Faculty Emeriti: Retirement Reframed

DISSERTATION

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By

Seth Matthew Fishman

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Ada Demb, Advisor

Dr. Leonard Baird

Dr. Antoinette Errante
Abstract

With the graying of the professoriate continuing and the massive number of baby boomers entering retirement age, universities and college administrations need to adequately prepare for retirement. This is beginning to cause some staffing shortages in the faculty pipeline as well as the loss of institutional history and professional knowledge. Unlike many employing organizations, most institutions of higher education provide some sort of opportunity for its retired employees to remain connected to the institution. For retired faculty, this often comes in the form of the emeriti status rank.

The overwhelming majority of faculty retirement research is focused on how institutions will manage the economic implications of retirement, particularly on retirement benefits and the financial costs to the institution. There has been little scholarship investigating the perspective of retirement from the individual and even less research in recent years. Recently retired faculty may have different expectations about retirement and the level of relationship they have with their former institution. This research examines this topic further.

This qualitative study contributes to the higher education literature by providing an in-depth analysis of 14 faculty emeriti from a large, land grant institution who retired within the past two to five years, explored their relationship with their former institution. Using the literature about adult development and the professoriate, a semi-structured, in-depth interview protocol was developed. Data analysis was conducted using a grounded
theory approach, with an emphasis on thematic findings. The resulting six main themes were: (1) the “nudge” toward retirement (motivating factors influencing the retirement decisions), (2) “no one owns your time”, (3) the unexpected (unanticipated events in retirement), (4) the continuity of scholarship activities, (5) new pathways in retirement, and (6) elements of the departmental and institutional relationship with the emeriti.

With these findings in mind as well as the previous literature, two categories of faculty, the Attached and the Unattached, and their sub-types were identified which provide a better understanding of faculty emeriti and the level of involvement, if any, they may wish to have with their former institution and department. A new transitional phase model of faculty retirement was created which provides a reframing of previous transition models. Three types of involvement opportunities and several institutional exemplars are discussed that can foster emeriti involvement.

The results may be beneficial for informing institutional policy, especially for human resource management, academic deans and department chairs. Lastly, there may be additional benefits for the retired faculty including greater satisfaction in retirement, improved mental and physical health, increased social networks, support for new endeavors and a continuation of their scholarship.
This is dedicated to all the educators in my life, beginning with my parents.
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the best roommate I have had. I am fortunate to have had that experience so late in life.
Now our parents have two sons who are doctors and consequently, both finally out of
college.

I want to thank the handful of scholars that have conducted research on faculty
retirement from the individual’s perspective; many of their works are cited throughout
my dissertation and some provided feedback in my early dissertation stages. Lastly, I
want to graciously thank the 14 emeriti from MWU for spending time with me. I hope I
represented their voices the best I could in this dissertation. I learned so much not only
about the academia but also about life.
Vita

1993......................................................Cypress Lake High School, Florida

1997..........................................................B.A. Mass Communications, Florida
Atlantic University

1999..........................................................M.Ed. College Student Personnel
Administration, The University of Florida

1999 - 2001 ...............................................Hall Director, Ferris State University

2001 - 2003 ...............................................Complex Director, University of Kansas

2003 – 2006 ...............................................Assistant Director of Student Life &
Recreation, Florida Atlantic University-Jupiter

2006 – 2009 ...............................................Graduate Teaching Associate, Department
of Educational Psychology, The Ohio State
University

2008 – present .............................................Graduate Administrative Associate,
Multicultural Center, The Ohio State
University

Fields of Study

Major Field: Education
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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

After checking his university email in his office, George penciled in an appointment in his planner to meet with doctoral students in a roundtable discussion. He is looking forward to sharing his life experiences and passing down his knowledge with this future generation of scholars, several of whom have already contacted him by e-mail to bounce some ideas around and get some feedback. After serving in the professoriate for 30 years, George is now an emeriti faculty member at West University and is well regarded as an authority in his discipline. He still reads his journals, contributes opinion pieces and book reviews and mentors several junior faculty in his field. He shares his small campus office with another emeritus faculty member whom he has forged a strong friendship with and stops by the campus emeriti center to see other friends. George visits campus weekly, which gives him something to look forward to. George enjoys feeling valued by his colleagues. He does not miss endless committee meetings and mounting report writing and enjoys his autonomy. He teaches a small seminar course every spring for some extra income at a local liberal arts college and to provide interaction with students. Though retired for five years, he still feels a strong connection to his department.
and former institution. He does not “feel retired” but rather has as though he entered a new chapter in his life.

Esther is a retired Professor emerita from East University. Her experience seems to be a contrast from George’s. In 2004, when she announced her retirement for the following year, she felt almost invisible in the department, often excluded from meetings, social events, and even informal water-cooler conversations. She taught at the institution for 15 years, having spent 15 years at another institution. She was well liked among her students and toward the end of her career focused more on teaching and service to the campus. Her college hosted a small reception for all retiring faculty members which had a poor turnout and seemed more like a mandated obligation than a career celebration. She was expecting more than a certificate and “good luck” comments. True, she was retiring, but she was not dead yet either! Except for an annual invite for a retiree luncheon, an occasional retired faculty newsletter and the annual fund raising campaign phone call, Esther does not hear much from her former institution. While she keeps current in her field, she no longer visits the campus and in fact feels a bit of resentment; she expected more as a “faculty emeritus.”

The baby boomer generation, born during the years 1946 – 1964, is the largest single sustained population in U.S. history with over 76 million individuals (AARP, 1999). Using US Census Bureau projections, Conley (2008b) calculated that beginning in 2006, 330 individuals turn 60 every hour. The early boomers are reaching their 60s and for universities and colleges, the graying of the professoriate has begun.
The flow of faculty in and out of academia has been on the higher education radar for over 20 years (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Chronister, Baldwin & Conley, 1997). With the increasing percentage of faculty retiring from their institutions comes many challenges for both the institution and the retiring faculty member. Institutions are concerned about replacing individuals who may have been renowned educators (Conley, 2008a). These faculty members may have had large research grants, held prestigious professional association titles and appointments, been award winning teachers and served their institution in a variety of roles. The number of faculty retiring may be greater than the number hired to replace them, thus creating a flow problem (Bowen & Schuster, 1986). The flow problem was more recently illustrated in Leslie’s 2007 report for TIAA-CREF. Based on the data analysis, Leslie (2007) noted “…that disciplines at the heart of the nation’s most pressing economic, security and health issues (biological, physical and health sciences, mathematics and business) are precisely those aging the fastest” (p.16).

The Effects of the Ending of Mandatory Faculty Retirement

A major piece of US legislation has set the retirement context for the professoriate at most institutions. In 1967, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) was passed which forbade discrimination against workers aged 40-65, protecting the individual’s right to work. One caveat was that the new ADEA law stated mandatory retirement was still acceptable if the employee was part of a pension plan, thus permitting employers the opportunity to force retirement of workers at age 65 (Clark & Hammond, 2001; Smith, 2001). Colleges and universities fell in this category as most institutions had
pension plans or were part of their respective state governments, which also called for mandatory retirement at age 65.

The ADEA was amended several times including the two important amendments in 1978 and 1986; the latter eventually leading to the abolishment of mandatory retirement in higher education. After much debate and two independent commissions investigating the merits of lifting the mandatory retirement age, an amendment to the ADEA ended a seven year exemption for higher education institutions (Chronister, Baldwin & Conley, 1997; Clark & Hammond, 2001). Effective January 1, 1994, faculty were no longer under mandated retirement age rules; they could work as long as they wanted so long as their institutional responsibilities were met satisfactorily (Clark & Hammond, 2001; Pappas & Goodman, 1997). The fears of the opponents about ending the mandatory age never came to fruition. Faculty are retiring at around the same age of 70 as before, though now they have the option of choosing when to retire rather than being forced to retire (Conley, 2006).

Emeriti Transitioning to Retirement

Unlike other professions, most institutions of higher education have what is known as the emeritus faculty rank for those who have retired, which allows future participation in the organization (Roman & Taietz, 1967). The emeritus title for most institutions has been purely honorific and often viewed as just a rite of passage into disengagement from their former role. Albert (1986) formulated a list of 39 rights and privileges that colleges and universities should grant to emeriti faculty members, a type
of “Bill of Rights for Emeriti.” His intent was to help guide universities in establishing relationships with the faculty emeriti of their institution. Albert’s list brought brief attention to the role of faculty emeriti (Mauch, Birch & Matthews, 1990, 1993). While some institutions may have been prepared to handle faculty emeriti, Mauch, Birch and Matthews’ (1990) research in the late 1980’s found that fewer than 50% of institutions surveyed had formal emeritus policies. Not much has changed as that percentage coincided with more recent findings by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (Ehrenberg, 2003).

Mauch et al. (1990) began raising the questions about the value of faculty emeriti, the importance of retirement and the effects this might have on both the individual and the institution. Many faculty are engaged socially and psychologically in their colleges, have professional affiliations and activities making the “quit cold turkey” retirement more difficult than it might seem (Leslie, 2006a, 2006b). Furthermore, it may be actually an unhealthy and painful transition (Leslie, 2006a). One faculty member stated concisely, “retirement is hard to accept for academics” (Leslie, 2006a, p.63). It is important to mention the three main predictors for retirement are an individual’s financial situation, their health, and level of satisfaction with their current job (Berberet, Brown, Bland, Risbey & Trotman, 2005; Hatcher, 2003). These will be discussed further in the literature review chapter.

Atchely (1980), as cited in Pappas and Goodman (1997), discussed the transition of retirement as having a honeymoon phase where everything seems wonderful followed by a period of either “disenchantment or stability” (p.4). Only small percentages of
people are able to walk out the door to retirement and be happy (Mauch et al., 1990). While no specific data on the number of retired faculty who later relocated after retiring was found in the literature, many may relocate significant distances. Often this is for medical reasons or to be in closer proximity with family (Mauch et al., 1990).

Examining the literature on faculty satisfaction with retirement, professors seem to be satisfied overall with retirement (Dorfman, 1992, 1997, 2009; Pappas & Goodman, 1997; Waltz, Craft & Blum, 1991). The reasons varied but common themes included more time with family, friends, and the ability to pursue personal interests. Some negative aspects mentioned included “…loss of contact with students and colleagues, loneliness, feelings of uselessness, lack of structure, and concern about finances” (Waltz et al., 1991).

Trends of Older People in the Work Force

The increasing costs of homes, travel, and hobbies have led to a realization that retirement may not be as attractive at the traditional age as before. People are working longer because the cost of leisure is much more than before (Baum & Ford, 2002). Most faculty have the benefits of leisure breaks between semesters, university holidays and summers off. Economists have hypothesized that faculty will therefore be more likely delay retirement than workers in other professions because of their flexible schedule allowing for greater leisure opportunity (Baum & Ford, 2002).

Health insurance offered to retired employees has continued to decrease while health costs have risen (Baum & Ford, 2002; Johnson, Mermin & Ressenger, 2007).
Health insurance has been a motivating factor for some faculty to defer retirement (Dorfman, 1997). Obesity rates continue to rise nationally which often lead to a decline in the health of the population. In 1995, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that 15.3% of Americans 18 and over were obese. In 2007, this number increased to 25.6% and the CDC predicts continued increases in obesity proportions which are directly linked to other chronic diseases including diabetes (Center for Disease Control, 2008). Emeriti faculty may not have the access to the recreational facilities and physical fitness programs which were available to them while employed at their former institution. Still, the baby boomer generation is healthier than the previous generation, allowing for increased opportunities to work later in life, especially if they need to work for financial reasons.

There has been a decrease in retiree defined benefit plans and an increase in retiree defined contribution plans (United States Department of Labor [DOL], 2008). The increased competition in the global economy has also been influential, which has forced both public and private sector employers to downsize, outsource or reconfigure their work force (Johnson et al., 2007). In addition, the American economy has become a major factor affecting faculty and the 2008-2009 recession has created a steep decline in the value of stock portfolios and other retirement funds will likely influence faculty to chose to work longer. One major investment firm predicted that the oldest baby boomers may need to work nine additional years to offset their losses from the 2008 – 2009 recession (Gandel, 2009). Universities and colleges continue to make modifications in
their workforce as they try to find ways to save money while still providing the necessary services espoused in their institutional missions.

Lifespan Transition

In 1971, the White House Conference on Aging sought to create the feeling that retirement was a good thing and that people deserved a period of rest and relaxation. Seemingly correlated, retirement communities sprang up in some places in the U.S., mainly Florida, where retired citizens could enjoy tropical weather year round and enjoy a leisurely lifestyle (Sterns & Kaplan, 2003). However, that statement was directed toward retirement of the baby boomer’s parent’s generation. Many different factors play more prevalent roles in the shape of “retirement” for the baby boomers. In addition, the gerontology literature suggests that adaptation to life transition constitutes a process that may change over time or occur in phases and is unique to the individual (Szinovacz, 2003).

Retirement is often seen as the reward for a successful career. Reaching this milestone is usually celebrated by the retirement party ritual and other tokens of appreciation. Sometimes these are seen as “initiation rituals” (Szinovacz, 2003, p. 12). Savinshinsky, in Szinovacz (2003, p.12), stated that formal ceremonies highlighting an employee’s official retirement are “formulaic, predictable and clichéd.” This in turn leads to individuals having little sense of acknowledgement, value or personal fulfillment. There is less of a focus on the entry of a new life stage and more focus on the termination of the work career (i.e. the retirement party) (Szinovacz, 2003). Thus, the retirement party
is more of a celebration of ending formal employment than recognizing a career and the person’s contributions. One key point is how institutions could better assist faculty in their retirement transition than just the requisite retirement “going away party.”

National statistics related specifically to faculty emeriti, much less the overall number of retired faculty, have not been kept. Most records are kept by an institution’s human resources department and many do not differentiate between retired faculty and emeriti (Mauch et al., 1990). A key piece of information would be determining how many higher education institutions even offer the emeriti title. The 2000 AAUP institutional survey of retirement policies consisted of 1382 colleges and universities. One survey item asked the participants about institutional policy regarding faculty emeriti titles, if they were even offered at all.

The survey results were:

in almost 85% of the institutions, faculty members who retire are eligible to have the title emeritus professor conferred upon them. In about half of these institutions, it is fairly routine for all retiring tenured faculty to have the title conferred upon them, while in the remaining half, the title is subject to the discretion of the university administration to confer the emeritus title. (Ehrenberg, 2003, p.1)

In the more popular trade publications, articles focusing on the “graying of the professoriate” have increased. Retirement has been the focus of several articles in the
Chronicle of Higher Education with a special section on retirement in 2008. Olson (2008) asked the question of how academic administrators can keep retired professors involved at their institution and June (2010) reported on faculty emeriti at several large institutions that were offering to work without compensation to assist their institution during the recession. Mainstream news magazines such as Time have also increased their retirement coverage and Business Week dedicated an issue on retirement, aptly titled, Rethinking Retirement (Business Week, July 13 & 20, 2009).

Research Goals and Questions

Retiring faculty, many of whom have spent a lifetime in academia now wonder what their retirement will look like. There are many questions to consider: 1) What activities should comprise of their last years of active faculty service? 2) What type of assistance would they like with the transition and to continue to contribute to their profession and their campus community, if they so wish? 3) Is there more to being a retired emeritus than just the honorific title? and 4) What will they do with themselves during retirement? The primary research question for this study is “How do faculty emeriti think about the value of having a relationship with their former institution?”

Several questions emerge and warrant further inquiry:

1) What does “official retirement” really mean to the emeritus/tae professor?
2) How do retired faculty feel about the emeritus/emeritae classification?
3) What are their opinions about the perquisites associated with the classification at their institution?
4) What are their greatest satisfactions during retirement?

5) Should this term and other concepts related to faculty retirement be redefined?

6) Given the responses for questions 2, 3, and 4, how might the institution involve the faculty emeriti in purposeful activities and keep them integrated in the organization?

Plan of Study

My dissertation will research questions 1-4 and offer commentary regarding questions 5 and 6 posited earlier in this chapter. I used Crotty’s (1998) four elements of research design for my structure. A constructivist epistemology and interpretivist/social constructionist theoretical perspective informed my research methodologies. Grounded theory provided the framework for my methods. I utilized qualitative methods, conducting in-depth interviews with retired faculty emeriti as my primary data collection, with a variety triangulation methods to not only assist with my interview validity and trustworthiness but overall data analysis.

The literature review outlines several lifespan transition theories; two, in particular, will play an integral role in the grounding of the research questions as well as assisting in framing concepts and future implications for practice and research. Continuity theory (Atchely, 1993) conceptualizes the importance of continuing activities and interests throughout a lifespan. A professor who has spent a long academic career most likely will want to continue with many of the activities associated with the professoriate that were enjoyed while eliminating those that were less appealing. This
“dumping” of undesired activities is known as selective optimization with compensation. Baltes and Baltes’ (as cited in Atchley, 1993) concept of selective optimization with compensation is a prime example of Atchley’s activity decision making concepts using continuity.

As individuals age, they tend to focus more on enjoyable activities where they feel competent and thus will focus more energy and effort in maintaining these activities and much less on others where they may little interest or less competence. Survey data of 134 future faculty retirees from a large research university supports this notion (Fishman, 2008). The faculty respondents had little interest in attending department meetings, sitting on tenure review or student admission committees but were much more willing to want to advise graduate students and serve on their dissertation committee. By engaging in this optimization, they often can adapt and prolong their personal interests, activities, and values throughout their life course. Atchely’s research has strongly suggested that the more one is involved with activities and interests, the higher level of satisfaction the person will experience in retirement.

Other associated concepts include Schlossberg’s (1989) mattering and marginality. Older people are just as interested in wanting to feel valued and important as younger people. Geriatric research has shown social networks in aging to be important, having positive affects on a person’s health and emotional well-being (Whitbourne, 2005). Older people also have a desire to make positive contributions to their community and want some internal fulfillment (MacManus & Tenpas, 1998; McCluskey, 1975).
Another consideration is how the role of faculty emeritus could assist with the role transition for that individual. Researchers have questioned whether the emeriti title could be used as an incentive to help faculty retire (Conley, 2006; Mauch et al., 1990). The status and benefits required to be a worthwhile incentive vary by institution and individual needs and is discussed in greater length in the literature review.

Significance of Study

Despite the burgeoning interest in faculty retirement, most institutions are lacking retirement organizations, programs and policies specifically for faculty emeriti. A handful of institutions have, however, recognized the importance of faculty emeriti and their collegial involvement, notably Emory University which established an “Emeritus College.”

The Emeritus College of Emory University was established in 2001 to "enhance the relationship between the university and its emeritus faculty for the benefit of Emory's educational mission as well as for the greater welfare of its emeriti and of the wider community." (Emory University, n. d.)

Other institutions have created emeriti faculty associations. A national organization, the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) was established in 2002 and headquartered at the University of Southern California (USC). The AROHE now holds an annual conference and collects survey data about the benefits, advocacy and recognition institutions provide for retired faculty and
staff (AROHE, n. d.). With only a limited number of institutions addressing the needs of
eremitted faculty, more institutions will likely need to revisit their emeriti and retired
faculty policies and do so in a quick manner. The benefits to both the emeriti and their
former institution have yet to be realized. Mauch, et al. (1990) advocated that old title of
emeritus can have a new meaning. This new meaning is explored in my research plan
outlined in chapter three.

This study contributes to the higher education literature by providing an in-depth
analysis of faculty who retired within the past five years, exploring their potential
relationship with their former institution. There has been little research on faculty emeriti
conducted in the past decade and there may be differences in what the new generation of
retired faculty expect in retirement than previous generations. The results may be
beneficial for informing institutional policy, especially for human resource management
and academic deans and department chairs. Lastly, there may be additional benefits for
the retired faculty including greater satisfaction in retirement, improved mental and
physical health, and a continuation of their scholarship.

Terminology

Baby Boomers: The baby boomers are those born between 1946 – 1964 (American
Association for Retired Persons [AARP], 1999).

Retired faculty: Differentiating between an active faculty member versus an inactive
faculty member.
Faculty: A 100% appointed university or college employee at a four year institution who holds a faculty title of assistant, associate or full professor.

Faculty emeritus: In 1980, Ciardi, as cited in Mauch, Birch, and Matthews (1990) defined a faculty emeritus as “…specific to academics, a professor (dean, president) who upon retirement retains the title of his tenure by formal order of his colleagues and under the same authority by which it confers degrees” (p.4). Ignoring the gender bias of Ciardi’s definition, many institutions adhere to this definition in which the emeritus title is an awarded one, while others use the term for all retired faculty, though this practice is less common. Essentially, the emeritus title is awarded for meritorious service to an institution which entitles the person certain rights and privileges associated with being an emeritus (Mauch, Birch & Matthews, 1990). The title will be interchanged with “emerita” – which refers to a woman and its plural, emeritae, throughout this paper.

Former institution: College or university from which the faculty member formally retired.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

During the next 10 years an entire generation of faculty will retire and a new generation will be hired (Berberet, Brown, Bland, Risbey & Trotman, 2005). University administrators are beginning to prepare for the wave of faculty retirements and are making attempts to predict the number of academic retirements for planning purposes. Retirement is often the primary reason new faculty are hired (Clark, 2005). Conley (2008) cautioned that there is a major public policy and leadership concern as large-scale retirement looms over most institutions and there is a need to regenerate the faculty workforce. Retirement is reshaping the faculty (Leslie, 2007). There are serious concerns about the impending retirements leading to a shortage in the workforce, a reduction that also includes a loss of skill and experience (Leslie, 2007; Sugar, Pruitt, Anstee & Harris, 2005). In addition, the retired faculty member is often left loosely connected to their former institution. Re-engaging these individuals could be mutually beneficial for the retired faculty member and their former institution.

In order to establish a conceptual framework illustrating the elements of this potentially valuable symbiotic relationship, an interdisciplinary approach is utilized. This
chapter reviews the literature on retirement, focusing on the individual, which can provide a foundation for discussing the emeriti’s relationship with their former institution. The literature review begins with a broad discussion of relevant US population and faculty aging demographics then segues into the factors surrounding individual retirement decisions. Next, a brief review of adult development and gerontology theories that provide a framework for the importance of transitional theories in retirement. With these theories in mind, an overview of the nature of faculty work is discussed. Together these theories provide the core foundation for research on faculty emeriti, though the literature specific to emeriti is quite limited. The institution’s relationship with emeriti is also discussed as it is an integral factor in the question of creating a symbiotic relationship between the faculty emeritus and the former institution.

Demographics of Aging

The definition and meaning of age has changed. The boundaries of “old age” have been extended as the life expectancy in America continues to slowly increase. Age as a numerical demarcation may be less important now than twenty years ago. Neugarten and Neugarten (1996) described the life cycle as being fluid and suggest that in the future, society will move toward accepting age as being irrelevant. Moody (2006) reclassified the previous terminology of “old”, formerly those 65 and older, to create new age ranges as our population not only ages but has longer life expectancy, categorizing those 65-74 as “young old”, 75-84 as “old-old” and 85 and over as “oldest-old” (p.5). Cohen’s (2002) phases of life model uses similar age-ranges as Moody with the last phase, the encore,
beginning when a person reaches their 80s. Adult development theories will begin to research those passing the 85 age plateau. Whitbourne (2005) has suggested that the oldest-old category will again be reclassified as the centenarians (those 100 or older) become a larger portion of the oldest-old population. Moody found the age demarcations useful as the needs of a 65 year old are different than those of an 85 year old but “acting one’s age” has become murkier to define. With increased physical health and a large population cohort, the Boomers may change the views of how a population ages physically.

To gain a perspective about the graying of the professoriate, it is important to have an overall picture of the demographics of aging in the US. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau (USCB), there were approximately 31 million people in the 65-84 age category and another 4.3 million aged 85 and over, comprising of 12.4% of the 2000 population (U.S. Census Bureau, [USCB] 2004). Then, the number of those aged 75 and older continues to increase; from 13 million in 1990 to an estimated 30 million by 2030 (Binstock, 1998). The baby boomer generation, those born during 1946-1964, is the largest single sustained population cohort in U.S. history with estimated 76 million individuals (AARP, 1999). The first boomers began to turn 60 in January 2006 and they will continue to celebrate their 60th birthdays at a rate of 10,000 each day, four million each year, for the next 18 years (Agewave, n. d.).

The Boomer retirement should double the elderly population in the US by 2030 (USCB, 2004). About 20 percent of the total US population is predicted to be over 65 in 2030 (Day, 1996). Binstock predicted the 85 and over population will increase from 3

18
million in 1990 to an estimated 8 million in 2030. The USCB’s most recent prediction from the 2000 Census estimated this number to be an even higher projection at 9.6 million in 2030 (USCB, 2004). The boomers are more educated, more likely to live in dual income homes, have fewer children, and be more racially and ethnically diverse than the previous generational cohort (Grabinski, 1999; Morgan, 1998; Strauss & Howe, 1997).

Faculty Demographics – the Graying of the Professoriate

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), in Fall 2005, it was estimated that there were approximately 3.4 million employees at degree granting institutions of higher education in the United States. There are about 1.3 million faculty members (approximately 38% of total employees) in instructional and research positions (NCES, 2005/2007). During the past 20 years, the number of retiring faculty members has been rising as the “graying professoriate” transitions to retirement.

Based on previous National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) reports, the average age of faculty has increased since 1987 (Conley, 2006). In 1987, the average age of the United States full-time faculty members was 47 and by 2003, this number increased to 50 with an even higher age (54) for tenured professors (Conley, 2007). In the NSOPF:99 report of 865 institutions with approximately 17,600 respondents (Abraham, Steiger, Montgomery, et al., 2002), 29% of full-time faculty that left their institution between fall 1997 and 1998, were due to retirements (Conley, 2006). In the NSOPF:04 report of 920 institutions with approximately 26,100 respondents (Heurer, Kuhr, Fahimi,
et al., 2005) retirements increased to 36% percent of those who left their institution between fall 2003 and 2004 (Nevill & Bradburn, 2006).

According to the NSOPF data in 2004, full time faculty aged 65 and over represented 6.4% of the professoriate (Nevill & Bradburn, 2006). This percentage has been slowly increasing during the past NSOPF surveys. A recent US Department of Labor Bureau of Statistics (2008b) report found that in 2006, those aged 65 and over composed of 3.6% of the overall workforce. This is projected to increase to 6.1% by 2016. In 2004, the faculty percentage age 65 and over was already greater than the number projected for the general population for 2016. At my own institution, approximately 40% of the faculty are eligible for retirement and this number is much higher in some departments (personal communication, Laura Gast, December 16, 2009).

Demographics of Work

In 2006, the average household income for those 65 and over was $37,982. Social Security contributed $20,804 or about 55% of that income (U.S. Department of Labor, 2008a). Rising incomes and Social Security allow the elderly to live independently of their families. There has also been an increase in the variety of assisted living opportunities including government funding elderly housing communities as well as independent age-restricted communities (e.g. 55 and older requirement) (Binstock, 1998; Pynoos & Nishilia, 2005). With these housing options, many of the elderly could still work at least part-time while living in different types of living situations.
Along with changes in demographics, there has been also been shift in the proportion of older people remaining in the work force. A July 2008 report from the US Department of Labor (DOL) revealed a 101% increase in the employment of workers 65 and older during the years 1977-2007, with the largest gain made by women. Older workers 75 and older, while only consisting of .8% the workforce, have increased significantly by percentage, a 172% increase from 1977-2007. The DOL report also cited an important trend in full-time versus part-time employment in older people who continue to work. Full time employment for workers 65 and over has now surpassed the number of part time workers, with 56% of older workers employed in full time positions. The report did not address those that did not work at all (DOL, 2008a).

The nature of work has also shifted in the US, affecting all age groups. From 1971 – 2006, the percentage of jobs requiring general physical demands has declined 11% (Johnson, Mermin & Resseger, 2007). However, there has been a greater increase in more stressful jobs requiring higher cognitive and interpersonal skills, an increase of approximately 35% over the same 35 year time period. Currently, over one-third of U.S. jobs require high level cognitive and interpersonal communication skills (Johnson, et al., 2007). This presents a challenge for older people who wish to remain in the workforce. There are fewer jobs requiring substantial physical demands, however the higher levels of stress associated with many of these available jobs may be somewhat problematic. While there is some loss of cognitive function as a natural result of aging (Baltes, 1993; Whitbourne, 2005), the hectic and stress-filled positions may be a much greater barrier
and move some older people toward retirement or less stressful part-time employment (Johnson et al., 2007).

