

EXPLORING TRUST BETWEEN THE HIGHER
EDUCATION PRESIDENT AND THE
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president in light of institutional culture. The researcher employed a qualitative case study research design using interviews, observations, and document analysis at a single institution. The theoretical framework used for this dissertation was William Tierney's Grammars of Trust (2006). The research questions included the following:

1. What does trust look like between the higher education president and the assistant to the president according to the research participants;
2. What are the most common ways in which trust is experienced by the higher education president and assistant to the president;
3. How does institutional culture influence the role of trust between the president and assistant to the president?

Trust as faith, an exchange, and a cultural construction yielded the most thick and rich data. Trust was found to be experienced most via shared and learned experiences. The value of trust and its importance between the higher education president and assistant to the president is highlighted.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Context

The president of an institution of higher education is charged with a plethora of duties and responsibilities including, but not limited to, institutional planning and advancement, meeting with the board of trustees/regents members, and managing internal institutional affairs (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Cohen & March, 1974). The college president must respond to the political nature of the position, as most presidents are charged with maintaining positive relationships with many and varied internal and external constituents (Cohen & March, 1974). University presidents must also surrender to the entrepreneurial side of the job with demands such as maintaining positive relationships with financial support systems, vendors, and community stakeholders. Bess and Dee (2008) stated that college and university presidents have complex responsibilities that include setting the general tone and direction of the institution by working closely with the institution's trustee members, shaping the public image of the institution by working closely with external constituents, and managing day-to-day policy making by working closely with vice-presidents and/or other senior-level administrators. According to Bess and Dee (2008), the president may devote the majority of the working day to external affairs such as meeting with alumni, potential financial supporters, governmental representatives, and community stakeholders.

While the college presidency has become increasingly complex since its inception, the research expounded upon in this dissertation will show that the complexity of the role of university president is a direct result of the increasing complexity of the higher education

enterprise in general. Institutions of higher learning are serving more diverse populations than ever before (American Council on Education, 2005). For example, some single gender institutions are opening their doors to both male and female students (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). International students are enrolling in record numbers (McMurtrie, 2011). Students on American college campuses represent various religions, sexual orientations, and levels of skill and maturity (American Council on Education, 2005). Funds for higher education are not coming from one or all of the same outlets for all students, as the American economy continues to remain unsettled (Paulsen & Smart, 2002; Barr & McClellan, 2011). Colleges are also continually searching for new and innovative ways to market themselves in part because they must do so to stay relevant in an ever-changing society, and so they can take advantage of the new opportunities made available almost daily by the Internet and the global opportunities it presents (Kaufman, 2006). Bess and Dee (2008) summarized the complexity of institutions of higher education by asserting that these organizations are operating in an increasingly diverse and ever-changing environment with numerous demands from external groups, shifting institutional missions and values, economic uncertainty, increased faculty and administrative specializations, varied employee personal needs, and ambiguous forms of political power both internally and externally. One cannot review the duties and responsibilities that make managing a college harder than it once was without realizing the university president of the twenty-first century needs assistance.

What are institutions of higher education doing to support the college president? What are members of the university president's cabinet doing to help the president, or do they even have time to help the president considering the high volume of demands on them as well? It is quickly becoming the norm to hire an executive assistant to the president, often referred to as the

presidential assistant, assistant to the president, or chief of staff - a term borrowed from the political arena (O'Reilly, Jr., 2000). The assistant to the president is an extension of the president, often following the president in his or her shadow and even representing the president in his or her absence at Board of Trustees/Regents meetings and/or fund-raising events (Curchack, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore trust and institutional culture in the relationship between the university president and his or her assistant to the president. While it is important to note this study does not yield generalizable results, as it did not seek statistical data and did not involve a large number of participants, it took the form of a qualitative research study examining institutional culture and the relationship between the higher education president and his or her executive assistant, with an emphasis on the process of how trust manifests itself in such relationships. It helped to establish the importance of trust in the college president-assistant to the president relationship in light of the institutional culture that surrounds these two critical senior-level administrative positions. In addition, understanding the role of the assistant to the president (AP) helps to eliminate the prevalence of misconceptions regarding the role (Miles, 2000). Finally, it is my hope that by researching the role of trust between the higher education president and the AP, an understanding of how the position can be effective (Gifford, 2011) regardless of culture is evident. The college presidency and his or her assistant's position are neither firm nor singular in experience and vary depending on the type of college or university in which they work (Neumann & Bensimon, 1990).

