship that you want to keep once the project is completed.

Finally, Tyler described the importance of seeing the bigger picture:

I’m very careful about recognizing that I represent not only myself, but my department and division… it's important that when I’m invited or when I have these opportunities that I capitalize on the moment. I feel like anything positive that happens for me also there’s something positive that happens for the division
and the department as well and so I’m very cognizant of that as I enter into work relationships with others, within [department name withheld] and outside.

When asked about when collaboration was most appropriate Tyler offered:

I evaluate when I need to collaborate based on what is [and] who is my target audience and how large of a project… Is this something that’s larger than me? And I need to find other people to pull in so that we can divide up responsibility and the project runs smoothly and the work that we produce is quality work.

He returned to the example of [program name withheld] as one that required the involvement of a wide constituency considering the magnitude of the event and those who had a stake in its success.

Tyler explored at some length the factors affecting collaboration. He mentioned cultural as well as structural examples. As a contrast to other places that he worked where the organizational structure and culture prevented collaboration from happening "organically," within UD's culture the "relationships are driving the work." He went further on this idea eventually offered that:

Here everything is done in relationship and partnership and it’s something that I like and I think for me it’s what makes working here and being in this community something that I love; it’s what keeps me here; I don’t ever feel like that my work becomes stale because of all the people that I’ve had an opportunity to work with and learn from in the process.

In addition to the scale of the institution, he described how size and relationships work together to impact his work:
The size of the community and the fact that there is a value around being in a relationship with one another… the two together is what I think makes my work exciting and makes me excited about coming to my job… and that’s what sustains me through some of the more troubling times, or the more, I guess, vulnerable [times] … As a division we’re going through a tremendous amount of change, but it’s those factors that keep me positive even when… I’m unsure about what the future’s going to hold for the division, for me, for the department. It’s that piece that keeps me focused and keeps me excited and positive about my work.

In exploring this idea further, Tyler mentioned the Catholic and Marianist principles of UD and described an expectation that staff in his area to know and apply these ideas in their work.

The moment I started working here, it was part of my training, you know, as we talk about the Catholic Marianist Philosophy of Community Living... the ways in which we’re expected to understand it for ourselves, to apply it to our work. Much of it is about being focused on how my decisions or my work as an individual affects those around me and so I think I’m always being cognizant of the common good is what keeps my work centered and focused in ways that not having that value again allows for your ego to creep in there and to take over… Here there’s always a constant reminder or at least a cue for me to step back and to reflect on my work and why I’m doing what I’m doing.

In describing his experiences in Leadership UD, Tyler reflected on how the program influenced his work: "I think definitely Leadership UD, helped from a
networking perspective, there are definitely people that I met, where had I not met them, I
would not have had an in-road in some places…” Tyler mentioned a specific example of
a senior-level administrator that he was able to work with and noted that “had I not
interacted with her or been a part of that program, I don’t know if we would have been
able to, or if there had been the opportunity for me to work more collaboratively with her
outside of that.” Tyler also described learning
how the university operates from a budgetary standpoint… What is the structure
of the university, who reports to whom… why certain decisions are made or how
certain decisions are made about where money goes… As someone who’s
responsible for managing a budget, it was very helpful to have that larger picture
… It gives me a philosophical framework to work by, so that was very helpful in
terms of content.

_Cynthia Porter_

Cynthia has been with UD for 12 years working in [name withheld] and later in
[name withheld]. She thought collaboration was highly valued at UD and that “it seems
to be encouraged or I perceive it to be encouraged and it certainly has made us more
effective here.” She described interactions with two Marianist leaders “observing how
they worked” as important early influences in her understanding of collaboration at UD.
As a new employee, she felt as though these interactions were “a great introduction to the
Marianist idea of collaboration.” These experiences then led Cynthia to more
involvement in collaborative endeavors. “Over the years it has deepened and grown,”
particularly as she moved to the division of [name withheld]. She cited significant
collaborative work among staff from the development division, as well as faculty and academic administration from many academic areas in developing programs for students.

Cynthia viewed collaboration as part of “community building.” She referenced the Marianists and their belief that community building involves “people bringing their different gifts, their differences to the table… and becoming stronger as a community.” Cynthia suggested that ultimately, “collaboration makes the members of a community stronger and perhaps more influential in their work or more impactful in their work.” However, she cautioned against “letting collaboration become an obstacle in itself” in that some at the institution interpret the Marianist value of collaboration as a mandate for consensus. “There’s so much drive for consensus and that’s not collaboration.” She illustrated this concern in an example of a recent hiring process and questioned rhetorically, “Does everybody need to have a say in who we are going to hire?” In the conversation that ensued, she described a striking balance where inclusiveness is valued, but in equilibrium with other organizational values and needs.

As we discussed her experiences, Cynthia reinforced several times that her area could simply focus narrowly on meeting the minimal standards of [program name withheld], yet the Marianist influence surrounding valuing collaboration has influenced her to care deeply about students’ total experience. “All this could operate within every [name withheld] guideline and deal with people purely on a financial basis, but we have shifted to a more holistic approach.” In providing some comparisons, she offered that from my experience and then from what others have told me whose children are at other schools or who have looked at other schools and gone through this [name
withheld] process tell me, it’s nothing like the way we do it here and I think the reason that we do it this way is mission driven. So to me collaboration is not only part of the mission, it’s a way to achieve the mission.

When Cynthia moved into a position of leadership, she has encouraged a spirit of relationship building among her staff. “We’ve encouraged people to get more involved in community beyond [program name withheld] and many of the staff, for the first time, they are involved with things like Sr. Mary Louise’s mentoring program with first year students.”

In discussing barriers to collaboration, Cynthia suggested two significant barriers including senior leader personalities and “cultural” barriers. She was not willing to discuss on tape the details of a situation with a senior administrator, but suggested that senior level leaders can influence or serve as a barrier to collaboration. However, she was open to sharing a discussion she had with a former dean at the institution about how cultural issues have played out “in the differences between faculty and staff.” She shared that:

Yeah there was almost a feeling of a caste system and … I thought it was me. I’m being a little too sensitive, but when I discussed it with [former Dean] we talked about it some. It exists among some faculty members… There is less value placed on the work that a staff member may give to the University. To me… that is a denial of the participation of people who are deeply committed. So yes we are human; it is a human organization and I think there are always various ways in which we can improve.
In response to these barriers, Cynthia offered, “When I felt the collaboration was important and was going to benefit the students, I ignored any obstacles… I just went around them… like water.”

Cynthia cited Leadership UD and the Marianist Education Associates program as two important influences in her work. She cited both as sources that “deepened” her understanding of the mission and provided opportunities to build relationships with key personnel around campus.

I think it introduced me to a deeper understanding of the University and of the values…, an introduction to the Marianists and the University itself and how it works; that was very beneficial. The relationships that developed during that experience have served our students well.

Cynthia described two important relationships that she developed with fellow LUD cohort members that have “benefited our students and their families,” one with a staff member working in the business affairs area and another with a department chair who later became a dean.

I can call [business affairs colleague’s name] and we can resolve an issue that could be pretty painful for the student if it were drawn out for awhile and with [colleague, now a Dean] there have been a few scholarship issues with international students that could not have been resolved right away if we would of had to go through some other [formal] channels. If we didn’t know each other and hadn’t gone through the LUD experience, I don’t know if it would have been resolved so quickly… to benefit the student.
Cynthia described the influences of the Marianist Education Associates program in also “deepening” her understanding of the Marianists and the institutional mission:

I’ve learned that’s part of what this place is about and what the Marianists are about is saying “yes” to opportunities… this whole idea of the Marianists looking to Mary who said yes, listening to God telling her this plan he had for her and she really didn’t quite know what that was going to be, but she said yes. So that whole idea of saying yes instead of throwing up obstacles and giving every reason why this can’t happen.

Cynthia thought that, even though she was not Catholic, this lesson was consistent with her own value system and that helped her to be “full of faith” and “more open to possibilities” in her work. Together these influences helped her be more holistic and mission-focused in various partnerships around campus.

**Mike Ober**

Mike worked as an academic administrator subsequent to 17 years as a faculty member and department chair. In our conversation, Dr. Ober asserted that “50% of his job as department chair involved collaboration” and in his new role at the divisional level, that has only increased. From the beginning of our conversation, it was clear that collaboration was important to Mike. We talked about the origins of his orientation to collaboration, which he attributed to his academic discipline and experiences early on in his career. “The work that you do for the first portion of your adult life, which in my case was graduate school and research, it’s not too surprising that that becomes an extension of what you do as a faculty member.” He further explored his early experience in graduate school and particularly with his dissertation director and concluded: “… that’s
where my openness to collaboration came from. In fact, I would actually attribute that to the patterns I saw in my own Ph.D. supervisor.” In addition he thought his academic disciple was influential as well. “My discipline is one that has a tendency to be somewhat multidisciplinary and if you’re truly multidisciplinary in your research focus, you’re going to be more collaborative from the standpoint of the human interaction.”

In describing his decision to come to UD, Mike saw the institution as a good fit based on his perception that “UD by definition is such a collaborative organization. I think collaboratively-minded people are attracted to it.” Specifically he offered, “I came to a place like UD because it was a comprehensive institution, because I could work with engineers and people in the school of education. So for me it was… a deliberate choice.”

As a new faculty member coming into a small department, Mike quickly learned: “It’s collaborate or die.” He described collaboration as an expectation from an individual and departmental survival standpoint. “For a very small department it would determine whether or not … the department was going to continue to flourish.” Mike offered that collaborative work ensured financial solvency through linkages with other areas: “That department has all these other things going, we can’t take resources away from them. In fact we need to give them more resources because they’re actually working collaboratively.”

Based on the need for collaboration as a means of survival, there were explicit expectations of Mike in order to attain tenure. “There was every incentive based on tenure and promotion, those kinds of pressures [from fellow faculty]… You need to be collaborative.” Fortunately, he was quickly involved in a variety of partnerships around
campus and thrived at UD. As he rose from faculty to department chair to associate dean at the college level, he maintained this same orientation to collaborative work.

Mike described collaboration as an “organic” process of individuals working toward “a mutually identified goal in common” that starts with “interpersonal communication”-- individuals willing to “listen carefully to the perspectives of other people.” At times collaboration involves problem solving, but “collaboration is not just about solving problems, it is about looking at issues in ways that would not occur to us.”

When prompted to discuss the reasons for, and appropriateness of collaboration, Mike suggested that

If it is scientific, we want to do something that we haven’t been able to do without that collaborative effort or if it’s my example of [working with staff office] and the academic side, it’s because we want to provide a service and a value to students that we are not doing now to enrich the student experience.

Mike attributed this idea of improving the student experience as a common element for “most folks who are collaboratively oriented.” He went on to suggest three levels of collaboration. First, “to get together, start talking and see what develops”; second, “groups gather with a common interest or question”; and third, “groups gather to solve a particular problem that is too big or complicated to solve alone.” In exploring these levels, Mike cautioned that in his experience groups (faculty and student affairs in this example) may assume that collaborating to solve a problem does not necessitate an exploration or acknowledgement of a mutual goal. “It’s quite easy since all you’re trying to do is solve that problem to never actually come together and say, ‘do we have the same
Thus, groups may dive in and find that their approaches or strategies are very different: “The mutual goal is to solve the problem, but you may end up having two different strategies just to solve the problem.” This presented significant problem as the deadline for a project approached. “The way that you talked about it… for months and months becomes different than the way you actualize it when you have three weeks to do it.”

In addition to the example above, Mike described various barriers to collaboration in our conversation. In his collaborative work of attempting to improve the experience for students, Mike cited differing reward structures among faculty and staff as a major obstacle. “I try to work collaboratively with folks from [staff area] and yet the reward structure that they have is so different than the reward structure that a faculty member has… They’re being sent different messages.” From his experience, Mike noted, “If we don’t have the same reward structure or if not the same reward structure, a parallel reward structure between collaborative partners… that’s a tough thing to sell.” A correlate of this concern was a concern over the shortage of time “I find frequently it has to do with just as busy people are now days, it has to do with the actual honest to goodness schedule.”

In reflecting on lessons learned from work in collaboration, Mike discussed the challenge of faculty navigating broadening expectations on faculty workload. He noted that faculty members spend a great deal of effort demonstrating individual performance and yet collaboration requires much work in relationships:
As academics we have a perspective that much of what we do, we can do with our own brain power and to be truly involved in collaborative work, you are ceding a certain amount of expectation and even control to others, so you become highly dependent on the contribution of your partners. That has a tendency, even today, to be a new approach because… the academic model is wired in such a way as your personal accomplishments are achievable through your own individual efforts and I think one of the one of the hardest lessons is that you have to really be patient to let those partners that are part of collaboration come to know… and trust you.

Trust was an issue that Mike came back to at several points in the interview and finally concluded that even if a solid process is in place, “if there’s no personal trust, then it doesn’t matter about the process.” Mike cited a recent example of work among faculty and staff and commented that “personal trust” enabled them to move through a rather thorny situation involving a senior leader in [name withheld] and differing professional cultures, expectations, and reward structures. While he would not talk on tape about the specifics of his struggles with the senior leadership in [name withheld], he reinforced that the trust he had established with others in the [staff area] allowed the project to move forward successfully. In summarizing this situation, Mike suggested, “If you really want to work collaboratively, particularly in a high-risk environment, you have to start with trusting because there’s always a lot that’s not specified.”