In summary, the American workforce is undergoing demographic changes. The DOL (2008b) predicts that there will be an increase exceeding 80% of both workers aged 65-74 and the 75 and older category during 2006-2016. As mentioned, they also predict that these workers will comprise of 6.1% of the total workforce by 2016, up from 3.6% in 2006. Older workers may have more options for continued employment after they pass the official US retirement age.

Theories of Adult Development

There are many theories of adult development and they can be grouped into three broad categories. Adult development can be categorized as (a) psycho-social, usually as sequential models of development, (b) sociological, such as life events and transitions, or as (c) gerontological and relational models (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). The term “development” is defined by value judgments and in the Western world, development is seen as focused primarily on the individual (Reeves, 1999). Our ideas about biological aging tend to be negative and often associated with decline (Baltes, 1993; Whitbourne, 2005). The stereotypes we hold about the physical aging process are strong and prevalent within in our own psyches and are embedded in societal expectations and norms (Clark & Caffarella, 1999. p.5). Psychological perspectives examine an individual’s developmental process including the environmental effects that may shape this development. Life
transitions and events are a concept of the sociological perspective (Clark & Caffarella, 1999).

Psychosocial theories of adult development have received considerable attention since Erikson’s 1959 landmark book, *Identity and the Life Cycle*. Erikson’s model of stage development has undergone some minor modifications and remains heavily cited as the foundational work for adult development theories. Some models of psychosocial development include the better known sequential models of development (Erickson 1959; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee, 1978; Levinson, 1986) that are marked by either age parameters or the accomplishment of certain key tasks or responsibilities.

This section will briefly review of Erikson’s (1959) stages relating to adult development. Erikson’s eight stages are premised on each stage building upon the persons last one; a sequential accumulation of life-task resolutions which are highly influential in the next stage. Five of the stages are associated with adolescence and three stages are directly related to adult development. Each stage involves a crisis, which is some sort of dilemma as the main issue to be addressed during the stage. The first of the adult stages is intimacy versus isolation, during which an individual can emerge from the adolescence stages and begin to have serious relationships with others. Love is often associated with this stage. Generativity versus stagnation is the next stage and one that can be easily connected to the professorial life. In this stage, an individual is more concerned about the upcoming generations (e. g. parenthood or mentorship) and making a contribution to society than her/himself. For example, senior faculty find themselves
mentoring graduate students and junior faculty members and having a sense of fulfillment in doing so.

Lastly is the integrity versus despair resolution stage, one which according to Erikson, all older adults face. This stage is often seen as a summary of one’s life where an individual can either accept her/his life course or flounder in despair and regret. Carstensen’s socioemotional selectivity theory also states that an older individual realizes his/her time is limited and the older adult makes purposeful choices on how they selectively spend their time (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999). Cohen’s (2000) phase model of aging is similar, with a person in their 70s entering a life summary phase. However, with the extended longevity, a person’s 80s becomes the encore phase where they have some more opportunities to extend the life summary phase and repeat highlights from their 70s.

Levinson and associates (1978) research is founded on Erikson’s psycho-social beliefs and utilizes age defined periods in an individual’s life. His seminal book, *Seasons of a Man’s Life*, is grounded in Erikson’s last three stages. However, Levinson differs from Erikson in several regards. First, Levinson and Associates’ 10 year study yielded a life structure and this structure is composed of four eras (seasons), each with transitional periods. Instead of dilemmas, there are different forms of developmental tasks which are the priority in each era and as those tasks become less important, new ones emerge and become the new priority. Levinson bridges each era with transitions, usually lasting about five years, in which an individual can assess, reflect, and reassess her/his life within
society. Secondly, Levinson et al. establish age parameters for each transition and suggest that there are societal and environmental influences which affect the individual.

There has been some debate about Erikson’s model. Erikson has been criticized for a sequential life course approach to adult development where life eventually flows from one sequence to another (Levinson, et al., 1978). Others have argued that adult development is not linear and can be cyclical (Hudson, 1991) and specific to the individual. These criticisms are addressed in transition models (e.g. Sargent & Schlossberg, 1998). Life events may also be unique to the individual, such as marriage, or affect a larger group, such as survivors of a natural disaster or on a larger scale, the effects of a greater national event such as the Great Depression (Clark & Caffarella, 1999).

Critics of both Levinson and Erikson are vocal about their research subjects: predominantly men, usually white and middle class (Eysenck, 2004). Research from a woman’s perspective (e.g. Gilligan, 1982) has provided alternative models of women development, where their process is marked with connections to other people (Gilligan, 1982). Peck’s research (1986, p.280) integrated Gilligan’s work and stressed the importance of a person’s “sphere of influence” which not only included the importance of relationships but also of an individual’s socio-cultural identifications, an area overlooked in Erikson’s work. Both of these are cornerstones in a subcategory of adult development theories known as transition theories, discussed in-depth in the next subsection.

There are also important aspects of an individual’s identity that are main components of the psycho-social theories of adult development. Sheehy (1995) stated
when someone reaches age 60, that they should still plan for 20-30 more years of living. As mentioned earlier, most people age 65 and older are retired. Although, there is an increasing percentage of elderly maintaining a part-time job or even a full-time job; however they are still in the minority (Whitbourne, 2005). The AARP (1999) predicted this will shift as the “boomers” enter retirement. Many of the baby boomers can not even think of themselves retiring and the majority plan on part time employment after retirement (AARP, 1999). The concept of self-image suggests the framing of a person’s identity will affect their decision making process, as individuals will make choices consistent with their own personal identities (Barnes-Farrell, 2003). For example, a worker whose self-identity is clearly associated with his/her work or profession would likely prefer to continue in that role, even when there were attractive alternative opportunities available. It is no surprise that a tenured professor who has spent 20-40 years (or more) would have a very strong self-image as a professor.

Barnes-Farrell (2003) and Szinovacz (2003) suggested that role attachment is similar to self-image and is defined as the level of personal investment in a particular role. There is a substantial amount of time and investment placed in becoming a professor. The amount of formal schooling and productivity required for tenure track faculty to be a professor is extensive and varies by discipline, academic rank and status. On average, it takes seven years to be promoted from the untenured assistant rank to the tenure at the associate professor rank. Many more years are required to achieve the final faculty rank of full professor.
Feelings of self-worth tend to be associated with the ability to carry out a role effectively. This concept is very strong for those people in career roles. Sometimes the aging process can slow down an individual and this may even come suddenly which can lead to negative feelings of self-worth since they are not performing in the role the way they would like to be (Barnes-Farrell, 2003; Whitbourne, 2005). Individuals may try to compensate for these losses using several coping strategies including putting forth more effort and time toward an activity as well as eliminating other activities that no longer are as important or needed (Baltes, 1993). This tends to increase an individual’s internal self-worth and boost esteem, allowing for a person to continue in his/her role for a longer period of time.

When people retire, they are suddenly deprived of their employment satisfaction and try to fall back on other stimuli to fill in this large gap. Some elderly never had many personal interests and are suddenly left to figure out what to do to occupy their time (Scitovsky, 1976). They may spend more time with their established social networks including family which provide a supportive environment. However, those lacking social networks or family may find themselves at a personal crossroads (Atchely, 1989, 1999). Some will find the challenge of creating new social networks daunting and struggle while others will create new networks and/or find new activities leading to higher levels of satisfaction in retirement than those who struggled or did not form new social networks or maintain older ones. Often, this makes newly retired people prime recruits for a variety of age-based organizations including some with political advocacy agendas while other organizations are merely social or activity based (MacManus & Tenpas, 1998).
This also raises the issue of an individual’s family in relation to work. In an institutional survey investigating several aspects of retirement satisfaction, role identity and orientation appeared as major differences between retired faculty and full-time faculty. Dorfman (2002) conducted her research at a large private research university of retired and current professors aged 70-74. Dorfman found that those still employed were less likely to be married or to have children or grandchildren and were more strongly oriented to their professional role and professional ties outside of their current institution than their retired counterparts. This indicates the influence of family – those with a partner, children or grandchildren may be more inclined to want to retire in order to spend more time with their family while others with less family may be more likely to use their career to provide some social support.

Transition Theories

Levinson’s (1986) model of adult development sets the foundation for transition theory which emerges from the psychological adult development theories and focuses primarily on an individual’s life transitions. Transitions are the anticipated and unanticipated events which will alter one’s life. An example of an anticipated event would be retirement while an unanticipated event might be the sudden loss of employment. The more the event actually alters an individual’s role, routine, status, or relationship the more the individual will be affected by the transition (Sargent & Schlossberg, 1988). Zemke and Zemke (1995) suggested the more life altering the event

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1 May also be referred to as life course theory (e.g. Elder, 1995; Moen, 1996).
was, the more likely it could also be viewed as a significant learning opportunity. This may have potential positive or negative consequences to the individual. Some may not realize the effects of such an event immediately while other people may turn their negative behavior into positive behavior later in life.

Schlossberg (1987) created four categories to help predict how an individual would cope with a transition: situation, self, supports, and strategies. While the nature of events (situation) occurring may not always be within an individual’s internal locus of control (self), the way an individual responds (supports and strategies) to these life changing events is something that may be controllable. From the organizational literature, Bridges viewed an individual’s transition in an organization as a process (Bridges, 1991) as well as major events in an individual’s life (Bridges, 2004) and these transitions involved three phases. The first phase, *ending*, is letting go of something, such as a role or status, and creating a necessary ending. The individual is challenged with decision to let go. After this phase has occurred, it leads to the *neutral* phase where an individual realizes old habits and behaviors are no longer as useful or needed but new ones will begin to emerge. Individuals in the neutral phase expect to move directly straight to the new transition however this is rarely the case. Instead, the neutral phase may be one where the individual faces anxiety, ambiguity, mixed levels of motivation, and may feel confused about what is happening to them. Bridges (1991, p.5) referred to this phase as an “emotional wilderness.” It is also an opportunity to creatively explore new options. Once an individual has fully let go of the old ways, the third phase, *revitalization*, will occur. The revitalization phase allows the person to move forward with new endeavors.
with vigor and excitement, often with a new sense of purpose. The person reaching this phase now has successfully navigated the transition within the organization.

Two key components of Schlossberg’s transitional theory are the concepts of mattering and marginality. Mattering, simply defined, is a concept related to an individual feeling they are valued within a community and that they matter to other people. Marginality is when an individual feels socially isolated and not part of the community. The types of communities can vary but active involvement in personal and professional interests often lead to both formal and informal participation in these communities, thus most likely creating a mattering situation for the individual.

Theories of adult development derived from gerontology research challenge Erikson’s stages. An individual can lead a productive life, which may still include employment, and yet may not enter one of Erikson’s crisis stages. In fact, Levinson et al.’s (1978) age demarcations may be challenged as generation cohorts biologically age but redefine the age related societal norms (Neugarten & Neugarten, 1996). The next section will provide an overview of some key gerontology theories related to retirement.

Gerontology Theories of Aging

One of the earliest and most controversial theories of aging is Cumming and Henry’s (1961) disengagement theory, which espouses that aging is the normal transfer of power from the old to the young (Whitbourne, 2005). The old are seen as having nothing left to contribute to society and are a waste of resources. This view generated many alternative theories in direct response; one of the first critics of disengagement
theory was Havighurst’s (1968) activity theory. Activity theory stresses that people need to retain their activities from their middle age as they age to maintain higher levels both satisfaction in retirement and also personal health and emotional well being. Havighurst stated that an active individual can be a productive member of society.

Continuity theory (CT) was also a reaction to disengagement. Continuity theory’s main premise is that older adults will suffer from the negative effects of aging if they are not allowed to maintain their desired level of societal involvement (Atchley, 1989, 1999). Atchley supported his conceptualization of CT with a 20-year longitudinal study, which is often considered a seminal study in gerontology and well validated, though actual long-term replication has yet to occur. Schlossberg’s (1989) concepts of mattering and marginality are also useful when making a connection to activity and continuity theories from the gerontology literature.

Another important factor in gerontology is an individual’s level of self sufficiency. As mentioned previously, older people who live in their own homes are more self sufficient than those who live with family or in some form of housing assisted care (Atchely, 1999). More than 75% of today’s elderly are homeowners and of these, 80% own their home without mortgage debt (Chen, 1998). This is an important statistic with several implications related for retired faculty.

The first implication supports the concept of independence later in life. The American elderly are not migrating en masse to retirement homes. Instead, many own their own homes and often without debt. They have also planned more for retirement and have more options for relocating to an assisted living community where they can still
maintain their independence but do not have to worry about responsibilities such as home cleaning and maintenance (Pynoos & Nishita, 2005). This allows for some financial security without fear of mortgage foreclosure as many live on fixed incomes. Another important implication of this independence is that the retired person can maintain a connection to a community where they may have spent a significant period of time living. Additionally, home ownership can foster a sense of continuity as an individual can maintain a sense of normalcy beyond retirement and continue activities they enjoy in the familiar comfort of their home (Atchely, 1999).

There has been a drastic decline in recent years in Americans levels of organized involvement in associations and activities as well as interpersonal interactions (Putnam, 2000). This decline in social capital has attracted mainstream media attention and has been debated in the academic community, which has criticized social capital theory for a number of reasons including its promotion of a male dominated historical hegemony (Adkins, 2005) and as an institution of neo-liberalism (Law & Mooney, 2006). Individualized activities have increased, but these are often passive (e.g. TV watching). Putnam’s explanations could be criticized by stating that this decline may be because a greater number of retiree’s may likely not want to be active or involved. However, continuity theory offers a reframing of disengagement theory, suggesting that there may be no real crisis when retirement occurs formally and that people will want to continue with their previous life goals and activities (Atchley, 1999). This warrants a synthesis of the aforementioned retirement literature related to an individual to highlight how they may intersect.
Psycho-social, transitional and gerontological theories have several overlapping elements. Erikson remains the foundation from which the transitional theories emerged. Schlossberg’s mattering and marginality concepts in their simplest form could be another stage in Erikson’s adult development epigenetic stages or a “season” in Levinson’s work. Erikson’s stage, intimacy versus isolation, addressed the importance of relationships and suggested that a lack of important relationships leads an individual feeling isolated from their environment. This is very similar to mattering and marginality where if a person believes they matter, they are more engaged in their community and with other people, but if the person feels marginalized, they feel isolated and likely disengage.

Disengagement theory is also a component of mattering and marginality as well as Erikson’s stages. The main premise with disengagement theory is that older people eventually disengage themselves from society, allowing the younger generations to take their place in society while the older people become marginalized out of their own volition. In Erikson’s generativity versus stagnation stage, some strands of disengagement theory are present as the individual is more concerned about assisting the future generations. The process, however, is more of a gradual separation than a disappearance and this appears as part of Levinson’s seasons.

Continuity theory stresses the importance of maintaining personal and professional interests, is more congruent with Cohen’s (2000) phase model of aging where instead of being pushed a side, older people should remain active contributors to society. They are likely to choose to engage in selective optimization, reducing or eliminating those activities that they no longer enjoy as well as modifying those that
challenge them more from a physical perspective. Bridges (1991) view of transitions
having a letting go phase to create a necessary ending is found in Baltes (1993) notion of
selective optimization. Sometimes a person can no longer physically or mentally perform
certain tasks so they will end those but find a suitable replacement activities that share
similar qualities and characteristics of the previous activity. For example, a person may
no longer be able to maintain their full time job as a secondary school teacher because of
mounting health reasons, but may volunteer in a variety of programs that have
interactions with children, such as teaching in a religious weekend school or an after
school reading program. The individual would still be continuing with the activity they
enjoy (also an example of continuity theory) while also feeling like they still matter to
others. They also continue to identify with their role of being an educator, which is a
form of role identity discussed previously in the adult development theories section.

Social and Economic Context for Retirement

The factors determining an individual’s retirement relate to the person’s life
circumstances. The most cited predictor variable in determining when someone will retire
is the individual’s financial situation (AARP, 1999; Ehrenberg, 2003; Szinovacz, 2003;
Whitbourne, 2005). There are additional reasons why people 65 and older do not retire:
(1) enjoyment of work, (2) feeling useful, (3) being productive, (4) regarding work as an
obligation, and (5) maintaining health insurance (Szinovacz, 2003; Whitbourne, 2005).
These five reasons play an important role in an individual’s decision about retirement
though there may be other possibilities unique to the individual.
Hatcher (2003) suggests three additional reasons that may affect retirement decisions. First, they may be forced out. Even though this is now illegal based on age (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2008), people may still feel and perceive a pressure to leave. Second, they have a feeling of discouragement in the labor market. The person may not believe he/she could get another job if they left their current one for reasons such as lack of knowledge, skill sets, or fear of the unknown. Lastly, does the decision remain a choice? Hatcher’s last reason is also known as personal control theory. This suggests that people want to maintain control over their living situation and be able to make their own decisions (Barnes-Farrell, 2003). People with adequate retirement savings have greater flexibility and control over retirement while for others, work is a financial necessity.

It is important to acknowledge the economics of retirement for the general population. Earnings may eventually decline with age, thus becoming an incentive to retire (Costa, 1998). Of course, there are exceptions, including people who are union members and in universities and colleges where length of tenure often increases salary. Earnings often peak between ages 50-59, an age range during which many faculty have earned the title of full professor (Schuster & Finklestein, 2006). Many older people continue to work so they can accumulate more money or Social Security entitlement. The welfare of society at a particular time can influence retirement decisions as well (Whitbourne, 2005). A recession may keep more people in the work force so earning income can continue during an economic lull. Other people may inherit money from their families creating more financial security. Another retirement reason may be to receive the
benefits from the government that may be greater than if the individual were still working; this situation is prevalent after the age of 70 (Costa, 1998).

The type of occupation is very influential in predicting retirement. The less physical the job and the more flexibility it provides (e.g. flexible work schedules), the lower likelihood of retirement (Costa, 1998). Thus, the self employed or those in white-collar jobs (i.e. college faculty) tend to continue to work while blue-collar workers will likely retire earlier. Phased retirement or part-time work may also be viable options for those who do not have the physical energy for a full-time job but still have the abilities to do their job on a reduced schedule.

Another factor considers the job market conditions. Some people retire because they were laid off from their job, which often occurs in the declining industrial sector, and these individuals would rather retire than find a new job. Some elderly do not want to work part-time because the wage they receive was not what they had earned before. There may be some issues of prestige and personal value that play into this factor (Day, 1998). For example, retired faculty may be hired at the adjunct rate, which may be significantly lower than even their rate for teaching additional classes in summer while still part of the regular faculty before retirement.

On the whole, retirement is a relatively modern phenomenon. The rising middle class’s ambitions to plan for retirement early in their working careers has produced the leisure factor (Costa, 1998; Hudson, 2005). It is becoming more socially acceptable to retire for leisure reasons, broadly defined as time spent on activities excluding employment or self-maintenance (e.g. health-care, food shopping). Retirement can be
purely free time where one can choose what to do even if that involves doing nothing at all (Day, 1998). There is a difference in the cost of leisure activities; some are quite expensive (i.e. golf) while others are free (i.e. a library membership). The increasing costs of homes, travel, and hobbies have led to another realization; retirement may not be as attractive at the traditional age as before. People are working longer because the cost of leisure is much greater now (Baum & Ford, 2002).

Thus, there are a variety of interrelated factors that can assist in predicting general retirement trends however it is important to note the unique circumstances for each individual. These circumstances, such as life events, relate to the psychosocial adult development models previously discussed. Dynamics captured in gerontology theories of CT and activity theory also are present in Szinovacz’s (2003) factors, such as feeling useful and being productive. The relationship between the factors that predict retirement when combined with the psychosocial adult development and gerontology theories of aging can be related to trends in the work force.

The Nature of Faculty Careers

Knowledge of the faculty career is relevant for providing a framework for future emeriti research. Faculty are generally salaried professionals who normally have longer career preparation than most other professionals; with the nature of doctoral programs, they tend to start their academic careers at a later age (Sugar et al., 2005). They also are more likely to structure their life around their profession, which makes retirement difficult for many (Schuster & Finkleman, 2006; Sugar et al., 2005). The faculty career
may not always have been seen as linear and may be composed of a cycle where personal and professional identity, achievement and activity level are constantly negotiated as an individual pursues new interests or goals (Ferren, 1998). External events may also influence a professor’s career path, sometimes causing a deviation or hiatus where deep reflection and reassessment may be needed. One late career faculty member stated, “I think about retirement with some fear. I don’t have a clear alternative to what I’m doing. ...I would need an outlet for my energies” (Ferren, 1998, p.21-22).

Faculty members normally have terminal degrees in their respective disciplines. After finding their tenure track position, they spend an enormous time preparing themselves for tenure. Tenure defined and its relevance to the career path of many faculty will now be discussed.

In 1940, The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) published a document defining tenure and academic freedom known as the 1940 Statement of Principals on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

Tenure, briefly stated, is an arrangement whereby faculty members, after successful completion of a period of probationary service, can be dismissed only for adequate cause or other possible circumstances and only after a hearing before a faculty committee. (AAUP, n.d.)

The AAUP has been the leading authority for defining tenure (Aper & Fry, 2003; Plater, 2002; Helms, Williams & Nixon, 2001; Wales, 1996). Their definition of tenure
has also been endorsed by over 200 higher education groups (AAUP, n. d.; Wales, 1996). The purpose of tenure is also important to define.

Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], n.d.)

The tenure tradition is designed “…to reward the senior faculty so they can be innovative, controversial, and use their time to mentor junior faculty or take an active role in university governance and community initiatives.” (Helms et al., 2001, p.332).

Tenure is not without its critics, which include academic administrators, legislators, the general public and even former university presidents (e.g. Trachtenburg, 2008). The forms of criticism include concerns for the deteriorating education of undergraduate students while faculty immersed themselves in research, neglecting their classroom duties (Kerr, 2001; Rosovsky, 1990). The widespread creation of post-tenure review is to serve as a check on the faculty, often directed toward older faculty (Aper & Fry, 2003; Plater, 2003).

As of 2003, tenured or tenure track positions composed of 68% of full-time faculty appointments while 32% were faculty not on the tenure track or at institutions with no tenure system (Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007). When an individual earns tenure, they normally are “promoted” in rank to the associate professor title. A full professor is the last rank available and many associate professors never become full professors for a
variety of reasons. Many associate professors are satisfied with their role and have little interest in achieving the full professor promotion.

Individual Factors Affecting Faculty Retirement

Ferren (1998) utilized a life history methodology to further explore retirement satisfaction. She collected data from 20 senior faculty members approaching retirement, ranging in age from 55-66 and split equally by gender. Some had spent over 25 years at their institution while others worked in another career prior to academia. They were either tenured associate or full professors representing a variety of relationship status. All 20 came to the university to teach and received a great deal of satisfaction from student interaction and valued the mentor-mentee relationship (Ferren, 1998). This study illuminated some reasons associated with decisions about retirement. These reasons included (1) feeling productive, (2) did not want to see the program suffer, (3) tired of being isolated, (4) not sure what other alternatives they had, (5) or they had seen themselves less motivated or slipping off from their level of self-expectation.

Faculty in research-focused institutions are more likely to delay retirement and work longer than those in teaching-focused institutions (Lozier & Dooris, 1991). This could be because it is quite difficult for an individual to have access to university facilities such as laboratories as well as assistance such as graduate students, research assistances, and other types of staffing. They may also find their work still meaningful which may motivate them to continue their research. This behavior correlates with one of the predictor factors of retirement, the meaningfulness of their work and feeling productive (Szinovacz, 2003; Whitbourne, 2005). There is also the continued social
network and peer group that can validate one’s contributions (Atchely, 1999). Job security is another factor, which is often interrelated with an individual’s health and financial situation. Ferren cited a 1990 Carnegie Foundation study that reported that faculty who had a positive work experience at their institution were much less likely to want to leave higher education. This supports one of the retirement factors previously mentioned, work place satisfaction, which predicts that an individual satisfied with their work environment will be less likely to retire (Szinovacz, 2003).

Berberet and associates (2005) analyzed data collected from approximately 2000 individual faculty respondents at 40 four-year institutions, all whom were 50 years or older. They found that 98% were intellectually stimulated in their particular field, 94% believed that their contributions had a positive impact at their institution, and that 88% had favorable teaching evaluations. Their survey also investigated possible reasons to delay retirement and possible reasons to retire early. The top three reasons to delay retirement were: high work satisfaction (90%), financial and other incentives (83%) and rising health costs (83%). These findings reveal that work satisfaction is a major variable influencing retirement, confirming the retirement factors literature mentioned earlier. The possible reasons faculty take early retirement included sufficient income (84%), feeling burned out (73%) and work environment dissatisfaction (69%) (Berberet et al., 2005). The institution they retired from (which will be referred to as “former institution”) directly influences the individual’s work environment and how the individual feels (morale) is an important part of a large institutional organization (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002).
Faculty morale may also be used to predict retirement decisions. Quality of life is an important consideration for retiring faculty. Johnsrud and Heck (1998) conceptualized several dimensions which matter to the quality of contemporary academic work life. One dimension is professional priorities and rewards, defined as how faculty manage their job responsibilities, including time, and how they believe they should be rewarded for accomplishing their priorities. Another is the quality of benefits and services, which includes salary and other associated benefits as well as campus perquisites and support for their professional priorities.

Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) later proposed three additional dimensions that mattered to faculty member morale. The first dimension, engagement in their work, includes a faculty member’s level of enthusiasm, intellectual stimulation, satisfaction in their work and having a sense of shared purpose. The second dimension, their sense of institutional regard, includes a faculty members perception that he/she is valued by the institution and that his/her research is important and supported by their institution. This could also be classified as loyalty to the institution. The last dimension is the personal sense of a faculty member’s own well-being, which is concisely defined as one’s level of personal morale. Johnsrud (1996) as cited in Johnsrud and Rosser (2002, p. 524) defined morale as “… the level of well-being that an individual or group is experiencing in reference to their work life.”

Merging institutional regard into priorities and rewards, a new category can be formed which focuses on forms of rewards. The engagement with work dimension can be merged with well-being of the faculty member, creating a dynamics of morale category,
highlighting the relationship between personal well-being and engagement with work. Benefits and services remains, thus providing a synthesized model. This model, or the original dimensions of Johnsrud’s research are important considerations in retirement planning and each retiring faculty member will place different value on these.

Faculty Emeriti

The results of Ferren’s (1998) interviews showed that some faculty did not even know the meaning of the emeritus title and thought it was just purely an honorific appointment. This impression of it being solely honorific is where the emeritus definition gets muddled and the debate of the emeritus title purpose dates back as far as 1967 (Roman & Taietz, 1967). While it may seen as just a title for some, it is also used as an incentive to help faculty retire (Conley, 2006; Mauch et al., 1990; 1993; Roman & Taietz, 1967). Thus, the status and associated useful benefits of being an emeritus/ae would be required for it to be a worthwhile incentive and these benefits vary by institution and individual needs.

Institutions use different criteria in selecting those to receive the emeritus/emeritae title. Petrowski’s (2000) two-year college faculty emeritus survey found that the person’s length of term as a faculty member was the leading criteria and 15 years was the minimal average length of service. Approval was needed by the board of directors in almost every college as well, though Petrowski questioned why this occurred. Mauch, Birch and Matthews (1990) stated that often length of service is the determining factor on whether someone is awarded emeritae/tus status. More recently, Conley’s
(2007) institutional survey for the AAUP found that 82% of four-year institutions surveyed conferred the emeritus title. This was confirmed by my 2008 document analysis of emeritus title appointment at 11 large Midwestern research institutions. One school had a minimum age requirement; several had required years of service of ten years; another had no requirement other than formally retiring from the institution; and one school required the faculty member to be eligible to collect his/her pension according to the state retirement program. Conley also found that 47% of institutions routinely awarded the emeritus title to all retired faculty and in most cases, the emeritus title was awarded by university administration through a process typically initiated at the academic department level.