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the existing literature on the multitude of complex responsibilities of the higher education president, the president's executive support person, and assistant to the president by answering previous researchers' call for a qualitative study investigating assistants to the president in higher education settings (Miles, 2000; Stiles, 2008; Gifford, 2011) and the role of trust between the two individuals. This qualitative dissertation adds to the knowledge base of presidents and assistants to the president in higher education by offering a description of the role of trust between the president and his or her executive assistant and the role of institutional culture in this relationship. The ultimate goals of this study were to bring to light the role of trust between the higher education president and his or her assistant to the president, investigate the influence of institutional culture on trust between the president and assistant to the president, reduce misconceptions of the assistant to the president's role and aid in the process of the assistant to the president becoming a recognized profession within the field of higher education, and finally, inform higher education policy regarding senior-level administrators to the higher education president.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the influence of trust and institutional culture in the relationship between the university president and his or her assistant to the president. The research questions for this study include the following:

1. What does trust look like between the higher education president and the assistant to the president according to the research participants;
2. What are the most common ways in which trust is experienced by the higher education president and assistant to the president;

3. How does institutional culture influence the role of trust between the president and assistant to the president?

For the remainder of Chapter I, three related bodies of literature are discussed. They include the following: 1) higher education organizational structure – not only the interaction between the president and the assistant to the president, but also the larger issue of the interactions within the entire higher education organization; 2) complexities of the higher education president role; and 3) the role of the higher education assistant to the president. This discussion is followed by the conclusion to Chapter I and an outline of Chapter II.

Higher Education Organizational Structure

The higher education system in the United States borrows its structure from two cultures: the British undergraduate college and the German research university (American Council on Education, 2004). The organizational structure of higher education institutions in general terms relates to the internal structure of varying positions and departments (Bess & Dee, 2008). Tierney (2006) asserted that while the structure of higher education institutions commonly refers to organizational charts and lines of authority, the more important factor regarding institutional structure is what the structure of the organization means to external stakeholders and how those within the institution interpret it. Thelin, Edwards, Moyen, Berger, and Calkins (2011) have referred to organizational structure within higher education institutions as the ways in which colleges and universities are organized and controlled. The university structure has been an ongoing development determined by their changing internal and external environments and purposes, in addition to their characteristics (Padilla, 2005). Organizations must structure their units in a way that will allow them to achieve the goals set forth by the institution and achieve objectives efficiently (Bess & Dee, 2008). According to Padilla (2005), certain parts of an

institution of higher education are considered loosely organized. In contrast, many daily operations are highly formalized such as budget and finance functions and fund-raising (Padilla, 2005). Bolman and Deal (2008) have asserted that in addition to organizational structural issues like perfecting the loose and tight areas of an organization, issues such as a gap in communication as opposed to an overlap and excessive instances of autonomy as opposed to an unhealthy level of interdependence can be highly complex structural issues within an organization.

Higher education organizational structure considers the allocation of duties to specific positions and departments, how the people in these positions interact with one another, and the communication and organizational patterns that are inherent to the institution (Bess & Dee, 2008). According to Tierney (2006), structure involves the formal and informal aspects of decision-making and the way in which these decisions are perceived by stakeholders within and outside the institution. Three factors particularly relevant to the American university that aid in understanding why different structures exist from institution to institution are 1) level of complexity (size of the institution); 2) unpredictability (internal and external forces affecting the immediate and long-term operations of an institution); and 3) interdependence of the various entities within an institution (Padilla, 2005).

Determining how an institution of higher learning should be structured is based largely on the institutional type (Thelin, Edwards, Moyen, Berger, & Calkins, 2011). Of utmost importance when designing an institution's organizational structure is the consideration of the five major contingencies for deciding on the right design for a particular institution: 1) the surrounding environment of the institution; 2) the technologies it uses (the process by which its inputs are converted into its outputs); 3) the goals of the institution; 4) the institution's culture;

and 5) the size of the institution (Bess & Dee, 2008). The consideration of an institution's inputs (students, finances, prestige, external expectations, chemicals, and books) and outputs (graduates, knowledge, service, and status) should be a top priority when determining the proper institutional structure (Birnbaum, 1988). Richard Daft's (1983) definition of organizational structure is particularly helpful for institutions of higher education regardless of institutional type and includes four primary criteria for success: 1) allocating tasks and responsibilities to the right individuals and the right departments within an organization; 2) designing formal reporting relationships between the right supervisors and subordinates; 3) organizing individuals into the right department and the right departments into the right place within the entire institution; and 4) designing systems that will enable effective communication, coordination, and integration of effort in both vertical and horizontal lines within the institution.