While Mike attributed collaboration at UD more to the scale issues and less to Marianist influences, he did mention “the Marianist Charism encourages openness to new
ideas.” Mike offered that this openness leads to more people coming to you to collaborate, thus creating a “critical mass” of like-minded professionals or group of "usual suspects”; by this he meant those who gravitate toward collaboration.

In describing his experience with the Leadership UD program, Mike suggested “it was literally flipping a switch” in helping him understand the institution and putting him “in direct relationship with those who value similar things” thus building a coalition of like-minded individuals. He also mentioned Leadership UD as a “self-replenishing dynamo” that helps in building "bench strength" on the campus. He felt as though this process helps to keep regenerating campus leadership oriented to collaboration.

**Nancy Johnson**

Nancy has worked at UD as a faculty member for six years following the completion of her PhD in 2002. As an untenured faculty member, she has received a great deal of support from her departmental colleagues in building collaborative relationships across campus. “When I first started here, people who worked in my department especially encouraged me.” She attributed this encouragement to the development of a five-year collaborative project with a faculty member in the [name withheld]. She saw this collaboration as a way to understand various aspects of students’ lives and enrich students experiences and she is often thinking about “how can we enrich their [students] experiences, not just as [department name withheld] majors, but there are other things going on in their lives.” In Nancy’s experience, collaboration with other faculty provides her an opportunity to be “multi-dimensional.”

Aside from encouragement from her department, Nancy also attributes her interest in working collaboratively to being “a generally curious person.” She described
liking to “learn new things” and “meeting people outside her department.” She also worried about getting “pigeon-holed” into one subject. Based on our discussion, it was apparent that she liked gaining “different perspectives” from others around campus. She shared with me that in higher education, the disciplines are very focused on certain perspectives. “This is the way things ought to be.” Frequently, faculty have “blinders on” to other ways of looking at issues. For her, this was a frame of mind to avoid.

In defining collaborative work, Nancy suggested that “in getting a group together to solve an issue” it involves “bringing various perspectives to bear” on a given subject. For her, collaboration involved a learning process. “Something that I might not have thought about really gets illuminated and you learn new ways of doing or new ways of knowing.” For example she described a committee that she has worked on for some time: “We’ve been talking a lot about that in the Common Academic Program Committee, that there really are different ways of knowing that the different disciplines bring to bear on a particular problem.” Later in the interview, she came back to this issue by saying that “multiple perspectives are needed to accomplish collaborative work” and that “when it gets down to the nitty-gritty it’s really all about negotiating and sometimes giving up a little bit of what you’re really holding on to because for the good of the cause.”

Nancy stayed with the issue of negotiating multiple perspectives as she explored the challenges and barriers involved in collaborative work. In describing her experiences, she returned to the concept of collaborating involving negotiating multiple perspectives and shared that this dynamic made collaboration “hard work.” She thought that the higher education setting made this more of an issue. “Maybe more so in an academic
environment where people [faculty] are so certain… here are my credentials and here is who I am and my discipline.” As a result of this “certainty” mindset, she thought faculty members have a hard time acknowledging that “maybe I don’t have the right answer or maybe the perspective that I’m hearing is worthwhile.”

The Marianist influences on her sense of collaboration were expressed in a variety of ways. She valued an inclusive approach to decision-making and suggested that “both faculty and staff have contributions to make to issues that involve students” and that “people bring different strengths to the table and you have to figure out a way to… build on those strengths” She also referred to a sense of being open to possibilities and the ideas of others. “It is about dealing with contradiction and being able to hold that in your head and say… you haven’t convinced me that we should go down this road, but I’m still going to give you some room to try to convince me.”

Nancy described her professional development surrounding collaboration as an “evolutionary process.” She has learned that to collaborate effectively one needs to be both “self reflective” and to be able to “go beyond yourself.” She has found that “if you’re very self involved, it’s really hard to be in a collaborative or partnership with other folks.” She has sought out various faculty development experiences such as seminars, reading groups, Leadership UD, and other programs offered by the learning and teaching center.

Building relationships was an important outcome of her time with Leadership UD, “Leadership UD was a great experience… because there were people there that I would never have made connections with.” For Nancy, the small size (compared to her
experience at a large public institution) of UD and networking opportunities afforded by the learning and teaching center, Leadership UD in particular, have helped her in building relationships across campus.

**Chris Hamm**

Chris Hamm is a full professor working in a small department within the [name withheld]. Chris described rewarding collaborative work with his doctoral students and placed a great deal of emphasis on creating a collaborative environment within that group. Chris’s formation process of a faculty member grew largely out of his doctoral education experience. He described this importance resulting from his own experience in graduate school where his advisor invited him to discuss ideas as an “equal partner” through informal discussion sessions. “Thinking back to my experiences with my advisor, I feel like he… brought me into his academic family and I want to establish that same feeling for my students.”

Following graduate school, as a junior faculty member at UD he described a reluctance to partner with members of his department, particularly the senior faculty, for fear that this would reveal vulnerabilities that would work against him in the tenure process.

I think in a way tenure… may have been an obstacle between myself and possibly the people I could have leaned on… I never did that myself out of pure fear. I wanted a job. I didn’t want anybody to say, ‘He doesn’t know any more than his graduate students.’

Although Chris is aware of this cultural dynamic and is open to change, “I would be very happy for one of my junior colleagues to come to me and say, ‘Hey I need help… and I
think you could help me,"" the dynamic has not changed in his department. At one point, a mentor program was initiated; however Chris found that “assigned mentor relationships almost always failed when senior faculty are assigned to be mentors to people in my department.”

As a result of “trouble collaborating with some of my senior colleagues over the years “ and the dynamic described above, Chris has developed collaborative relationships primarily with doctoral students, research partners at a nearby air force base, and at the broader university level. Despite his desire to collaborate, he has been unable to develop partnerships with other members of his department (for political reasons) and with [name withheld] for (financial/ funding reasons).

In defining collaboration, Chris offered that collaboration is a "meeting of the minds" and that "each person brings something to the table" and that "in spite of all of our degrees, we don't necessarily have all the answers." Chris cited Fr. Chaminade's philosophy of "leadership of the head, heart and hand" as a community process of bringing people together with each making important contributions to those three ways.

Chris described lessons learned from collaboration as understanding that "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" or "synergy." He has grown more comfortable with the fact that he "doesn't have all the answers" and "needs to remain open to possibilities" and "seek other perspectives" as "no one person can do it all" Chris mentioned that collaboration is best done "in community of others" a concept he derived from the Marianist philosophy of education.
Chris discussed a number of barriers to collaboration in the interview and in summarizing these experiences suggested that faculty attitudes, financial barriers and the tendency for his work to be "self-isolating" and "siloes" early on in his career served as the greatest obstacles to working collaboratively.

In thinking about his collaborative relationships with colleagues and doctoral students, Chris described the importance of trust and respect. He first offered that the importance of trust was apparent when you admit that "you do not have all the answers" and the most "difficult colleagues (faculty) to collaborate with are the ones who like to pretend they know all the answers." Chris believes that respect underlies trust. "If there is respect for the other person's input, then I think there's fertile ground for establishing a trust relationship and once trust is established, collaboration can happen." This dynamic involved a certain willingness to be vulnerable. Chris mentioned that this dynamic was difficult in the academic setting because of the nature of faculty challenging each other's work. "If you haven't yet, you will encounter some SOB at a conference who wants to make themselves look good by belittling your work." Chris thought these issues make it difficult to build collaborative relationships, while he might "respect someone professionally, as a colleague it may take a little while longer for me to reveal my insecurities and establish a trust relationship so we can collaborate."

Chris described LUD as a significant "turning point" in his professional career. He described the experience as being more than "just about leadership development." It gave him an "understanding of the students and their needs, why we're here, and what it means to be a Catholic and Marianist university." Chris mentioned that it has been awhile
since he was a student and that he "lost that piece" and that LUD helped him be in touch with "who the students are..." and "what is important to them." He believes that LUD has been “a quantum leap” forward in enhancing collaborative relationships. LUD helped him become reflective about his status at the university and realize that he had "become isolated professionally." LUD helped him build relationships that probably otherwise would not be established." Chris described these relationships as helping both personally, as well as professionally. In one example, he cited reaching out to a LUD colleague (a Business faculty member) for assistance in writing a business plan for a venture project he was developing. On a personal level, he also cited that a Leadership UD colleague had referred him to a good physical therapist. In addition to the relationship aspects, Chris also cited a greater understanding of "the structure of the university" and "who the players are." I used to be just a professor; now I see myself as more apart of... I see myself as a player in the UD culture." In LUD "we talked about the university as a system... It finally started clicking and I started understanding the university culture." Chris felt as though "Leadership UD has laid a foundation for me to establish and pursue meaningful collaborations for the future."

Chris described the timing and appropriateness of collaboration. He thought that collaboration was appropriate when "I do not have a clear idea of where to go next" or when "there's more than one person who has to buy in to the idea" or "when more than one person will be affected by the results." In reflecting on this issue, Chris referred back to Fr. Chaminade's idea of head, hands, and heart and the need for distributed leadership
in the collaborative process. After discussing this topic for a few minutes, Chris admitted
"I'm not sure if I can think of a recent project that I haven't worked on collaboratively."

**Cross Case Analysis**

The gracious staff and faculty who allowed me access to their experiences seemed
eager to share their stories and examples of their work. From the first interview, I sensed
a great deal of enthusiasm and pride from both the staff and faculty in describing their
experiences of collaboration. Even in examples that revealed frustration and difficulty, a
sense of greater purpose and optimism was evident. I examined and analyzed the ideas
shared by participants and developed themes that guide the presentation of this cross-case
analysis. The themes and concepts are presented to characterize the unique Catholic,
Marianist, mid-sized, institutional context. Because the experiences of staff and faculty
are quite unique in many ways, I chose to divide the cross case analysis into separate
sections based on the faculty and staff experience. Themes that emerged from their
experiences are explicated within each groups’ description.

**Faculty**

The three faculty members participating in this study presented a number of
common experiences. Shared experiences included their orientation to their discipline,
the influence of the department subculture and particularly senior faculty in their
department, formation experiences in graduate school, size of their department, reasons
for collaboration, developing trusting relationships, influence of the Marianist mission
and philosophy, and Leadership UD as a source of professional development.
Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Factors

In the process of engaging in collaborative work, various individual level factors were suggested by the faculty participants as critical to their work. The description of these factors were frequently presented as lessons learned and reflections on various experiences from their past. From these experiences, the faculty identified important intrapersonal and interpersonal features that facilitated collaboration. Faculty most often cited working with and respecting diverse perspectives, developing trust, and managing the ego components of their academic identities.

The three faculty members all cited to some degree the importance of seeking and/or valuing diverse perspectives. Chris described the value in terms of “triangulation” providing different points of view on a problem. Nancy saw value in diverse ideas as a way to avoid the narrow focus of the discipline. She commented on the importance of “being curious,” and meeting different people and looking “at diverse perspectives.” She also described this value as a means for more equal value of contributions from a range of stakeholders interested in issues that involve students. Mike mentioned the importance of being willing to “listen carefully to the perspectives of others.” Together the faculty appear to value the contribution made by bringing diverse perspectives to the collaborative process.

Trust was another theme raised by the faculty participants. The faculty suggested that in order for collaborative work to be successful, group trust is a necessary component. Mike saw this factor as a real challenge for faculty whose focus tends to be on “individual efforts” and collaborative work involves group effort that hinges upon developing trust among partners. Chris also raised this issue and asserted the point that
respect should underlie trust. However, he described trust building as a process somewhat independent from respect. While respect among colleagues may be intact, it takes longer for a trusting relationship to develop.

The faculty participants also described ego components of collaborative work. With the faculty, there existed an element of ego that pervades other work particularly collaborative work. The ego dimension is likely a result of faculty building disciplinary-based expertise in various subjects and expectations to demonstrate subject expertise. This dynamic may lead faculty toward an ego strength that influences other areas and other forms of work. Nancy offered, “In an academic environment where people are so certain … here are my credentials and … my discipline … to let go of some of that kind of stuff and maybe saying … I don’t have the right answer or maybe the perspective that I’m hearing is worthwhile,” can be difficult. She went on to add, “It is really all about negotiating and sometimes giving up a little bit of what you’re really holding on to for the good of the cause.” As a result of her awareness of this dynamic, she offered “I try to be a person who doesn’t really separate people out as this is somebody in this discipline, so that carries greater weight than somebody over here,… both faculty and staff have contributions to make to issues that involve students and issues… around the campus.”

**Organizational Culture**

*Defining Collaboration, Its Appropriateness, and Purpose.* The faculty defined collaboration in terms of ability to broaden the scope of understanding though an attitudinal openness to ideas. They were focused on being open to the perspectives one brings to collaboration, as well as the process of collaboration itself. For example, Mike described collaboration in terms of a perspective or attitude “It means that you’re
someone who’s willing to listen carefully to the perspectives of other people sometimes with… a mutually identified goal in common, so it isn’t collaboration necessarily to solve a problem, sometimes… it is to see… how can we look at a problem in a way that wouldn’t even occur to us from a non-collaborative approach” Similarly, Nancy thought that collaboration involved an attitude of openness and flexibility, but added that it also involves “giving up what really you are holding onto.” The collaboration process was also described as “organic” by Mike and this point of view was true for all three faculty participants. While they acknowledged problem solving motivations, they all shared examples of the importance of entering collaborative experiences with an open mind and potentially redefining the nature of the problem.