The emeritus title may not even be considered a distinguished rank because of different institutional interpretations (Mauch et al., 1990). Also, there may be multiple definitions of faculty emeritus within one institution. Some institutions had extremely selective criteria when bestowing the emeritus title and those who received it still had the expectation of contributions to the university (Mauch, et al., 1990). In those circumstances, the faculty emeritus was treated like a part-time faculty member and provided with all the same support that they had while being full-time.

Perquisites that May Involve Emeriti

Institutions typically offer retired faculty some sort of perquisites, also known as “perqs.” These range in financial value and utility. Some are purely honorific gestures such as recognition at a yearly banquet or inclusion in a campus directory. Other perqs
include discounted or free campus parking, discounts to campus activities and events including athletics, and retaining the same discounts and privileges as full-time faculty.

Many institutions may provide the emeriti continued opportunities for furthering their scholarship activities. These perqs include library privileges, university e-mail accounts and campus computer access, computer support, academic software, office and laboratory space, research assistance, and travel grants. Scholarly perqs appear to vary greatly by institution. One of the earliest advocates for improved benefits and perqs for emeriti was Albert’s (1986) article in Academe. Albert (1986) stressed a need for some consistent perquisites and privileges in higher education institutions (e.g. to attend faculty meetings, to have the same access to library materials as full-time faculty, etc.). Mauch et al.’s (1990; 1993) seminal work highlighted the plight of the emeriti/a faculty and supported Albert’s call for more useful and meaningful perqs and privileges to help keep the emeriti engaged with their former institution.

Implications of Faculty Emeriti

The faculty emeriti literature is sparse and only one seminal research study has been conducted that was framed in psycho-social terms, specifically adjustment, life patterns and Atchely’s continuity theory (Dorfman, 1997). The limited research on retired faculty has been focused on the economic implications of retirement, mainly from the effects retirement will have on the institution’s finances and future staffing (Clark, 2004; Leslie, 2006b, 2007). Lane (as cited in Dorfman, 1997) moved away from the institutional focus and advocated more research on the adjustment and life patterns of
retired faculty. After conducting several interviews on emeriti for the AAUP, Maloney (2007) also stated more scholarship is needed in this area.

This section will use Dorfman’s research as the center point, reviewing individual factors related to emeriti retirement. In a mixed methods longitudinal study of retired professors from different institutional types, Dorfman (1997) conducted qualitative interviews and survey assessment over a period of 11 years, (1979-1989) with 203 faculty participants from a variety of institutional types. The median age of the participants was 73, most were men and 86% of men were married compared to 22% of women; though the number of widowed women was not reported. Personal finances among the participants varied immensely. The average faculty retiree annual income was $19,500 and males had nearly double the income of female retired faculty. There was also large dispersion in retirement income range among the participants, with individual differences less than $1000 to greater than $100,000. The majority of professors rated themselves in good physical health.

Dorfman (1997) had utilized continuity theory in her studies and found it to be a prevalent theme from the retired academics. The key to satisfaction seemed to be the continuation of the favorite aspects of faculty life in retirement. Four out of five of the participants continued some level of professional work during their retirement, including teaching, research, professional association involvement, mentorship, lecturing, and consultation. Additionally, retirees who remained in their community (as opposed to being relocated against their desire by family members or because of failing health) had high levels of satisfaction in retirement. There was also a minority of retired faculty that
maintained two residences during the year and were also satisfied with retirement. A faculty member’s non-academic interests may also influence the retirement decision. Bahrami (2001) suggested that as a person preferred to pursue more leisure-type activities, he/she would likely retire sooner than someone who had less of a preference or less interests.

Another interesting finding was that retirement satisfaction was correlated with health and financial well-being. Those who were in good health and had adequate financial savings were more satisfied with retirement. This supports the previous notions about the importance of an individual’s financial situation and their associated physical health (Hatcher, 2003). Ferren stated that most faculty member’s greatest financial asset is their retirement accounts, many with over one million dollars accumulated (Ferren, 1998). As mentioned in chapter one, the baby boomers are living longer and are healthier than previous generations.

Chase, Eklund and Pearson (2003) also conducted qualitative interviews with 33 emeriti. Their data analysis supported other research on the reasons faculty retire: health decline and freedom to enjoy retirement. Some negative attributes emeriti reported about retirement included detachment from their academic activities, loss of contact with friends, loss of income and loss of academic opportunities, such as research and student interactions. In other categories related to the individual, Dorfman (1997) did not find any clear pattern of evidence of gender, marital status, volunteer involvement, and non-academic leisure activities as having an effect on retirement satisfaction.
A quantitative study of approximately 500 faculty members age 56 and older yielded findings on several variables related to the institution and the individual. Bahrami (2001) analyzed data utilizing a model which incorporated an individual’s financial and personal factors as well as institutional factors. Confirming previous research, financial factors were correlated at a statistically significant level with an individual’s retirement decision; if a faculty member believed they would have adequate income in their retirement years, they were more likely to retire sooner.

The person’s perception of his/her relationship with their former institution is important. Dorfman’s research suggested that the professors who maintained an association with their former institution were more satisfied with their retirement than those who did not. If the institution provided formal structures to encourage involvement after retirement, almost all emeriti participated in varying levels of degree. Professors from the sciences were often less satisfied than their counterparts in other disciplines. Typically this was attributed to the lack of laboratory spaces and laboratory support provided to them upon retiring. One 72-year old retired scientist summarized the overall science emeriti sentiment about lack of lab space with “…a scientist must be able to work.” (Dorfman, 1997, p. 137).

Chase, Eklund and Pearson (2003) represent one of the few recent research projects on faculty emeriti and they take an affective, or emotional reaction approach toward their research. They conclude in their review of the faculty emeriti literature that a significant portion of the faculty emeriti have difficulty in adjusting to retirement. About one-third of Dorfman’s participants reported difficulty in their adjustment to retirement.
as well. In their survey of 87 emeriti, 39% had feelings of detachment from their faculty
detachment feelings. Forty-three percent also said they
sometimes missed their scholarly community. Fifty-nine percent of the participants
missed being involved with students, confirming other findings about missing student
interaction (Dorfman, 1997). Schlossberg’s concepts of mattering and marginality may
help in providing an explanation; faculty may feel marginalized from their previous
academic community and struggle with their own role identity. Havighurst’s activity
theory would confirm that the feelings of loss associated with retirement could be
attenuated by engaging these faculty in student activities.

The participants in Chase et al.’s study who still taught classes part time had
significantly higher levels of satisfaction in their retirement transition than those who no
longer were involved with their former institution, providing more recent confirmation of
Dorfman’s 1997 findings. A faculty member’s perceived teaching effectiveness was
highly significant and Bahrami (2001) suggested that psychological work satisfaction
would delay retirement. Dorfman (1997) also found similar results; individuals who felt
they had a decline in their teaching abilities were more inclined to retire sooner than
those who felt they were still productive. Some institutions offer faculty an opportunity to
reduce their teaching and service loads as part of a phased retirement.

Over one half of Chase et al.’s qualitative interview participants stated they would
be interested in volunteering part-time at their former institution, up to four hours per
week. Berberet et al. (2005) supported Chase et al.’s findings and their research has
suggested that faculty have a desire to maintain connections to their former institution including serving in volunteer roles.

It is important to note that Dorfman’s research is dated and that replication of her work may yield different results with the current generation of retired faculty. In addition, the number of female emerita should now be greater than during Dorfman’s study, due to the overall gender demographic shift. It could be speculated that there is more opportunity to have larger numbers of retired female faculty and this may present an line of research inquiry as their needs and desires will likely differ than men (Gilligan, 1982).

The Former Institution

There is a serious concern about the loss of knowledge and skills with the upcoming wave of retirements (Clark, 2005) as well as the loss of institutional history (Berberet et al., 2005; Glazer, Redmon & Robinson, 2005). How do universities respond to this “brain drain”? This section will review the literature on institutional responses.

Argyris (1964) stressed the importance of the need to integrate the individual with an organization so that mutually compatible outcomes could be achieved. Organizations provide the opportunities an individual needs to achieve goals and through acculturation, these goals usually are in congruence with the organizations goals (Argyris, 1964). Faculty wish to contribute to the scholarship of their discipline, disseminate knowledge through teaching and research, prepare future generations of students, and serve their profession and their institution (Boyer, 1990). Likewise, the mission of colleges and
universities is similar except it is achieved by the institution as a whole, versus a collection individuals operating independently of each other (Kerr, 2001).

Research on retired faculty has been predominantly based on economic impact issues such as salaries, health benefits, and retirement plan costs to the institution (Sugar et al., 2005). Retirement has garnered attention from many universities for a multitude of reasons, though mainly for the fiscal, budget, and staffing implications. A major debate is the cost-benefit issue of keeping older faculty. A common perception is that older faculty members are more costly to maintain because they have higher salaries and likely poorer health, needing more sick leave and raising health insurance premiums than their younger colleagues (Sugar et al., 2005). The debate about replacing older faculty members has been heated for a long time; especially in the 1980s with the Age Discriminating in Employment Act of 1967 legislative amendments ending mandatory retirement (see discussion in Ch 1).

Many institutions have considered cost-savings measures and have viewed replacing tenured professors with new junior faculty or adjunct faculty as one of cost savings. Another cost saving measure would be a reduction to retirement annuity contributions, which may save money for the institution but may also delay faculty retirement (Ferren, 1998). However, as junior faculty salaries continue to increase, senior faculty members may no longer cost more. The project and laboratory start up costs for junior faculty members will likely be more costly as well (Sugar et al., 2005).

Phased retirement, which offers faculty a time period to phase out of full-time employment and transition into retirement, has had mixed reviews (Allen, 2004). While
the administration gains the knowledge of when a faculty member will actually retire for human resources staffing and financial savings purposes, the individual considerations are sometimes overlooked. There are psychological effects of phased retirement, mainly faculty member feeling marginalized within their outgoing department. One faculty member in a phased retirement program interviewed by Leslie & Janson (2005, p. 239) stated feeling like a “lame-duck”, “Our colleagues treat us differently – they know exactly when we are retiring and that we no longer have tenure…” Thus, the question begs, can phased retirement plans be used to achieve a more desirable age pattern in the faculty to help create some sort of balance? (Clark, 2005).

Ferren (1998) concluded her working paper with 10 recommendations, the last being the importance of encouraging retired faculty to stay engaged with their former institution. Ferren (p.28) called on campuses to provide significant opportunities for retired faculty beyond the “…limited perks of opportunities of parking privileges, Faculty Club memberships and theater tickets.” Her examples of involvement included compensated special project work, consultation on strategic planning and opportunities to continue to do research. By doing so, the retirement transition will be smoother and the institution will not immediately lose it is vested human capital. Bland and Bergquist (1997) suggested more professional development activities for senior faculty to ensure their vitality as productive faculty members nearing retirement. Their review of the literature concluded that older faculty members scholarly contributions were no different in quality than younger faculty members, though for those employed at research institutions, the older faculty members were producing less research but contributing
more in other scholarly ways. This is another example of selective optimization (Baltes, 1993) by the senior faculty members as they choose to pursue different scholarly contributions.

Perhaps it is time higher education reintegrate the emeriti back into the collegiate family. While Ferren (1998) reported many of the participants strongly identified as members of their campus community, they seemed unlikely to seek further connection to the campus after retirement. This contradicts the literature stating that most faculty want some sort of connection to their former institution (e.g. Berberet et al., 2005; Chase et al., 2003). This disconnect could be attributed to several reasons: (1) they may have moved to another geographic area and are no longer living in close proximity to campus, (2) the lack of or limited perquisites offered to emeritus faculty may actually make maintaining a campus connection difficult, or (3) they feel they need to “quit cold turkey” and leave behind their former career. While this list is not exhaustive and purely speculative, more research about maintaining campus connections is needed so that institutional leaders can decide the nature of relationships it would like to have with their emeriti and revisit their institutional policies to ensure these policies are reflective.

To summarize, there are three urgent issues for academic administrators to address with the looming baby boom faculty retirement wave. The first is the balance of the faculty composition between junior and senior faculty. Second, is how to implement effective programs addressing the needs of the forthcoming faculty retirees as those are different than past generations of retirees (Sugar, et al., 2005). The last issue is how institutions plan on replacing lost talent and expertise.
Conclusion

The emeriti/ae may go through stages, transitions and reconsider aspects of their personal and professional identity, which may also be intertwined. There is a process of letting go, reformulating life patterns, and creating a new beginning; together these processes reorient and reinvigorate people when life may seem to be changing all around them (Bridges, 1991). Some people will try to continue the activities they enjoyed previously and attempt to find some comparable pursuit if necessary to compensate for the loss of interest or loss of ability to perform certain activities (Baltes, 1991). There are various scholarship activities an emerita/tus may pursue, depending on interest and availability/access to such interests.

The institution also undergoes types of transition as well. If the senior faculty all decided to retire in a short time period, the institution would suffer from a loss of continuation, institutional history and traditions (Ferren, 1998). Ferren added there is value in having senior faculty to help socialize the younger faculty to the institution and to their respective profession. This loss could greatly hinder the campus community of scholars. Institutions are beginning to realize the potential benefits for involving emeriti as part of the campus community.

Some institutions have established emeriti centers (e.g. Emory, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Southern California, Indiana) and emeriti organizations continue to form to help connect the emeriti with their institution in meaningful ways beyond the token annual luncheon or notation in a campus phone book.
(Glazer et al., 2005). The Big 10 Retiree’s Association meets annually to discuss issues relating to retired university employees including faculty emeriti and share best practices from the different campuses (University of Michigan, n.d). In 2004, Indiana University dedicated their emeriti building, a small campus building that hosts events and provides a formal place for the emeriti to utilize (Indiana University, 2009). However, these schools are still the exceptions and it is too early to state this level of emeriti involvement as a trend.

Further investigation of the possible benefits to having a mutually symbiotic relationship between the institution and the emeriti may be warranted. Several lines of inquiry should be undertaken. First, what benefits would the emeriti believe they are gaining from a re-engagement with their former institution? Second, what resources is the institution currently providing to foster the emeriti relationship and third, how the emeriti are utilizing these, if at all? Fourth, using continuity theory as the grounded inquiry line, what type of activities and opportunities would the emeriti wish to participate in? Fifth, how could these opportunities become implemented and what are the institutional policy implications. Finally, how would these findings compare to previous emeriti research and what new findings could contribute to the faculty retirement literature. These are further elaborated upon in the next chapter involving the research methodology and design.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The methodology chapter is formulated around two main purposes: (a) to describe methodology and methods that will guide the proposed inquiry, and (b) to explain the criteria for their selection (Crotty, 1998). This chapter first explores the epistemological assumptions and theoretical perspectives that provided the investigation’s framework. I then elaborate on my methodology and associated methods of data collection. Finally, a review of the ethical considerations including researcher reflexivity conclude this chapter.

It is worth restating my main research question, “How do faculty emeriti think about the value of having a relationship with their former institution?”

There are several other related questions as well:

1) What does “official retirement” really mean to the emeritus/tae professor?
2) How do retired faculty feel about the emeritus/tae classification?
3) What are their opinions about the perquisites associated with the classification at their institution?
4) What are their greatest satisfactions during retirement?
5) Should this term and other concepts related to faculty retirement be redefined?

6) Given the responses for questions 2, 3, and 4, how might the institution involve the faculty emeriti in purposeful activities and keep them integrated in the organization?

The methodology chapter of a research proposal comprises of four key elements. The first element addresses the epistemological assumptions of the researcher to then inform the theoretical perspective(s). These theoretical perspectives ground the methodology which provides the framework for the actual methods of data collection (Crotty, 1998, p.6). Crotty stated that by utilizing these four elements when conducting research, a greater level of “soundness” can be ensured, thus making the research outcomes more credible.

**Framing Epistemology: Constructionism**

An epistemology is essentially a framing of how we know what we know. For my study, I have selected constructionism where knowledge is created by being constructed and interpreted by people interacting with their environment. Knowledge is not objective truths waiting to be revealed. We construct meaning and our notions of reality and these can be defined in infinite ways depending on the person (Corbin & Holt, 2005).

Adorno (1977) stated the knowledge construction process is an exacting fantasy, where there is a degree of imagination mediated by some actual object, creating an interpretative balance. This balanced approach works best for my research questions as little research has been conducted on the “why’s” and “how’s” of most aspects of faculty
retirement, especially in regards to the individual emeritae/us. Constructionism provides a sound foundation for informing my study.

Theoretical Perspective

Patton (1990, p.67) stated that, “how you study the world determines what you learn about the world.” Theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance lying behind methodology, providing a context for the research process, its logic and associated criteria (Crotty 1998). Crotty discussed how there are different ways of viewing the world and these inform the different ways the world is researched. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.22) stated that research “… is guided by the researchers own set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22). I have selected interpretivism which seeks culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world (Crotty 1998). I take an interpretive and social constructionist philosophy which guided my methodology.

Social constructionism is relativist and once accepted, we hold our own understandings more lightly and tentatively and less absolutely. We see these understandings as historical and cultural interpretations rather than eternal truths (Crotty 1998). I take the perspective that knowledge is socially constructed, that people construct knowledge within a particular social context, rather than as an individual creating knowledge independent of society and with tabula rasa. My connection with the literature review, particularly the different adult development theories which are constructionist theories, was influential in the development of my interview guide. My research study
involved in-depth interviews which allowed me the opportunity to explore the voice of my participants, both as individuals and as a group. This assisted with my interpretations and understandings of their experience related to my research questions.

A Grounded Theory Methodology

Before delving into defining my methodology, I want to explicitly state that my research design is qualitative. Qualitative research does not privilege one methodology over another (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationships between the researcher and what is studied and the situational context that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Thus, the researcher is concerned about how social experience is given meaning (Adorno, 1977). As the researcher, I am interpreting the interpretations of the experiences of the research participants, linking my interpretative, social constructivist theoretical perspective with my methodology.

I primarily used a constructivist grounded methodology. Grounded theory is based on qualitative data gathered and collected through research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory has no predetermined theories underlying the perspective and belief system (Corbin & Holt, 2005). It can be presented “…as a well codified set of propositions or in a running theoretical discussion using conceptual categories and their properties” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.31).

There are some differences from the initial grounded theory definition from Glaser and Strauss published in 1967. In fact, both Glaser and Strauss have had different
interpretations since their seminal book, *Discovery of Grounded Theory*. The most relevant is the shift in where grounded theory informs methods and data analysis. Charmaz (2002) noted the major change as the emergence of a constructivist grounded theory which adopts grounded theory as a tool but deviates from the earlier objectivist, positivist assumptions.

As previously stated in my literature review, there is little recent work investigating retirement from the perspective of the retired faculty member. Thus, grounded theory is an excellent fit as it allowed me to generate concepts, both analytical and sensitizing and assist the reader to see and hear vividly the people in the studies (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). I used grounded methodology to further explore what retirement means to these faculty emeriti and conceptualize emergent themes.

I did not want to search for a priori theory in my analysis; a priori may force a researcher to arbitrarily categorize data into the certain preconceived notions. However, it is important to recognize the usefulness of a priori theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fook, 2002; Huberman & Miles, 1994). After my data analysis, I returned to relevant a priori theory from my literature review chapter to determine if any of those may be useful in my analysis, particularly theories of adult development (e.g. Erickson, 1959; Levinson et al., 1978), transition (e.g. Bridges, 2004; Schlossberg, 1988) and gerontology (e.g.

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2 I recognize that the use of the word “themes” is not present in Glaser and Strauss’s grounded theory and is seen as an ethnosemantic activity, but I take concepts and assign them categories which then are merged into categorical themes.
Atchely, 1991). These provided a framework for aiding in concept development and comparing and contrasting the data findings to the literature.

Grounded theory provides the ability to generate basic concepts which provide the framework necessary to develop and update the literature of one or more disciplines (Corbin & Holt, 2005). In generating theory, the researcher creates conceptual categories or their properties from the collected data – the data that helped create the categories can also be used as illustrative examples (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Fook, 2002). A category can stand alone while a property is an element of that conceptual category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Fook, 2002). Categories can be borrowed from existing theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Emergent categories prove to be the most relevant and best fitted to the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

From these categories and concepts, theory can be posited (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Strauss and Corbin distinguish between two types of theory: one type is based on data obtained from one context while the other type is formal, gleaned from several contexts. Grounded theory allowed me the opportunity to “…connect a multiplicity of perspectives and patterns and processes of action and interaction…” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.280). I was then able to analyze my interviews to determine if I could create one (or more) of Huberman and Miles’ (1994) type of theories (excluding grand theory because one study can not establish such a theory): maps, predictive patterns, a model, or a network of linked concepts. Grounded theory allowed me the flexibility to choose a multitude of theory formulation options.
There is an emphasis on the studied phenomena versus the methods of studying it (Charmaz, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Thus painstaking line by line, word by word analysis and strict rigorous procedures which tried to establish grounded theory in the same realm as objectivist and positivist perspectives is no longer as relevant in the constructivist grounded theory, which places more emphasis on the conceptual categories and what is gleaned from the data collection. I did not want to spend my time analyzing the positivist “1000 pages of data” question that Kvale (1996) lamented about but instead use grounded theory to “do more with less data.”

Methods

My primary method was semi-structured interviews. Constructivist researchers advocate for open-ended interviews to uncover meaning making from the interview participants (Warren, 2002). Using the semi-structured approach incorporates the open-ended questions. In general, inquiry methodology has no universal rules (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) nor is there a particular standardization among qualitative methods (Kvale, 1996). I particularly prefer semi-structured interviews because it allowed me the opportunity to not only ask related, follow-up questions but also provided the flexibility to ask questions that may only arise because of the nature of the conversation and emergent details. I also believed it allowed for more of a “dialogue” and this is a personal preference.

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3 Patti Lather, personal communication, March 31, 2009.
Weiss (1995) compiled seven reasons why a researcher should conduct qualitative interviews and six of them are applicable to my proposal. These include (1) developing detailed descriptions, (2) integrating multiple perspectives, (3) describing process, (4) developing holistic description (how the processes inter-relate), (5) learning how events are interpreted, and (6) bridging intersubjectivities.

Developing detailed descriptions and integrating multiple perspectives was paramount in my methods. Through interviews, you can learn about an individual’s inner opinions. We can learn how events affect their thoughts and feelings. We learn meaning through their relationships, families, work and sense of self (Weiss, 1994). “…concerns very personal matters such as an individual’s self, lived experiences, values and decisions, occupational ideology, cultural knowledge or perspective” (Johnson, 2002, p.104). [For a review of the history of the interview, see Platt (2002).]

Johnson and Weller (2002) conceptualized the interview process as follows. First, the items to be discussed must be created in some sort of format depending on the methodology and methods chosen. Next is the task of arranging the interview which utilizes the items to create an elicitation from the participants where information is conveyed and uncovered. The analysis and interpretation of the interviews concludes the process. While this is a very simplified model of the interview process without regard to much of the prior planning, literature review and overall project goals, it provides a basic structure.

However, this process may change for each individual. For example, “prior interview questions may become irrelevant in light of the changing context of meaning”
This occurred in my process. Thus, questions from the item list were rearranged, eliminated, reframed, and new ones created. These adjustments are congruent with constructivist grounded theory as the researcher is very close with her/his data and I transcribed and analyzed my interviews in less than 10 hours after each interview as to maintain the immediacy of the interview. This allowed for emergent design for future interviews as well as reflexive opportunity to review my findings and begin to identify emerging themes. In addition, all of my participants had the semi-structure roster of questions in advance so they could prepare if they wanted to. All but two of my participants reviewed the questions beforehand.

As part of the interview process, I used in-depth interviews which required the researcher to delve deep into the knowledge and information seeking process compared to other methods such as surveys or focus groups (Johnson, 2002; see appendix for interview questions). Johnson (2002) identified four key elements of in-depth interviews. First, the interviewer seeks to learn the deep level of understanding that the participants have. The informants become the teachers. Second, they allow the interviewer to go beyond the common sense understanding to uncover what is often not seen to create greater understanding about the investigated experiences. Third, in-depth interviews can unveil our own assumptions and preconceived notions. Fourth, in-depth interviews provide the ability to articulate multiple views and meaning making about events, activities, objects and our surroundings. By using this method, I had a better understanding of my research questions as well as further explore issues and experiences.

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4 They cited my letter of participation and our phone conversation was self-explanatory enough.
the faculty emeriti participants faced. Lincoln (1997, p.44) implored the researcher to find ways for our participants to “be with us” in the co-creation of knowledge, even if the outcomes involve a differing of opinion. Theory could be co-constructed between the researcher and participant (Charmaz, 2000) and joint construction of meaning is inevitable (Mishler, 1986).

There are also several considerations specific to interviewing an older population. Wenger (2002) provided some of these considerations. First, self image and esteem are affected by decline in physical capacity and changes in personal appearance. The actual interview may boost a person’s self esteem as the individual believes he/she contributed to something useful and that someone felt they were important and valuable. This may be related to the Hawthorne effect where observed employees were more productive when they were knowingly observed by researchers and felt temporary improvement in their self esteem when they were interviewed (Landsberger, 1958). Second, the choice of the interview site selected by my participants may also be revealing. For example, homes of older people may offer many clues of their earlier lives such as photographs. For the two home interviews I conducted, this seemed true.

However, I was aware of making any interpretations and instead used these artifact clues for conversation and rapport building. Third, self disclosure was very important to establish with older people. The reciprocal relationship was important (Wenger, 2002). Fourth, the interviewer can find it difficult to end interviews since the interviewee wants to contribute and this experience may be one where the interviewee feels like he/she is making a societal contribution. We communicate in stories (Mishler
Sharing stories is an important aspect of generativity and passing down knowledge to the younger generations is seen an important contribution (Erikson, 1968; Whitbourne, 2005).

There are additional considerations the researcher should have in mind when interviewing older people. Their living situation is an important consideration; are they living in their own home, an apartment, in some sort of assisted living facility, or with family members. Another consideration is their level of individual control and dependency. The lives of people living on their own are quite different than those dependent on others (Wenger, 2002). I allowed my participants to select the location of the interviews as well as the time and date. Nine interviews occurred in coffee shops or restaurants, two in their homes, and three on campus. I used e-mail for any follow up questions or clarifications I had.

Research Design

With the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods established for my research, it is important to briefly discuss some of the foundational issues related to designing a research project. A research design specifies how the investigator will address the critical issues of representation and legitimacy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Strategies of inquiry comprise of skills, assumptions, and practices employed by the researcher and how they are put into action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A priori research design could hinder the introduction of new knowledge. Qualitative
research usually has built-in flexibility to account for new and unanticipated empirical data (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In addition, the social context of where interviews take place should not be controlled as it would in a standardized survey interview (Warren, 2002). The relationship established between the researcher and the participants is essential to implementing the research plan. “The interviewer’s goal is to solicit the informant as a collaborative partner in the sense of meaning making and interpretations that flow from the interview process” (Johnson, 2002, p.112).

The aspects about my research design including participant selection, research timeline, data management, role of the researcher, ethical considerations and some limits to the research design will be discussed. In addition, representation and legitimacy will also be explored in the upcoming sections.

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling to obtain my participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Jones, 2002). Participants were selected from a Carnegie classified large Midwestern Research-Intensive institution and initially contacted by e-mail and a formal letter. A follow up phone call took place in instances where some emeriti did not have consistent e-mail access, if they were not checking their university e-mail address or if the letter were misplaced or undeliverable.
I did not use age as the main criteria of my selection process but as one of the factors. Instead, I recruited participants that have been retired for two to five years and were no longer employed at MWU. This provided me the opportunity to investigate “recent” retiree’s that are not in the first year of retirement which is often seen as a honeymoon year (Agewave, n. d.). I also only interviewed participants that lived within reasonable driving distance (e.g. approximately an hour).

My initial intentions were to conduct interviews with emeritus professors in the following three areas: (1) professional school (e.g. law, education, engineering, business), (2) sciences including medicine, and (3) arts and humanities, including the social sciences. I had hoped for 10-12 participants, but surpassed that number with 14 emeritae/us participating.