An integral challenge of the structure of a college or university is finding ways to coordinate the work of multiple and varied units on campus in a way that fosters positive interaction and productivity, without taking away from the work of highly trained specialists (Bess & Dee, 2008). Possible explanations for the pressure to improve organizational design in the field of higher education are pressures to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and offer positive responsiveness (Bess & Dee, 2008). Padilla (2005) asserted that current pressures such as increased demands from government, parents, and students, demands to make institutional goals more specific and meet them with fewer resources, and more frequent involvement by trustees are all factors leading to the increased complexity of the higher education institutional structure. Kiley (2011) has noted that because higher education institutions are highly complex, decentralized enterprises, they often lose money by failing to identify, and respond appropriately

to, the redundant administrative practices that could save institutions a significant amount of money if appropriate changes were made to the organizational structure.

Higher education institutional effectiveness has been directly linked to the structure of the institution (Fincher, 1997). According to Fincher (1997), organizational structure is also directly linked to the effectiveness of the institution's president. Structural efficiency within a higher education institution is a recurring priority and challenge for most university presidents and is defined as, the degree to which a transformation process uses resources – especially time and money – and this is no different for institutions of higher education (Bess & Dee, 2008). However, *how* efficiency is measured in higher education is specific to five issues: 1) cost of instruction per student; 2) departmental salaries per course taught; 3) average faculty salary per graduating student; 4) physical costs (power, water, maintenance) per department annually; and 5) donations by current students and alumni (Bess & Dee, 2008).

Current colleges and universities vary in a number of ways, such as the targeted student population (institutional type), level of control (private versus public), sources and levels of funding, and institutional missions and goals (Bess & Dee, 2008). Birnbaum (1988) posited that institutions differ in several ways depending on the type of institution, naming enrollments, academic programs, resource bases, and structures as the main four entities that differ the most. With a high level of specialization in any organization comes the possible difficulty of coordinating the separated units. Two potential problems with uncoordinated units in a higher education organization is that 1) each unit has the potential to lose contact with each other, which increases the probability that each unit will drift away from the overall institutional mission (Bess & Dee, 2008); and 2) ineffective financial practices (Kiley, 2011). Fincher (1997) pointed to the fact that external foundations and federal funding agencies are sometimes hesitant to invest

in an institution whose structure is not sound because funds can easily be displaced in an unstable institutional structure.

While it is easy to draw an organizational chart when trying to describe a college or university and its circles of interaction, institutions of higher education are deeper than charts and role descriptions (Bess & Dee, 2008). Several factors lead to the fact that the organizational structure institutions of higher education must go beyond charts and role descriptions. Such factors may include greater pressure for accountability on multiple levels, the evolving nature of decision-making, the ever-changing market, and innovations in academic and technology. This same concept of human interaction is represented when examining the organizational structure of a college. Opportunities for human interaction provide individuals with the chance to meet the personal needs of others while simultaneously achieving the goals of the organization as a whole (Bess & Dee, 2008). One of the most important keys to achieving the goals of an organization is fostering an environment that is rich with opportunities for maintaining motivation, organizational commitment, and trust among its members, according to Bess and Dee (2008).

The Complexity of the Role of the Higher Education Presidency

As noted by Burns (1978), higher education presidential leadership induces followers to live out the institution's mission by striving to achieve shared institutional values and goals, carrying through from the decision-making stages to the point at which there are changes in followers' lives, attitudes, and behaviors, and ultimately changes within the organization under the president's leadership. Because the president of an institution is the institution's leader, he or she is an important symbol of who and what the institution represents, and is hired to reflect the institution's desired image and goals (Padilla, 2005; Bess & Dee, 2008). Further, presidents are often perceived as the face of stability in times of uncertainty (Bess & Dee, 2008).