Collaboration in a scholarly context was different than in other contexts. Chris provided an example of defining collaboration in terms of academic work,

In the context of the relationships that I’ve been describing to you, I would describe collaboration as a meeting of the minds; to understand that one person can’t do it all, that truth is sometimes bigger than any individual can understand and each person brings something to the table and we can accept the fact that despite our high degrees, we don’t necessarily have all the answers. If we can admit our weaknesses and strengths mutually to one another… we can iterate and eventually find part of what is the truth.

Chris thought collaboration was important when there is a “broad constituent base” or when many are affected or “impacted by the results of the decision.” Mike offered a collection of purposes for collaboration. He described three ways for
collaboration to be initiated from his experience. “Let’s have lunch and see what comes out of it. I see examples of that in my new job all the time, ‘so why don’t you and you get together and… see what happens… that’s powerful.’” A second approach, “…somebody who says, ‘I’m really interested in understanding this or doing that. How can we work together to achieve that?’” and third, he described a problem-driven approach,

The third way if there’s an identified problem that a collaborative effort may solve or a task that’s too big to do without a collaborative effort. It’s not that those are remedial. It’s just that those are different goals. Alright, the last one is an administrative piece… If you have a collaborative project that is born from the need to solve a problem; it’s quite easy since all you’re trying to do is solve that problem to never actually come together and say, “Do we have the same mutual goal?” The mutual goal is to solve the problem, but you may end up having two different strategies just to solve the problem.

All three faculty participants described a common purpose of enhancing or enriching the student experience. Nancy had a good feeling about her departmental colleagues; she had a strong desire to work with others in order to enrich the overall student experience. Mike noted that while faculty and staff may have differences, those who enter into collaborations are focused on “providing the best experience for the students.” Chris experienced a sense of “family” with his adviser and wished to “establish that same feeling for his students.”

Formation Experiences. The faculty in this study described their experiences in graduate school and particularly the relationship with their PhD advisers as central to
their professional formation process surrounding collaboration. As Chris reflected on his relationship with his PhD adviser, he described a convivial indoctrination experience, passed from professor to graduate student, “He kind of brought me into his academic family and I want to establish that same feeling for my students.” Mike also described a similar experience in attributing his value on collaboration to his dissertation director, “That’s where my openness to collaboration came from; in fact I would actually attribute that to the patterns I saw in my own Ph.D. supervisor.” These close relationships with their advisers shaped their perception of faculty work and the roles of faculty. Chris recalled regular “advising sessions” with his advisor. In these sessions Chris was struck with how his adviser let down his guard and readily admitted that he did not have all the answers. Together, they would work out problems and over time built a relationship grounded in respect and trust.

**Disciplinary Influence.** All three faculty members described an orientation to their discipline as a source of important influence in their present work. The academic discipline appeared to be an important professional orientation feature, in some cases in support of, and in others negatively affecting collaboration. Mike described his discipline as a “multidiscipline” and thus he believed his academic training oriented him to multiple perspectives from the beginning. He believed an orientation to multiple perspectives helped him be more open to collaboration. In his job search, he sought out mid-sized, comprehensive institutions where he could continue this type of work. However, Nancy and Chris viewed their academic disciplines as limiting and as a source of isolation. Nancy described the disciplinary focus as one that created “narrow perspectives.”
“pigeon-holing,” and that faculty often had “blinders on.” As she began her academic career, she feared becoming isolated and sought ways to be “multidimensional” through Leadership UD and other programs offered by the Learning and Teaching Center. Chris also shared this concern and described a work context-imposed “silo” that he had created as a result of focusing solely on his research and teaching highly-specialized courses.

**Impact of Faculty Attitudes: Certainty, Credentials, and Expertise.** As a correlate to the disciplinary focus, the faculty made reference to the nature of faculty work involving credentials, certainty, and expertise as potential influences of collaboration. For example, Chris described how he was able to build trusting relationships with his doctoral students, but not his senior faculty colleagues. With the students, he felt as though he could build trust through demonstrating respect and vulnerability. Vulnerability involved him admitting that he did not have all the answers, which was more likely to happen with his doctoral students than with senior faculty in his department. He attributed this to the tenure system, “Tenure for me may have been an obstacle between myself and the people I could have leaned on.” With the senior faculty, he feared showing any vulnerabilities as he perceived “there is a real tangible hurdle between being hired and getting tenure,” and “I never did that myself out of pure fear; I wanted a job and I didn’t want anybody to say ‘He doesn’t know any more than his graduate students’.” It has become somewhat easier for Chris to be vulnerable now that he is post-tenure and he seemed to be very comfortable exposing what he does not know, at least to students, “I think it is reassuring to them that I don’t have a certain expertise
[about everything]. They realize… he’s just not hiding the answer from us, he really just doesn’t know.”

Nancy also experienced a similar concern and expressed the difficulty for faculty to be vulnerable and work outside of their disciplinary expertise. “Collaborative work is hard because … in an academic environment where people are so certain … here are my credentials and … my discipline … to let go of some of that kind of stuff and maybe saying … I don’t have the right answer or maybe the perspective that I’m hearing is worthwhile” can be difficult. As a result of her awareness of this dynamic, she offered “I try to be a person who doesn’t really separate people out as this is somebody in this discipline, so that carries greater weight than somebody over here… Both faculty and staff have contributions to make to issues that involve students and issues… around the campus.”

**Marianist Mission and Philosophy.** The Marianist mission and philosophy were frequently cited by the faculty participants. In some cases, statements were directly attributed to the Marianist influence, while others were mentioned without being attributed specifically to the Marianist philosophy. Most commonly, the faculty referenced a sense of community or family spirit. Chris cited this example and linked the tenet with his experience with his faculty adviser helping him to feel like a guide in the academic family and his desire to share this experience with his advisees. Within the concept of the family spirit, participants discussed the importance of trust. While this was critical, it is not always easy for faculty. “As academics we have a perspective that much of what we do we can do sort of with our own brain power and to be truly involved in
collaborative work you are ceding a certain amount of expectation and even control to others so you become highly dependent on the contribution of your partners.” Mike went further to describe the challenges of this process, “That has a tendency even today … to be kind of a new approach because I think there’s a there’s kind of a the academic model is wired in such a way as your personal accomplishments are achievable through your own individual efforts and I think one of the one of the hardest lessons is that you have to… let those partners … come to know you [and] come to trust you.”

The faculty also cited the Marianist Charism in encouraging “openness.” Mike thought that “it’s not just that the Marianist Charism permits everyone to be friendly, happy, and cooperative, but… the Marianist Charism encourage[s] an openness to new ideas.” He thought this was important as “one of the keys to collaboration is being receptive to new ideas and I don’t think we spend a lot of time saying, ‘absolutely not, we’ve never gone that direction, so don’t even think about it.’” This idea was shared by Nancy who valued providing her colleagues with a “chance to convince” her and that multiple perspectives are necessary to accomplish collaborative work.

**Structural Issues**

**Department Factors.** Department size was referenced by all three faculty participants. Two of the three came from modest sized departments within professional schools and the third came from a small department within the College of Arts and Sciences. Department size served as a source of motivation for Mike as he described “peer pressure” from his colleagues to collaborate as a result of a perceived concern among faculty in the department to “collaborate or die” as a means for their area to remain viable in the university political arena. Mike described that having “your fingers
in many pies” created a sense of security and that campus leaders would think, “That department has all these other things going. We can’t take resources away from them. In fact we need to give them more resources because they’re actually working collaboratively in the way that we want them to.” Departmental influence was also an issue raised by Nancy as she was encouraged to collaborate from early on in her career, and her colleagues served as a key referral source for a collaborative service-learning project she developed with another junior faculty member in the School of Engineering.

For Chris, the department did not serve as source of potential for collaboration due to the highly specialized nature of their work. “There’s just not common ground, it’s not that there’s bad interaction, it’s just that there’s not enough common ground for us to collaborate”. Chris revisited this issue and acknowledged that “most of my collaboration with faculty comes through committee work.” From his experience faculty tend to be “on their best behavior” on school-level and interdepartmental committees and more difficult to work with on intradepartmental committees, an issue he attributes to the idea that “familiarity builds contempt” and that many faculty view intradepartmental service work as beneath them. To illustrate his point, Chris cited the comments of a faculty colleague, “I didn’t spend ten years getting a Ph.D. to serve on this committee to figure out this recruitment issue, it’s not my problem.” As a result, Chris found much greater potential for collaboration with University-wide committees.

**Institutional Scale.** The scale of the overall institution was described by the participants as well. While all three mentioned the issue, Mike in particular spent a great deal of time discussing how the “mid-sized” scale of UD was an important factor in his
decision to come to the institution as well as a source of influence for his and others’ collaborative work. Mike suggested that “the culture of a middle sized institution is a source of tension and structural problems;” yet, “It’s that same middle size that I think makes collaboration possible.” This perspective seemed to be informed by Mike’s experience at many levels (faculty, department chair, and decanal administrator).

In reflecting further on the issue of institutional size, Mike referenced conversations with colleagues across the country. “I can’t tell you how many national conferences… on higher education… there’s a group of 15 of us that get together and they all tell me the same thing, that UD is doing more astoundingly collaborative things than institutions that are much larger and institutions that are much smaller.” In expanding more on this issue, Mike thought the small institutions had a “predominance of more traditionally defined roles” and fewer resources to facilitate opportunities: “From a resource perspective, there frequently are far fewer resources at a smaller institution… They don’t have the base budget…” From Mike’s experience, “collaboration usually requires new resources… I think UD’s actually pretty good at having those new resources available.” At large institutions by comparison, the focus is more on the department level and collaboration is “not part of the culture.” Nancy thought that the scale of the institution created opportunity. “Size here is one thing that I think that helps with collaboration and what people do, I think you have more of an opportunity to form relationships.” She contrasted the issue of “scale of opportunity” at UD with her experiences prior to becoming a faculty member at a large public institution.
While Mike viewed the mid-size as a real advantage for collaboration to flourish, he also expressed concern about “reward structures” and said, “The multiple expectations of a middle sized university are kind of daunting and actually are a structural detriment sometimes.” In Mike’s estimation, faculty at UD are expected to do it all,

I think it has to do with having an institution that… says do everything and then on top of that collaborate. We tell faculty, not infrequently, for their own good, they should do everything because we can’t confidently predict what will count [for tenure and promotion] and what won’t. So if they say, ‘Well should I work collaboratively?’ We say, “Yes,” “Should I do my individual research?” Absolutely! “Should I be God’s gift to teaching?” “Of course.” “Should I be involved in service functions professionally, administratively, in my department, in my discipline, across campus, and on the University level?” “Yep.” Together these make the potential for successful collaboration very challenging.

Tenure. Another theme of the quote cited above is the issue of tenure and how the tenure process may impact collaboration. Based on Mike’s statement, it appears that there is a perception of ambiguity in the tenure process. Chris also referenced this issue and cautioned that “this [UD] is a publish or perish institution” and that “there is a very real obstacle between being hired and being tenured.” Thus, untenured faculty may be instructed to “do it all” in order to attain tenure. Mike saw this “temporal” piece as a real challenge to overcome, “I find frequently it has to do with just how busy people are…” Later in the interview Mike came back to this issue and suggested that he is cautious about “pushing new faculty into collaboration” for this same reason. Thus, the very real
expectations of faculty to produce scholarship, teaching, and service may not align closely with institutional values surrounding collaboration, creating an atmosphere of increasing work demands without a rebalancing of time allotments or expectations. As Mike remarked, “We don’t take anything off the table; we don’t take anything off the plate; the expectation is you’ll just do it all.” He thought that this presents a “real challenge” as he believed it is important to be “an institution that values… time for collaboration.”

**Leadership UD.** Participating in the Leadership UD program served as an important experience for each of the three participants. The three faculty members described their experiences in Leadership UD and suggested a variety of outcomes that resulted from their participation in this program. They most frequently cited learning more about the institutional (mission, philosophy, and structure) as well as building networks or relationship with other “like-minded” staff and faculty around the campus.

As Mike pointed out, “the academic path doesn’t necessarily lend itself to a broad, holistic understanding of how UD as an institution works.” In fact as Chris observed, faculty life tends to be an isolating experience where he had a “general” knowledge of “what the university was doing” and Leadership UD provided “specifics” which reinforced that “the institution is really doing those things it claims to do.” Mike also described learning more about the function of the institution. “It gave me the knowledge base to actually understand how the institution works.” This was an important component to Mike. “It doesn’t matter how… collaboratively oriented you are, if you
don’t understand how the place works.” And thus, Leadership UD provided participants with a better understanding of the culture and structure of the institution.

In addition to increasing their knowledge base, the faculty cited networking as another critical component. As Chris noted, “There’s some obvious things that Leadership UD does, but one of the not so obvious things is that it… helps build relationships that probably otherwise would not be established or even thought to establish.” Nancy shared a similar sentiment, “There were people there that I would never have made connections with.” Mike found not only general connections, but connections to staff and faculty with similar openness to partnerships. “It absolutely provided me with the direct connections to people that turned out to be a lot of the collaboratively minded people on campus.”