The campus human resources office provided me a list of all emeriti faculty who have retired from “MWU” (Midwestern University, the pseudonym chosen to represent the institution) from 2003 – 2007. I eliminated from the sample those who lived out of state and those who were not teaching faculty, such as administrators and extension agents. I was left with 61 possible participants, 31 in the sciences, 20 in professional schools, and 10 in arts and humanities. With the potential to have an overrepresentation of science faculty, I only contacted 20 of the 31, choosing those who lived closest to me. I contacted all remaining emeriti in the other two categories. I had five participants from the sciences, five from the professional schools and four from the arts and humanities. I received enough participants by e-mail to satisfy the number I wanted for the sciences.

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5 Often, professors are hired back, usually as part-time faculty but in some circumstances on a full-time, temporary basis.
and professional schools. I followed up with the arts and humanities professors with formal letters and phone calls, neither of which netted any new participants.

A follow-up e-mail proved more effective and I was able to obtain the four in arts and humanities. Two arts and humanities professors declined participation while three had invalid postal addresses and these same professors did not have valid phone numbers on file. I never heard back from one professor at all. Thus, approximately 23% of the emeriti contacted participated in my study. The rate of participation for the sciences was approximately 16% while professional schools were 25% and arts and humanities was 40%. A combination of e-mail and phone calls were used to arrange the schedule the interviews which were conducted between October and December 2009. There were four women and 10 men with their average age of approximately 68\(^6\). Table 3.1 provides a brief overview of my 14 participants. More descriptive information about them is provided in the beginning of chapter four.

\(^6\) Some have had their birthdays occur since the interviews occurred, however the age stated in the dissertation is their age at the time of their interview.
Table 3.1: Interview Participants Sorted By Gender and Then By Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name*</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Current Age</th>
<th>Relationship status</th>
<th># of yrs retired</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th># of yrs at MWU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitsouko</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith</td>
<td>Allied Medicine</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vega</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow</td>
<td>Vet Medicine</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Single but w/ “lady friend”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* all pseudonyms
Data Management

This section briefly provides information about data transcription and storage of my information. All interview participants were given pseudonyms and all personal information de-identified from the data. In addition, all data files (including but not limited to fieldwork notes, interview transcriptions, and document analysis) were encrypted and stored on an encrypted computer hard drive. Digital audio recordings were de-identified and coded and secured in a locked cabinet. Digital audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of the research project. All written material including transcripts of the audio tapes was securely stored in the locked cabinet. I was the only one that had access to the codes and data.

Data Analysis

I used thematic analysis, which is consistent with grounded theory development (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 2005; Fook, 2002; Huberman & Miles, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thematic analysis explores emergent patterns in the data. These initial patterns become developing categories which change as other patterns and themes emerge. In order to most efficiently and effectively analyze my data, I utilized Huberman and Miles (1994) 13-point procedural framework. This framework begins with descriptive analysis points such as notation of patterns, clustering, frequency counts, variable reduction, comparisons and concludes with more abstract points which lead to the formation of a theory and comparing this theory to the current literature. Fook (2002, p. 90) stressed the relevance of using procedures such as Huberman and Miles’ by
pointing out, “…grounded theories are never developed in a vacuum, but ultimately in relation to current thinking and discourse about a phenomena.”

My study participants chose the location of the interview. The interviews occurred in a variety of settings, most in local coffee shops\textsuperscript{7}, though three interviews were held on campus and two in the participants homes All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed within 10 hours or less after the interview occurred. I transcribed verbatim, though I did eliminate “uhhhs, ummms” but left other semantics intact. Since I was transcribing verbatim, almost all the emeriti were not interested in reviewing their own transcripts, though several had interest in hearing about general themes or ideas. One offered to read my entire dissertation draft while another provided feedback to the last chapter.

I kept a journal tracking my thoughts on the interview process as well as interesting concepts, points, and ideas which were fresh in my mind after each interview. I used an emergent design with my set of semi-structured questions. This enabled me to make some minor adjustments on how I worded the questions or the order they were in.

For example, after the second interview, I noticed how Arthur made the distinction between his relationship with the institution and his department. I made a note to ask my next interviewee, Vega, about the department if she did not mention the distinction. From that point on, I specifically inquired about their relationship with their department, as an emergent theme was that the emeriti made clear distinctions between the two. Arthur’s interview also made me realize that I should provide a list of the

\textsuperscript{7} Panera’s Bread Company
perquisites they could receive as emeritus/ae. Almost all were unaware of the perquisites, so I provided the list after the interview or by e-mail for their own reference and received some feedback as well.

I read the set of transcripts two days after my last interview to reacquaint myself with my participants, especially the interviews held six weeks earlier. I then read them again, but this time making notes in the transcripts about themes, concepts and ideas. Based on my advisors suggestion, I read them by gender and by age to see if any particular themes emerged that may be gender specific or age specific. I then read the transcripts a fourth time with an eye toward discovering if there were any differences between emeriti with academic administrative experience (department chair or higher) and those who never held a formal administrative role.

I used Miles and Huberman (1994) as my main source to assist with my data preparation and organization and Huberman & Miles (1994, p.432) 13 tactics to generate meaning list to guide my data analysis. I also utilized Erickson’s (1986) assertion-warrant-disconfirming evidence pattern to present qualitative data in authoring the data analysis chapter. My intent is that the data analysis has an engaging narrative flow and that the reader will be able to get a sense of the different personalities, experiences, and insight that my participants shared with me.
Reflexivity as a Researcher

As researchers, we are often transformed by our research experience interacting with our subjects, who may become respondents and then participants, and perhaps as co-creators of knowledge (Lincoln, 1997). Our own engagement may involve transforming from the outside researcher into the personal friend and confidant of our participants. Guba & Lincoln (2005, p.210) provide a succinct definition to reflexivity, “reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher.”

As a social constructionist researcher, I considered my past interpretative frame, life history, personal interests as well as the research setting, relationship with my research participants, field experiences and my methods (Charmaz, 2005). In addition, I kept a reflexive journal throughout not only my interviews but also during my interview analysis. This also assisted in my efforts to understand the effects of my own lived experience. I utilized bracketing techniques (see Ahern, 1999, for a guide list; Crotty, 1996) to assist in organizing my personal feelings, preconceptions and potential biases as I conducted my interviews and later my interpretations and analysis. While some may state that bracketing can help the researcher suspend her/his personal beliefs (Holloway, 1997), Ahern (1999) stated it is more important to honestly assess and have awareness of one’s own life experience and how it may influence the research process.

It is as important to recognize what the interview accomplished and how it was accomplished (Holstein & Gubrium, 2002). My journal documented my interview process and allowed me to reflect on the experience and also make minor changes in my next interviews (if applicable) which grounded theory encourages as part of the interview
experience (Corbin & Holt, 2005). I also kept track of my bracketing list as well as worked through issues such as the politics of representation as I had progressed.

The researcher becomes a “conduit” for making their research participants voices heard (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.26). Some sage advice for interviews which coincided with my constructivist grounded methodology was to go along with the flow of the interview and recognize that tangents are acceptable and may yield rich data (Johnson, 2002). After completing my interviews and reflecting on each interview, I found this to confirm Johnson (2002)’s advice.

Presentation of Self as Researcher

I also believe it is important to be upfront about how I presented myself as a researcher. There is a redistribution of power in an interview relationship as the interviewer often seems to hold the power position during the interview session which may greatly differ from the relationship between interviewer and interview outside of this setting (Mishler, 1986).

I did have the advantage of being aware of and utilizing my dual membership as a researcher entering the world of academia (Adler & Adler, 2002). This benefitted me by being more able to understand some of the terminology relevant to a professoriate career. It also allowed a level of comfort to my interviewees, who are well aware of the dissertation process I am undertaking.

However, there were some disadvantages to my situation within academia. At times, I felt like I may know what my interviewees were trying to say before they said it,
but I never went as far to complete their sentences. My embeddedness as a doctoral student in higher education along with my prior professional work experience in academia also created more opportunities for me to misunderstand and misinterpret what I heard, but this did not cause me to ignore potential probing questions because of my own assumptions. I felt focused on each interview and tried as much as possible to ask the right questions, even when the answers seem predictable as to minimize researcher bias. I recognized my own situation within academia and proceeded diligently, reminding myself that each interviewee is unique. I kept a reflective journal about the process involved in each interview so I could self-monitor, make adjustments, and grow as a qualitative researcher conducting my first large scale project.

I am quite personable but a potential downfall is that I often have a difficult time understanding the difference between what is seen as a short term friendship of convenience and more long term relationships with those I interact with. Interviewing in a person's home casts the researcher “…with an aura of friendship” (Adler & Adler, 2002, p.58). This was helpful though in some follow-up discussions, as some of my participants seemed to look forward to reading parts of my dissertation.

Another area that I personally ascribe to is what is sometimes known as feminization in interviewing (Oakley, 1981). In post modern interviewing, researchers can show their human side, answer questions and express emotions (Fontana & Frey, 2005). I have a difficult time being the passive, neutral, objectivist interviewer, homage to my background as opinion writer. I am not interested in authoring a positivist realist tale with an omniscient author who is not present in the research write up (see Foley,
1997, for a review of realist tales in qualitative research). However, I rarely interfered during the interview, even if some of the emeriti went off topic or on a tangent, as I felt those may yield some insight or nuggets of rich data. Our small talk before and after the interview proved very useful in getting some initial feedback.

Gilligan’s (1982) ethic of care is grounded in the considerations of compassion and nurturance. An empathetic interviewer becomes an advocate, hoping to ameliorate the conditions brought forth in the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). To learn about people we must treat them as people (Oakley, 1981). Wenger (2002) also advocates being prepared to be generous with my time as my older participants were generous with their time. I sent thank you e-mails to all my participants, and one by mail. This also allowed them an opportunity to provide any additional feedback if they had any.

Ethical Considerations

This section briefly addresses some ethical considerations including the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and privacy and confidentiality. As mentioned earlier, there is power and control in the traditional interview process where the interview asks questions and the subject provides answer, thus delineating clear roles and boundaries (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Piper & Simmons, 2005). This can lead to the possibility of emotional costs in interviewing, often brought to light by the depth of the interview with its exploratory nature and this can be stressful for both the interviewer and interview participants (Magolda & Weems, 2002; Warren, 2002). Interview participants may not

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8 Initially, none provide any additional comments after the interview though I contacted several for clarifications.
fully reflect on the interview at that moment in time but may do so in the near future and wonder what resources are available to them. As such, each research participant received a list of their MWU perquisites; many were unaware of these and were appreciative of this list.

Institutional Review Board

The purpose of the IRB is to protect respondents from “invasion of privacy, breaches of confidentiality or anonymity, and distress caused by topics raised by the interview process itself” (Warren, 2002, p.89). IRBs are to protect the research subjects first then the institution (Christians, 2005; Lincoln, 2005). The IRB also protects the institutions sponsoring research from possible law suits (Adler & Adler, 2002). My research design conformed to all the standards set forth by the OSU IRB and my IRB proposal was reviewed and approved.

Privacy and Confidentiality

There are privacy and confidentiality issues for both the individual and the institution. “Water-tight confidentiality” has proven to be impossible (Christians, 2005, p.145). Pseudonyms and disguised locations often are recognized by insiders or can be leaked out by those associated with the research. However, I still used them as they allow an individual the opportunity to discuss more sensitive information. My participants selected their own pseudonyms and the institution was given the “MWU” pseudonym as well. Participants were not identified by their specific department and instead, were
classified in generic colleges which may not reflect the actual organizational structure of the campus but are representative of where such departments likely would be housed at large universities.

Written records produced during the course of the study were archived by research participant pseudonym in a locked file cabinet. All word processor and other computer files (including interview audio recordings) were archived by pseudonym, to CD-ROM media. Handwritten notes and journals were also stored in the same cabinet. The data CD was labeled by code and kept in the secure cabinet. All personal information from my interviewees (e.g. address, phone number, e-mail address) will be deleted upon completion of my project.

There is also the notion of the “on the record and off the record” type data (Warren, 2002). This can yield new insight but the researcher should be cognizant of the differences and handle those as he/she sees ethically fit. The politics of representation can be challenging and these were addressed in my reflexive journal and conversations with my dissertation committee members.

As for the institution, there is potential harm exposing the private parts of an educational institution (Christians, 2005). This creates a potentially ethical moral dilemma. I had to use my best judgment when I encountered information that was potentially damaging to the university; however the institution was never formally named as it received a pseudonym (MWU) for its protection as well as to protect my interview participants.
Trustworthiness and “Goodness”

“Are we interpretively rigorous?” – can our co-created construction be trusted? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.205). There are many debates about validity in qualitative research. Lather (2001) posited that there is no one established validity standard nor should there be. This contradicts earlier notions of validity which stemmed from Lincoln and Guba (1985)’s definition in their seminal work, *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Some researchers have replaced “validity” with the term “credibility”, which the reader determines if the data, analysis and interpretations are believable (McMillan, 1996). This may also be called trustworthiness (Schwandt, 1997).

Another important concept is “goodness” which takes into account the overall trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Jones, 2002). Goodness and trustworthiness become the premise for the interpretivist criteria for evaluating research which include trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In qualitative research, triangulation of data has often been viewed as serving as means of validity. Multiple methods allow for an in-depth analysis of the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Triangulation is an alternative to validity which brings a strategy for a rigorous in-depth study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I utilized document analysis, particularly in regards to perquisites offered at over a dozen institutions similar to MSU, where I reviewed faculty emeriti and retiree association websites, emeriti and faculty council meeting minutes, agendas, and associated constitutions, by-laws, newsletters and other documents related to emeriti. I also utilized two emeriti not associated with my study as
expert debriefers. They reviewed my findings from chapter four and provided feedback which also assisted in my formulation of emeriti involvement activities in chapter five. One of my participants, Irving, also served as an informant debriefer, reviewing my findings from chapters four and five. These triangulation methods allowed me to construct a more complex analysis which also served as a reliability measure.

Member checks are usually associated with good qualitative research. This allows the interviewee an opportunity to review the transcription and provide feedback. Lincoln and Guba (1985) initially advocated the importance to check with participants every step of the research process so they can provide feedback and consent to their self-presentation in the text (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants who review their transcripts may catch errors (Poland, 2002). I offered the emeriti the opportunity if they were interested at the end of the interview, all declined but one 9.

While it is still important to conduct member checks with your research participants, it is also important to remember that the researcher is in charge of what goes into the text (Lincoln, 1997). A detailed explanation of the transcription process will allow a reader to determine the trustworthiness involved in this process and how faithful were the interviews reproduced from oral to tape record (Poland, 2002). Fairness is a quality involving the balance of all stakeholder views, perspectives and voices (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). However, for the purposes of my research, it was not feasible or manageable to obtain Guba and Lincoln’s fairness qualities as I am presenting just the interpretations of my analysis of the retired faculty.

9 Sandy
Charmaz (2005) espoused several essential categories regarding grounded theory and two of them are specific to my research. Originality is concerned with creating an original contribution to the body of knowledge. Usefulness is the value of the contribution which can better society. I wanted to contribute an original work to the literature that will also be useful in influencing college and university institutional policy. I also believe that my work could be useful to faculty in their retirement planning.

Research Limitations

Data is filtered through the reconstruction of participant’s responses and event interpretations and then again filtered by the analysis of the researcher (Corbin & Holt, 2005). Tape recording may alter the interview (Warren, 2002). There are several challenges in the transcription process. Perhaps the most important challenge is recognizing a transcription is translation of the interview which Kvale (1996, p. 280) reminds researchers that “…interviews are living conversations.” The researcher as author must be cognizant of this distinction and attempt to bring the reader into a dialogue with the collected text instead reappearing as fragmented quotes.

In converting the text there also some translation challenges. First, is the concept of sentences and punctuation (e.g. commas). Second, when participants mimic or quote, if not noted, the researcher can lose the context. Third, sometimes data can be lost during the rewinding and fast forwarding process during transcription. Lastly, there may be mistaken words due to either poor sound quality, typos, or misinterpretation (Poland,
2002) thus reinforcing Kvale’s differentiation between a live interview and the text transforming during transcription.

It is possible for a contamination of the interview process (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Many aspects of interpersonal communication are not captured, mainly in the form of non-verbal’s. Audio/digital taping is not a strict verbatim of record; body language, smiles, nods, and the physical setting are not captured (Poland, 2002). While the researcher may make notes during and after the interview, it is still by no means complete and still prone to recall bias.

There are limitations with the sample size as well. Only a handful of emeriti represent each discipline in this study and the emeriti population is less diverse (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender) than the junior and senior faculty ranks. The institution is also only representative of a large research intensive university and there are many other categories of colleges and universities. A comparative study may address some of the possible variations but this was not within the scope of my research design. Another important limitation is that while there are some general traits and characteristics in each generational cohort, each baby boomer is not circumscribed to these and my sample is not a representation of the baby boomers or any other age-based cohort.

It is important for the reader of this dissertation to keep in mind that one interview represents “one snap shot” or moment in time. Replication is much more difficult as there are many external and internal factors which can intervene (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Johnson, 2002). The interviewee may have some intervening life circumstances (e.g. health/wellness, family issue), or could be distracted by other things such as the interview
environment. Conversely, they could also be in an upbeat mood and more willing to share. This is all part of the nature of interviewing, especially when the research is biographical (Johnson, 2002; Warren 2002).
Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the main themes which emerged from my data collection. I will briefly share some general information about each of my 14 participants, which will set the context and provide the reader some perspective about my emeriti participants. I will then focus on six themes:

- the “nudge” toward retirement (motivating factors influencing retirement);
- “no one owns your time” (freedom to manage one’s time);
- the unexpected (unanticipated events in retirement);
- the continuity of scholarship activities (research, teaching, and service);
- new pathways (new endeavors the emeriti pursued);
- elements of the relationship (aspects related to the relationship between the emeriti, and their former department and institution).

Participants

The 14 participants\(^\text{10}\) represent a variety of disciplines and life experiences. I will briefly provide some demographic information about each participant as well as general

\(^{10}\) Again, a reminder that all names of the participants are pseudonyms.
information about how they became a professor and the aspects of being a professor that they enjoyed. They are listed in the order in which their interviews occurred.

Mitsouko

A professor in the college of Engineering, Mitsouko spent her entire academic career at MWU and retired after 30 years. She was briefly a high school teacher and her interest in academia began while using a college’s computer facilities. She is 65 and has been retired for four years. Her husband is also an emeritus professor, but he still works half-time at MWU. She was the only participant married to another academic in my study. They are currently trying to sell their home and Mitsouko spends most of her time living in a major northeast city. She enjoyed working with her graduate students on research the most. “For a long time, we had wonderful ideas and times and it was great” (Mitsouko, p.1).

Arthur

I met Arthur at his campus office, a room he shared with two other emeriti. He had retired two years ago after 28 years at MWU in the College of Engineering. He is 65, married and has a secondary residence in Colorado where he spends a few months per year. After a post-doc experience, he had worked in industry for five years, which he was not excited about, but he said he needed a job. He only applied for one academic position and took the job at MWU at age 35. “I felt lucky to fall into what I envision as an ideal

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11 Completely different area within the college of Engineering.
career move.” He greatly enjoyed the autonomy and independence as a professor, “…you don’t have to punch a time clock or keep track of project hours or those kinda things (Arthur, p.1). Arthur also greatly enjoyed his association with young people, especially in hindsight.

Vega

Vega was an energetic 76 year old who returned to MWU to conclude her academic administrative career and she has strong ties to the city MWU is located in. She came to MWU as an academic administrator in the College of Education. She had been an administrator for the majority of her academic career and had worked at several colleges, all along the east coast. She had been divorced early in her graduate school career. She had begun her career as an elementary school teacher, earned her master’s, and then her doctorate. As a professor, she enjoyed the time flexibility, her faculty colleagues, and most importantly, working with bright graduate students. “These people had kids, they had life stories, I liked that about doctoral students” (Vega, p.4).

Hunter

An internationally recognized interdisciplinary researcher in his field, Hunter (age 67) retired from the College of Natural Resources after 35 years. He has been retired for four years and lives with his “lady friend.” He entered academia through his interests in community action and development programs where he wanted to help people help themselves but also wanted the opportunity to pursue his research interests which were
heavily involved in the environment, economics, and social science. Our interview took place at a small pub known for its good food, a place where he took his graduate students when he was a professor. He really enjoyed working with graduate students. By his own count, he served on over 200 graduate programs for masters and doctoral students, serving as the chair for approximately 30 PhD students and 25 master’s students and he considers his graduate students as part of a big family, all over the world.

Miriam

Miriam retired from the College of Education\textsuperscript{12} after 20 years. She has been retired for four years. Miriam was a school teacher for a number of years. She also completed all three of her degrees at MWU, inspired to earn a PhD by a her professors who were influential in her thinking and took her under their wings. Miriam lives with her husband, who is a few years older than she, as well with her son and his grandchildren. She greatly enjoyed her association with other faculty members and graduate students. “I count them among my best friends, even though they are scattered [geographically]” (Miriam, p.1).

Irwin

Irwin retired two years ago from the College of Business. He was at MWU for 28 years and is 64. Prior to that, he worked professionally for a law firm in another Midwest city. His wife was recently laid-off after 17 years as a corporate librarian. He stated he

\textsuperscript{12} Different School within the College of Education than Vega.
was always academically minded and taught for a year at MWU part-time before a full-time position opened and after a national search, he was selected. I conducted his interview at his home. He really enjoyed the interaction with students, inside and outside the classroom walls. “I did some advising for student organizations and I had a pretty open door policy and actually I felt like a student myself” (Irwin, p.3). He received a teaching award from his college a few years before he retired. He also enjoyed his colleagues, both at MWU and through his professional organization associations within his discipline.

Irving

Irving retired from the College of Arts after 22 years at MWU. At age, 70, he has been retired for three years and lives with his wife. He came to MWU after over 20 years as a professional musician in a prestigious performance orchestra. He did not come from the traditional academic preparation background and instead was hired based on equivalent professional experience\textsuperscript{13}, something not uncommon in the arts. Irving stated he has always been a teacher.

I always been a teacher, I started teaching at the age of about 15 and I think that musicians do teach a lot, even if they don’t intend to be teachers, they end up teaching their craft so teaching was the thing I most enjoyed about being a professor. The satisfaction of seeing the light come on when

\textsuperscript{13} Irving does hold a master’s degree.
the student gets it, or hearing it come on, that satisfaction is very profound

(Irving, p.1)

Sandy

Sandy retired two years ago after a 30 year career in the College of Natural Resources and he is 75. He worked at another land grant university before actually quitting as a tenured associate professor.

I was the only person you’ll ever meet who was a tenured associate professor who quit. I didn’t take leave or anything [laughs]. I came home one day and I told my wife, ya know teaching is not fun anymore and that was around 1970 after the Vietnam war. She said, “why don’t you quit?” I said “I will, do you mind?” She said no. So I go in there the next day and quit! [laughs] (Sandy, p.3)

He spent several years in different government agencies before returning to MWU as a department chair and full professor. His military experience provided some teaching exposure and a friend had recruited him to his first faculty position. Sandy really enjoyed teaching and having the independence to develop programs.
Michael

After 29 years as at MWU as professor in Social Sciences, Michael retired two years ago when he was 61. He took a social psychology class while an undergraduate and a professor hired him as a lab assistant after the class ended. He said he became groomed for the professoriate but did not enter it right away. He worked for a few years in a prison system as social worker and then took a research associate position at a small college where he eventually was hired as a faculty member while he finished his PhD. He enjoyed teaching and research and having the independence and freedom to pursue his interests. “So you can go over my career where my research interests were at, where I had the freedom and luxury of looking at issues that were really meaningful and important to me (Michael, p. 3)”

Andy

Andy retired from the College of Arts and Humanities after 35 years as a professor and high level academic administrator. A faculty member at his undergraduate college inspired him to become a faculty member. He is 69 years old and married, having spent his entire career at MWU. After serving a long period as an administrator, he returned to the faculty ranks before retirement. “I went back to teaching, about two years before I retired and really enjoyed that. I just loved the day to day things” (Andy, p.3). I interviewed him in his home; one he had custom built a few years ago.
Woodrow

Woodrow retired the earliest of all 14 participants, two years ago at age 58. He retired from the College of Veterinary Medicine. He currently works full time in very large veterinary practice. After a brief stint in the military reserves, he completed MWU’s vet school and then took a professorship at a large western university. He left there to return to MWU so that his wife could be closer to family as they raised their children. He enjoyed conducting clinical disease research as well as his one on one teaching with graduate students. “…on a daily basis, there were students on their fourth year or on their veterinary clinics so it was a year round process. So with the exception of the holidays which I wasn’t working, you are with students daily” (Woodrow, p.2).

Ben

Ben had the longest tenure of all the participants at 39 years where he also served in university administration roles. He retired from College of Arts and Humanities two years ago. He is 67. Ben had come from an academic family, his father ran boarding schools. Like several other emeriti, he attributes his pathway to the professoriate to an inspiring professor. He cites his good fortune in entering academia when jobs were very plentiful in 1968. He enjoyed research and the ability to pursue his academic interests, but enjoyed undergraduate teaching the most. “…I always loved being in the classroom and loved engagement with students…” (Ben, p.4).
Edith

Edith retired from the College of Allied Medicine four years ago after 33 years at MWU. She is 69 and never married, though she is not alone as one of her granddaughters lives with her. She was a therapist for eight years in the MWU clinic where she later became a professor after a colleague got married and left for another country. She most enjoyed her students, particularly upper division students. Edith has won national and state awards for her service to her profession.

Alfred

Alfred retired after spending 10 years at MWU holding an endowed professor position in the College of Natural Resources and then later as an administrator in another school on campus. He retired two years ago, arriving at MWU after spending a career at two other land grant institutions. At age 69, he described himself as an applied researcher. He really enjoyed his freedom to explore his research interests, as illustrated with this quote: “I tell students that all the time. The best thing an academic career is the freedom you get to pursue the things you are interested in, the only limitations on you in a faculty position is your own imagination and the amount of time you are willing to put in on it” (Alfred, p.2).

The “Nudge” Toward Retirement

The first theme is the “nudge” toward retirement. The emeriti had different experiences which influenced their decision to retire. These “nudges” occurred at
different times and varied in degree. I will discuss four different nudges. First, some emeriti felt like it was time for a generational succession involving change, whether this was more natural “letting go” or second, because administrative change provided the catalyst for the emeritus to retire. Third, emeriti were greatly influence by their own experiences with emeriti faculty throughout their career and these experiences proved to be quite influential in the participants’ retirement decision. Lastly, a major life illness provided one emeriti with a rather forceful nudge into retirement so she could battle this illness which would greatly diminish her ability to continue as a professor.

Generational Change and Letting Go

A theme that emerged from data analysis was the effects of change. After a close review, I found two interrelated categories of change. The first was generational change. The emeriti seemed to accept generational change as a natural occurrence in the academic career, that younger generations of faculty were coming up the pipeline and that the retiring faculty should step aside. At no time did any of the emeriti convey a feeling of being forced out of their role. Instead, they seemed to realize that the time was right to let go and this was influential in their retirement transition, as Sandy’s quote illustrates:

The university is changing and the program is changing as you know.
You’re a graduate student, things are changing greatly out there and that’s normal, that’s one of the reasons I retired so that somebody else could move up and get my salary and take my spot. It was one of the things I
thought, well there were changes, but I don’t know. I wanted to get out of the way of the change. If I was there, I was standing in the way of change. Its fine; I think it’s good. (Sandy, 75, Natural Resources, p.5)

Andy knew there were major changes occurring in the college of arts and humanities, as several large reorganizations were taking place. He came to terms before leaving MWU that this change was inevitable and he was able to mentally let go and not impede change:

But I stay away because its different now, it’s different people and the department is different and the college of the arts is part of the college of arts and humanities and that’s going to disappear as it becomes one big arts and sciences and how do I feel about that? Well I don’t feel good about that because its change. I was the dean, acting dean, and how could they take my college away but its fine. I’m not there. I don’t need to worry about it.