While colleges and universities vary in mission, culture, size, institutional type and student body, the demands on the president of an institution of higher education are significant in terms of their time and energy (Cohen & March, 1986). Complaints from college and university presidents are often centered around the demands placed on them (Cohen & March, 1986). The position is physically and emotionally draining. One factor possibly leading to the physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion experienced by university presidents is the fact that while the president generally moves up the academic ranks stopping at the appropriate positions, there is no formal training on how to be a college or university president (Padilla, 2005). There is always the need for one more hour in the day and one more set of hands to help get the job done (Bowen, 2011). As a result of the stressful nature of the job, college presidents typically describe themselves as feeling unable to adequately handle the high-priority aspects of their jobs (Cohen & March, 1986). Bowen (2011) has confirmed this sentiment writing that university presidents and their offices have too much to do and not enough time to do all that needs to be done well.

In an effort to understand the role of the university president, some might ask questions such as 1) what is the president doing all day; 2) how is his or her time organized and prioritized; 3) where is the president during a typical week, a typical weekend; and/or 4) with whom does the president spend time and why? Questions like the aforementioned ones are understandable according to Cohen and March (1986). Highly structured tasks, such as administrative activities, typically have priority over other less-structured activities, such as personal reflection because in most cases, administrative activities yield immediately visible results. Cohen and March (1986) have asserted that financial planning is one of the primary responsibilities of a college president, regardless of institutional type.

Cohen and March (2004) wrote that the higher education presidency is largely a social job, one that is heavily dependent on positive interactions with other people. Padilla (2005) also agreed the position is largely social and a position in which success in the role is largely determined by one's ability to interact with other leaders and followers effectively. According to Cohen and March (1986), the president's time is organized in terms of people, rather than problematic issues. This allocation is evidence of the priority placed on the social aspect of the job. The position of university president requires an ability to display oral knowledge and to gain satisfaction from verbal productivity measures such as prolonged discussions and conversations. Due to the extremely busy schedule of the average college president, the typical individual seeking an appointment with the president should expect a three to four day delay to secure a time on his or her calendar. Bowen (2011) has asserted that the success of a university president can be attributed in large part to the quality of his or her working relationships. To that end, Bowen (2011) stated, "I have always believed in surrounding myself with colleagues who can do all the things that I cannot" (p. 25). Cohen and March (1986) shared the same opinion years earlier by stating that a main focus of attention for college presidents is building the right personnel team.

An effective administrative team is key to presidential success, according to William G. Bowen, former president of Princeton University (2011), who acknowledged that

I am skeptical that it was ever possible in modern times for a university president to accomplish much on his or her own. Certainly it isn't today. There is just too much to do, too many constituencies to keep in mind, and too many personal relationships that have to be handled sensitively... A sure path to mediocrity, if not failure, is to be afraid of good people. (p. 24-25)

Bowen (2011) has asserted that surrounding one's self with outstanding support personnel, such as administrative assistants matters tremendously to a college president. There is no substitute,

according to Bowen (2011), for having a chief assistant who is highly skilled in managing people and office operations, but also in making decisions. The former president of Princeton University acknowledges the importance of recruiting personnel who understand what needs to be done and is willing to “just do it” (Bowen, 2011). Hiring the right support staff is crucial to fostering an environment of trust and productivity. While there is no “cure” for the recurring sense of having too much to do and not enough time to do them, one factor that can help is making sure the president has excellent colleagues he or she trusts to share the work. Choosing who will help the president and his or her staff perform day-to-day operations is crucial to organizational success (Bowen, 2011).

Assistants to the President

Assistants to the president in higher education are often viewed as “extensions of the personality and role of the president as a university leader” (Miles, 2000). With this in mind, it is important to understand the role of the assistant to the president and his or her role in higher education. In addition, understanding the role of the assistant to the president is critical to improving institutional organization and effectiveness, specifically regarding the Office of the President (Carlson, 1991). Carlson (1991) stated that studying the role of the assistant to the president is vital to understanding effective presidential transitions, as most assistants to the president are willing to stay at the institution in transition and can offer greater insight to the culture of the institution to the new president.