Together the network and knowledge features of Leadership UD helped participants achieve transformational changes. As Chris described, Leadership UD “… was the turning point in my career.” This was quite a powerful statement considering he had worked at the institution for 15 years, attained tenure, and achieved full promotion. Not surprisingly, Chris, an engineer and scientist, used a scientific term in describing his transformation as a “quantum leap.” Where he once saw himself as “just a professor,” he now views himself “as a player in the University of Dayton culture.” While the term “player” has many connotations, Chris was using the term in this case to mean that he had become a knowledgeable and active participant in university-wide activities. The other two faculty members, especially Mike, had similar experiences in Leadership UD. Mike, who was promoted from department chair to [senior level administrator] following
his Leadership UD experience, described Leadership UD as “literally flipping a switch” as he went from “knowing nothing” to not only being knowledgeable, but also being “in direct connection” with others who “valued some of the same things.” Mike suggested that this combination of experiences creates a “critical mass” and process to expand collaborative possibilities,

The process that we tend to utilize, it’s not that Leadership UD is management training, but the process that we tend to utilize identifies the folks who are seeing the picture that’s broader than just their little corner of the world and so there’s a critical mass that comes together when you have all those folks who see the broader picture or have interests in the broader picture and… ultimately those become probably the people that, if opportunity presents, are going to avail themselves of the chance to be working in the broader picture.

**Staff**

The staff participants shared interesting common experiences similar to the faculty in some cases and quite distinct in others. For the staff, pervasive cultural influences included the Marianist philosophy and parallels in their understanding of the collaboration. Beyond those two primary cultural influences, the staff also described common structural influences including their Leadership UD experience and the influence of their departmental composition. The staff members also described intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that were important to collaborative work from their collective experiences.
Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Factors

In the process of engaging in collaborative work, various individual level characteristics were suggested by the staff participants as critical to their work. The description of these factors was frequently presented as lesson learned and reflections on various experiences from their past. From these experiences, the staff identified important intrapersonal and interpersonal features that facilitated collaboration. Staff most often cited staying open to possibilities, working with and respecting diverse perspectives, developing trust, and self-reflection.

In describing their experiences, all three staff participants made reference to being “open to possibilities.” Cynthia referred to this value and described a process of coming to know and understand the value of openness to possibilities through interaction with various Marianist brothers. She described developing the confidence and trust of a brother who was working in her department. Based on that trusting relationship, she was open to his invitation to get involved with the Marianist Educational Associates some years later. From this experience, she was able to specifically identify the institutional value around “openness” and attributed its centrality to the Marianist Charism. While she is not a Catholic, she found that this and other Marianist values to be personally and professionally affirming. Tyler also valued the idea of being open to the process and to others. He described the importance of “being open” and valuing others’ contributions. He described these values as central to the relationship building that is vital important at UD. Paul experienced this sense of openness with his supervisor. In their professional relationship, Paul feels as though his perspective is welcomed, “My boss gives me the opportunity to express myself very directly.” He went on to say that the collaboration
process involves appreciation for openness and that much of this process hinges on listening to one another.

The three staff members all cited to some degree the importance of seeking and/or valuing diverse perspectives. Tyler made reference to this value at several points in the interview. He suggested that the “work is better and stronger when you have more minds and more perspectives coming together.” In Tyler’s experience, a “coming together” of these diverse ways (skills, contributions, and work ethic) of working were defining features of collaborative work. Respect was a theme described in detail by Paul, who in describing his collaborative work offered that everyone is respected regardless of titles. A sense of inclusiveness is pervasive from his experience, “Everyone has something to offer.” Diverse perspectives provide an important basis for much of the work for these staff members.

Trust was another theme raised by the staff participants. Tyler described the importance of surrounding oneself with colleagues that can help keep him “on track.” These colleagues allow him to be candid and they in turn provide honest feedback to him. Paul described trust as a desired outcome of continued partnerships. He discussed the satisfaction of coming back to trusting relationships with various partners from across the campus. Once these trust relationships are established, the staff members find the potential for ongoing success to be highly likely and sources for continued professional growth.

Another common component of the individual level experience involved the staffs’ inclination toward self-reflection. Paul suggested that the experiences at UD and
particularly his time with Leadership UD helped him to see “certain things about myself that perhaps contradict the culture and being willing to self examine… do some reflection personally on ‘how do I treat other people or why do I react at certain times… the way that I do.’” Tyler explored the idea of self awareness and reflection as well. “There’s always a constant reminder or at least a cue for me to step back and to reflect on my work and why I’m doing what I’m doing.” In describing his experience Tyler attributed this “cue” to self reflect and move from orientation to the self, to orientation to the “other” from,

the Catholic Marianist philosophy of community living and… the ways in which we’re expected to understand it for ourselves, to apply it to our work. Much of it is about being focused on how my decisions or my work as an individual affects those around me. … Always being cognizant of the common good is what keeps my work centered and focused in ways that not having that value again allows for your ego to creep in there and to take over.

While I have presented these individual level themes as distinct components, they are in practice, parts of a whole. As multifaceted people working in a dynamic workplace, these wholes are certainly greater than the sum of their individual parts. Together, these components make up commonly held individual level values and attitudes which appear to reflect the institutional culture described in the next section.

Cultural Features

Defining Collaboration, Its Appropriateness and Purpose. The staff participants viewed collaboration as a process of “coming together.” Cynthia described this process as a “community building” process. However, as Cynthia pointed out, this is not implying
“homogeneity” of perspective. Rather, all three mentioned that this was an inclusive process where multiple and diverse perspectives were sought and valued. These perspectives involved varying skill sets, experiences and points of view that may or may not qualify as expert points of view, yet they were all valued in the process. Tyler shared these sentiments and viewed collaboration “an equal partnership where we could be coming from different perspectives, but what we bring to the table is a skill set, a work ethic, an ability to contribute significantly to the project.”

Participants also described that this process had a unifying and common theme of working together for a common purpose. Paul described this common purpose as “what is best for the university as a whole.” Cynthia and Tyler believed that the results of this process work to benefit students and ultimately make the community stronger. Cynthia thought that multiple partners being “at the table together” and “part of the big conversation in collaboration” allowed for greater attention to student needs in ways that “doesn’t happen at every school.” Tyler viewed this common purpose as broadening his “audience” and ability to reach students in areas where he might not otherwise have access.

Each of the participants described the conditions when collaboration is most appropriate. Staff members thought that the target audience and scope of project determine the need for collaboration. All three described a need for greater collaboration with project complexity and size of audience. However, each of the staff members was from different divisions of the university with very different focus of their work. Two of the three had more of a direct student service role and the third had more of a general
business affairs focus. However even Paul, the business affairs participant, cited that collaboration served as a significant benefit for students.

Paul and Cynthia pointed out that in the practice of collaboration, the Marianist values surrounding inclusiveness and consensus can result in lengthy and drawn out processes. Paul described that frequently “everyone [is] looking for total agreement” which can significantly impede the process of collaboration. Cynthia shared this concern and warned against confusing consensus and collaboration as synonymous terms. She believed that at UD there is “so much drive for consensus” that collaborative processes may become bogged down.

_Marianist Mission and Philosophy_. The strongest theme that emerged in the data related to the influence of the Marianist mission and philosophy. Throughout all three interviews participants shared multiple, indirect as well as direct, examples of how the Marianist Charism influenced their work. All three had worked at other institutions of higher education and contrasted their experience at UD with these other experiences. For example, Tyler had worked at two other institutions where he worked “as an individual” and there was not a structure for collaboration to happen “organically.” Any work in partnership was done as an individual effort outside of, or in spite of institutional or departmental influence. This has been a stark contrast to his experience at UD where collaboration is “expected.” Paul worked at multiple institutions (public and private) before coming to UD and noted that “it was clear to me that it was a different place to work.” The Marianist influence shown through many of the stories and examples they shared.
Participants cited a number of experiences from early on in their career at UD. Perhaps the most profound were the two staff members who had the opportunity to directly work with and observe vowed Marianist brothers. Cynthia cited observing and working with the former president Br. Ray Fitz and former provost Fr. Jim Heft “who valued collaboration” and modeled collaboration for her. Paul discussed his work with Br. Bernie Ploeger as “one of the most profound examples of collaboration” and important early experience in his career at UD. These early experiences provided the staff with a sense of the values of the institution, why collaboration was important, and equally important, these early experiences demonstrated for the staff the behaviors associated with these values.

The third staff member did not have the opportunity for as much direct observation and interaction with vowed Marianists. However, he was introduced to the philosophy early in his career through training he received in his department. At the time of his arrival to UD, the Catholic and Marianist Philosophy of Community Living document had been developed and adopted by his department. This statement was jointly developed by Campus Ministry and Student Development in order to help articulate the Marianist Charism/ philosophy specifically for student and campus life situations. Tyler was introduced to this document early on in his career at UD. From this point, he was expected to understand the document and train staff and students on broaching the themes with other staff and undergraduate students. In addition, the document became the basis for the department’s student judicial system and thus Tyler was using the document in disciplinary hearings with students as a tool for conversation about community standards.
and individual conduct associated with these standards. As a result of these expectations and his work with the implementing the document, Tyler received a thorough orientation to the Marianist values.

Themes cited as Marianist influences most frequently by the staff participants included: equality and inclusiveness; faith, trust and openness; and the development of relationships. Each component of the philosophy affected members more so than other parts, but together these influences served as transformation forces that shaped their understanding of their work, professional practice, and professional development.

Equality was a pervasive theme, described by all three staff participants. In Tyler’s definition of collaboration, he described a sense that collaboration is “valuing equal partnerships.” He noted that the outcomes of his work are stronger because of the value placed on these diverse perspectives. This idea was expanded upon by Paul, who cited several examples in our interview of how the Marianists operate from equality and social justice perspectives. In particular, the experience early on in his career of being asked to renegotiate a contract in order to create a more equitable arrangement for the workers served as an import lesson on the Marianist value of equality. According to Paul, the Marianist value on equality has created a culture where staff members at different levels are invited to “provide insight” and participate in the decision-making process. Even in more ordinary aspects of his work, Paul saw the Marianist influence of equality. As an illustration to this point he described the campus copier program which charges everyone the same cost per page instead of offering reductions to high volume areas.
Cynthia described the way in which community members valued bringing diverse perspectives and differing gifts “to the table” as another example of the value of equality.

Participants also described a sense of trust, faith, and openness. For some like Cynthia, she learned that the value of openness that members of the community experience on campus is a result of the Marianist influence. She described learning:

…that’s part of what this place is about and what the Marianists are about is saying yes to opportunities… this whole idea of the Marianists looking to Mary who said yes, listening to God telling her this plan he had for her and she really didn’t quite know what that was going to be, but she said yes, so that whole idea of saying yes instead of throwing up obstacles and giving every reason why this can’t happen.

Cynthia went on to add there is great potential and power, “…of actually saying yes and being full of faith” and “being open.” Paul also explored this theme and described a situation where he developed the trust of a new faculty member by taking the time to help her understand business operations. He described a trusting environment among the department chairs with whom he worked and said that now people now call him for recommendations.

Another facet of the Marianist influence described by the staff participants involved community building and valuing relationships. Tyler found this as a source of inspiration for his professional work,

I feel like everything is done in community here; everything is done in relationship and partnership and it’s something that I like, and I think for me it’s
what makes working here and being in this community something that I love, it’s what keeps me here, I don’t ever feel like that my work becomes stale because of all the people that I’ve had an opportunity to work with and learn from in the process.

Cynthia viewed community building and relationship development as integral to the Marianist philosophy and thought that through collaboration the community becomes stronger and, as a result, students ultimately benefit. Paul saw a real distinction between the sense of community at UD as a “family spirit” versus other places he worked and noted:

The community is a major aspect of this institution that you may not see in other businesses or other institutions. I’ve been at other institutions where they talk of what it’s like to be a family, but it’s a family that’s probably very hierarchical. While hierarchy clearly exists at the institution, the linking of the equality, openness, and family spirit (sense of community and relationship development) into one philosophy creates a unique atmosphere at UD that appears to transcend issues such as hierarchy. Other structural issues are presented in the next section.

**Structural Features**

**Leadership UD.** As with the faculty, Leadership UD was cited as an important experience for the staff participants. Important components of the leadership UD experiences included learning more about the institution and its operation, mission, and values as well the opportunity for networking and building relationships with others around campus. While the benefits were not always apparent at the time and the staff
gave up large amounts of time to participate in the program, overall the participants reported that the experience was very beneficial. As Cynthia noted, “It was a wonderful experience… more important than I thought at the time.”

Each of the three staff members described learning more about the institution and in the case of Paul, not only within the university itself, but also partnerships that colleagues had established in the surrounding community. The program helped give Paul a broader understanding of what “were issues in [department name withheld] and information technology” as well as other arenas around the university. Tyler described learning about structural and operations aspects of the institution. He found this particularly helpful in understanding how budget decisions were made. For Cynthia this institutional level of understanding included both institutional operations and a “deeper understanding” of the University’s values as well.

The relationship building aspects of the program were highly valued as described in the interviews. The program helped the staff members understand the Marianist values surrounding community building through relationships and then served as a catalyst for acting upon those new found connections. Tyler described a “networking” opportunity to work with an Associate Provost through Leadership UD. He believed that the experience of getting to know this administrator would not have been possible otherwise. This relationship was critical as some years later Tyler was assigned to work with this individual on a comprehensive and complex collaborative project.

Cynthia described two important relationships that she developed with fellow LUD cohort members that have “benefited our students and their families,” one with a
staff member working in the business affairs area and another with a department chair who later became a dean. “I can call [business affairs colleague’s name] and we can resolve an issue that could be pretty painful for the student if it were drawn out for awhile and with [colleague, now a Dean] there have been a few scholarship issues with international students that could not have been resolved right away if we would of had to go through some other [formal] channels. If we didn’t know each other and hadn’t gone through the LUD experience, I don’t know if it would have been resolved so quickly… to benefit the student.”