I hear gossip from my friends and I kinda shrug my shoulders, and say it’s a different generation, let them do what they want to do. There’s no sense. I suppose you could preserve everything the way it is, but that just ruins the fun for other people so I don’t participate.
Both Irving and Andy knew the faculty members who replaced them and had positive relationships with them. Irving enjoyed serving as a mentor and helping this person transition into the professoriate, as this person’s background and work experience was similar to Irving’s when he joined MWU. He accepted that his successor had different scholarship interests and ways of doing things. At times, Andy felt nostalgic about teaching, but liked his successor and that made it easier for him to let go and move forward to pursue other things. Despite several offers to teach at MWU, he has respectfully declined.

Alfred helped two different administrators transition into their roles. Initially, he had a harder time letting go immediately and instead took a phased approach, letting go slowly over time but still having a relationship with those who succeeded him:

What I did was pave the way for a new director to come in and I would go in and see him quite often at the beginning but gradually got away from that and he has his own agenda that is quite different than mine. Same thing with the endowed chair. I helped recruit a new person to take my place in the department and he has quite different interests than I have and he is going in a different direction and that’s perfectly appropriate. That’s fine. He is a good friend. I see him every so often. I am reluctant to go in and see him too often because I know he’s busy (Alfred, Natural Resources, p.8)
Administrative Change

Another type of change is centered on administrative changes at the institution. Some of these changes involved new administrative leaders that influenced their feelings toward their former department including a faculty member who retired because he did not agree with the new dean’s direction for his college. Changes in organizational structure also impacted several emeriti who retired at the first opportunity they could after meeting the criteria for years of credited service they desired. They did not want to continue in this new structure any longer than they needed to.

Michael stated that he was not particularly keen on the new head of his college who was entering the leadership while Michael was leaving. He mentioned that if had not retired when he did, he certainly would have the next year because of this new leader. When this individual left MWU after a short tenure, Michael felt the new replacement dean was more welcoming of emeriti and the atmosphere within the college improved.

Woodrow cited the new leadership in his college as the catalyst that motivated him to retire. He took another full-time job directly after retiring formally from MWU:

…he was not my first choice candidly, but I was very much involved and then there were some things that happened under the leadership of the new dean that made my job more problematic. And several of my colleagues in the practice where I am right now used to teach at MWU and they sensed some of concern for what was happening at the university so they offered
me a job that was very very difficult to turn down (Woodrow, 60, Vet Medicine, p. 3)

Hunter, Arthur, and Irwin cited organizational changes as affecting their opinions about their former department. In these situations, their department was merged with a larger department and those faculty in the smaller department felt unwanted. Arthur stated the consolidation left his program faculty feeling like an unwanted step-child and the other department was looking forward to their retirements so they could reallocate those resources for themselves. “We have had four retirements in the last two years including me. We haven’t dropped off the face of the planet but the other half of the department was glad to soak up the resources we had from our retirement” (Arthur, p.5).

Irwin conveyed that after his department merged with another, larger department, that his department program became an after thought and their faculty felt marginalized as they were slowly down-sized. He illustrates this here:

At our zenith, we had 8 full-time business [names his department] professors and now we have two. And from 8 to 2. We were one of the best in the country, with Wharton and IU\textsuperscript{14}, but now we are not even on the map. It’s a shame and it was all because politics and the fact that we wanted to improve [names larger department] and get more research and the like and cut down. I didn’t enjoy that. (Irwin, 64, Business, p. 6)

\textsuperscript{14}Wharton is the name of the college of business at University of Pennsylvania; IU is Indiana University.
Hunter had appointments in several departments and was moved around during his time at MWU. He was greatly disappointed on how his new primary department viewed research and external funding, and scholarship overall. “I got put over in [names department]; it is the worst department on campus; they are very poor department; they have no scholar of any type in my opinion, so those were the leaders that did not value empirical research and publication in the journals and that’s what I do (p.7).” He purposefully negotiated with his new dean to be left alone and chose self isolation so that he could continue his research. He also was able to negotiate two appointments in different departments that placed more value on research. Throughout his interview, he mentioned his dislike of university administration (on all levels), especially in recent years. However, he has enjoyed his own work, his career, and his graduate students.

The Influence of Previous Emeriti Interactions

One theme I found was that previous retiree experiences influenced my participants in their retirement decision making process. Some of my participants had negative experiences or did not want to end up like other emeriti they have seen during their own career. Andy conveyed a lengthy story about his own experience with emeriti faculty when he was new assistant professor in the early 1970s:

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15 When he chose when he was going to retire, he provided enough of a timeline (five years) so that his remaining advisees could complete their dissertations or theses.
I started becoming much more aware of what was going on; becoming aware of the politics and I realized, we were, we as in the assistant professors, and some of the associates, and a couple of the fulls, were doing just fine. We were running the department, we were changing the department, we were moving the department forward and having a lot of fun doing it.

Well there these emeriti, three of them, who wouldn’t go away. I mean they were always hanging around. It was always an ominous sign if you saw the three of them talking in the hallway, there was something was going on. Then sure enough, they would start meddling; emeriti in my department got to come to faculty meetings, why they would I don’t know, but they could and those guys came.

I just decided probably in my third or fourth year of teaching, of being a professor, that when I retire, I would never do that. Because, it was our time, damn it. I was really selfish then. I thought, these guys had their time and they did what they did and they had all the fun and they took away what they wanted to take and now they ought to go home... I vowed right then and there I would never do what those people did to me and I am very proud of myself. (Andy, 69, Arts & Humanities, p. 8-9)

Andy was intent on getting out of the way when he retired and not meddling in his department or college, despite substantial changes occurring in both, as previously
mentioned. While details about what these emeriti were doing were disclosed to me, clearly they had a negative effect on how Andy felt about emeriti. His sentiment was that once retired, it was time to walk away from the department and the college it is in. He did not comment about emeriti involvement at the overall institution.

Vega’s story does involve an emeriti returning to the institution daily. When Vega was discussing her relationship with MWU, she related a brief story to me as to why she is not actively involved as an emeriti faculty member:

I had a faculty member who at that university, at that college, had been there for 45 years. And he finally retired, and he was married and had a family, and I thought it was the saddest thing. He didn’t know what to do with himself. I would go over to the faculty club and he’d be sitting there reading the newspaper, almost every morning. He came on campus like he was working. And I thought, “I will never do that”, if you have to do that, don’t retire. (Vega, 76, Education, p. 9)

Pulling the Retirement Trigger

A question the emeriti greatly enjoyed answering was providing advice for faculty considering retirement. Almost all the responses involved the importance of financial planning and the emeriti seemed pleased with the amount of support they had from their state retirement system. Most had also stated the importance of planning and Hunter provided some worthwhile advice that all faculty should consider:
SMF: What advice would you provide to faculty getting to retire?

H: I wouldn’t just say focus on those folks. I would go back to people soon as they joined the faculty.

SMF: Ok, well what advice would you give them?

H: Newly minted PhD faculty should set up a plan immediately. “This is what I want to do 5 years, 10 year, 15 years, 20 years, 30 years from now.” Evaluate it on that context. The ultimate objective is to be financially independent. The worst thing faculty can do; if people wait to think about retirement when its near; they should probably be planning on ways to supplement their income (Hunter, 67, Natural Resources, p.10)

Instead of writing about the importance of financial planning, I want to discuss the section heading, “pulling the retirement trigger.” This phrase came from Ben regarding knowing when faculty should retire and being able to actually go through with retiring and not just going through the motions.

“I have had discussions with colleagues who can’t pull the trigger on retirement. And as I listen to them, they can’t pull the trigger for what sound to me like all the wrong reasons” (Ben, p.10). These “wrong reasons” included not being able to vote in promotion and tenure decisions and losing their status, the latter a challenge that I thought would come up in my interviews, but rarely did. Pulling the retirement trigger

16 Author
metaphorically synthesized the retirement process for faculty and advice the participants provided clustered into different themes.

Ready

The first part of pulling the retirement trigger is whether an individual is ready to do so. Assessing one’s life is a difficult, cumbersome endeavor, but necessary. Michael reflected this sentiment, “if you have done something for a long time, it’s really part of you, whether you really want to go or not” (p.12). Michael advised future emeriti:

If their life is still really caught up in they have been doing many many years, unless its something physical – their physical capacity to do the job is not really there any more, I would almost discourage someone from retiring if they don’t have other things that they actually they want to do. There is a big transition and there is a sense of loss and it can be depressing (Michael, 63, Social Science, p. 12)

Andy spoke at great length about those planning on retiring from the professoriate to be brutally honest with themselves:

… really be honest with yourself and decide if you are going to go nuts because you can’t stand the lack of structure and your ego, your ego is heavily involved in your job and mine wasn’t, then maybe you shouldn’t
retire. So I see some retired people that are real unhappy. I think they are unhappy because they would rather be working. They stepped away from it and they don’t dare go back into and that’s because they weren’t honest… If I really felt I was going to feel like I was useless or that I lacked direction or that I wasn’t important any more when I retired then I probably wouldn’t have retired. (Andy, 69, Arts and Humanities, p.10)

While it is well established in the literature (and my participants echoed this sentiment), that the retirement process is unique to the individual, there are signs for emeriti to aid in their decision making.

I think you have to have a purpose in retirement and like we said earlier, you need to plan for it. I would say that you should retire when its right and you’ll know when it’s right. I said that students were my most enjoyable portion but there came a time for me where that started to wane; not so much the student personal one on one contact but just going to classes and teaching, going to classes and teaching and teaching and teaching that just started to get old…(Irwin, 64, Business, p.9)

Aim

The emeriti advised having direction and purpose in retirement, though many stated earlier in this chapter that they were no longer pursuing academic interests, they
still were pursuing other interests. Irving stated, “I think the advice anyone gets planning retirement is what you will do rather than just thinking you will be rocking on a porch” (p.7). Art spoke about not sitting around idle “…but I’d certainly say they can retire as a normal retirement and forget their career and go onto other things…you probably have an idea of what those other things are and not just sit home and watch TV” (p.6). There should be some time built in to explore what that purpose may entail. Irving added:

…give yourself a couple of years to consider all of the pathways you could take. It was pretty clear to me but I didn’t really have any specific plans but it was clear to me that I would be involved with music, performing, and probably publishing… (Irving, 70, Arts & Humanities, p.7)

Irving had a general idea of what he wanted to do in retirement, he had purposely aimed for his target, an involvement in music and then when retirement formally occurred, he fired the retirement gun and implemented his plan and was successful in doing so.

Fire

The emeriti advised taking action and implementing one’s own retirement plan, whatever that may entail. Art reminded me about the nature of faculty careers. “Most faculty dedicated 20 – 30 – 40 years of their career, they have gained some status within their peers, with their research and perhaps with associations, that is professional
societies, that they wish to continue...” (p.6). Vega stated that some faculty return to
teaching, but she was hesitant to advise returning to their former department. “If you go
back and do the same stuff and sit in the same chair you’ve been sitting in for 45 years; I
would just ask, Why?” (p.10). Instead she suggested that the individual try some variation
of teaching. “I would say, if you want to teach, go on over to a community college or
another college, get a new experience, that’s what retirement is about. Make it fun!”
(p.10). Irwin knew when he saw the signs and advised not letting the halcyon days
interfere with one’s retirement decision.

… but you have to have a plan and purpose and you need to read the signs when
its time and then retire and don’t look back. You can look back on the good times
and all that, but don’t regret, that’s what I mean. I’ve never met anyone that
regretted retiring (laughs)…maybe you will in your studies, but I’ve never met
anyone or regretted it one moment. (Irwin, 64, Business, p. 9)

Once the retirement decision is made, emeriti should embrace the change in their
status. Alfred spoke about his advice from the perspective of an active faculty member.
“I enjoyed retired people once in awhile, but develop your own life and own linkage to
the university in various ways, but don’t expect the circumstances to stay the same as
when you were working full time” (p.10).

Not everyone went through the “ready-aim-fire” transition and Michael provides
us with a look at a negative case example. He had conducted research on retirement early
in his academic career. He felt having this experience would have prepared him better for his own retirement, but this was not the case. “I guess it didn’t sink into me at that time that there is really a kind of transition involved” (63, Social Work, p.4). In hindsight, he felt he made a rather abrupt transition, turning in his office keys as soon as he gave his last final exam. He continued by describing this transition:

There is, you lose a lot of status in some respects. In our society, we are defined in many ways by what we are in the ways of an occupation, not just as what we might be as a human being outside of that. So there was, retirement, separating from it as full time activity and trying to do other things, there are certainly ups and downs about it.

It’s also had its stresses and its ups and downs in ways I hadn’t anticipated… I thought that separating from the university and from my career, my profession, was going to go more smoothly than it actually did so I had to learn how to cope with some of that. (Michael, 63, Social Science, p.4)

Later in the interview, he returned to the difficulty of transitions and provided some poignant insight.

We tend to identify as, our life, our work is what our life is. For many people they may have a transition problem when they make that step
away… I think when we retire, if you have been a faculty member for 30 years, you do get used to having a certain amount of status, people address you with titles and then all of the sudden you don’t have that in your life. Its more compelling I guess than a lot of us are prepared to deal with or really realize we are going to have to deal with issues like that. (p.9-10)

No One Owns Your Time

The next major theme was around time management. The emeriti seemed to greatly enjoy the liberation of owning how their time is spent in retirement. Most of the emeriti discussed that retirement was an act of freedom, a liberation from the confines of their former responsibilities in the professoriate. Michael stated, “I don’t know if I can give you an actual definition of retirement, for me it’s just been an opportunity to do some other things that I wanted to do” (63, Social Science, p.4). His definition though, was echoed by the other emeriti.

Arthur provided a concise definition, “Well I would say a freedom to not have to work for a living and not have to come to work at a certain time, being on your own whenever you want, however you want. I’d say that about sums it up” (Arthur, 65, Engineering, p.1). He described retirement as the freedom of employment, having a set schedule, and being on your own. Of course, some faculty found that the nature of the professoriate involves being autonomous and setting your own schedule, but even this has limitations, and several emeriti cited the teaching schedule as rigid (e. g. Sandy, Vega, Hunter). Andy put the academic’s schedule into a larger perspective, starting from
formal education and continuing into his administration career, “once you start going to school you have a schedule, and this schedule continued in 15 minute intervals when I was an administrator” (Arts & Humanities, 69, p.4).

Vega and Irwin challenged the previous assumptions of retirement, where an individual transitions into a life of leisure, often in a stagnant, unproductive, uninvolved form such as television viewing or sitting around the house all day. Irwin stated, “For the most part I am doing what I want to do. I see retirement as not ceasing living or breathing but doing what you want to do” (63, Business, p.3).

Arthur compiled a comprehensive list of things he no longer missed from his professorial responsibilities and these were echoed by the other emeriti:

I don’t miss a rigid schedule and professors have a rigid class schedule and I don’t miss that. I don’t miss the meetings and politics and that kinda thing. I don’t miss the money chase, the research deadlines and completion deadlines. I don’t miss the grading…I liked teaching but I didn’t like grading papers, homework, exams. I don’t miss working on students with their writing on their dissertations or thesis …I did a lot of that, but I sort of dreaded it, all the work it entails to get it on the right track, that is, their writing I am talking about, not the work itself (Arthur, 65, Engineering, p. 3-4).
Several emeriti waited their entire careers to actively pursue travel opportunities. Arthur said he enjoyed “open ended travel, not having to worry about getting back at a certain time or leave at a certain time, not about rushing to get back” (p.3). Vega added, “the first thing I did, frankly, when I retired, as I never ever did as I have always been in education was take a vacation in the winter time, I never ever took a vacation in the winter time because that’s when school is” (Vega, 76, Education, p.7). She found her travelling experiences liberating. “So this is really the first time of me being my own woman” (p. 7).

After being retired for two years, Sandy had a loosely defined plan which has centered around relaxation and travel. He enjoyed being released from his work duties:

Well I would have to say very relaxed, probably more relaxed than I ought to be. I’m sort of just drifting around right now and haven’t started to do anything in particular. People want me to write and I say “yeah I will write one of these days” and I do have some books published. I don’t know. I like to get up, read the NY Times, do a work-out and come home and do something else, so it’s kinda like a lot people I have met recently retired. I have enough chores to keep us busy, and also I have to be honest, we have been travelling. A whole lot. (Sandy, 75, Natural Resources, p.1-2).

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17 He and his wife had been taking biking trips all over the world, including France, England and Canada.
Andy’s retirement is similar to Sandy’s with the exception that he continues to work and produce art in his home. Andy stated, “I must say that there has not been one day I have been bored since I retired. I don’t do anything productive; I don’t write in my field, I don’t contribute anything to my field, I might just be a little selfish like a kid before I went to school” (69, Arts & Humanities, p.4).

Alfred has enjoyed owning his time. Some days he is very involved in consulting projects at two of the institutions he formerly worked at. Other days he spends his time leisurely.

I just spend a lot more time reading the newspaper in the morning. It basically it’s the concept that everyone tells you, you can do whatever want to do, anything and that’s what I do. I feel no compulsion to do anything particular. (69, Natural Resources, p. 3)

The Unexpected

The third theme was the unexpected. While the majority of emeriti felt satisfied with their retirement planning, a few had concerns which were unexpected, such as the recession effects, personal health, and the aging process. This section will provide examples of four different categories of “the unexpected.” These are not mutually exclusive categories and in fact, are quite interrelated.
Health

Ben mentioned that most emeriti are likely concerned about their future healthcare. Several emeriti were concerned about their current health and in the future. Several emeriti implored faculty to take their health into consideration when making decisions. Miriam added, “it wasn’t that I hadn’t some form of savings but the longer that I look at how healthy we all seem to stay, and how long a period of retirement we lead, the more unsettling it is to wonder whether resources will hold up” (Miriam, 69, Education, p.3).

Miriam reminded us that people are living longer today and thus have to plan for a longer retirement, something that perhaps she and other emeriti had not predicted or given much thought when they were junior faculty. A resource included one’s own physical condition. Some emeriti stated that those considering retirement should pursue activities and interests while they physically can. Irwin stated that he wanted to retire at an age where could continue to be active physically, including running. Mitsouko illustrates this with a story about an unexpected injury her first year in retirement:

…I had a problem with my knee and I had knee surgery and it took me a year to eventually walk steps, one step at a time…things are good now and I’m able to get around; but if something happened… you have that potential to help people and do experiences and those things when you have your health. (Mitsouko, 65, Engineering, p 4-5)
Mitsouko not only was concerned about her potential to pursue activities she enjoy in retirement, but how her health could affect others as well. As someone who volunteered in many short-term service projects, she recognized that without her health, she could not help others too.

While no longer running, Sandy still bikes, often in foreign countries. He retired at 73 and wanted to continue biking for as long as he could, both physically and financially. He warned against retiring too early if it would adversely affect an individuals Medicare contributions if other health insurance options were not in place.

Edith’s retirement circumstance was unpredictable. At age 65, she did not have the choice to retire. “Well it wasn’t like I wanted to because I had cancer and I had to quit. I probably would have stayed a couple of more years” (p.4). Her cancer diagnosis worsened after she left MWU. In our interview, she revealed she had terminal cancer, which has taken away from the activities she enjoyed doing as she spends more time at doctors offices and in the hospital. When asked about her retirement, she was quite candid about her disposition as a care taker along with two major health issues:

Well I am raising a 16 year old granddaughter\(^{18}\) so that takes quite a bit of time and effort. I have cancer and now I have heart failure so I spend a fair amount of time going to doctors. Reading, I read a lot. Socialize, visit friends, go out. And take trips whenever I can afford it [laughs]. (69, Allied Medicine, p.1)

\(^{18}\) She has had custody for over 10 years and essentially raised her grand daughter.
Edith did not mention what her plan would have been had she not been diagnosed with cancer. She has taken several trips to tropical destinations such as Mexico, Hawaii and the southeast US. She implored faculty who are considering retirement to do the things they want to do while they have their health and have fun. She is managing this unexpected situation as best as she can.

The Recession

The recession that began in 2008 occurred after they had all retired from their MWU faculty positions. Sandy spoke earnestly about the recent recession and the impact it has had on his retirement, though he is still planning international travel. No emeriti had planned for such a financial recession. He seemed was cautiously optimistic but realistic in his financial future:

…well we got burned, well up until the collapse of the stock market, I was in pretty good shape, I didn’t have any worries. But I got burned up pretty badly like everyone else. Well, we had a diversity of portfolios, but our 403(b) lost about 45% or so of what I had in there and I know its going to come back but it never goes back to make up for what it would have, had it not collapsed so that’s where we have to accommodate the loss of 40% of what we had in the stock market and I diversified. We’re ok. (Sandy, 75, Natural Resources, p. 4).
Vega would like to move out west, though she knows she will have a difficult time finding a buyer for her home in the current real estate market. Instead, she continues to maintain her home so when the time is right, she can place it on the real estate market quickly. She should know; she has a real-estate license that she earned after retiring.

While the 2008 recession was the worst the US has faced in generations, there have been others during the lives of the emeriti. Michael was greatly influenced by his parent’s financial struggles in retirement due to a recession. He later became very involved at the beginning of his career researching retirement, especially how those who were disadvantaged faced retirement. His story below relates the effects of his parent’s situation on his life:

In the early 80s, the country was going through a serious recession, probably on or a near of a level on what we are having now. My father who was in his early 60s, lost his job and wasn’t able to get one and it got on a personal level, I got very interested in how older people survive. In my dad’s case, he ended up taking early Social Security benefits at age 62 because he couldn’t get a full time job again and that had a big effect on my parent’s lives until the end of their lives; it also provoked more of my interests in that issue. (69, Social Work, p.5)
Life circumstances from the recession also created some unexpected situations. Miriam’s son and his family moved in with her and her husband as a way to save money while he got back on his feet. She discussed how her retirement expectations have changed:

Let’s see. Far different than what I had anticipated in retirement. I had some fairly dramatic changes in our family life. The year that I retired, my adult son and his family came back to Columbus; they had been out of state. They moved in with us temporarily, but it turned out not so temporary so my official role is grandmother slash nanny\(^\text{19}\). And so I have a very lively household, far livelier than I anticipated.

SMF: What was your anticipated retirement?

Well, one of the things I did during the course of my career is write a series of children’s novels. My anticipation is that I would sink into my writing and clean all of my closets. That’s what I intended it to be. Instead, I have been supervising homework and trying to find room in my closets for other peoples things so its been really quite different. (Miriam, 69, Education, p.1).

\(^{19}\) An hour after our interview, I came across her at the local grocery store. She had a shopping cart full of foods for kids and told me this was part of the grandmother/nanny role.
Aging

Andy’s retirement difficulties revolved around the aging process. He felt unprepared, even though he had taken some proactive measures, such as designing his basement studio with the amenities he would need so that he would not constantly go up and down stairs. He still has not come to terms with the physical aging despite his mental youth:

What I didn’t plan for was the fact that I was going to get old. Nobody told me that at a certain age, things may get difficult for me to get up and down stairs. I think I did my last subways in New York City. Two years ago I realized, we had a big two story house, three stories with the basement. It was getting really hard. We built this, its all on one floor. But the basement has the amenities down there that I need so if I want to go down there for the entire day, it has a bathroom and kitchen, and refrigerator and microwave and whatever I need.

Nobody ever told me I was going to change. I probably did not expect it was going to happen but it does. There is nothing good about getting older. You hear all old people say that. Well you think, “it’s not going to happen to me” and then you try and wake up one day and it’s really hard and you are like “holy shit, what is going on?” So you go to the doctor and he says “Yeah Andy, you are 60 years old! And I say “why didn’t you tell me this is going to happen?” [laughs] And he says “it’s the disease of the
6th decade.” I didn’t know doctors had stuff like that, disease of the 6th decade. [laughs] Last time I saw him, and said, “how many diseases are there are at the 7th decade” and he said “you wouldn’t believe it!” [laughs]. That was not good retirement planning. I should have figured out things were going to change, that I was going to change. My head still feels like its 20 years old though.

The Continuity of Scholarship Activities

The fourth theme was that the emeritae/us faculty were continuing with various aspects of scholarship after retiring. Some were quite opinionated that retirement was not the end of their scholarly pursuits. For example, Vega refuted the notion of retirement being unproductive or a life of sedentary leisure. Vega provided her definition:

My friends tell me I have flunked retirement. Particularly now, I think it’s a misnomer for most people. I think a long time ago, when people aged 60, that retirement meant go sit on the front porch or go watch television. What retirement means now, for some people, they can continue now with what they’ve done, with their research and freedom. (Vega, 76, Education, p.5)
Ben attributed his scholarship abilities as similar to a fine wine, which improved with age.

I think that, you know one of the great things about academic life, especially in the Humanities, is that you like to think that as you are older and you’re at the end of end, yeah at the end, you actually still can be very productive as a scholar because presumably you know more, your range, you’re wiser, your readings are broader, you should actually have more depth… (67, Arts & Humanities, p.5)

Hunter enjoyed the intensity of work and the creation of new ideas and concepts. As the following quote illustrates, he is immensely attached to his research, connecting his research with his outdoor interests. He is trying to find ways to enjoy retirement while continuing the activities he enjoyed most as a professor.

But I also balance it more I suspect now than before. I hunt a lot, I fish a lot, I camp a lot. I take my computer with me of course, and there’s a lot of times where I did a lot of natural resources stuff before and now I bought a camping trailer and now I use that as my field office for data collection. I have had a wonderful career. (Hunter, 67, Natural Resources, p.4)
As mentioned in chapter two, faculty activity\textsuperscript{20} is often categorized as research, service and teaching activities (Gappa e al., 2007; Terosky et al., 2008). After reviewing the emeriti activities in retirement, most are continuing with one or more of these areas in retirement. For example, Woodrow is working full-time in a position where does not think is much different than before, except that he no longer has administrative committees to serve on. “So you see my day didn’t change a lot; I have the best of what I like in the teaching and I am connected with some really important research. I am going in an area that I was working on for 20 some years at MWU. So I don’t know if you really could call me retired” (Woodrow, 60, Veterinary Medicine, p.3). The next three sections provide more in-depth examples of scholarship activities that were continued in retirement.

**Teaching**

Several emeriti continue teaching, but only Michael has taught a course since retiring\textsuperscript{21}. At the time of our interview, Woodrow was in the nascent stages of working out an adjunct teaching role at another institution. He was the only one who desired regular teaching. At age 60, perhaps this is age related, as he does not consider himself retired. Woodrow is now a member of a large private practice, one which attracts interns and local college students from across the country. He believed he still gets a good amount of one-on-one instructional opportunity, something he enjoyed immensely as a

\textsuperscript{20} Also referred to as “scholarship”\textsuperscript{21} He quipped humorously that while he enjoyed that experience, it reminded him of why he retired in the first place.
professor. He stated, “…I really enjoyed the day to day management of cases with students. And in this practice we have students who visit us from all over the world, all the time. So I still get the thing that I liked most about the university” (Woodrow, 60, Veterinary Medicine, p.3).

Irving continues with some of the teaching activities he enjoyed previously. “I do some coaching, that is coaching is a little different than directing where you help people with ensembles or even individual with musical ideas. I have presented some seminars and clinics at different universities around the country” (70, Arts & Humanities, p.2).

Service

Others are providing consultation, both for compensation and pro-bono. Irving helps out several former colleagues in his department on an advisory basis. Woodrow served on a PhD committee at another university. Alfred continued in several service endeavors which included some that are paid consultation though money was not a motivating factor:

I do serve on one national committee for the Association of Agricultural Economics and Policy\(^\text{22}\). I am involved with a phone call every so often. I am also on an external advisory committee for a natural resource unit in Florida so I have kept in touch, pretty good touch actually with the other schools I have worked at. I have enjoyed it. I like working down in

\(^{22}\text{Pseudonym}\)
Florida, particularly because we meet in Florida (69, Natural Resources, p. 8)

Research

Many emeriti were actively conducting research in retirement. Some were continuing projects and strands of research that they were engaged in as a full-time faculty member, while others were pursuing new areas within their field or in new areas all together. Hunter still was confident in his abilities as a researcher and proud of his productivity:

I am not quite as productive in sense of output in term of publication as I was before, it’s very high, again more than often times than a lot of people who are fulltime at MWU do. I work when I want to want work. I don’t work when I don’t want to work. (Hunter, 67, Natural Resources, p.3)

Irwin felt he was still conducting research at a similar level as he was when he was an active faculty member:

I’m not doing a whole lot different. I’m revising textbooks. Two textbooks, one I revise every year and one every three years and I’m doing that and doing other writings that I submit for publication but they are the history writings. I just submitted a piece on Justice Cardozo, a Jewish
justice of the US Supreme Court and am hoping it will be accepted where I submitted it to. So in all, I intersected law and religion in some respect.