The assistant to the higher education president is by nature both a generalist and an extension of the university president (Lingenfelter & McGreevey, 2009). Due to the broad spectrum of responsibilities expected of assistants to the president, it can be difficult to define the position. It is generally accepted that the duties of an assistant to the president are dependent

upon four factors: 1) the president's specific needs; 2) the institutional type, values, and mission; 3) education, skills, and experience of the AP; and 4) current needs and goals of the institution (Lingenfelter & McGreevey, 2009). Carlson (1991) asserted that there is a wide range of duties assigned to the assistant to the president and the responsibilities reflect the individual president, his or her learning style, and the specific institution. Miles (2000) noted that "such fluid descriptions" of the position may lead to the misunderstanding of the role. Further solidifying this assertion is O'Reilly (2000) by noting that the assistant to the president is a position that varies from college to college, university president to university president, and from assistant to the president to assistant to the president. O'Reilly also noted that the position is still evolving (2000). Gifford (2000) has suggested that due to much of the assistant to the president's work being conducted behind the scenes, little is known about the job. Stephen Trachtenberg (2009) described the position as something like a chameleon, able to easily and quickly adapt to changing circumstances and demands. Trachtenberg further describes the assistant to the president as the president's "helpmate" – understanding both what the president needs and what the president's position demands and is there to help the president meet his or her responsibilities. Millet (1980) has noted that a university president is expected to ensure the proper management of a university despite the ever-increasing complexity of the job. He further asserted that college presidents need assistance. Bess and Dee, in 2008, asserted that no leader of an institution has all the skills and knowledge necessary to lead a college or university alone.

While one specific definition of the assistant to the president role may be difficult to find, the role is one worth investigating because as O'Reilly (2000) noted from Robert Berdahl, President of the Association of American Universities, in his dissertation entitled *A Study of Assistants to the President at Specialized Institutions in Higher Education*, there is no other

administrator a university president consults with more consistently than his or her closest assistant. O'Reilly asserted that the key to this role is the fact that these individuals have regular and direct contact with the president, the most powerful person on any campus. Assistants to the president have the ability to influence decisions made by the president, sometimes without intending to do so, which can ultimately affect institutional policy (O'Reilly, 2000). While the president makes the final decisions, undoubtedly the assistant to the president beliefs influence the president's decision in some way and that creates power.

Having such close proximity to the president of a college, the assistant to the president position carries with it implicit power and influence. Dressel (1981) has posited that assistants to the president possess influence and power although none may have been formally delegated. A president's assistant has the ability to influence constituents in the best interest of the president simply because of their interaction with the president (Carlson, 1991). O'Reilly (2000) stated that the assistant to the president has great potential to be the president's and presidential cabinet members' most influential professional contact. Gifford (2011) asserted that the assistant to the president's influence and power also come from his or her knowledge of the institution's cultural norms, traditions, and identity. The higher education president often relies on his or her assistant to help maintain and expand their own influence and power.

The number of assistants to the president is increasing at institutions across the United States, as is their tenure (Carlson, 1991). However, the research of this position has not increased at the same rate. Due to the lack of research regarding assistants to the president in higher education, it stands to reason that each of the researchers referenced here have indicated at one time or another that further study should be conducted on assistants to the president in higher education (Stiles, 2008). The role of the assistant to the president is important to research for

two reasons: 1) the work of the university president is crucial to the success of the institution and his or her ability to successfully carry out his or her agenda; therefore, the work of the assistant to the president is equally critical due to his or her relationship with the president; and 2) the perception of the university stakeholders and the external community on the institution is largely a direct result of the work of the president; therefore, an indirect result of the work of the assistant to the president (Schaeffer, 2009). Because the assistant to the president is the president's closest confidante in many cases, it seems important to research the higher education assistant to the president position (Carlson, 1991).

Conclusion

This chapter provided a background of the research problem, purpose and significance of the study, the research questions, and a discussion of three related bodies of literature: 1) higher education organizational structure for the purposes of setting the context within which this study will be framed; 2) complexities of the role of the higher education president and the need for an executive assistant to the president; and 3) the role of the higher education assistant to the president. The next chapter frames the study conceptually by reviewing selected literature on higher education institutional culture, the duties and responsibilities of the higher education president, and assistants to the president in higher education. The chapter also includes an examination of Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* (2006), which serves as the conceptual framework for this study.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter establishes the context for this research study by examining the literature in five related areas: 1) the varying cultures of higher education institutions; 2) the complex responsibilities and duties of the higher education president; 3) higher education assistants to the president; 4) the role of trust and its relationship to academic culture; and 5) Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* (2006). The president and his or her assistant, and their performance individually and collectively are bound by the past and present culture(s) of a given institution. Given the unique dynamics of an institution, there may be multiple cultures at play, creating a multifaceted environment within which the president and his or her assistant must perform. Culture is the element binding an institution together and defines who the institution is within the knowledge industry and society (Parsons & Platt, 1973), and trust gains value within the cultures of the institution (Tierney, 2006). The successful or unsuccessful performance of an institution's presidential cabinet and the trust experience is highly dependent on the current culture(s) of an institution. As such, William Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* (2006) serves as the conceptual framework for this study. Taken together, this review provides an understanding of trust within a cultural framework (Tierney, 2006) and serves as the proper foundation from which this study will be grounded. To conclude the chapter, a summary of the literature is presented, followed by a conclusion and outline of Chapter III, Research Methods.