Paul also shared how the program and his work with the Leadership UD Development Team helped him to grow professionally through the relationships he established. He noted becoming more “self-reflective,” empathic (“put myself in other people’s shoes as we are walking together”), and “less focused on my own point of view” as a result of participating in the program. As a result of this professional development activity he was willing to go back to individuals with whom he had a poor interaction and make amends. He also described a willingness to reach out to others and help them be self-reflective as well. To illustrate this point, Paul described gently confronting a colleague who he perceived to be making inappropriate and negative comments.

**Importance of Collaboration to Achieve Cross Departmental Goals.** The staff participants described the importance of collaboration for them to successfully complete their work, outside as well as inside of their respective departments. Tyler suggested that from his experience “in order to be successful and to accomplish your goals professionally and to do your job you have to do that in partnership with other people.”
Thus for him much of collaborative work happens with others outside of his area. Cynthia shared similar sentiments in describing her work with colleagues outside her area in order to help enroll students participating in the Dayton Early College Academy (DECA),

With DECA students we worked in collaboration with the Dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions… to attract the DECA graduates to UD. So we have that partnership between the University and the school, but… there’s a financial component that is huge [for the students], especially to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We wanted to see what can we do to make it possible for them to come to Dayton, if they’re qualified enough to come.

Paul’s work involves almost constant partnership with staff and faculty from all over campus. His department oversees purchasing activities, but the university’s “decentralized purchasing environment” allows for departments to ultimately make purchasing decisions. Thus, his role is as a consultant in making recommendations and suggestions. With the decentralized power structure, Paul works in partnership with many department heads to influence various institutional priorities such as selecting minority vendors. He shared an example of spending time with a department chair developing a relationship “to explain to people why there are benefits to them or benefits to the university by looking at different ways of doing things, so that’s probably one of the things from a business practice that I’ve looked forward to and what we’re finding out is that over the course of the years… we build trust with them.”
Research Question 1: What are the Structural and Cultural Institutional Features That Have Served to Facilitate Staff and Faculty Collaborative Experiences?

Features that served to facilitate or support collaboration within the context of a Marianist institution included structural as well as cultural influences. The influences to be described in more detail in this section include: the Marianist mission and philosophy, interaction with vowed Marianists as role models, departmental culture, formative experiences, and programs such as Leadership UD.

Marianist Mission and Philosophy

The Marianist mission and philosophy stood out as a central feature in promoting collaboration among faculty and staff. In fact, this feature was the most frequently discussed topic among the various participants, faculty and staff. The mission and philosophy provided the participants not only with a focus of their work, it provided clear expectations of how to go about the work and relate to one another in this process.

Themes cited as Marianist influences most frequently by the staff and faculty participants included: equality and inclusiveness; faith, trust and openness; and the value of relationships. The participants referenced the institutional mission and philosophy in terms of the Marianist Charism as cultural influences as much as structurally defined roles and expectations. Thus, this feature is as much cultural in influence as it is structural.

Most of the participants were influenced by the Marianist philosophy although in different ways and at different times in their career. The faculty typically came to know the philosophy later in their career, as their early years were focused on their academic
discipline, scholarship, teaching, and particularly on attaining tenure and promotion. The staff on the other hand described meaningful experiences early on in their careers which shaped their work values, attitudes and attention.

Staff members described learning the Marianist philosophy through observing and working with vowed Marianist or as in the case with Tyler (a newer staff member) receiving specific training on the Marianist Charism. The level of influence that these experiences had for the staff was significant and described at length. Faculty did not have these more formal introductions to the Marianist philosophy until participating in the Leadership UD (later in their careers). Faculty members came to embrace the Marianist philosophy, but mentioned the values or examples of how the values influenced their work with less frequency than with the staff.

Participants, especially the staff, described the Marianist philosophy as influencing a “family spirit” and “community” that valued the cultivation and development of strong working relationships in the service of students or other institutional priorities. For the faculty participants, this same value emanated from their formative years in graduate school; was a source of their choosing the institution and subsequently was reinforced in their work at UD. In the case of the staff, this value grew from early experiences with vowed Marianists or from specific job training and expectations. In both cases, a common purpose or common good provided a central focus for their work in partnership. In all cases, there was as sense of congruence between personal and institutional values even though most of the participants were not Catholic.
The participants described the Marianist Charism as based on respect for diverse perspectives and a sense of openness to ideas as well as people. Some participants described this feature in terms of valuing multiple perspectives and being “open to new ideas” and perspectives. Others saw this as a value of equality wherein leaders invited the perspectives of many from different levels of the organization to have a voice, “provide insight” and “be at the table” in various decision-making processes. Tyler described a process of “equal partnerships” from his experience and viewed this value system as adding strength to the outcomes of his work with others. Several participants associated these values directly with the Marianist Charism, while others made more indirect references to the influence of institutional values.

Another feature described by the participants involved levels of trust that developed, often in association with the equality value. Paul described a trusting relationship that evolved out of a situation where he helped a faculty colleague understand the university’s decision-making process and campus value system. Faculty also experienced this process as well. Mike referenced the importance of trust in working with colleagues from a particular administrative area. Chris also suggested that trust was a critical component to collaboration among colleagues and that respect for one another was tied into the trust building process.

In many cases among faculty and staff, there was alignment of professional and Marianist cultures. Staff and faculty described how institutional mission and philosophy helped them to achieve professional goals. For example, one staff member described being able to be more “holistic” in her work with students, as this was an important
professional value for her. Faculty members also found synchronicity between their disciplinary and institutional mission and philosophy. As one faculty member noted, collaboration is a means to address problems either academic or administrative that are quite complex or involve the interests of many. Collaboration provides a means to democratically accomplish these challenging tasks for faculty and staff.

Exposure to the Marianist philosophy happened in several ways for the participants. Two staff members were able to learn about the values through direct observation and interaction with influential Marianist brothers. Another staff person was introduced to the values and philosophy through his department and expected to understand and apply the principles as a component of his work responsibilities. The faculty as a group had far less exposure to the Marianist brothers in their early years. In fact, some of the faculty did not develop more than a basic understanding of the values until taking part in Leadership UD years later. Once they had been exposed to the principles, they were able to build these principles into their work. As Chris noted, he finally had an understanding of “what it means to be a Catholic and Marianist university.”

**Formative Experiences**

In reflecting on their formative experiences, participants cited important influences that encouraged them to get involved in collaboration with others around campus. However, there were clear demarcations of influences between the staff and faculty. For the faculty, the experiences in graduate school and particularly with their dissertation adviser served as the most important experiences in forming aspects of their professional identity. Specifically, faculty cited their advisers in introducing them to the role of faculty and the manner in which faculty work with others around campus. As
Mike summarized, “That’s where my openness to collaboration came from, in fact I would actually attribute that to the patterns I saw in my own Ph.D. supervisor.” Staff members on the other hand, were described being much more influenced by their immediate work environment and in some cases had the opportunity to directly observe Marianist brothers in their work areas. This early exposure formed how they approached their work and signaled important behaviors associated with collaboration and the ways staff members work with others in the campus milieu.

Another important formation difference among faculty and staff was that the staff had worked at other institutions whereas the faculty (aside from graduate school) had spent their entire faculty career at UD. All three staff cited comparisons between their experiences at UD with other institutions. These comparisons revealed important differences for them in how collaboration was manifested. In all three cases, staff described significant features of the culture that supported collaboration and values associated with collaborative activity.

*Departmental Subculture*

The subculture of the department was described by the participants as an important feature in influencing collaboration. In many cases, the departmental influence served to help staff learn about the Marianist philosophy and faculty members cited the department as sources of encouragement in developing relationships with others around campus. For the staff, the department orientated them to their work and in all three cases; they believed their work required high levels of collaboration with staff and faculty outside of their departments. The faculty also described the need for collaboration; in one case a faculty member cited “peer pressure” from faculty from his department to
“collaborate or die,” as work in partnership ensured future viability. Thus, while departments created organizational boundaries within the institution, the department culture also served as an influence to collaborative work across the institution.

**Leadership UD**

Programs such as Leadership UD and the Marianist Educational Associates were described by the staff and faculty as aiding them in developing the knowledge, attitudes and relationships necessary for collaborative work. There was a great deal of similarity in how the staff and faculty described how the Leadership UD program influenced their work. The experience for them was important in understanding the institutional mission, range of work performed across campus, and also served to normalize collaborative activity.

Participants described Leadership UD as particularly helpful in fostering relationships. Through spending significant time learning together in the program, staff and faculty had an opportunity to develop a network with other “like-minded” staff and faculty. For some, particularly the faculty, the experience was significant enough to influence their orientation to their work. Chris described going from an isolated, narrowly-focused faculty member to an informed and active “player in the campus culture.” Cynthia described the benefit of this relationship building process in very pragmatic terms; it enabled her to establish solid working relationships which in turn, helped her to expediently solve difficult student-related issues.

Participants also described learning more about areas that comprise the institution and how their functions served to support the mission of the institution. A more broad understanding served to reinforce the central themes described previously. The
participants learned that in spite of a diverse range of activities, there were commonalities in the purpose of work as well as in how individuals worked collaboratively in their daily activities. This broader knowledge of the institution also helped the participants to be knowledgeable about formal (budgets) as well informal (politics) systems and processes.

The participants also experienced a shift in attitude toward how they approached their work. Through a greater understanding of the institutional values presented in Leadership UD, participants could identify, in themselves, connections with their own personal and professional values. For example, Paul described the attitudinal shift helping him to be more reflective, empathic and “less focused on my own point of view” as a result of participating in the program.

Participants also cited the Marianist Educational Associates, but to a lesser degree. Two of the participants, both staff, had participated in this relatively new program and it served to greatly increase their knowledge of the Marianist Charism and the Marianist Philosophy of Education. The more in-depth knowledge of the Charism served to reinforce their commitment to working collaboratively. In the case of one participant who was promoted shortly following this experience, a deeper understanding of the philosophy provided the knowledge base that enabled her to translate the Charism into practice as she assumed greater leadership responsibilities.

Workload Issues

Faculty and staff workload was described by several participants albeit in distinct ways. One faculty member (more so than the other two) had a unique opportunity to be involved in some high level collaborations with staff and faculty and noted that faculty members are often given release time to be involved in projects with other faculty or
staff. While this was not the case for staff, he noted that this practice helped faculty in balancing an otherwise impossible feat of “doing it all.” In other words, in attempting to meet the demands of faculty (publish, teach, and service), collaboration was more likely to occur if either 1) collaboration could be built into their work or 2) there was course release time that could help to alleviate some of the additive pressures of faculty taking more and more individual responsibility. While other faculty did not reference this subject in quite the same way, Chris described being much more available for enrichment activities once he had completed tenure and promotion. Nancy, as an untenured faculty member, was encouraged by her department colleagues to integrate collaborative work into her teaching and scholarship role.

**Institutional Size**

Institutional size issues (of the institution) were raised by the faculty and discussed at length. One faculty member thought that size issues were as influential on collaboration as the Marianist philosophy. While one staff member did raise the issue of size as a factor, the issue was raised more by the faculty than by the staff.

Participants believed that the mid-size of the institution enabled collaboration to flourish. The institution was perceived to be small enough to allow for staff and faculty to know one another and build relationships across departments and divisions. However, the institution was perceived to be large enough to provide sufficient resources to support collaborative endeavors. In a follow up interview, one staff person described UD as a “happy medium” size that would allow relationships to be supported on projects of common interest. Whether or not the size actually facilitated additional resources or
Research Question 2: What are the Structural and Cultural Institutional Features that Have Served as Challenges, Barriers or Obstacles in Staff and Faculty Collaborative Experiences?

In general participants did not describe the barriers as being nearly as influential as the features that support collaboration. None-the-less, their experiences with structural as well as cultural influences are important in understanding collaboration within the context of a Marianist institution. The influences to be described in more detail in this section include: traditional (individual-focused and independently-oriented notions) of faculty work, time issues, tenure system, definitions of work and value placed on staff work, fewer vowed Marianists, senior leaders, workload/reward systems, and multiple interpretations of the Marianist philosophy

Marianist Philosophy Vis-à-vis Other Issues

Participants described the Marianist philosophy as promoting a “family spirit” and “community” that valued the cultivation and development of strong working relationships. The participants described these relationships as mission-focused, group-oriented and interdependent. This orientation stands in contrast with much of the traditional notions of faculty work as individual-focused and independently-oriented. As Mike remarked, “As academics we have a perspective that much of what we do we can do sort of with our own brain power and to be truly involved in collaborative work you are ceding a certain amount of expectation and even control to others...” Thus for faculty,
the expectations of collaboration promoted by the Marianist philosophy posed challenges vis-à-vis traditional academic work ethos that values and is centered around individual effort and recognition. In terms of workload and priorities for faculty seeking tenure, this presented a daunting, if not impossible challenge.

In general, participants described the Marianist philosophy as a very positive influence. However, the participants also suggested that this approach and underlying values do present challenges in the decision-making and partnership process. For example, Paul and Cynthia both described trade-offs with a highly inclusive process. While the Marianist Charism values bringing many voices to the conversation, participants described the tendency of the inclusiveness process leading to at times confusion between collaboration and consensus. Paul described that a barrier can be “everyone looking for total agreement.” Cynthia shared this concern and warned against confusing consensus and collaboration. At UD there is “so much drive for consensus” that the whole process may become bogged down.