Irwin, 63, Business, p.3-4)

All four of the arts and humanities professors were continuing some aspect of research and production of their craft in retirement. Michael has used film to reach a new audience, redefining how he conveys his previous research in a new format. Irving had created a catalog of instructional materials with over 80 titles as well as occasionally performing. He was also writing new compositions, most recently a project involving a campus singing group, where he now involves himself with some singing with the group to help him write for an ensemble that involves voice. He has found this endeavor particularly rewarding. Andy has engaged in art using his computer to find images on the internet. When he built his house, he had a custom basement built to create an art studio experience.

Ben had several writing projects that he was looking forward to researching. He made it clear in his interview that he was writing for himself and his own enjoyment and was not interested on whether some of his work ended up being published. He believed that a faculty member who was still engaged in research at the end of their career should have an easy retirement transition.

I think that faculty who are still engaged in research in any way, shape or form have probably have no trouble going to retirement because it gives
them more time to do that. One of my closest friends in [names department] department has written, well two colleagues, have written two books, one of them is finishing a second book. One was a scholarly book, the other he is writing an autobiographical account of his academic life. He is one of the great old lefties who then became department chair so it was very interesting. He has had just a fascinating great life and to not have that written up, to me, would be a tragedy and he is doing that. (Ben, 69, Arts & Humanities, p.10)

New Pathways

The fifth theme was new pathways. For some emeriti, retirement provided them new opportunities to pursue different activities. After our interview concluded, Irwin said he felt like retirement was a retreading of his career. Other emeriti found retirement a chance to reinvent themselves, to embark on a new career or pathway that was significantly different than their professorial life.

Michael has reinvented himself as a film director. He took one of his research interests, the effects of poverty on people, and one of his personal interests, political activism and joined them together to create a film production company. By his own accord, he has no aspiration to be the next Michael Moore\(^{23}\), “The plan is to make this a feature length film and put this in theaters and maybe having a little bit of impact by bringing a human face back to poverty” (p.8). Michael began almost immediately after

\(^{23}\)Famous documentary film maker, known for his satire approach to serious issues.
retiring from MWU on his new project, starting the summer of 2007. He has enjoyed learning how to be a film producer and feels his work will provide him with a new audience:

But being able to try my talents in a different way and do some things and maybe reach some people outside of academics. When you teach, you have a captive audience. You have students you can try show ides to and issues to and things like but not everyone goes to college and not everyone takes certain kinds of courses. My hope now is that I can reach a broader audience than before, seems true of academic writing. It’s limited as how broadly it’s seen or used, at least a movie, somebody may see it on TV at some point, if they are flipping channels and may run across it o something. (Michael, 63, Social Science, p.8)

After spending two years post-retirement in educational consulting positions at MWU and at another former institution, Vega went back to school and became a real-estate agent. She wanted to try something new and found satisfaction in the experience, though it only lasted a few years:

I went to a college and studied real estate and the studying of it was fun and I got my license. I joined a real estate company but last year I thought I didn’t have time any more to do this. So my license is in escrow with
that state, but the satisfaction is that I just wanted to do it. (Vega, 76, Education, p.8)

Hunter has focused his efforts on continuing research in retirement as a consultant and felt confident he could compete against universities and colleges in earning research grants. Irving has felt he can become more of a generalist now and has engaged in several projects that allow him to explore new areas, such as singing as well as publishing music. Both Hunter and Irving have actively produced new projects, but on their own terms, a homage to the chapter's first theme, “no one owns your time.”

Irwin loved teaching and before retiring, he earned a master’s in history. However, he is no longer lecturing in business but instead has taken on a new teaching interest with some success and seemed very pleased with this new role. Irwin took his love for teaching and utilized his history master’s degree by teaching at a variety of religious affiliated institutes and other similar programs. He has accepted an appointment to teach abroad for part of a year. He has taken his classroom teaching experiences and created this new pathway in a completely different area from his former identity as a business scholar.

…it really isn’t a whole lot different [from teaching business at MWU].

For example, I do continue to teach but not law.\textsuperscript{24} I got a masters degree in 2006 from MWU in history; Jewish history.

\textsuperscript{24} He was working on several pro-bono cases for some non-profit organizations.
So I really wanted to teach Jewish history so I’m doing it. I taught, I will say that I taught at 4 different institutes and I’m not making a lot of money at it, that’s for sure, hardly, maybe its paying my costs. I’m going to Israel for five months teaching rabbinical literature in an undergraduate setting. I teach in several institutes and some on-line. Jewish history, Jewish customs and the like so I’m really into that. (Irwin, 63, Business, p.3-4).

Several of the emeriti are involved in community service during their retirement. Mitsouko volunteers in her new city and enjoys serving her community. By her own accord, she has volunteered over 300 hours of her time\textsuperscript{25} doing short term or one-time projects that last several hours that she finds on-line, and this provides her flexibility. She has worked with people with substance abuse problems, homeless teens, and unemployed people.

Giving something back, volunteering has been very gratifying….working with people coming back from substance abuse issues, doing mock interviews, resume reviews. The people are very grateful. I go away walking on clouds on some of those sessions; some of those people think I am an angel. I feel like they are better off with me after an hour (65, Engineering, p. 2).

\textsuperscript{25} She estimates she volunteers about 100+ hours a year, she has received a presidential award for volunteering, a certificate achieved after someone volunteers for 100 hours.
Vega serves on several non-profit boards in the community, “So now I do civic stuff. You don’t really stay far away from education, but for the moment it’s a different side. I chair a board for a community school because I do have the expertise for these kind of things which is helpful” (76, Education, p. 6).

Elements of the Relationship

The last theme was elements of the relationship, a section where interview questions were designed to explore emeriti relationships with the institution. After critically reflecting on several micro themes, an overarching theme emerged – the elements of the relationship. This relationship begins with the perceived status of the emeritus/emerita title. Next is a discussion of how and why the emeriti are involved with MWU in relation to their emeriti perqs, followed by a section about their relationships with MWU as an institution and their former department and the differences between these as well as ways to re-engage the emeriti with their former institution.

Emeriti Title

Unique to the institution, the emeriti receive an annual reappointment letter of their emeriti status from the secretary of the MWU board of trustees. Twelve of the emeriti had positive feelings about the emeriti title and two were ambivalent about the title. The 12 emeriti had varying degrees of affinity for the title (see Table 4.1). Several concepts emerged related to the emeritus title:

- The title as a status symbol
• The title as a connection to the institution

• The title as an enabler of campus perquisites

Michael and Ben were indifferent toward the title as indicated in the table below, for different reasons. Michael rarely uses any title, using his emeritus title sparingly and in which case, it was for access or status purposes. Ben did not find the title to have much status, instead it only served as a notation that someone completed their academic career.
Table 4.1: Summary of Emeriti Thoughts on Emeritus Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Positive Thoughts about emeriti title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfred</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>“I am very pleased with the emeriti title.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>“It gives me a free parking pass”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>It’s nice, “I asked for it as a matter of course, most people do upon retirement”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith</td>
<td>Allied Medicine</td>
<td>Very pleased, especially since she wasn’t sure she would get it because she was at the assistant professor level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>“I am very proud of it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>Happy to have it, “it creates validity outside of the university”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Likes the title and its association with the institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Pleased, “it gives me access, should I need it, to some of the resources of the university”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsouko</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>“I use my title, I use it in my e-mail”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>“I like it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vega</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>“Very proud of it…I am still enough of an academic to know what it means and it means you did something good, you did ok”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow</td>
<td>Vet Medicine</td>
<td>“It’s extremely important to me, it’s something I consider one of my proudest accomplishments”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indifferent Thoughts About Emeriti Title**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Positive Thoughts about emeriti title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Not one for titles. “I never used titles much even when I had them”, however uses when needed for “credibility”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>“But the title itself, it’s nice but I don’t suppose it means anything truly, does it mean you were distinguished in any way, shape or form? No. It means you got to the end and you get this designation”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perquisites as a Relationship Incentive

An interesting finding emerged from the question inquiring about how emeriti felt about their perquisites that were offered by MWU. The majority of them were not sure what those entailed. I provided almost all the emeriti a list of these perqs at the end of our interview. I asked what the benefit of these perqs were. Vega said perqs such as the free parking, the ability to purchase football tickets and library access allow an emeritus to remain connected to the institution if the person wanted to be. Ben said almost the same thing as Vega, adding the campus gym as well.

Irwin commented that the perqs bring him to campus, such as utilizing the library, which in turn, provide him a positive feeling as an emeritus. He said, “just being on campus and feeling not that I taught there, but I have a status, an emeriti status. It’s psychological but its positive for me” (Irwin, p.5) While the emeriti listed many of the perquisites (see Table 4.2), some of these perquisites seemed to foster a connection with the institution or department.
Table 4.2: Positive Responses to Emeriti Perqs, by College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Free Parking</th>
<th>Library Access</th>
<th>Athletic tickets</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>Other Perqs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edith</td>
<td>Allied Medicine</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>getting fake plant at campus hospital when admitted overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Art center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>E-mail, gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>taking classes, gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vega</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Office space, e-mail updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsouko</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>E-mail, gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ID card, taking classes, campus speakers, Seminars and activities, office space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Association with institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ID card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Art center, campus activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow</td>
<td>Vet Medicine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None mentioned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“X” = emeriti discussed this perquisite

E-mail

Mitsouko commented on being able to keep her e-mail address, one she has had for almost 30 years. Her emerita status was important. She felt it was part of her
professional identity and signs her e-mails with her emeritus title. She was impressed with the computer access and software she had available to her during retirement though she thought as a department within the College of Engineering that was very computer oriented, she had high expectations.

Arthur also enjoyed receiving department and institution e-mails which provided him updates. “It’s not interaction but more of the flow of information, its kinda nice” (p.2). Several other emeriti noted that they read e-mail newsletters and other updates from MWU. Andy followed two different colleges and read his e-mail daily. I will also add that all 14 emeriti were using their MWU e-mail, some checking their account multiple times a day26.

Office Space

Arthur was satisfied with his shared office. He liked having a “cubby hole to stash stuff” (p.2) but was unsure of what he needed to keep and what he needed to discard. He liked having the office to continue in activities if he wished to do so which kept him connected to the university. He expanded a bit more:

It maintains your association with the university. When you retire you don’t know what you’ll be doing and how much you’ll continue to do so it gives you a bit of a transition, where you are just not “bang”, completely

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26 Woodrow had his e-mail forwarded to his cell phone. I had sent the initial invitation to participate in my study by e-mail as well.
turning your back on your career. It’s a nice, its good to have. (Arthur, 65, Natural Sciences, p.2)

However, one emeriti did not share Arthur’s opinion about having an office on campus. Andy believed emeriti should not have offices at all. He said this opinion is a bit radical; a suggestion that unlikely will garner support from most emeriti:

I think the worst thing is emeriti that still have office space or studio space at the university and then they feel obligated to be there. It’s bad for the institution and it’s bad for the emeriti. Now that’s a radical suggestion because if there were a union of emeriti professors, or whatever the organization is, they would say, “oh my god that’s a horrible idea. It’s something we fight for all the time, these offices.” (Andy, 69, Arts & Humanities, p. 12)

Andy continued with a story about when he was an assistant professor and how he had to share an office while an emeriti held a very large office on a better floor. He said it built resentment among the junior faculty. As he mentions, he believed it is bad for the emeriti as they may feel some sort of obligation to make use of the space and be there when they may not have any good reason to do so. Secondly, there is a sense of status related to office space and location and this could create potential conflict among the faculty.
With office space at such a premium at MWU, it would seem unusual for emeriti to have single offices. Only Alfred said he had a private office, and this was because of his status as a former high ranking administrator and not because of his faculty status. Other emeriti said they do not maintain a campus office by choice; they have no practical need (e.g. Sandy, Mitsouko, Irwin, Hunter). Michael did not have an office and he was the only emeriti to express a desire to have some sort of space if he were doing department related work.

Free Parking

Most of the emeriti commented on how they enjoyed the free parking. It was the most mentioned perq and even those emeriti who did not come to campus often appreciated having it when they did. Irving summed up the feelings of the emeriti about parking: “One of the nicest benefits is free parking. When I was teaching until 2006 I was paying well over 600 bucks for parking, now I can come to the university at any time, I have a special tag, an E[meriti] pass and it’s marvelous, it’s really great” (p.3)

As someone who attends events on campus frequently, he is greatly appreciative and it certainly motivates him as he does not have to worry about paying for parking. Alfred was also very active attending lectures and seminars throughout the institution and was greatly appreciative of the parking pass. This enabled him to park in most campus lots, many right by the campus buildings where they are attending events or near where their office or department is located.
Differing Relationships

Mitsouko was my first interview and when I asked her about her relationship with the institution, she spent most of her time focused on her feelings toward her former department. One emergent discovery came to me during my interview with Arthur who was the second participant interview. When I asked him about his feelings toward MWU, he made a distinction between the institution as a whole, and then their former department. It made me consider whether the emeriti had some sort of connection to their department that differed from their connection to the institution. To me, when I designed the roster of interview questions, the institution encompassed all of these things. I then added a question about their feelings about their department relationship, which provided me additional insight about institutional relationships and how some emeriti viewed the university. At the end of this section, table 4.3 briefly summarizes the relationship the emeriti perceived they had with MWU and their former department.

Institutional

The relationships the emeriti described having with the institution varied. Irwin, Woodrow, Hunter, and Alfred all specifically mentioned their love and/or good personal feelings about the university during their interviews. Others, such as Vega and Arthur, said their relationship with the institution was minimal. Irving said his relationship with MWU overall was distant and that the retired faculty and staff organization was his main source of information. Sandy said his relationship was good but would likely improve if

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27 The remaining 12 emeriti were then asked specifically about the relationship, if any, they had with their former department.

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he were doing any contract teaching, which at the time of our interview, he had no interest in doing. Vega had only returned once to campus and it was for a memorial service for a former colleague. Miriam said her relationship with MWU was “friendly but distant” (p.4). Since she was not doing any teaching or consulting, she felt she had little reason to be on campus.

Irwin felt he had more of a relationship with MWU than his department. He said the main reason was that he still occasionally takes classes at MWU\textsuperscript{28} and he gets to interact with wide range of students, mostly young undergraduates. He feels using the campus facilities such as the library strengthened his relationship with MWU. As mentioned earlier, his department has almost disappeared, a change that Arthur also faced.

Michael was not sure if he had a relationship at all with the institution, then changed his mind as he considered the question. He stated that since he attends many campus events and some sporting events that he must have sort of relationship. He enjoyed the active atmosphere of a large university.

Woodrow graduated from MWU and has a deeper institutional connection. He is a yearly donor and feels this is an important activity. He was the only emeriti to express interest in assisting with institutional development in some capacity. Hunter and Irwin mentioned that the only time they receive phone calls from the university, it is usually for a fundraising campaign. Edith’s connection to the institution was passive, through her

\textsuperscript{28} Mostly fitness and wellness class offered in the college of education.
emerita annual reappointment letter and other things she receives in the mail or gifts she
may receive while in the hospital that university employees automatically receive.  

Department

During Mitsouko’s interview, she spoke at length about her computer technology
perqs from her former department. Her primary friendships were with her former
department colleagues, several who had visited her already in the northeast. Vega also
keeps in touch with some of her former colleagues, strictly on a social basis. Irwin is
friends with the two remaining full-time professors in his former department and usually
attends the annual retiree holiday dinner, because he informed me, “why would he pass
on a good and free meal?”

Miriam had returned to campus for other retirement parties and social events
within her department. She said there was not a lot of opportunity to continue
relationships and she felt her retirement has put her in a different place in life compared
to her colleagues. Alfred echoed those sentiments. He had been asked several times to
present seminars or lectures but has been rather hesitant in doing so. He felt he does not
have much to offer his former colleagues as he is not as up to date with the research and
current literature. Ben spoke about personnel change in his department and his
diminished contact because he was no longer teaching:

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29 She receives some sort of fake plant when she is at a university hospital facility overnight; her particular
facility does not allow real plants. She believes the fake plant gift is sent to her because of her retiree
status.
I have way less contact than I used simply because I don’t teach anymore and that’s another piece that I miss. Obviously, they have done so much hiring, I suppose I only know half the people in the English department and a lot of my closest friends are long since retired, some who were senior to me…I am sure half the people in the English department wouldn’t know who I am nor should they, by the way. My relations with the department are certainly good. (Ben, 67, Arts & Humanities, p.9).

Irving said his relationship with his department was very good and is frequently invited to participate in activities. Woodrow has maintained a strong connection with the department, in case he ever wants to return to teach, conduct research or participate in some sort of campus or department service. He has been invited back a few times to be a guest lecturer in some courses which he felt were important courses. He also wondered at times about his relationship with the department. Did they miss him more than he missed them? (Woodrow, p.7). Arthur had also commented on a similar thought, but he said he was doing fine without the institution and they were doing fine without him.

Edith was nominated for several awards in her field and she greatly appreciated this. She eventually received three, including a national aware for service and contribution. Edith’s department seemed to take a great deal of interest in her well being. She valued this assistance, especially with her more recent medical challenges:
Well, like I said, they nominated me for a national award, gave me a local award and then also check on me regularly. They brought food, they gave me a gift certificate for house cleaning and the students from the student association of which I was an advisor for 20 some years come out twice a year. They were just out a couple weeks ago to rake my lawn and rake all the leaves. In spring, they came out and planted a whole bunch of flowers. (Edith, 69, Allied Medicine, p. 3-4)

As mentioned previously, Andy does not return to his department. “I get invited to the annual holiday party and I never go; I always decline very gracefully, occasionally the department chair calls me and asks my thoughts on some things, well not that often. Well I am sure whatever is going on down there is fine…” (p.9). He has declined teaching opportunities as well, though he said he thought about it for a day before declining. He does visit a friend from his college almost weekly on campus where they go and have lunch. Hunter had appointments in several departments and has had minimal contact with any of these. However, he had a strong interest in returning to mentor younger faculty on research projects.
Table 4.3: Emeriti Relationship Perceptions of MWU and Department by College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>MWU Relationship</th>
<th>Department Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edith</td>
<td>Allied Medicine</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Very good, provide her some life assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>Friendly but distant</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>Great, but not actively involved</td>
<td>Almost non-existent, by his choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>Excellent, very involved</td>
<td>Good but less relationship than when was teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Very strong, due to taking courses on campus</td>
<td>Mostly social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vega</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Purely social but minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Friendly but distant</td>
<td>Friendly but distant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsouko</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Not strong because of distance</td>
<td>Purely social but minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Good but minimal, not interested</td>
<td>Good but minimal, not interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>“I am proud of MWU, I love MWU”</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>Great, but not actively involved.</td>
<td>Great, but not actively involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>“I have a good personal feeling” about MWU”</td>
<td>Very good, actively involved socially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Somewhat ambivalent</td>
<td>Increasingly better, re-engaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow</td>
<td>Vet Medicine</td>
<td>Great</td>
<td>Good but desires more of a relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Re-engaging the Emeriti

Ten of the emeriti specifically mentioned wanting to be more involved at the institution. Edith only stated she would like some social events for retirees campus-wide. I suspect she would be quite active as an emeriti if her health permitted. Actually, she likely would not have retired yet. Mitsouko was content with her involvement, especially now that she is moving. Her e-mail updates and occasional contacts with former colleagues have satisfied her level of involvement. While Edith and Mitsouko were
content with their MWU relationship, Vega and Andy had no interest in any further involvement, both advocating that people should move on to other activities in retirement. Vega stated “that’s trodding on old ground” (Vega, p.10). Some of this involvement was at the department level, but several emeriti stated they would like to be involved in either in college or institutional activities instead. Alfred mentioned he appreciated getting invitations to attend campus events and activities, but there is an entire pool of talent that could be utilized and this would engage the emeriti in meaningful activities.\(^\text{30}\) This section will focus more on the emeriti statements desiring re-engagement.

Since retiring, Arthur has had little involvement with MWU or his department. He does read the college and department e-mail updates, but he does not feel his college actively reaches out to emeriti. He did not miss campus politics in retirement. Upon reflection, though, he felt the emeriti were an untapped resource that could assist the institution as a whole on its education process. He had commented on how he thought MWU did not value teaching as much as it should and that the emeritus faculty may have ideas worth sharing. While he was not keen on serving on any university committees in retirement, he thought the emeriti could provide some sort of advisory role:

One area emeritus faculty can be offer but isn’t tapped into, is that after having retired and reflected and sort of out of the politics of the university and the department and the program and all that, perhaps emeritus faculty

\(^\text{30}\) The conclusion chapter will provide detailed strategies for emeriti involvement based on their suggestions as well as my own synthesis of possible engagement activities.
have got some thoughts and ideas about the whole education process that goes on at the university that perhaps could be utilized. Arthur, 65, Engineering, p.6)

Hunter discussed how he thought the productive emeriti researchers could be more engaged with MWU. He spent significant time in his interview discussing a plan where emeriti could mentor junior faculty on research and grant writing. These mentors would be compensated. His idea is similar to Arthur’s, though it focused on different aspects of faculty work, Arthur on teaching and Hunter on involving emeriti in the direction of research at the institution.

I think that a lot of the faculty have emeritus faculty who have really good ideas but again, ya know we are kind of free spirits. You have to remember, we have no political alliances anymore, we have no bones to pick… So you can bring in a commission of high ranking, highly recognized noted emeriti and then tell or ask them what should be the future direction of MWU but you know what the outcome will highly, likely be; they will tell you the truth (Hunter, 67, Natural Resources, p. 10).

Irwin discussed how he would enjoy receiving a phone call that was not fundraising-related from MWU. He said emeriti should not receive phone calls from
MWU for “the exclusive purpose of raising money” (Irwin, p.10). Instead, he suggested phone calls that would engage emeriti in campus activities, events, and connecting them to other retiree’s. He was quite keen on an emeriti tennis tournament as an idea to connect him to other retiree’s. While he was well aware of the existence of the retirement association on campus, he was not particularly interested in the activities they currently offered.

Miriam felt that engagement of emeriti faculty may vary by department, that some departments may be purposeful with involving their emeriti, while others have done little. She thinks campus service might be an opportunity for emeriti involvement. Irving stated nearly the same thing. He is one of the emeriti still engaged with his department, but felt that service is an area that the emeriti may enjoy and it would connect them to the institution. He called it an emeriti “service corps” (Irving, p.10). He did not think emeriti should teach academic classes for free because, despite a lack of funding in the arts, he felt this would be unfairly taking advantage of the emeriti.

Woodrow, who had previously served in campus governance committees, said he would welcome such opportunities, as those opportunities enhanced his connection toward the institution when he was a professor. Woodrow was the only emeriti who stated he missed campus politics. Ben agreed that the emeriti were the “great unused” and wondered how the university could better engage the emeriti in campus activities. Sandy had similar thoughts, but in particular, wanted student involvement, something he greatly missed since retiring:
The university as such, per say, the university does not have an avenue where I could reconnect with students. Maybe they do in certain units but I don’t know otherwise nobody has ever come to said “would you want to do such and so” that would help mentor students and so forth. That I would like to see. (Sandy, 75, Natural Resources, p.6)

I credit Michael for coining the section heading with his notion of a re-engagement with into his department. This return has provided him with some satisfaction and renewed interest in his department. By his own planning, he left his department rather abruptly and somewhat dissatisfied with the administration in the department. However, this was short lived, as the administrators changed and the environment also changed:

…some of my colleagues I left behind have been encouraging to get re-involved with college life and invited me to do a couple of presentations and participate in the life of the organizations a little more…It’s been nice to re-engage with some of the people and I have met some of the newer faculty that have been hired since I retired and they are good people I think. I am enjoying that re-engagement. (Michael, 63, Social Science, p. 10 – 11)
Summary

The six themes discussed in this chapter are crystallized, each one growing incrementally and building upon the previous themes. The nudge toward retirement encompassed several sub-themes that were expanded upon by stories and life experiences. The emeriti never claimed to have felt pushed out from the institution; however the nature of change at the institution may have motivated their retirement decisions. Some felt a generational change and it was time “to let other people have their fun” while others found administrative change as something they did not wish to be a part of. Past interactions with emeriti clearly influenced several emeriti to the point where it may have had a negative effect as these emeriti did not desire much of an active relationship with their previous institution. Pulling the retirement trigger helped emeriti consider the transitioning process of preparation, focus, and then finally completing the formal act of retiring from MWU.

The emeritae/i seemed to enjoyed the liberation from full schedules, long meetings, and even commuting to work. They were able to take full ownership in their lives, despite the semblance of autonomy that they enjoyed as part of the nature of the professoriate, which does not dictate formal work days. Retirement was not smooth for all the emeriti and some faced unexpected challenges. Personal health circumstances plagued some of the emeriti, including one situation where serious health issues forced one faculty member into retirement. The recession also interfered with the plans of a few emeriti. While all emeriti felt they had financial security, a few had concerns about their financial security, a few had concerns about their

Footnote 31: Contractually speaking, faculty set their working hours. Of course, there are set times for classes, meetings and other obligations, but the professoriate has never been seen as a 9-5 job with a time clock.
investments and how they would need to re-evaluate their future finances. The process of aging was a major unexpected transition that Andy had faced. While he understood the physical changes that are associated with aging, he did not anticipate the psychological changes of aging.

Still, the emeriti were active and vigorous in retirement. Many had engaged in different forms of scholarly activities, attributing not only having the time to pursue these endeavors, but because these activities were still important to them. A few emeriti created new pathways for themselves in retirement, attempting new pursuits. Emeriti such as Michael and Vega attempted new careers, while others undertook new activities.

The last major theme discussed the elements of the relationship between the individual and the institution. The other major themes are visible in this section, showcasing the interdependency of these themes. Title, status and perquisites were important to most of the individuals. These influenced the emeriti’s relationships with MWU. The emeriti distinguished between the institution and their former department and had differing relationships with each. Re-engaging the emeriti was an important concept within the elements of the relationship, which will be further explored in the next chapter.
Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

Years ago when I was working as academic liaison with athletics, I worked very closely with the athletic director [names him]. He said someday you and I will both have that same disease; we will be “emeritus.” We always chuckled about that. I have to tell you the title itself or what it brings is not something that I have ever thought deeply about. I think it’s an assumption all academics have. (Ben, 67, Arts & Humanities, p. 6)

This final chapter begins with a synthesis of the two categories of faculty emeriti and the different types. I then provide a commentary and analysis beyond the chapter four thematic findings, using Bridges (1991) organizational transitional theory. Three phased steps serve as a framework to situate an integrated literature review and commentary section, drawing on comparisons between my findings and previous scholarship highlighted in chapter two. A model of the faculty retirement transition is presented and discussed.
An expansive section on implications for practice is provided, outlining how my findings may benefit campus administrators as they consider policy, practice, and procedures. I also incorporate the benefits to the individual, and describe an engaging, mutually symbiotic relationship that could occur.

Types of Retired Faculty

As I reflected back on my data analysis and literature, I wondered how I could take my thematic synthesis one step further. My adviser suggested I consider defining types of retired faculty and the characteristics that would be associated with these types. I created a list based not only on my 14 participants but also examples anecdotally provided to me by these participants during my interviews. Two overarching categories emerged, each with sub-types (see Table 5.1).
Table 5.1: The Two Categories of Retired Faculty and Their Sub-types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Un-Attached</th>
<th>Attached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Door Closer</td>
<td>• Encore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Life Circumstancer</td>
<td>• Socializer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New Opportunity</td>
<td>• Missing You</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first category is the Un-Attached. The Un-Attached left the university and have had little contact since. The first sub-type is the Door Closer, the faculty members who on their last day of employment turned in their keys, cleaned out their offices and walked away, often abruptly. Michael was an example as he dropped off his last final exam with his teaching assistant and turned in his keys.