The first section of this literature review sets the tone for researching how institutional culture surrounds an institution's president and his or her assistant and their work individually

and collectively. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), an organization's culture is the "super glue that bonds an organization, unites people, and helps an enterprise accomplish desired ends" (p. 253). Similar to other industries, no two higher education institutions in the knowledge industry are exactly alike. Therefore, no two institutions will have the exact same culture(s) within which they operate. Reviewing the current literature on higher education culture sheds light on the role of an institution's president and his or her complex responsibilities and duties.

The next section in this literature review addresses the complex duties of the higher education president and is examined through the lens of institutional culture. The research revealed in this section is derived from a review of the literature written by past presidents of higher education institutions and the responsibilities with which they were charged in order to be successful, as well as higher education scholars' studies of the role of the higher education president. By examining the role of the higher education president and his or her complex responsibilities and duties through the perspective of institutional culture, the importance of trust between the president and the institution's stakeholders is evident.

The third section of this literature review examines the current literature of assistants to the president in higher education. This section begins with a history of the role. Next, the national professional organization for assistants to the president in higher education, National Association of Assistants to the president in Higher Education (NAPAHE) is discussed. In addition, current literature on the position is presented through the lens of higher education institutional culture. The dearth amount of relevant literature related to the assistant to the president, also known as the chief of staff in higher education is minimal and therefore includes dissertations, published reports, papers presented at national conferences, and opinion pieces.

Following the presentation of current literature on assistants to the president in higher education, the influential factor of institutional culture helps explain the role and the position in relation to his or her president as well as the invaluable element of trust between the assistant to the president and his or her president. This section of the literature review shows how trust between the assistant to the president and his or her president, between the assistant to the president and the presidential cabinet, and between the assistant to the president and the remaining institutional stakeholders is directly affected by the culture(s) within which the assistant to the president works. The responsibilities and duties entrusted to the assistant to the president are also determined by the institutional culture(s).

Finally, William Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* (2006) is discussed in detail, as this concept serves as the conceptual framework against which the results of this study were evaluated. As Tierney suggested, trust can be experienced in three ways: shared, learned, and conditional. Culture plays an important role in how trust manifests itself in institutions of higher education as well as in an effective president-assistant to the president relationship.

Reviewing the characteristics of the various higher education cultures and reviewing the current literature on higher education presidents and assistants to the president sets the context for addressing the research questions, which include the following:

1. What does trust look like between the higher education president and the assistant to the president according to the research participants;
2. What are the most common ways in which trust is experienced by the higher education president and assistant to the president;
3. How does institutional culture influence the role of trust between the president and assistant to the president?

Cultures Within the Academy

In order to fully understand the element of trust and its role in any relationship, one must develop an understanding of the culture in which the trust between individuals is built, as an effective culture is built around the central element of trust (Tierney, 2006). This dissertation uses a two-tiered cultural lens through which to view institutional culture and its relationship to trust within the academy. The first tier is derived from Bergquist's and Pawlak's (2008) six academic cultures. The second tier comes from Tierney's (1991) individual cultural framework.

While this dissertation merges Bergquist's and Pawlak's and Tierney's respective frameworks, it is important to mention other highly-regarded scholars and their contribution to the concept of culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). What is culture? What is its role in an organization? Do organizations *have* a culture or *are* they a culture? According to Bolman and Deal (2008), these questions have been contested for many years. Kuh and Whitt (1988) have asserted that in order to appreciate why faculty and students exhibit certain behaviors and think the way they do, one must first describe and understand their culture. The scholars suggest that culture is perceived as an interpretive framework for understanding and appreciating events and actions in higher education institutions (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Schein (1992) offered a formal definition of culture:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 12)