Cynthia also described a personnel situation in her own area where her staff were frustrated that everyone was not consulted on a hiring decision and made claims that this practice was not consistent with the Marianist Charism. She wondered if this claim was reasonable and asked rhetorically, “Does everybody need to have a say in who we are going to hire?” In this statement and the tone of the conversation, I sensed Cynthia’s frustration that, while she highly values the Marianist Charism, at times the Charism is used as catch-all phrase related to individual entitlement. As Paul described learning from a Marianist brother and campus leader, this could not be further from the Marianist sense
of the “common good” which is inclusive of individual needs, but only in the context of the community’s best interest or needs. As illustrated with Cynthia’s situation, defining what is and is not Marianist behavior will continue to a challenge, particularly in light of reduced numbers of vowed Marianist role models expected in the years ahead.

**Fewer Vowed Leaders**

Several participants described the importance of observing and working with vowed Marianist. These individuals demonstrated behaviors which served to shape participants professional development, particularly in developing collaborative relationships. In these cases, the Marianists being observed were all senior leaders of the institution. As Paul noted, “We used to have three religious [Marianist] leaders… the president, provost, as well as the senior VP and now today those three positions are held by lay employees—lay personnel who all buy in and live the Marianist values and traditions, but still, their way, their approach, their way of thinking is different.” Thus, maintaining the level of collaborative activity in spite of fewer Marianists as role models will serve as a significant issue. As Paul wondered:

> With fewer vowed Marianists on campus, how do you keep the Marianist values and tradition alive and how do you move the Marianist values forward? That is going to be a challenge for the university in the years to come.

**Senior Leaders**

While senior leaders may serve to facilitate collaboration, in some cases participants cited examples of senior leaders presenting obstacles. Tyler noted, in general, “There are definitely people sitting around the table who have more experience, a better
title, make more money, rest higher in the hierarchy than you” and that “there are times when you may have to defer to that individual or those individuals even if you think that their way of approaching it is wrong.” While the participants were often reluctant to discuss specifics on tape, they described situations where either the collaborative process was interrupted by senior leader influence or the senior leader did not permit the participants to be in partnership and instead made decisions in a more unilateral fashion. However this obstacle was not insurmountable. As Mike described in one example, the trust that he had developed with staff partners in a previous collaborative project, as well as in Leadership UD, helped him and his partners to navigate the obstacles presented by the senior leader’s influence. Mike attributed the ability to navigate these barriers directly to his strong and trusting relationship with the other partners.

**Time and Workload Issues**

Limited time was raised by several participants. In various ways, time, priorities and demands placed on participants’ available time served as a barrier to collaboration. As Nancy so directly put it, “Collaboration is hard work” as it involves negotiating diverse perspectives and interpersonal human relationship issues. Primary issues such as building trust, being inclusive, and seeking diverse perspectives often require time consuming and protracted processes involving a great deal of face-to-face contact. While Cynthia found that once the relationships are built, problems can be solved more easily, participants were not suggesting that collaboration was easy or efficient. In fact, Mike spent considerable time describing time-related issues for both staff and faculty. His perspective and vantage point on this issue is informed by a great deal of experience as a faculty member, department chair and administrator responsible for partnerships within
the college, as well as with many staff areas. He described that while the issue is manifested in different ways, both staff and faculty struggle with collaboration as an “add on” to their current work load versus having collaboration integrated seamlessly into their work.

For faculty, the key component to having the ability to fully engage in collaboration seemed to be whether or not they have achieved tenure. The requirements of the tenure process may present significant obstacles to faculty developing collaborative relationships with other faculty or staff. For untenured faculty, the requirements included publishing and teaching, and a wide variety of service obligations to the department, institution, community, profession, and discipline. Based on the participants’ experiences, collaboration is possible if it can be worked into one of those first two requirements, as demonstrated by Nancy in her work with a fellow junior faculty member from Engineering. Otherwise, as Mike pointed out, “It’s not that we discourage collaborative work, but we are very cautious about pushing [new] faculty into collaborative directions.” This creates a tension among various priorities for new faculty for as Mike described earlier, there is uncertainty and ambiguity in the tenure process. Thus, faculty members are instructed to “do it all.” While this tension may be present at all institutions, it is of particular interest considering the underlying values and practices at a Marianist institution. From the experience of these three faculty members at this mid-sized, Catholic and Marianist, research intensive university, mixed messages may be more dominant than at other institutions.
Successful faculty, such as Mike, were able to navigate these competing expectations as his own professional development included “peer pressure” to work with other faculty. Chris echoed the sentiment that tenure requirements should be approached with great reverence. He did not seek out collaborative partnerships with faculty in his department for fear of appearing vulnerable and did not view his department as a source of potential for collaboration or even basic levels of partnership. In retracing his own professional journey, he described working largely in isolation, focused solely on his scholarship and teaching until reaching tenure and full promotion. After that point, he felt able to participate in broader activities such as Leadership UD. There was a tone of disappointment in Chris’s voice as he described being at the institution for many years before feeling able to participate in the Leadership UD program. This was particularly poignant considering Leadership UD was a “turning point” in his career. Chris and the students he served may have reaped the benefits, if this experience could have occurred earlier in his career at UD.

The ability for staff to engage in collaborative work was a concern as well. For staff, the work of collaboration may be able to be integrated into their current work flow or serve to improve current work responsibilities; however, in some cases collaboration involved work beyond their perceived or actual job description. In some cases it involved a reframing of their work, which may or may not be within their control. Mike, in describing a collaborative project with [staff area], noticed that faculty, are frequently offered an incentive for additional work that might involve a collaborative project. Common incentives include course load reductions or additional pay. According to Mike,
with staff members, “There isn’t a parallel reward system” or “reduction in what the expectations are for the rest of their job,” rather, “It gets added on.” Mike went on to describe the concerns of his staff colleagues, “You can say… my boss recognizes the importance of this…” but in the end, it becomes additional responsibilities on top of whatever else the staff member may be working on. Whereas, according to Mike, on the “academic side of the house the recognition sometimes translates into the most precious commodity-- additional time or maybe additional money and I think that’s a big challenge.”

Value Placed on Staff Contributions

Another barrier that surfaced in the interviews was the value placed on work among faculty and staff. Chris described faculty colleagues who had a fixed and narrow perception of faculty work and were reluctant to do work “beneath them.” He suggested that “there’s a certain level of arrogance among university faculty” about their work and “that whatever is asked of them beyond what they think…. is the definition of their job.” He went further to share a comment that colleague made to him, “I heard a faculty once say something to the effect that… I didn’t get my degree to clean toilets…” and a more pervasive attitude, “I didn’t spend ten years getting a Ph.D. to … figure out this recruitment issue; it’s not my problem.” While this may represent some faculty members’ displeasure toward committee work, it may also represent faculty attitudes toward work performed within the institution, including demarcations regarding who performs what work and the value placed on that work. Chris’s example would indicate a sentiment among at least some faculty toward what is and is not the work of faculty. Since the participants felt as though respect, trust, and openness were important features of
collaboration, this sentiment toward work responsibilities presented challenges to working in partnership between faculty and staff.

Cynthia, a staff member, picked up on this attitude in her years at UD. She brought up that there is “a feeling of a caste system” and this attitude serves as a barrier to collaboration. Beyond just a feeling of work stratification, she also felt that there is an attitude among some faculty that “less value [is] placed on the work that a staff member may give to the University.” This was a source of much frustration to her as she felt as that this was “a denial of the participation of people who are deeply committed.” She broached this subject with a former Dean who validated her experience and shared that he too had experienced an attitudinal bias among faculty regarding the work of staff versus faculty.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Higher education is facing ever more complex challenges in attempts to meet the various needs of society. In an era of diminishing resources, higher education is called upon to educate a diverse workforce, deepen and broaden fields of knowledge, and serve a global society increasingly interdependent with each passing year. These postmodern challenges are taken up by faculty and staff who inherited a system of American higher education that is highly fragmented with increasing numbers of specialized fields. As such, the ability for staff and faculty to adapt to the needs of the day is hampered by organizational systems designed at a different time for different purposes than those that have emerged in the last fifty years. Beyond the structural issues, distinct organizational cultures have followed widespread specialization within academe and, particularly but not exclusively, in academic fields. In spite of these challenges, higher education continues to attract inspired and dedicated professionals who seek ways of working together to address contemporary needs of students, communities and fields of knowledge.

Collaboration among staff and faculty has emerged as a strategy to address the multiple needs confronting higher education. The literature on higher education points to collaboration as a means to address a range of higher education outcomes from improving student learning to achieve institutional excellence (Blimling & Whitt, 1998; Elkins-Nesheim, Guentzel, Kellogg, McDonald, Wells, & Whitt, 2007; Kezar, Hirsch & Burack, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates 2005; Pascarella & Terenizini...
This rich collection of research also documented a variety of issues that impact the ability of staff and faculty to work together toward issues of common concern. Distinct staff and faculty cultures as well as institutional structural variables come to bear on how working relationships, collaborative or otherwise, are carried out.

If, as the literature suggests, collaboration is an important strategy in promoting a range of important higher education outcomes, then knowing more about collaboration within the context of various institutional types could be helpful for practitioners as well as researchers. This study sought to explore collaboration within a specific organizational context both structural (mid-size) and cultural (Catholic and Marianist). This context is worthy of investigation as larger public institutions were the focus of earlier case studies by Kezar (2005, 2006) on this topic. This study explored how staff and faculty with experience working collaboratively described their experiences, and particularly how structural and cultural factors may have influenced their work. Specifically, the research questions explored in this inquiry were: (1) What are the structural and cultural institutional features that have served to facilitate staff and faculty collaborative experiences? (2) What are the structural and cultural institutional features that have served as challenges, barriers, or obstacles in staff and faculty collaborative experiences?

I employed a qualitative methodology in order to build an understanding of structural and cultural aspects of collaboration within the Marianist institutional context. Since the existing literature on collaboration was derived from studies of public and larger institutions, understanding collaboration within a smaller, Catholic and Marianist
context required an emergent design that allowed the researcher to work toward building a theory or an understanding of the issues in context (Merriam, 2002).

Basic Interpretive inquiry was chosen as the method of inquiry and analysis for this study. The aim of Basic Interpretive is to explore “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, p.38). Thus, experiences as revealed through participant narratives make up the primary data source and focus of analysis.

Criterion sampling was used in order to narrow the field of potential participants to those with experience working collaboratively. Specifically, I recruited participants who were current employees of the institution and had participated in the Leadership UD program. Recommendations from the Leadership UD Development Team helped to further narrow the field to those with experience working collaboratively.

I conducted interviews during August and September of 2008. Participants were invited to participate via email and chose the location for the interview. I followed the interview protocol defined in Chapter Two using a semi-structured interview guide. The guide (see appendix A) provided a basic framework for the interview with open-ended questions to allow the participants the ability to share their experiences within broad parameters. I recorded the interviews and took written notes.

Following each interview, a transcription of the interview was made and loaded into a qualitative data management software program. In addition, I typed notes in the form of memos which were also loaded into the software program. Using constant comparison, analysis began with each participant’s narrative. The narratives were coded
as themes and the comparison process continued throughout all six interviews. I sorted and refined codes through an iterative process. Multiple visits with the data provided for a thorough examination of themes and elements surfacing from the data.

Themes that emerged from the data analysis process served as the basis for the individual case descriptions, as well as the cross case descriptions. In this process, transcripts were reviewed to clarify concepts and ensure fidelity between each participant’s narratives and the resulting presentation of concepts. The results section reflects the output from this process and includes a narrative of the participants’ experience within the context of a mid-sized, Catholic, Marianist institution. The case presentation provided a summary of each participant’s experiences. The cross case analysis grouped participants by their professional identification as either staff or faculty. These two categories were important designations in the literature and the participants’ experiences reinforced important differences among these two groups. Themes across common experiences were grouped when codes crossed individual categories.

The results of this study are not generalizable to other organizational contexts: mid-size, Marianist, or Catholic. The results may not even be generalized to the institution, as these participants had all participated in Leadership UD and, as such, may have had different experiences from many other staff and faculty at the institution. I did not seek a representative sample of staff and faculty at the institution for this study and do not make any claims about the generalizability of the findings. Among the participants, there are five Caucasians and one African-American. Four participants are male and two are female.
A summary of the findings are presented below followed by a discussion of the findings against a backdrop of related research and theory. This study sought to uncover the structural and cultural features that impacted staff and faculty collaboration within the context of a mid-sized, Catholic and Marianist institution.

**Research Question 1: What Are the Structural and Cultural Institutional Features That Have Served to Facilitate Staff and Faculty Collaborative Experiences?**

Among staff and faculty, the Marianist mission and philosophy, interaction with vowed Marianists as role models, departmental subculture, formative experiences, institutional size, workload issues, and programs such as Leadership UD all served as positive influences to collaboration.

**Marianist mission and philosophy**

The Marianist mission and philosophy served as a source of significant influence for the participants. There were remarkable similarities in how the participants described these influences. Faculty and staff described values consistent with the Marianist Charism, albeit at times in their own words. The values cited included, family spirit, community-building, equality, focusing on the common good, having faith, inclusiveness, remaining open to ideas, developing trust, seeking relationships, being inclusive of diverse perspectives, and valuing the perspectives of all, regardless of status. While these might not be unique values to this context, it nonetheless indicates the salience of these themes.