The second sub-type is the Life Circumstancer. This individual left the institution because of life circumstances beyond his or her control (e.g. Edith) or because of a relocation. Distance reduced the involvement of emeriti such as Mitsouko while Arthur anticipated that his relocation to Colorado would diminish his involvement with MWU. The level of involvement for these individuals may ebb and flow based on factors of personal health, family issues, or geographic location. Alfred has a home in Maine where he does not have internet access and is disconnected from MWU for several months a year but when he returns to his home near MWU, he is re-engaged.

The New Opportunity is the last sub-type within the Unattached. This individual is ready to make a change and pursue different opportunities unrelated to his/her past
professorial career. Examples have been previously mentioned in chapter four. Individuals may be mentally tired and looking for a change, or may have an opportunity to pursue a dream, prevented earlier by time constraints.

The second category is the Attached. These faculty are still active with the institution and/or their department and feel a strong connection to both these. The first sub-type, the Encore emeriti, are those who have continued in some aspect of their scholarship. Many are writing books that they have always wanted to write or taken on new roles in their profession, such as Woodrow who returned to working in a practice in his field. He still remains active at MWU for which he stated he has a strong attachment. He stated he speaks with his former department chair at least once a month and has been invited to present some guest lectures.

Some emeriti may have always had a disposition toward a life of scholarship and are fundamentally inclined to do so. For example, Ben spent his childhood surrounded by high achieving students, as his father was the head of an elite private school. He had stated he always enjoyed the humanities. Irving was career artist before becoming a professor and he has always seen himself as an artist; it is how he defines himself.

The Socializers are still pursuing aspects of scholarship but also are very much interested in social opportunities. Many of the emeriti missed their colleagues and the conversations they had with them. Often, this was more social than scholarly. This is to be expected as these colleagues often have offices located in the same floor, served on the same committees, and are part of the same department. Irwin was very interested in social activities. He attended most activities to which he was invited and was a supporter of
initiatives that could involve retired faculty in fitness related opportunities. Edith would like to attend social events for retired faculty. Vega pointed out that there was no need for her to spend time on campus for social events, but if people wanted to meet up, they could do so off campus at a variety of locations.

The Missing You’s are ingrained in the department or institution to the point that while they are formally retired, they are still often on campus and at times, just because they have little else to do. I would not include any of my study’s participants in this category but several participants discussed stories about emeriti who were unable to separate themselves after they formally retired. Vega related the story about the emeriti who came to his office and the faculty club almost daily; Andy mentioned the emeriti who attended all the department meetings and were not content leaving the department business to the active faculty. Alfred himself did not want to become the faculty member wasting his former colleague’s time, “pontificating” about the past and Michael provided a story about a colleague in another social science department who returned to teach part time to keep him occupied. He only left when he himself became part of the Life Circumstancer group:

Other events in our lives can impact you. My friend in psychology, he took off two quarters. He retired in winter quarter, a quarter before I did. He was off spring and summer and then started teaching a course in the autumn but about mid way through his wife was diagnosed with a serious kind of cancer. Because they had to get her into some treatment and were
travelling a lot and so for him, that was a major issue; the threat of his
wife’s dying and he’s not taught since. He hasn’t had the time or energy to
do it. (Michael, 63, Social Science, p. 13)

Michael’s story is an illustrative example of how emeriti may change their
disposition. In this case, it was a forced circumstance; however, there are other possible
reasons. Perhaps a new opportunity occurs that was not previously available or perhaps
the Attached professors eventually transition to other types, or vice versa. Faculty may
switch sub-types during retirement for a variety of reasons and there are some clear
overlaps. However, these categories and sub-types may provide useful when considering
options to engage (or re-engage) the emeriti.

Revisiting the Literature

These upcoming sections revisit the literature. I spent significant time analyzing
theories of adult development that were most applicable to my dissertation work
including the theoretical areas of psycho-social and sociological such as transitions and
life events. The other major area from my literature synthesis was a review of the
step transition process, offers categories that could be effectively used to frame this
section in a way that also creates a storyline, blending the comparison of some of the key
findings with the literature as well as conceptualizing several other important aspects into
a new model gleaned from my findings.
Bridges transition theory involved a three step phased process around major changes that occur to individuals in an organization (Bridges, 1991, 2009) or while navigating life’s events (Bridges, 2004). The first phase, letting go, was used in chapter four in a section heading of similar nature. Letting go can be viewed as the formal act of retirement and the retirement departure. The second phase is when an individual moves to the neutral phase, a period of that feels like an internal limbo as the individual attempts to sort out the changes that just occurred from the letting go phase. A person often perceives this phase as sort of a life waiting room where the wait will not last long. This is rarely the actual case. Instead, this phase is where the individual confronts many emotions: anxiety, ambiguity, mixed levels of motivation and overall confusion. Through the different ways each of the emeriti navigated retirement, aspects of the neutral phase varied. They all exited this phase, albeit at different levels. Bridge’s third phase is revitalization, where the individual has fully let go of old ways and is able to pursue new activities in a different role with renewed vigor and a new sense of purpose.

Bridge’s phases describing the way an individual navigated change through the use of transitions in an organization or in personal life events became more salient as I revisited my literature review. His work was appealing because of the unique status of emeriti; they are always part of the institution and are often encouraged to stay involved at some level.
Faculty Retirement: A Three Phase Model

Using Bridge’s framework, I reframed his three step model. It is supported by my findings and includes a brief, integrated review of relevant adult development theories. My model also (see Figure 5.1) takes into consideration the cognitive dissonance involved in each phase. It also allows for the possibility of an individual skipping the redefine phase or retreating into a phase, allowing for potential overlap and recognizing that transitions do not always represent a “clean-break” occurrence. Headings show the transition phase as named in my model with Bridge’s phase names in parenthesis for reference. At the end of this section, a summary is provided with more commentary about the insights the model offers.
Letting go includes the often symbolic act of departure. However, departure is more than just one moment in time. Thirteen of the 14 emeriti had planned their retirement departure. I had not asked the participants to directly explain the way they left
MWU, though the topic came up in several of the interviews. Instead of focusing on specific departure acts, I chose a line of inquiry that explored their feelings towards the institution and department and the findings were discussed in greater detail in chapter four. The departure act marks a major moment where an individual transitions from one phase to the next. Transition theories are designed to explain various aspects of life’s anticipated and unanticipated events and how people cope with these events. Often, a life event, such as retirement, can be viewed as both a milestone that shapes an individual’s life and a process (Levinson, 1986; Reeves, 1999; Sargent & Schlossberg, 1988; Schlossberg, 1989).

In higher education, the graduation ceremony is often seen as the ritualistic closure for a student (Magolda, 2003). Magolda (2003, p.780) stated that colleges are full of ritual activities that are an integral part of the campus experience:

…Exit rituals symbolically represent dominant institutional values, which are seldom explicitly scrutinized. The examination of rituals in general and exit rituals in particular illuminates the socialization, political, and inculcation processes that are inevitable on college campuses.

In the retirement literature, the act of retiring, often celebrated by a symbolic going-away event, is a seen as a rite of passage (Szinovacz, 2003). I had attended one such event at MWU as an observer so I could gain a better idea of what occurred, who showed up, and how the emeriti seemed to express their emotions. The department chair
was the opening speaker and there were four emeriti for which this reception was organized. Attendance was sparse; few students were there and the faculty ranks were thin as well, likely a result of scheduling the event date right before final exams.

In all but one case, an active faculty member spoke about his\textsuperscript{32} former colleague. They all spoke about halcyon times, “the good old days” and how each of these emeriti were dedicated scholars and mentors. The emeriti were provided an opportunity to respond and they had a few remarks, though most were brief; none seemed overtly sad and perhaps, this is because these emeriti were still living locally and three of the four were still teaching at MWU part-time. In addition, three emeriti had been formally retired for at least two academic terms so this was a delayed event for them and perhaps less symbolic.

Each was awarded the same token gift with the institutional emblem on it. There was a modest reception afterward and the whole gathering lasted about an hour. To me, the affair seemed muted and formulaic. While I did not engage the emeriti in any conversation about how they reacted to their formal going away activity, I felt disappointed. It did not seem to be a celebration of their careers but rather a forced activity.

Woodrow’s departure experience sharply contrasts with the event I had witnessed. Woodrow was leaving MWU to return to private practice. He was less than enthusiastic about the administrative changes in his college (and was vocal about these) and had little expectation for any sort of departure event.

\textsuperscript{32} All the honoree’s and speakers were male.
W: … they gave me an outstanding [going away party], I couldn’t have had a better going away party. It was a celebration. It was kind of a roast, so I got roasted, but we had phenomenal group and people from all over the university, all over the United States came as a part of it. I was pretty lucky.

SMF: Was that how you envisioned your send off?

W: No [laughs] I didn’t think it would be that way. I figured it would be a “see you later””. I enjoyed it. The department chair who currently is there gets a big part of that responsibility for setting that up. It was fantastic.

I could hear the excitement in his voice as he was talking about this. This event apparently had an important impact on him; he felt valued by his department colleagues and this event was not only a celebration of his 24 years at MWU, but a tribute where he felt honored. It allowed him to leave on a positive note and he still holds these positive feelings toward MWU.

Sometimes an unanticipated life event serves as a catalyst for a major life change. “The Unexpected”, a theme from chapter four, described unfortunate alterations in the retirement visions of several of the emeriti that affected their departures. Health reasons, either chronic (e.g. Edith) or acute (e.g. Mitsouko) created two different types of retirement. Edith was forced into retirement because of terminal medical conditions. With a limited social network before this occurred, she is faced with more physical challenges
daily and as a result, her relationship with MSU and her former department is limited. When she first retired, Mitsouko had suffered an injury which kept her off her feet for almost a year, but she was able to return to her regular level of mobility and this helped her move through to the revitalization phase.

Andy, while a bit surprised by the aging process, planned for a different level of mobility in the future by moving in to a new one level home and outfitted his basement to reduce his need to continuously climb stairs. He realized his days of travelling extensively by foot were going to become more limited. Impacts of the recession affected Sandy who was limiting his travel expenses while Vega is forced to ride out the recession in a town near MWU because she can not sell her home for the price she wants.

Not all departure considerations relate to personal circumstances. Sometimes the emeriti have difficulty deciding when to depart because of concerns for the welfare of their former department or students. Ferren (1998) summarized her study of late career faculty entering retirement with five major factors influencing faculty retirement decisions. One of Ferren’s factors that I found striking was that faculty delayed retirement because their retirement may adversely affect their department. In one of my interviews, I found an example supporting Ferren’s factor on department concern. Hunter spoke at length about this as well in our discussion about what current faculty who were nearing retirement should consider:

Third issue is what does this do to your department or program? In my case it was the beginning of the end of my component of the program
meaning that I was not replaced, that I wasn’t going to get replaced. They were looking for retrenchment of how to get resources and being in an interdisciplinary program and with the other discipline in control, they usurped the position and I knew they would and that was one of the reasons I held off for awhile and finally I said “the hell with it, it was going to happen anyway.” I think it’s important that faculty think about what their retirement is going to do for continuity of your program. (Hunter, 67, Natural Resources, p. 9)

Redefine (Neutral)

I think the ones [emeriti] who are actively engaged intellectually have no trouble with retirement because most people, they want to travel, continue to stay alive intellectually, retirement allows them to do that (Ben, 67, Arts & Humanities, p. 10).

The emeriti seemed to redefine the conventional notions of retirement but also had various struggles; some barely perceptible (e.g. Vega) while others were very apparent. Bridge’s (1991, p.5) neutral phase is one of an “emotional wilderness” where there were internal struggles surrounding changes. Bridges stated that these were struggles around transitions, not crisis. I renamed this phase as “redefine” to illuminate the internal activity addressing dissonance toward this new change and move away from

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“neutral” which sounded like an indifferent term suggesting stagnation. The psychosocial models of adult development and transitional concepts of status and role were important aspects in comparing my findings to the literature.

While many prefer to use Erikson’s stages to explain adult development, Levinson’s work seems to yield richer insight for the emeriti population. Levinson’s extensive research on four different eras, which he referred to as seasons, in a person’s life (Levinson et al., 1978; Levinson, 1986) added useful dimensions to the Bridge’s (2004) neutral phase, particularly for one emeriti who struggled psychologically with the transition. Michael was not at a crossroads of choosing between Erikson’s (1959, 1968) generativity versus stagnation, as Michael had a well devised plan for his retirement and greatly enjoyed this pursuit. However, he was unhappy with the transition; he attributed some of this as the change in status and how society views one’s profession:

There is, you lose a lot of status in some respects. In our society, we are defined in many ways by what we are in the ways of an occupation, not just as what we might be as a human being outside of that. So there was retirement, separating from it as full time activity and trying to do other things. There are certainly ups and downs about it. (Michael, 63, Social Science, p. 4)

This statement echoes a major part of Levinson et al.’s work. Visible is Michael’s effort to manage the psycho social and socio-cultural aspects of development (Levinson...
et al., 1978; Peck 1986). There are transitional periods that occur after each major season and they often last up to five years. Michael had been retired for only two years and appeared to be in what Levinson et al., referred to as the late adulthood transition phase, often associated with those aged 60-65. He is not in Erikson’s crisis/dilemma but instead is emotionally negotiating his way through this large and complex developmental task, in this case making the transition from a full-time faculty member (Levinson et al., 1978; Levinson, 1986). He had made a rather abrupt departure:

When I left, I really just wanted to cut off everything. June 6th, I gave my final exam but what I thought at the time was that was the last final exam I would ever give and I gave my exam to my TA to grade and I locked up my office, and I had packed and everything moved out and on that day was the end of my connection. I tried to make too abrupt a transition; I tried to cut it off too dramatically and too quickly. In retrospect, I should have probably tried to be a little [more engaged], stayed more engaged with some, with my unit and the college. But that’s hindsight [laughs].

(Michael, 63, Social Science, p.11)

The more the circumstance alters an individual’s role, routine, status, or relationship the more the individual will be affected by the transition (Bridges, 1991; Sargent & Schlossberg, 1988; Zemke & Zemke, 1995). Michael is an example of

33 “Life is never standardized” (Levinson et al., 1978. p.19) and that the age demarcations are averages, not absolutes.
retirement altering one’s role and status. He struggled with the change, despite his desire to retire. He anticipated retirement but an unanticipated consequence was that despite a new, engaging career change, he still had difficulty in the transition.

There is a strong connection between occupation and a person’s perception of self as well as perception of societal roles (Barnes-Farrell, 2003; Levinson, 1986; Szinovacz, 2003). Michael (p.12) added, “I have gone through some stages that I realized afterward that I was depressed for a period of time, because of that loss-connection for something that had been very important to me for so long.” Faculty heavily identify with their work, often blending their personal life with their work life (Near & Sorcinelli, 1986). Levinson et al., (1978, p.9) stated:

A man’s work is the primary base for his life in society. Through it he is “plugged into” an occupational structure and a cultural, class and social matrix. Work is also of great psychological importance; it is a vehicle for the fulfillment or negation of central aspects of self.

The perception of status was still important to most emeriti and it assisted them in redefining themselves. Ferren (1998) had concluded that many of the emeriti in her study were unclear about the emeritus title and that it was purely honorific. I found that the 14 participants in my study were well aware of what the emeriti title stood for and most did not find it just an honorific title. Vega stated “Very proud of it…I am still enough of an academic to know what it means and it means you did something good, you did ok”
Ben’s interpretation did align with the emeriti participant responses in Ferren’s study. He remarked, “But the title itself, it’s nice but I don’t suppose it means anything truly. Does it mean you were distinguished in any way, shape or form? No. It means you got to the end and you get this designation” (Ben, p.8).

Dorfman (1997) had posited that the professor’s perception of his/her relationship with the former institution was important. As I stated in chapter two, Dorfman’s research suggested that the professors who maintained an association with their former institutions were more satisfied with their retirement than those who did not. I did not find evidence of this among my participants. The two least involved emeriti, Andy and Vega, were both very satisfied in retirement, as discussed in chapter four. Self image and role attachment relate to the amount of time professional time invested. Participants in this study had spent up to 35 years at MWU as well at other institutions. They also spent years earning their terminal degrees and earning tenure. Thus, we might expect that navigating this transition phase after the formal act of retirement would be a difficult process. Participants navigated their way through with varying degrees of success.

Scitovsky (1976) stated that when people retire from a career they are suddenly deprived of certain satisfactions and look for new interests and activities to occupy their time. Bridges defined the neutral phase as where such attempts and new pursuits occur. However, these interests and activities are often one dimensional, lacking complexity and often more of a means for social interaction rather than a means of life revitalization. They may be a means to attenuate potential life dissatisfaction.
Unless we had something really profound that affects our life, if we don’t have other things to fill in all that time, you can’t sit in a rocking chair. You can’t even spend all your time with grandchildren if you have them, because that’s exhausting too and tiresome too, sometimes they can be difficult when they are little. So you really need to have, if not a plan, at least some pursuits that will really give you a sense of life satisfaction and that you still have a role in life. I mean gardening is great, travelling is great, but those are life passions, but I think people need something that is going to occupy and consume them in a positive way. (Michael, 63, Social Science, p.12)

Zemke and Zemke (1995) espoused the notion that major life events may provide reflective opportunity. Having had two years to reflect on retirement, Michael stated he wished had not made such an abrupt departure but he has rekindled his relationship with his former department and this has helped him feel a greater connection and improved his level of satisfaction with his department relationship in retirement.

Miriam’s adult son and his family return to her home shortly after she retired and have not left. She had initially retired to spend more time with her husband, the influence of family that Dorfman (2002) discussed in predicting faculty retirement. However, her son’s return, coupled with the poor economy led her to alter her retirement plans. At times, she seemed a little melancholy about the situation. She had not expected to be a
nanny in retirement; however, it certainly moved her through the letting go phase, just on different terms than she would have preferred.

Erikson’s (1959, 1968) seminal work on adult development through psychosocial stages was a foundational starting place for my chapter two literature review. Erikson determined that there was some sort of crisis that individuals had to resolve before being able to move forward with development. Similarly, Bridges (1991) stated that the neutral phase may involve emotional challenges as the individual tries to prepare for their future endeavors. Thinking of Erickson’s generativity versus stagnation stage, stagnation could leave an individual in a form of life limbo, lacking direction and focus.

As I mentioned earlier in this section, my study’s participants, at the time of interview or upon reflecting on their interviews during data analysis, seemed to not have had any major developmental crisis where they were left in limbo. The emeriti did not seem stagnant in their pursuits. Some spent only a brief time period, if any, in the redefine phase of my model. However, there were some emotional difficulties encountered by the emeriti. A few had different types of transitions to make, some more sociological in nature while others were more internal, perhaps more psycho-social. I had previously illustrated Erikson’s generativity stage by providing examples\(^34\) of the older professor spending more time passing down his/her knowledge to future generations and being more concerned for the welfare of these generations than his/her own individual welfare (Erickson, 1959). The nature of the professoriate is generativity, to develop people and knowledge (Boyer, 1990; Gappa et al., 2007; Thelin, 2004). In my study, the

\(^{34}\) See page 1 and 23.
emeriti exhibited strong desires for the welfare of the younger generations. Many were vocal about the future of their institution, including the lack of regard for undergraduate teaching (e.g. Arthur) and concerns about the university priorities (e.g. Hunter, Michael, Sandy).

Re-engage (Revitalization)

As Sheehy (1995) forecasted and mass media has popularized, the upcoming generation of retirees are looking forward to vibrant retirements; the biological age designation norms are shifting toward more youthful connotations. The 14 participants in this study were all actively engaged in a variety of pursuits and it did not seem like they were looking for time fillers to keep them busy. Almost all the emeriti stated they were satisfied with their life in their retirement and the few others dealt with unexpected life circumstances.

Many of my faculty participants have used their time in retirement to pursue scholarly interests that they did not have time for, or would not have been well rewarded in the tenure-promotion system at MWU. They are re-engaging with themselves as scholars, but on their own conditions, “no one owns my time.” In the future, they may return to the redefine phase for a variety of reasons which may lead them to re-engage in new opportunities, perhaps outside of academia.

Ben had commented on how he plans to write a book or two during retirement in areas that interest him. He also stated that several of his colleagues have written memoir-style books about their experiences in academe which are worth reading. Andy has
engaged in projects relating to art, using the internet to acquire images, a project that he
did not have time for while a faculty member. Irving is writing musical compositions and
becoming more of a generalist in his field, branching out and obtaining opportunities to
build or refine skills in his field. The emeriti may re-engage with the institution and/or
pursue a new opportunity that may or may not have direct relation to their previous
scholarship. In addition, they may re-engage in their scholarship but without the support
of the institution (e.g. Hunter).

As mentioned previously, faculty have a role attachment which often blurs the
boundaries of a personal and professional self (Near & Sorcinelli, 1986; Schuster &
Finkelman, 2006; Sugar et al., 2006; Terosky et al., 2008). Ferren (1998) stated that
faculty careers are not linear and that they are cyclical in nature. Professor’s scholarly
interests may change during their career. There is also the possibility that external factors
alter a professor’s career path; sometimes leading to a deviation or hiatus, similar to
Bridges neutral phase.

When I asked the emeriti what they missed most about being a professor, the
majority responded that they missed the students, both undergraduate and graduate
students. They missed their faculty colleagues. While many were engaging in a variety
of scholarship activities in retirement, this is a different type of generativity. Emeriti were
writing books (Ben), pursuing new lines of research (Hunter, Woodrow), contributing to
their fields (Irving, Michael) or new ones (Vega, Mitsouko) or both (Irwin) but I did not
find examples in my interviews where the emeriti were spending significant time in
mentorship or university service. The emeriti were quite vocal about the lack of
involvement opportunities (see Chapter 4) and these may serve as potential barriers for retired faculty to continue scholarly pursuits in a revitalized way.

Dorfman (1997) stated that physical proximity to the collegiate campus likely will be a factor determining emeriti involvement. It was unclear to me how far the emeriti in her study lived from their former institutions and distance could be an intervening variable. My findings suggested that physical distance from the institution may change the nature of the institutional relationship. Mitsouko, who now lives in a major northeastern city, relies more on forms of technology to provide her with connections to MWU and her former department, however her emeriti husband still returns to teach and so she has more of a connection because of her husband who keeps her informed. Alfred and Arthur have second homes and split their time between their residences by MWU, depending on season. Arthur did feel once he moved out west that his relationship with MWU and his department would greatly diminish.

Summary

Bridges (1991, 2009) work was not intended to explain how people leave an organization but how they handle change within an organization. His 2004 book is about life transitions including retirement from a profession or organization, but Bridges perspective did not address the integration of the individual and the organization (e.g. Argyris, 1964). This is where my model is more purposeful in explaining retirement because the emeriti, by contrast with other faculty, are more likely to have some sort of continuous association with their former institution, even if it is only the emeriti status. I
purposefully link the individual as part of the organization because of the unique nature of the emeriti status. I also utilize Erikson’s stagnation versus generativity stage and Levinson’s transitional periods to further ground the conceptual model, particularly in the redefine and re-engage phases.

This use of Bridges phases to create a transitional model of the way someone retires is open to potential criticism. As Bridges (1991) noted, there is an overlap between these types of phases; they are not separated by boundaries. An individual may regress into a previous phase depending on life circumstances and events. Others may completely skip the middle phase, something Bridges did not address. An individual could plan to redefine while in the departure phase, thus the individual is overlapped in two phases, as represented in the model. They may also find after spending time in the re-engage phase that they desire to, or are forced by life circumstances, to recycle back into the redefine phase again. The model also accounts for an individual to continue in his/her scholarship without involvement in their previous institution.

The departure event as a “send-off” made me think deeply about the way one departs, how colleagues are valued, and how the event reflects on the department or institution. In retrospect, I wish I had asked each emeriti about their departure in the interviews. Bridges (1991) provided a checklist about how a supervisor could assist an individual in the letting go phase, whether it was a job change, termination, or retirement. A similar list might well offer insights for a department chair to better understand the challenges an individual faces when retiring from the professoriate.
I did not want to use Bridges’ “letting go” phase as it had connotations of an individual walking away completely; it seemed too neat and clean. Bridges (1991, 2004) does expand on several sub-sections of this phase, including allowing the individual to take a piece of the past with them, treating the past with respect, and assuring endings actually ensure continuity for the organization, all relevant aspects when one thinks about acts of departure. I think that the nature of the tenured professoriate is that for most, they will always be associated with the institution and even more so, with their discipline as they are seen, and view themselves, as stewards of their profession.

It seems we could postulate that intentionally or unintentionally, the way an individual departs may occur over time, a phased departure. This rarely occurs abruptly when the office keys are turned in (though one emeriti did just that) or when the retirement reception ends. The retirement party may not actually be a closure event, but becomes the beginning of a new phase which may include new relationships with the department and institution.

As previously discussed, many faculty have continued with their scholarship. It seems that continuity theory (Atchley, 1993, 1999) and the concept of selective optimization with compensation (Baltes, 1993) also explain the transition to my model’s last phase, re-engage. Faculty desire to continue in similar activities they enjoyed before and reduce or eliminate other activities that they no longer enjoy or are able to participate in because of limitations (e.g. physically, financially, etc.).

Many of the emeriti would like to see improved relationships with MWU and/or their former department. Others, such as Vega and Andy, were comfortable moving on to
a new chapter in their lives and thus their departure had little impact on their new role, new routine or status. They seemed to have leaped over the redefine phase because they had a plan for what they wanted to do as soon as they retired. My model takes this into account.

Still, the conventional view of faculty retirement needs major reframing. I have found that there are a myriad of divergent pathways for retirement. There is no one dominant pathway, previously viewed as the life of leisure (Costa, 1998). Faculty can continue actively in their scholarship pursuits (Dorfman, 2002, 2009) and have a balance of personal interests and activities if they so choose. As seen with such endeavors in retirement such as Michael or Vega, they can pursue new opportunities.

However, new opportunities may also mean doing very little related to their scholarship. Indeed, the “no owns your time” statement aptly captures this possibility. This is also a new pathway. Neugarten and Neugarten (1996) stated that while there will continue to be this generational categorization based on biological age, there may become a redefinition of retirement based on societal norms. Popular books about “new ways to retire” increasingly fill the shelves of local bookstores. Thus, for the professoriate, two main pathways emerge that may become more of the accepted norm and neither of them seems dominant: (a) the continuity of past professional activities; (b) the pursuit of new activities, spending time doing things that were not possible or available previously.
Engaging the Emeriti

Dorfman (1992; 1997) found that if an institution provided formal structures to encourage emeriti involvement, almost all emeriti participated in varying levels of degree. These 14 participants had some level of participation, even if it was a passive activity such as reading their MWU e-mail. In terms of their involvement with MWU, the difference between formal and informal organizational structures became apparent to me during data analysis. Indeed, some of the emeriti were participating in formal activities as members of the campus retirement association and attending events for retired faculty, but more of the involvement seemed to be informal opportunities with in the department. There were some formal institutional structures in place, mainly the perquisites, but active engagement was most present at the department level and this was not formalized.

As discussed in chapter four, almost all the emeriti desired a continued relationship with MWU and their former department. The level of involvement varied, but they believe they will benefit socially, psychologically, and in some cases, even physically. University administrators have the opportunity to determine how they could involve faculty emeriti to contribute to their profession, field and their institution (Sugar et al., 2005). Some institutions already offer part-time teaching and research opportunities and service on graduate committees (e.g. Michigan State) but many more opportunities could be pursued. Institutional leaders could consider involving retired faculty in faculty mentorship, service on campus committees and assist in fundraising efforts (Sugar et al.) yet more opportunities are needed. For those faculty looking for less substantial involvement in their institution, a review of the current perquisites should still be
undertaken as the baby boomers have different needs than previous retiree cohorts (Sugar et al., 2005).