Among the staff participants, exposure to the Marianist philosophy occurred early in their employment and generally occurred later for faculty, when they participated in Leadership UD. Professional formative experiences that oriented the staff members
toward collaborative work included interactions with vowed Marianist. Among faculty, experiences that formed their understanding of collaboration largely came about during graduate school by their doctoral program advisers/directors. The faculty members experienced some challenge in navigating traditional expectations of faculty work along with expectations of the Marianist philosophy, particularly prior to attaining tenure.

**Department Subculture**

The department subculture served as a source of influence for the staff as well as faculty participants. In the context of higher education, the department serves as a demarcation of cultural boundaries in spite of overarching organizational mission and values. However, participants in this study found that in many cases the department was a source of encouragement and support for working collaboratively across departmental boundaries. With five of six participants, there were explicit expectations to work collaboratively. For the faculty, this expectation was for individual, as well as departmental, viability. For staff, the expectation was job or project specific—as a means to accomplish departmental goals.

**Leadership UD**

Programs such as Leadership UD were frequently cited as key experiences in helping to promote collaboration. The participants described gaining important knowledge about the university mission and systems as well as providing examples of how others at the institution were working collaboratively. A number of participants experienced shifts in their frames of reference and attitudes toward their work and, in a few cases, participants reported significant or transformational changes. All of the participants reported that the program helped them to build relationships and a network of
“like-minded” colleagues around campus. Together these experiences served as an experience that normalized collaborative attitudes as well as behaviors or habits that supported working collaboratively.

Size of the Institution

The size of the institution was referenced by participants as a feature that facilitated collaboration. Participants thought the institution was small enough for relationships to be developed across departments, yet large enough to provide sufficient resources for collaborative projects and initiatives.

Workload issues

Workload issues were suggested by participants as generally a feature that served as a barrier to collaboration. However, as Mike pointed out, some faculty members are receiving incentives to work collaboratively. Incentives included course “buy outs” and other work load reductions or supplemental pay for faculty to participate in collaborative projects. These work load incentives helped to facilitate faculty participation in various collaborative projects.

Research Question 2: What Are the Structural and Cultural Institutional Features That Have Served as Challenges, Barriers or Obstacles in Staff and Faculty Collaborative Experiences?

The central themes related to structural and cultural institutional features that served as challenges or barriers to collaboration are summarized in this section. Among staff and faculty, orientation of faculty work, tenure, time issues, values placed on work
contributions, fewer vowed Marianist influences, and senior leader influence inhibited collaboration.

**Orientation of Faculty Work**

The mixed (individualized work in addition to collaborative work) orientation of faculty work was raised by participants, particularly among the faculty. Due to the expectations of their work, the staff members had developed an inclination toward collaboration from early in their careers at UD. In multiple examples, staff members cited the importance of collaboration as a central means to accomplish their professional and departmental goals. Faculty, on the other hand, cited influences from graduate school to be collaborative, but largely found themselves pulled between expectations to prove themselves as scholars and teachers, which is work they characterized as being more individually focused and institutional expectations to prove themselves as scholars and teachers, and expectations to work in collaborative partnership with others. The tenure process was cited as a barrier to faculty being able to meet expectations to work collaboratively. While all three faculty members successfully navigated this system, they struggled to meet these competing expectations.

**Time issues**

Considering the expectations described previously, it should come as no surprise that faculty members struggled with finding the time “to do it all.” Staff members described collaboration as central their work and yet also struggled with finding the time to engage in collaborative activities. Participants warned that they did not perceive
collaboration as an “add on” to be sustainable and that collaboration needed to either be integrated into their work or staff members needed relief from other responsibilities.

**Values Placed on Staff Work**

Participants described concerns over the perceptions among some faculty regarding their involvement in work beyond teaching and research. Connected to this concern was a sense that less value was placed on the work contributions of staff members by some faculty. This dynamic was described as a “caste system” and antithetical to the Marianist philosophy.

**Fewer Vowed Leaders**

Catholic higher education is facing the reality of fewer religious leaders in their midst. Participants in this study recounted important formative experiences with vowed Marianists and voiced concerns about the implications of this issue. Primarily, participants wondered if the institution would maintain its identity and historical practices with fewer vowed leaders as influences.

**Senior leaders**

Senior leaders were cited as both positive and negative influences. As presented earlier, vowed Marianist leaders were referred to as models of the Marianist Charism. Participants described opportunities to observe vowed Marianists as key experiences that oriented them to working in the Marianist setting. However, other senior leaders were described as negative influences to collaborative work. In some examples, this influence was described as simply “different” from their understanding of how leaders in a Marianist institution should act. In other cases, the influence was much more immediately
detrimental in their attempts to collaborate. For example, participants described senior leaders who made decisions unilaterally or blocked staff and faculty from developing successful partnerships.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study complement and supplement the literature on collaboration in higher education. The literature on collaboration within higher education has largely focused on individual and micro-conditions that relate to collaboration versus more system-oriented and macro-conditions (Kezar, 2006). Kezar, in citing Denison, Hart and Kahn (1996), called for more research on the contextual and environmental factors that support or enable collaboration (2006). Kezar’s 2006 study served as part of the impetus for this study of cultural and structural contextual features influencing collaboration within a Marianist, Catholic, mid-sized institution. The other component driving this study was the desire for the researcher to develop a better understanding of collaboration in this context.

**Marianist Charism**

The pervasiveness of the Marianist Charism was a beaming light that shined through this study. The stories and descriptions offered by these dedicated staff and faculty presented a strong case that the institution’s mission and philosophy were central aspects of their work lives. While the influence was present for all participants, the influence of the Marianist Charism played out differently for staff versus faculty. For staff members, the philosophy directly supported and enhanced their work from early in their careers. This was less so for the faculty, particularly among new and untenured faculty. With these faculty, the influence of their discipline and tenure requirements
largely trumped institutional influence. Participants pointed to tenure expectations as the primary source of motivation from early in their career; as Chris put it, “I wanted a job.” He also described that, “There is a very real obstacle between being hired and being tenured.” While another faculty member described expectations from his department colleagues to work collaboratively, there did not appear to be alignment of expectations to collaborate with expectations to publish or teach. Compared to the staff members, there was not the same level of perceived necessity to collaborate among the faculty. The divergence of the career paths of Mike (who collaborated early in his career) and Chris (who was focused on his academic discipline until later in his career) suggests that realignment of expectations within the tenure system may be warranted.

The salience of the Marianist philosophy signals that mission and institutional values are pervasive in spite of cultural differences (local or departmental influences that interact with the Marianist mission in unique ways) among faculty and staff within this institutional context. This finding was parallel to the outcomes of Kezar’s 2006 examination of institutional features that supported collaboration at large public institutions. In this (2006) study, she discovered three critical ways that mission and philosophy were “important to fostering collaboration” within the organizational context (p.817). The mission/philosophy needed to explicitly encourage collaboration, be clearly articulated and well-known among employees, and aligned with goals and initiatives. These factors were suggested by Kezar as “powerful symbolic” forces that connected staff and faculty under a central purpose (p.818).
The mode of transmission of the Marianist Charism to staff members was another important finding. The magnitude of influence from participants who had the opportunity to work with and observe Marianist leaders was significant enough to suggest that this was a key experience that shaped their collaborative work. While senior leaders in general were an influence (both positive and negative), the vowed Marianist leaders served to model the philosophy in action; an orientation to organization life far beyond what could be read in a brochure or even viewed in a video on the Marianist Charism.

**Departmental Subculture**

The departmental subculture was described as an influence in working collaboratively. The boundary lines between different staff and faculty subcultures are often drawn at the department level (Matthews, 1997). In her text on life within the college environment, Matthews described three distinct “tribes” that have emerged: “those who learn, those who arrange, and those who profess” and the increasing “territorial” nature of these groups (p. 36). In a (single) case study analysis of faculty members and student affairs staff attempting to work collaboratively, Philpott and Strange (2002) suggested that, while these groups may work with the same students, they “act as if they are from different worlds” (p. 78). Based on the experiences of participants in this study, the overarching Marianist philosophy appears to be pervasive enough to mitigate at least some of this effect.

**Workload**

All participants described issues surrounding managing their workload. While workload issues were different for staff versus faculty, there was a common concern that collaboration was an “add-on” versus being integrated into their work. This may be an
issue that leaders within the institution are beginning to address, as incentives to collaborate have been introduced, at least for faculty. In broadening collaborative activity, campus leaders will be challenged to devise ways of integrating collaboration into overall workflow, as the current add-on model was not perceived to be sustainable by staff or faculty.

The issue of faculty work and particularly how faculty allocate their time has been a subject in the literature over the last twenty years. Some studies have shown that institutional type is an influential factor in determining how faculty members allocate their time among the traditional notions of faculty work including: scholarship, teaching and service (Fairweather, 1993). Other studies have documented a tendency toward institutional isomorphism wherein universities are becoming more homogenized as they seek to emulate aspirant institutions, particularly research intensive institutions (Scott, 1995). As Massy and Zemsky (1994) posited, this tendency is creating standardized and rigid expectations of faculty work as institutions seek to gain status. This change over the past twenty years has led to an expectation of greater productivity in all areas of faculty work and particularly in research productivity (Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000). The University of Dayton, as a research intensive institution, will be challenged to find ways to address workload issues in order to protect institutional values and the ability for faculty to enact values surrounding collaboration in light of this national trend.

**Tenure**

Connected to the issue of workload is the issue of faculty navigating expectations of the tenure process vis-à-vis institutional expectations to collaborate. The faculty participants in this study were largely successful in navigating these challenges.
However, the tenure system did not facilitate collaboration for these participants and, in fact, may actually have served as a barrier. If unchanged, this may be a nagging concern as reward systems are considered key determinates in faculty motivation (Fairweather, 1993; Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000, Kezar, 2006). As Kezar reported in her 2006 study of highly collaborative campuses, “One common facilitator of collaboration was the alteration of the tenure and promotion system” (p. 822). Each campus in her study had made changes in tenure and promotion systems, which enabled more collaborative activity. The level and quality of collaborative activity may increase dramatically if these changes were adopted at UD considering the level of collaboration already taking place in spite of traditional models of tenure and promotion.

**Fewer Vowed Leaders**

The numbers of vowed religious leaders within Catholic higher education have been on the decline for some years (Cernera, 2005). This trend has been reported among the Marianists as well as other Catholic orders. This issue raises a number of concerns for the future of Catholic higher education. Among these concerns is how this issue will influence collaboration at UD. As Paul wondered, “With fewer vowed Marianists on campus, how do you keep the Marianist values and tradition alive and how do you move the Marianist values forward?” In addition to attracting more people into the priesthood, the order has attempted to involve more lay leaders; in fact, lay leaders have been an important component of the Marianist order since its inception. Beyond lay leaders, the order may need additional ways to share the Marianist philosophy with employees and help them learn to integrate these principles into their work.
Leadership UD was described as an important experience for the participants in fostering collaboration. Since the research frame of this study involved former participants of the program, it was important to know how the program influenced their work, as this program is the only formal leadership program available to employees at the institution. While each of the outcomes was described independently by the participants (e.g. learning more about collaborative activity happening at the institution, learning to be reflective, and learning more about the Marianist Charism), taken together these experience served as transformational learning experiences.

As described earlier, transformational learning is a “...process by which we transform our taken for granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow, p.8). As presented in the results section, participants described forms of learning that extend beyond facts about the institution; indeed, their way of thinking was changed as well. They were able to transcend disciplinary or administrative boundaries as well as frames of thinking and adopt attitudes and work practices consistent with the Marianist Charism. This type of learning is critical for collaboration among staff and faculty to flourish. Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) suggested that higher education leaders need to help their constituents to develop the knowledge, skills, talents and feelings such that they are able to be culturally competent and meet the demands of the modern workplace. Argyris (1991) characterized this transformation shift as a “far deeper and more textured understanding of their role as members of the organization... they are
learning how to learn” within the context of their environment (p. 109). Based on the reflections offered by the participants, Leadership UD appears to have served as an important catalyst in helping employees develop these “deeper” abilities essential to collaborative work.

Building on these strengths and past successes, Leadership UD offers potential to generate even greater influence on employee development. The program’s areas of greatest strength include: increasing knowledge of institution and its culture, systems, and political environment; encouraging the development of relationships and building a network of “like minded” potential collaborators; and encouraging reflection and personal development consistent with the Marianist mission and collaborative activities. As Bergquist and Pawlak (2006) suggested, a more sophisticated understanding of the culture as well as ability to work within the culture may help to transform the institution. In the spirit of appreciative inquiry described earlier, the Development Team of Leadership might sharpen the focus of the curriculum around these specific areas of strength. Specific recommendations are outlined in the next section.

The Catholic and Marianist values surrounding equality, valuing diverse perspectives, relationships/ family spirit, and the common good may not be unique to this setting and in fact, are found in varying degrees at many institutions. However, the synergy created by all of the values coming to bear at a mid-sized institution creates ideal or “organic” conditions for collaboration to flourish. Plants may grow in many types of gardens, but the fruits yielded in the Marianist context may be more bountiful as a result of these confluences of features found at UD.
**Metaphors on Collaboration**

A number of metaphors shared by participants in this study were presented earlier in Chapter 4. These metaphors served as a means to view and interpret symbolic meaning that participants associated with their experiences. Symbolic interaction, as described earlier, attends to the interpretation and transmission of meaning through common assumptions and language of individuals in the organization (Tierney, 1988). Metaphors are symbolic representations of central features of the culture and sub-cultures and an opportunity to explore and better understand artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions of the culture (Schein, 1985, 1992, 2004). The images presented through the metaphors provide colorful and rich illustrations of the experience of staff and faculty working in the context of a Marianist institution. These metaphors also allowed the researcher another means of triangulating the data.

Participants described collaboration and settings for collaboration as “organic.” In using this term, the staff and faculty members were suggesting that collaboration is a naturalistic process most likely to occur when participants feel as though the culture fosters relationships and encourages collaborative partnerships. In my time with the participants, I sensed that they believed collaboration was an inherently good and virtuous process and that they perceived concordance among personal with institutional values. Tyler contrasted his experience at UD with another institution where he found it difficult to build collaborative relationships due to a lack of perceived institutional support.

Chris referenced the founder of the Marianists, who described distributive leadership as valuing the “head, hands, and heart” contributions to leadership. This
metaphor helped Chris to understand and appreciate the Marianist value surrounding multiple contributions that people may make to a collaborative initiative. This metaphor seemed to help Chris, a faculty member, value the contributions made by all members of the community and be more reflective and critically conscious of how faculty perceive their work and the work of others. The retelling of this metaphor also served as a teaching tool in spreading and deepening institutional values and cultural cues.

Tyler described collaboration as being like a “dance” where each person is in step with (or perhaps stepping on the toes of) the other as they move together. This metaphor reflected his understanding the institutional values of “equality” and “common good” as a synchronous movement among individuals toward a common purpose or goal. I was particularly struck by this metaphor and came back to it on many occasions in the data analysis stage. The dance metaphor provides a vivid image of the collaborative process. Based on the experiences of these participants, the music driving the dance is the Marianist Charism, which provides the rhythm and melody, assuming the participants are listening. In this dance, there is mutuality in their goal and purpose. At times there are missteps, but with persistence and patience comes grace.

Mike used the phrase “collaborate or die” to indicate the critical importance of collaborative work from his perspective. To Mike, collaboration was essential to ensure individual, as well as departmental livelihood. Contrary traditional images of faculty work as isolated and fragmented, Mike had experienced and redefined faculty work as integrated and highly interdependent.
When Cynthia discussed barriers to collaboration, she offered a number of ideas, but quickly suggested that when she encounters an obstacle, “…I went around them… like water.” From this metaphor and our conversation in general, it was apparent that she remained focused on the goals of her work, and particularly helping students, when faced with adversity. The sense of greater purpose and overcoming barriers that Cynthia described was shared by other participants and reinforced the pervasiveness of this value within the culture.

Together these metaphors help to reveal basic assumptions within this organizational context. Basic assumptions, Schein’s (2004) deepest level of culture, are those most central and unconscious features of the culture. Within the Marianist context these basic assumptions surround human relationships (equality, inclusiveness, valuing diverse perspectives, openness, faith, and common good) and human activity (collaboration as a means to achieve mission).

Implications and Recommendations

In this chapter I have described and discussed a number of important features within the Marianist context. The question now becomes what the institution can do to further influence collaboration. Another important question is how leaders within the institution can help to remove barriers to collaboration or at least help faculty and staff to navigate the obstacles to collaboration. Kezar (2005) presented a three-stage organizational development model based on the outcomes of her study of collaboration at four large public institutions that had successfully institutionalized collaboration. In this organizational schema, Kezar posited that relationship development and network building
were the “most prominent feature(s) in facilitating the developmental process.” (p. 855).
This study reinforced Kezar’s findings; however, the importance of mission, philosophy
and values in this setting were inextricably linked to relationship development and the
“family spirit,” such that in this organizational context, they are all part of the Marianist
Charism. The implications of this dynamic suggest that strategies aimed at facilitating
collaboration must reinforce these united concepts.

1. With fewer vowed religious and particularly vowed leaders, it will become
increasingly difficult for staff and faculty to maintain the kind of important formative
experiences with religious leaders that were described by participants in this study. If
additional vowed leaders cannot be identified, then additional measures are needed to
aide staff and faculty in understanding and applying the Marianist Charism to their work.
The Marianist Educational Associates program is an excellent example of such a
program. However, the scale of this program could be expanded to increase the numbers
of staff and faculty with this training. Building on each of their respective strengths,
Leadership UD and the MEA coordinators might collaborate to link the programs or at
least portions of their curriculum. In this way, they will ensure the critical link between
philosophy, values, and collaborative leadership.

Vowed religious leaders may be unique to the private religious higher education
setting. However, the influence of individuals deeply committed or “vowed” to
institutional values and principles are not uncommon at public institutions. While they
may not receive the same depth of formation around a central doctrine or dogma, within
many colleges and universities are those with extraordinary institutional wisdom who
serve to strengthen and model institutional values in their daily work life. In each of the public institutions I have worked, I was lucky to meet many of these individuals. They were as likely to be faculty as staff or administrators. Considering the large-scale generational turnover taking place in higher education, institutions will need to cultivate and foster the development of the next generation of these types of leaders.

2. While staff members described important early formative experiences with the Marianist philosophy, the faculty members were much more influenced by and oriented to their discipline and the expectations surrounding tenure. While this issue may be ubiquitous in higher education, changes in the tenure system to promote and support collaboration among faculty might help better align faculty work expectations with the institutional value system. This approach to supporting collaboration showed efficacy at the institutions studied by Kezar (2006). Other institutions may be wise to carefully examine the tenure process with a critical eye on how the process influences faculty work in relationship to institutional values and priorities.

3. While two staff members had significant experiences working with vowed Marianists, the third was strongly influenced by training received involving the Catholic and Marianist Philosophy of Community Living document. Not only did the staff member learn the principles of the document, he was also expected to apply the principles in his work with students. This document could be modified slightly for a broader faculty and staff audience and used as a part of new staff and faculty training. For current employees, the document could serve as the basis for departmental in-services on understanding the
Charism and philosophy, as well as discussions on application of the principles to specific work areas.

Guiding values or philosophies, while more pervasive at religious institutions, are not unique to these environments. Public institutions have formal and informal values and philosophies that surround their mission or purposes. As such, employees at public institutions would benefit from a “working philosophy” document that helps to build praxis around these core principles. Multiple strategies are needed to infuse this “principled-centered” practice campus-wide, particularly strategies that build on existing vehicles of employee development. For example, new employee training at the institutional and departmental levels could address application of institutional values, which could then be integrated into the employee supervision and evaluation system. Faculty members need a parallel system to encourage the adoption of institutional values into their daily work. Considering the nature of faculty responsibilities described earlier, it may helpful to articulate how the mission and philosophy can be or is being integrated into research agendas, teaching methods, advising practices, and service responsibilities.

4. Leadership UD could focus even more sharply on what it does best, helping participants through increasing knowledge of institution and its mission, culture, systems, and political environment; encouraging the development of relationships and building a network of “like minded” potential collaborators; and encouraging personal development consistent with the Marianist mission and collaborative activities. Additions to the curriculum could include: specific components on institutional culture and sub-cultures of staff and faculty; individualized learning plans where faculty and staff participants
construct their own objectives and are given a menu of learning opportunities; opportunity for coaching on specific elements within the learning plans; and more guidance for linking the program with their work.

To the broader higher education community, the creation of employee development programs (for staff and faculty members) presents an important opportunity for institutions to help build the knowledge and skills of their employees around institutional values. Particularly critical are those abilities needed to work collectively, which may or may not have been developed in their other formative experiences. As some of the participants of this study experienced, at their best, these types of programs may offer the opportunity for transformational change (altering not only what, but how they know). While transformational change may not have occurred with every participant, these types of programs provide an opportunity for normalization and socialization around collaboration as well as fertile ground for networks of relationships to be established. This dynamic alone makes the investment in development programs worthwhile.

5. Workload issues need to be addressed as the practice of asking faculty and staff members to continually do more is not sustainable. At some point, these employees will either burn out and become less effective or leave the institution. Either way, the mission of the university is not served. A careful study of institutional priorities and how this work is accomplished is needed. Based on what is learned from this process, the institution may consider reorganizing around these priorities and further reducing boundaries between departments. The literature also suggests that reorganizing key
support systems (such as planning and budget systems) to facilitate collaboration has proven successful. Essentially, the institution must come to terms with the ever-more-complex challenges to its identity and fiercely protect those core values that make the institution distinct and successful through creative and bold actions.

6. This study revealed the pervasiveness of the Marianist values and how this philosophy fostered an environment conducive to collaboration. The Marianist Charism reminds us of the importance of “investing in the heart” as many of higher education’s most significant aspirations—equality, trust, faith, openness, respect, risk-taking, and collaboration—involve emotional and relational components. As Parker Palmer (2008) suggested, these secrets to success are often “hidden in plain sight” (audio recording), obvious, yet illusive assets within every community that offer powerful possibilities in addressing the challenges before us.

Participants in this study believed that the mid-size and Marianist mission and philosophy were ideal or “organic” features for collaboration to flourish. As one might expect in a private and religious setting, institutional values and employee identification with those values were as pervasive in this case. However, these frames of mind were learned by the participants who had little, if any, previous experience with the values and traditions of a Marianist or Catholic institution (only one participant was even Catholic). Thus, the transmission of mission and philosophy was of equal importance as the mission and philosophy itself for these staff and faculty members. The participants learned two critical frames of mind that largely influenced their work: What is the central purpose of our work and how we do interact in order to accomplish that work? The Marianist
mission and philosophy had concrete answers for both of these questions and were reinforced formally and informally through the culture.

What lessons from this case might be helpful for, or transferable to the public sector of higher education? Is this same phenomenon possible at public institutions with less explicit value systems and without “vowed” leaders to model the way? The literature, and particularly the literature on collaboration among student affairs and academic affairs, would suggest that it definitely is possible. In fact, while there may be different challenges and obstacles at public institutions, the return to unifying core values and principles is exactly what is needed in public higher education (Morales, 2007). Two interrelated central lessons from this case that may be transferable to public settings include the importance of 1.) a unifying and guiding philosophy or purpose, and 2.) an institutional culture that fosters development of the heart (helping employees learn to work together across divisional boundaries).

An example of this important work in the public sector is under way at California State Northridge as described by Koester, Hellenbrand and Piper (2008) in *The Challenge of Collaboration: Organizational Structure and Professional Identity*. This recently published case study provides a powerful example of how institutional leaders at a public institutional helped to transform their institution through developing a unifying learning-centered vision. The key components of this process included “creating a unified vision” that “called on all staff and faculty, regardless of their designated work roles, to embrace a commitment to student success in their daily work life” (p. 14). In addition, institutional leaders (from the president, provost and other vice-presidents) encouraged and supported
a “new type of leadership…” that encouraged “collaborative, cross divisional work as the key to moving forward…” Through a clearly articulated common purpose and support to achieve these goals, organizational leaders at California Northridge “reinforced” collaborative activity already taking place and helped employees as well as units learn to work together toward these collective goals. This case, along with others like it, collectively serves as a promising trend toward a transformation of the public and private higher education workplace.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

Through this study I attempted to provide a better understanding of collaboration within this unique organizational context. While various issues were discovered, much more could be learned about this context, and particularly, the way the Marianist philosophy has shaped organizational culture and collaboration. The hypotheses presented here could be examined and tested through quantitative inquiry or longitudinal studies could follow faculty and staff through the process of coming to understand and apply institutional values.

In exploring the experience of faculty and staff members, a number of issues were uncovered that, while intriguing, were outside the scope of this study. One such issue was the influence of departmental subculture. As I interviewed the participants, I sensed that another dissertation could be written based on the experiences within the departmental setting. Subcultures within higher education are rich and vibrant; as such, the department subculture might present an interesting perspective into the work lives of staff and particularly faculty.
The Marianist context presented a number of unique insights that are reflective of this setting. They may or may not be generalizable to other Catholic settings. As such, this same mode of inquiry at other Catholic institutions, Jesuit, Franciscan, etc. might present quite illuminating, contrasting, as well as shared findings. In addition, more knowledge is needed about collaboration and institutional features that support collaboration in other higher education settings such as liberal arts institutions and community colleges.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Opening

You have been suggested to me as a person with experience in working collaboratively with other faculty or staff. Would you mind telling me about some of your experiences working in collaboration?

Formation Experiences

What influenced you to develop collaborative relationships at UD?

What does that term mean to you?

What lessons have you learned as a result of working in collaboration?

How has your work in collaboration changed over time?

When is it most appropriate to work collaboratively?

Please tell me about aspects of UD that may have influenced your collaborative work positively or negatively? (If participant needs more clarification, I would offer that there may be structural (organizational make-up, programs, incentives, etc.) or cultural (politics, campus ethos, departmental attitudes/values, etc.) influences to collaboration)

Did LUD play a role in your formation? If so how?

Closing

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

Do you recommend any other former LUD participants that I might speak with on this topic?
APPENDIX B: IRB

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2: research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior.

Project Title: Outcomes of a Leadership Development Program at a Catholic Marianist Institution

Project Director: Geoffrey Markland

Department: Higher Education

Advisor: Peter Matter

Rebecca Cali, Associate Director, Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

Date: 6/13/08

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications in the project must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT LIST

Faculty participants

Chris Hamm – 15 years at the institution

Nancy Johnson – 6 years at the institution

Mike Ober – 19 years at the institution

Staff participants

Tyler Hughes – 3 years at the institution

Cynthia Porter – 12 years at the institution

Paul Wideman – 28 years at the institution