Mauch et al., (1990, 1993) suggested that these perquisites have the ability to actively engage emeriti on the life of the campus. Perhaps there are other strategies and opportunities for emeriti involvement that go beyond the seemingly standard privileges and perquisites offered by most institutions. My research suggests that categorizing the means for potential emeriti involvement would be useful (see Table 5.2). The first category is the *standard privileges* that are offered at most institutions. These are basic and may be utilized by both the Attached and Unattached categories of faculty. The second category is *productive engagement*, service activities where emeriti can participate and that create meaningful, productive engagement opportunities. These may be appealing opportunities to engage the Attached category of retired faculty, particularly the Socializers and Missing You’s.

Upon retiring, faculty who still wish to pursue further scholarship activities are often left without the basic support system, especially within their former department, to continue such endeavors (Glazer, Redmon & Robinson, 2005). This leads to the third category, *scholarly continuity*, which are knowledge-based means that assist the emeriti to continue with a variety of scholarly activities; some of these may be independent or collaborative in nature. Departmental and/or institutional commitment of support is necessary for implementation. This would attract the Encore type of emeriti who seek some continuation of scholarship.
There is some overlap between categories and arguments could be made for some of the engagement and life long learning activities to become standardized benefits. For example, with the increased reliance of faculty on department technology staff, it would be useful for emeriti not only to have seminars about how to purchase and operate their own equipment but also to have access to some sort of technology assistance for a set number of years after retirement. This could become a standard privilege for institutional leaders to consider.

Also, it seems most schools exclude emeriti from the software contracts negotiated with the university. In 2008, at the University of Iowa, retired faculty were excluded from receiving the software discounts they had as permanent faculty. They were not specifically identified as a benefit receiving group when the Microsoft contract was approved and according to the information I could gather from the University of Iowa Emeritus Council minutes (May 7, 2008) the retired faculty had to wait until the next contract negotiation with Microsoft and there remained a distinct possibility that they would again be excluded. At Iowa’s Emeritus Council’s June 7, 2009 meeting, the software situation had not changed but emeriti with software interests may be able to get discounts through their former department.

The listings under the engagement and scholarship categories represent general suggestions; institutions may have different needs, or the lack the ability to offer such opportunities as an emeriti center because of space or financial limitations. In the next

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35 The main purveyor of office software and PC operating systems
section, I will provide some examples of engagement and scholarship supported by universities.
Table 5.2: Three Categories of Emeriti Involvement with Examples

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<tr>
<th><strong>Standard Privileges</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Annual reception</td>
<td>E-mail forwarding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus computer network log-in ID</td>
<td>Emeritus title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus ID card</td>
<td>Event and activity discounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus parking/free campus buses</td>
<td>Library access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directory listing</td>
<td>Recreation and wellness discounts</td>
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<th><strong>Productive Engagement</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Admissions/scholarship review</td>
<td>Instructional evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum design</td>
<td>Junior faculty mentorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emeriti advisory council</td>
<td>Meeting with prospective students and parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emeriti centers</td>
<td>Serving on university or department committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate school rep on dissertation defenses</td>
<td>Teaching classes/seminars/guest lectures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hosting international students</td>
<td>Volunteer opportunities</td>
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<th><strong>Scholarly Continuity</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer software and technology assistance</td>
<td>Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum design</td>
<td>Research grants/funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full library privileges</td>
<td>Serving on graduate student committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office/Laboratory space</td>
<td>Symposia/roundtables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Taking courses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Writing groups</td>
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If a creating an atmosphere that actively encourages emeriti participation were an institutional goal, then campus administrators should focus their energy on the category of Attached faculty. This group includes faculty who are most likely already involved at some level, or want to be involved and may likely includes those who are still productive in scholarship.

Forms of Rewards

I want to return to the notion of feeling valued and important (Schlossberg, 1989). Two of the faculty relationship models discussed in chapter two are very relevant for reconsideration. Johnsrud and Heck (1998) and Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) conceptualized several satisfaction dimensions which mattered most to faculty in modern academic life. I had combined their dimensions of professional priorities and rewards, defined as how faculty manage their time and feel they should be rewarded, with the dimension of institutional regard, defined as how the faculty felt valued and supported by their institution. I called this new category forms of rewards, as it seemed to me that they addressed similar notions and encompassed both tangible and intangible rewards.

I have previously discussed aspects of forms of rewards in chapter four, such as “no one owns your time” and how faculty felt supported by the institution or felt there was a lack of support. Ben had commented that he felt supported for his work his entire career at MWU. “Someone is paying you to read Shakespeare. How lucky is that? And then to do my research and the university supported it” (Ben, p.4). Hunter felt that support for research was sorely lacking and it was not valued in his college.
In chapter four, I related the story of Edith’s nomination for national, state, and local awards and how valued and honored she felt. Other emeriti did not feel valued at times and were disappointed about this. Irwin mentioned several times that he rarely hears from MWU except for fundraising calls. Woodrow, while thrilled about his departure event, felt like the door was closed on him for sometime. He advised faculty who wanted to keep a connection with MWU and their former department:

The second thing is that if you want to be connected to the university that I think you need to make that aware to your department chair, your development officer. I have talked to all of those people several times and they have contacted me a little bit but it’s pretty limited. So maybe my missing of them is more significant of theirs of me, I don’t know.

(Woodrow, 60, Veterinary Medicine, p. 6-7)

He later informed me that while he had done some guest lectures and was working on the possibility of teaching a course in the future, he felt like he was putting in all the effort. Arthur echoed Woodrow’s sentiments, doubting that he was missed, yet when we conducted our interview in his shared office, several faculty stopped by to say hi and wanted to catch up with him after our interview.

Individuals value forms of rewards differently (Robbins, 1988). For example, while almost all the emeriti valued the free parking on campus, those who did not visit regularly were less enthusiastic about that benefit. Those who did not have athletic tickets
at least knew they had options to purchase them. Albert (1986) and Mauch et al., (1990, 1993) discussed that universities and colleges should reconsider what perqs they were offering and how these may affect the emeritus/ae level of involvement with the institution. Perqs are clearly a form of reward, they are tangible and many are of little financial cost. I found that many of the perqs were unknown to these emeriti outside of these three: free parking, library, and discounted athletic tickets. Despite their limited knowledge, when the emeriti discussed perqs provided, they seemed pleased, even if they were not actively using them. There were at least ten more perqs available to all emeriti at MWU and a few were awarded at the department level (e.g. office/lab space). This leads to a consideration of engaging practices where emeriti can feel valued and have the opportunity for generativity.

Examples of Engagement Best Practices

In order to sustain productive relationships with emeriti faculty, there are several practices for consideration. The first thing that the institution should do is to ensure the emeriti are aware of the standard perquisites associated with their status. The majority of my participants were not aware of the full extent of emeriti perquisites and privileges available to them at MWU. This certainly seemed problematic. While I provided each with a list after our interview36, it seemed inappropriate that an interview for dissertation research would be the first time they were informed of such matters.

36 Either a hard copy or by e-mail
An example of a solution to this comes from Colorado State University. Their Society of Senior Scholars developed a check list for department chairs or section heads to review with each retired faculty member. The list includes perqs available in the department and gives the emeriti the opportunity to decide whether she/he wishes to have access or be included in such things as department list-serves and directory listings. The remaining institutional perquisites for retired faculty were listed, and the onus of utilizing these is placed on the emeriti, but they are made aware of these opportunities (personal communication, Jerry Eckhart\textsuperscript{37}, February 10, 2010). This check list process provides face to face time between the department chair and the emeriti and allows the opportunity for discussion about future involvement, if the emeritae/us desires such a relationship. I would add a section to the checklist for involvement opportunities – a generic list (see Table 2) as well as a space for the emeriti to add possible involvement areas that were not mentioned. A database cataloging these response forms for each department, college, or institution could then be created.

The checklist would also alleviate such uncertainties such as the one Miriam discussed in our interview. She struggled cleaning out her office: what books and materials to keep and what to discard because she did not know if she would need them again. She was uncertain of her level of involvement with her former department or what opportunities might have presented themselves. She admits she did not seek out these answers either but would not have minded knowing, and a face to face conversation about involvement opportunities could have been useful to her.

\textsuperscript{37} Dr. Jerry Eckert developed this check list. At the time of our conversation, he was the president of the Society of Senior Scholars, a type of emeriti association.
In July 2008, through website document analysis of emeriti involvement opportunities at 11 large, research intensive institutions, I sought examples of engagement and scholarship opportunities for emeriti faculty. I compiled a list of examples illustrating meaningful opportunities as well as the type of support mechanisms the institution provided. In February 2010, I revisited these schools websites to see if my information was still accurate and if any changes occurred.

Michigan State [MSU] (n. d.) had an extensive list of opportunities available online. One volunteer opportunity involved designing distance education courses. An emeritus faculty member was soliciting other emeriti to help design distance courses as well as to inform the emeriti about the benefits of teaching distance. This opportunity could parlay itself into a possible adjunct employment. In fact, the emeritus coordinating this project now lives in Tucson, Arizona and his course is available year round.

Another unique MSU opportunity involved emeriti in MSU campus service learning projects. The MSU Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement had several opportunities including serving as a service learning trip adviser for Alternative Spring Break, creating in-service trainings, working with local non-profits, and even curriculum development integrating a teaching farm that MSU owns.

MSU also had several teaching opportunities available, including teaching courses for the Evening College’s non-credit personal interest courses as well as the MSU freshman seminars. Assisting English as a Second Language (ESL) students as well as volunteering as museum docents were other teaching related opportunities. In 2008, there was an annual conference for adults in fundraising and development positions that also
solicited emeriti who had conducted research in development, leadership and fundraising to assist with the conference.

The medical college at Northwestern University took a different approach to the annual emeriti luncheon held by many institutions. The emeriti were invited for lunch with the medical school deans and then were taken on personal tours of three laboratories. The Vice Dean discussed the benefits of “…encouraging the emeriti to re-engage with the medical school” and he introduced his idea for a corps of emeriti medical faculty who could serve as mentors, preceptors, and group leaders for medical students (Northwestern, 2008).

Beginning in 2008, Minnesota’s retiree association had negotiated with the university to offer ten $3500 grants to support retiree’s in their research. In 2009, this dollar amount increased to $4000. There is extensive collaboration between many units for this endeavor as indicated below:

In recognition that funding sources are often unavailable for University retirees who wish to continue their professional work, the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and the University of Minnesota Retirees Association (UMRA) are pleased to announce the second cycle of awards intended to support retirees requiring financial assistance to pursue projects related to their research, instructional, or other work history and that contribute to the educational, scholarly and academic reputation of the University. Funding for these awards has been provided by the Senior
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences, the Senior Vice President for System Academic Administration, the Vice President for Research and Interim Dean of the Graduate School, and UMRA. Support for the program also comes from college deans.

All faculty, professional and administrative, and civil service retirees from the Twin Cities and Coordinate Campuses of the University, who will be fully retired by July 1, 2010, are eligible to apply. Ten grants or more of up to $4000 will be awarded during the 2009-2010 academic year.

(University of Minnesota, February 27, 2010)

Two universities provided awards for departments that involved their emeriti. The MSU Faculty Emeriti Association (FEA) in collaboration with the Office of Faculty and Organizational Development provided an award each year, though it was unclear if there was any monetary benefit to the department (MSU, n. d). They also provided an individual award for emeritae/us which recognized individual contributions by emeriti to MSU. They presented two individuals with this award in 2009. Purdue University offered two annual awards for retiree involvement, though this was not specific to emeriti:

The Arthur G. Hansen Recognition Award was created to recognize annually the efforts of University units (departments, divisions, sections,
colleges, schools, etc.) that cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships with affiliate retirees.

... The PURA Award Selection Committee reviews the nominations and makes a recommendation to the executive board, which gives final approval at its March meeting. A trophy accompanied by a $2,500 cash award from TIAA-CREF is presented to the selected unit at the annual Retiree Banquet.

The Betty M. Nelson Special Recognition Award was established to recognize annually University departments, units, or individuals that have meaningful relationships with a wide range of University retirees, are especially supportive of retirees and their needs, and/or have provided important services to retirees. A trophy is presented to the department, unit, or individual; there is no monetary award. (Purdue University, n. d., p.5)

Other universities such as Cornell attempted to greatly enhance the status of emeritus professor so that it becoming an emeritus would be seen as a natural and desirable stage of ones career rather than being put out pasture. Ehrenberg, Matier & Fontenella (2001) stated that successful emeriti programs such as Cornell required extraordinary amounts of human capital and that the small town of Ithaca enabled retired professors to remain as vigorous parts of the community. “A successful program must
offer retiring professors an opportunity to do what they love” (Ehrenberg, Matier & Fontenella, 2001, p.94).

Retired faculty can benefit from institutional support. Many believe that their relationship has weakened over time (Gappa et al., 2007). Some institutions (see Chapter 2) have created emeriti associations to facilitate on-going campus connections and offer opportunities to contribute to their former university by sharing their knowledge and expertise.

Ferren (1998) called on college campuses to provide significant opportunities for retired faculty beyond the “…limited perks of opportunities of parking privileges, Faculty Club memberships and theater tickets” (p.28). Her examples of involvement included compensated special project work, consultation on strategic planning and to continue to do research. By doing so, the retirement transition will be smoother and the institution will not immediately lose its vested human capital. Academic affairs administrators should consider the benefits of emeriti involvement by reviewing their own campus policies and resources available to emeriti.

In summary, the exemplars mentioned are examples of the standard privileges, productive engagement and scholarly continuity categories of increasing emeriti involvement. They may be very beneficial in involving the Attached emeriti in more purposeful ways while reaching out to some of the Unattached emeriti who may become more involved and eventually reclassified as Attached. The awareness of standard privileges available to emeriti is an important opportunity to reach both the Attached and Unattached categories of emeriti. Productive engagement activities may revitalize some
of Attached types, especially the Missing You’s who are likely seeking opportunities for involvement, particularly campus service and this may also appeal to the Socializers as well. The Encore faculty most likely will benefit from scholarly continuity activities, such as the scholarships and research grants previously mentioned.

Limitations of Study

Participant Demographics

I was fortunate enough to be able to recruit participants from an entire population rather than selecting from a sample. However, there were obvious limitations. First, I narrowed my list of potential participants to the state of where MWU was located and then only contacted those who lived within an hour’s drive of MWU. Those no longer living in this state may have had a different experiences since retiring. Questions such as “Why did you move” and “What are the effects of distance on your relationship with your former department and MWU” would be ones I would have asked.

Second, I initially contacted my participants based on three broad disciplinary categories: sciences, arts and humanities, and the professional schools such as education and business. There were twice as many potential participants in the sciences, but only two-thirds were contacted because of concerns about over representation. While initially my committee and I thought having these comparison groups may provide differences based on larger potential academic disciplines, I found this was not the case upon data analysis. There were more participants than anticipated, yet I spent more of my recruitment efforts worrying about getting enough arts and humanities participants than
with the sciences and social sciences. I also did not ask any questions that were specific to any one broad grouping and reflecting back, perhaps those may have revealed differences.

Third, the emeriti population was overwhelmingly male, particularly in the sciences. Thus while my female participants better represented the overall MWU emeriti population (approximately 29% female), it was still male dominant. America’s professoriate is more diverse than ever before (Finkelstein, Seal & Schuster 1998; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006) yet there is less diverse representation within the older faculty ranks. I did not search for participants based on race/ethnicity because that number was so small in my pool; only one of my participants was a person of color. I wonder if the experiences of emeriti faculty of color would be any different.

There was also a 16 year difference in age between the youngest participant (Woodrow, 60) and oldest participant (Vega, 76). This is a large gap and each age range may have different developmental, psychological, and physiological needs (Cohen, 2002; Leclerc & Kensinger, 2008; Levinson et al., 1978; Whitbourne, 2005). Lastly, the reader must also consider that MWU is a large public research intensive institution and the experiences of emeriti faculty at other institutional types may be different. Qualitative research is meant for the reader to examine the transferability rather than generalizability of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
The Interview Process

I only conducted one interview at one point in time. While I mentioned this limitation in more detail in my methodology chapter, I now have the lived experience of going through the actual process. I wonder if I would have received different responses for those interviews that occurred in public places such as the coffee shops than at the individuals home or in their office. Some of the participants had time limitations as well, such as appointments right after our interview and this have also been a distraction. I also had a few interviews the same day I had to go into work and I wonder if I could have been unconsciously distracted and not as attuned to their interviewee as I could have been. These are all challenges, among others, faced in interview research.

The nature of emergent design allowed me to make small changes in my interview questions. However, there were some changes regarding topics that I would have made in hindsight, but that were not apparent to me during the interview process, such as the act of departure. I did not spend much time inquiring about the individual’s social networks, which limits the sense I can make whether these networks influenced the emeriti’s experiences. Reflecting back on Schlossberg (1987) and Sargent & Schlossberg, (1998) transitions theory, which relies heavily on an individual’s network of social support, I would have purposefully inquired about these rather than assume I would find this information within the context of the interview.
Future Research Implications

It is important in developing a research plan to consider the audience who may be reading our work (Lincoln, 1997). This readership consideration can assist in developing the research design as well as reporting the findings. It also allows for the opportunity where the results may influence policy or bring about other changes and provide a voice for the research participants. As I have mentioned throughout my dissertation, the overwhelming majority of research involving retired faculty has been through the institutional perspective rather than on the individual perspective. Lane (as cited in Dorfman, 1997) advocated more research on the adjustment and life patterns of retired faculty. While I attempted to ground my interview questions in these areas, I did not spend significant time investigating the life patterns of the emeriti. I would also encourage future research by institutional type as well. I suspect just by the nature of the institutional type that there may be differences from my findings at MWU.

My data findings revealed the importance of the department. Besides my findings, Dorfman (2002; 2009) and a UC-Berkeley survey of their retired faculty found that the department was the main link between the retiree and the institution (Glazer, Redmon & Robinson, 2005). I would encourage interviews of department chairs addressing their opinions about emeriti faculty and what relationship, if any, is desired. A case study methodology may also be an appropriate methodology besides in-depth interviews.

Another line of inquiry focuses on the attitude of current faculty toward emeriti. What interactions, if any, had they had with emeriti faculty? While I did not ask this question to my participants, two emeriti discussed their own negative experiences with
emeriti having an important influence on their own retirement. This certainly would make for an interesting research topic and may be useful in determining the level of desirability the emeriti status may possess. As mentioned previously in this chapter, more research is needed on departure and “how we say good-bye” (Effron, 1993).

A study on the means by which institutions and department assist faculty to prepare for retirement beyond the financial and benefits (e.g. healthcare) would be very useful for administrators. This type of study would allow for the dissemination of exemplary practices that may have a level of transferability across institutional type. Now that the baby boomers are entering retirement age in substantial numbers during an economic downturn, I would also suggest revisiting the scholarship on phased retirement. While there is good scholarship on the subject (e.g. Conley 2006; Ehrenberg, 2003; Leslie 2005; 2006a, 2006b) and interest from organizations like the AAUP, much has changed in the American economy in the past five years. A continuation of the previous scholarship can investigate the feasibility of phased retirement for the institution now as well as ascertain the level of appeal there is for faculty to select phased retirement.

I strongly agree with Sugar et al. (2005), that there needs to be more research providing not only institutional data but a national data set that go beyond basic demographics but include model retirement programs and both qualitative and quantitative research on the expectations and needs of retired faculty. Comparison studies by institution type and demographics (including emeriti rehired at their former institution) may further yield robust data. Lastly, a quantitative study investigating some of my research questions would provide a substantially larger data set as well.
Conclusion

Lindholm (2003) stated several reasons people choose the professoriate. They enjoyed the collegiate atmosphere, they felt comfortable conducting academic work, and they felt they had some sort of calling to the academic career. Faculty felt a connection to their academic environment during their graduate school endeavors and that the professoriate could offer them a meaningful career (Gappa et al., 2007; Golde, 2008; Lindholm, 2003). At MWU, my participants were also the beneficiaries of the tenure process. Ben summarized how fortunate tenured faculty are compared to other professions (as well as how well the state that MWU is located in has weathered the economic recession):

You are among the elite, the privileged and at this state now and in higher ed now, do you know how lucky you are…? You get to plan. I think that piece of the academic life of having control over your own destiny. Once you are tenured, nobody tells you what to do. It’s an incredible thing. So when I am able to really step back and look at it all, how fortunate! (Ben, 67, Arts & Humanities, p. 8).

According to Gappa, Austin and Trice (2007), faculty chose the professoriate because of the autonomous nature of the position, its intellectual challenges and the freedom to pursue personal scholarly interests. They often garner satisfaction from their
contributions to their scholarly field, developing students and creating positive social change. Collegiality also plays an important role in the faculty work environment, providing a catalyst for further creative stimulation as well as serve as a buffer for professional stress (Lindholm, 2003). Many of my participants specifically mentioned examples about having a meaningful career, creating positive change (e.g. Hunter, Michael), developing students and teaching (e.g. Andy, Edith, Mitsouko, Vega, Ben, Sandy, Irving), contributing to their scholarly field (e.g. Woodrow, Hunter, Irwin), and having a collegial work environment (e.g. Alfred, Miriam). The emeriti status allows a continued relationship with their former institution and department and the model I created to describe retirement transitions is useful to help understand how emeriti navigate themselves after departure and emerge in a re-engagement of new or continued activities.

The emeriti in this study redefined the traditional notions of retirement. I was able to classify emeriti into different types which may be useful to meet the different needs of these faculty and engage them in various ways. Universities and college administrators should revisit the notions of departure and its potential impact on the individual retiree. When asked about the status of emeriti professors and how they were treated, Woodrow offered some poignant thoughts that are quite salient considerations:

Well, I guess if you achieve that status of emeritus professor it is an indication that you had certainly did something during your career that was important to you and the department and important to the university
and I think you know, the people that follow behind us are individuals that
we hopefully have helped mentor, so you know, whatever connections can
be maintained they should.

In the business of the world and the size of the university, people slip
through the cracks. It’s intriguing to me, with the exception of a few
things that I have initiated, that I have not ever heard from the
university… (Woodrow, 60, Veterinary Medicine, p.8)

Woodrow implored those in the university business not let people fall through the
cracks and that the department and institutional connections be fostered. A simple
inventory list of potential areas of involvement would be a good start. Communication is
essential. Almost all the emeriti in my study were actively using their university e-mail
addresses and those forthcoming retirees are likely to continue their use of technology in
retirement, making communication efforts much easier, timelier, and less costly. I asked
Irving in a follow-up e-mail about what would keep him involved with his former
department. Besides geographic proximity to the MWU campus, he also stated that,
“T’ll surmise that an emeriti’s continuing interest in the field and a sense of being welcome
to participate would be the strongest influences to be connected “(personal
communication, January 24, 2010).

With the graying of the professoriate continuing and the massive number of baby
boombers entering retirement age, universities and college administrations need to
adequately prepare for retirement. Many departments at some institutions, especially
small departments and programs, have yet to have their first faculty retirement in recent memory. Michael shared that he was the first person to retire from his department in such a long time that the administrative support staff were not sure what he even needed to do.

There is also a concern for the loss of institutional memory (Glazer et al., 2005) and this may have a negative effect on the academic department. Irving informed me that “in my opinion, the loss of useful corporate memory amongst faculty who retire, could be quite harmful in some departments. The same, I’ve read somewhere, is true in the business world” (personal communication, January 24, 2010). Emeriti such as Alfred were hesitant about “pontificating about the past” and Andy stating that emeriti should not be involved in the department because it may hinder change. Yet, the intergenerational opportunity may be more of an asset. Only Woodrow expressed any interest in serving on formal department committees; the rest were more interested in ad hoc or in personal advisory opportunities. This may alleviate concerns of emeriti overly active in department decisions; they were more than happy not to have to attend such meetings anymore.

There is more of a positive shift in conducting research which connects with policy, practitioners, and evaluations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This is a definitive goal I have and I would like to continue my future work purposefully engaging theory to practice which can inform institutional policy. While I have generated many themes, concepts and one transition model in this study, I acknowledge the following long standing advice; “the published word is not the final one but only a pause in the never-ending process of generating theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.40). This dissertation is
intended as a catalyst in forming a larger intercollegiate dialogue about reframing faculty retirement and the effects and relationships that emeriti face in retirement, which may enable them to retire with distinction.
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38 All website links listed were operational as of March, 2010.


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Appendix A: Sample Participant Letter (E-mail Version)

Dear (Participant)\(^39\),

My name is Seth Fishman and I am doctoral candidate pursuing a degree in Higher Education Administration at The Ohio State University. Currently, I am in the process of completing my dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Ada Demb, Associate Professor of Higher Education & Student Affairs. My dissertation aims to explore the potential relationship between emeritus faculty and their former institution. I am writing to seek your participation as an interviewee in my study, which is outlined below.

This study will contribute to the higher education literature by providing an in-depth analysis of faculty who retired within the past five years. There has been little research on faculty emeriti conducted in the past decade and there may be differences in what the new generation of retired faculty expect in retirement by contrast with previous generations. The results may be beneficial for informing institutional policy, especially for human resource management and academic deans and department chairs that may eventually lead to additional benefits for the retired faculty.

Through an in-depth semi-structured interview, I hope to acquire insight about the ways faculty emeriti think about the value of having a relationship with their former institution; the meaning of “official retirement” for the emeritus/tae professor; their opinions about the perquisites associated with the classification at their institution; and their greatest satisfactions during retirement.

\(^{39}\) I used a 14 point font in the e-mail purposely to provide easier reading than the standard e-mail font size.
I would like to explore these questions through interviews with faculty emeriti/ae who have been retired from their institution between two and five years and are not currently employed at that institution.

All participant data will be handled in a confidential manner. No individuals will be identified in the reporting. All participants will have the opportunity to create a pseudonym which will be utilized in all data write-ups. The institution will also be given a pseudonym. All of the data will be maintained in an off-campus, secured location in a locked cabinet. Your participation is completely voluntary. At any given time, a participant can remove him or herself from the interview and/or study with no consequences.

I will plan to contact you again in about two weeks to see whether you might agree to participate. The location of our interview will be determined by you and I am willing to drive to whatever location you decide to be most appropriate. If you no longer live in the Columbus area, please let me know.

In the meantime, if you find the study of interest to you, please call me at 614-975-2788 or contact me by e-mail at fishman.31@osu.edu. My academic advisor and dissertation chair, Dr. Ada Demb, is also available as a resource and can be contacted at 614-292-1865 or by e-mail at demb.1@osu.edu.

Thank you for your consideration in participating in my study and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Seth Fishman
Doctoral Candidate
School of Educational Policy and Leadership

Ada Demb, Ed.D.
Associate Professor
School of Educational Policy and Leadership
Appendix B: Consent Form

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION RESEARCH

Ohio State University IRB Protocol # 2009E0664.
I consent to participating in research entitled:
Retired with distinction: Faculty emeriti.

Seth Fishman, Co-PI and the authorized representative of the Principal Investigator (Dr. Ada Demb) has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described, as have alternative procedures.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date:  Signed (Participant)

Date:  Signed (CO-PI)
Appendix C: Interview Guide

Participant Pseudonym:
College: Gender:

Intro script:
Ok, now that we have reviewed the consent form and the confidentiality protocols used in my study, I am going to go into a short series of questions, the same ones I had e-mailed to you earlier (give participant list of questions).

Semi structured questions:
1) Please tell me about how you became a professor.

2) What did you enjoy most about being a professor?

3) How would you define “retirement?” How do you spend your time these days?

4) How do you feel about your emeriti title?

5) How do you feel about your perquisites and benefits as a retired faculty member?

6) What do you miss about being a professor? Least?

7) What have been your greatest satisfactions during retirement?

8) How did you feel about your retirement planning?

9) How would you describe your current relationship with your former institution? Department?
10) What relationship, if any, would you like to have your former institution/department? Why?

   If they desire a relationship:
   1) Do you feel the university encourages you to be involved? If yes, how so?

   2) If not, how COULD they?

11) How does your proximity to your former institution affect your level of engagement with the campus?

12) What advice, if any, would you have for the upcoming faculty entering retirement?

13) What advice, if any, would you have for your former institution about retired faculty?

14) Now that you have a better idea about the focus of my study, is there anything that I did not address in my questions that you think would be helpful for my understanding?

(Thank participant. Provide perq list. Mention that if there is anything they want to add, to e-mail me)