Birnbaum (1988) presented a three-pronged, academic culture framework, while Smart and St. John (1996) offer a four-culture framework. According to Birnbaum (1988), the three academic cultures are 1) the national education system culture which focuses on sharing understandings of excellence and access and an agreement that education is valuable both intrinsically and

professionally; 2) the professional culture which gives importance to autonomy; and 3) the academic culture which are based on differences in research techniques and methods and membership in certain groups. According to Smart and St. John (1996), the four academic cultures are 1) the clan culture which is noted for having high flexibility, individuality, and spontaneity and the primary leadership style is mentor-style; 2) the bureaucratic culture which differs from the clan culture in that it is noted for its emphasis on stability, control, and predictability and the dominant leadership style is coordinator; 3) the adhocracy culture which is noted for its focus on external positioning and activities which are achievement-oriented and the leadership styles are innovator and entrepreneur; and 4) the market culture which is noted for its valuing of stability, control, and predictability and a dominant leadership style of producer. By examining cultures in the academy using a multi-layered perspective, a more thorough study of trust within institutional cultures can be presented.

Culture provides an avenue through which order out of the complex can be created, helps to understand and identify reactions to individuals living and working within a specific culture, and plays a vital role in shaping individuals and the structures they create (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Tierney (2006) explained culture as a concept that helps create meaning and identity within an institution. Birnbaum (1988) has argued culture is the “social or normative glue” (p. 72) that holds an institution together and represents the values or social ideals and beliefs an institution’s stakeholders generally share. He posited that culture can be influenced by numerous factors, including other comparable institutions such as community colleges, state universities, or liberal arts colleges. Culture is often influenced at many levels such as within a department and/or institution and at the system and state levels. Birnbaum (1988) further stated that an institution’s culture creates purpose, loyalty, order, and social cohesion. Culture helps to clarify

and explain behavioral expectations and actions and influences an institution through the individuals within it. In the knowledge industry, culture sheds light on the mission, vision, and values and on the roles played by faculty members, administration, students, trustees, and community members (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Tierney (2006) stated that an organization's culture has three primary functions: 1) to provide an institution's stakeholders with meaning and identity; 2) to shape behavior; and 3) to provide institutional stability and effectiveness. Table 1 illustrates the concepts reviewed and used to frame this study.

Table 1

Comparison of Bergquist's and Pawlak's Six Cultures of the Academy and Tierney's Individual Institutional Culture

Bergquist's and Pawlak's Six Cultures of the Academy	Tierney's Individual Institutional Culture
Collegial Culture	Environment
Managerial Culture	Mission
Developmental Culture	Socialization
Advocacy Culture	Information
Virtual Culture	Strategy
Tangible Culture	Leadership

The effect of institutional culture on change strategies in higher education: Universal principles or culturally responsive concepts? (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 441)

Scholars have long conceptualized culture in various ways as a result of varying individual perspectives (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Some believe institutions have one culture and it is either strong and congruent or weak and incongruent (Kezar & Eckel, 2002) while others (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Van Maanen & Barley, 1985) believe multiple cultures exist on a college campus (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). With this in mind, I draw from a lens utilizing both perspectives through which to view institutional culture and its relationship to trust within the academy.

Bergquist and Pawlak's (2008) work on the six cultures of the academy are comprised of the collegial, managerial, developmental, advocacy, virtual, and tangible cultures. The authors state that one or all six cultures may exist on one campus. The collegial culture, according to the Bergquist and Pawlak, finds meaning in the disciplines that faculty represent within the institution. The authors further state that those associated with this culture value research and scholarship by faculty.

The managerial culture is one in which meaning is found primarily in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of work and where fiscal responsibility and effective supervisory skills are highly valued (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Bergquist and Pawlak described the developmental culture as one in which meaning is derived from the creation of programs and activities that further the growth, personally and professionally, of the members of the academic community. Being open and serving others, as well as research and curricular planning are valued in the developmental culture. The culture of advocacy primarily finds meaning in establishing policies and procedures for the dissemination of resources and benefits in the institution (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Those aligned with the advocacy culture value fair bargaining and confrontation among stakeholders, primarily administration, faculty, and staff, who have opposing vested interests.

Bergquist and Pawlak introduced the virtual and tangible culture in 2008. The first, virtual culture, is one in which meaning is found by appropriately responding to the knowledge generation (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Those aligned with the virtual culture value a global perspective of open, shared, and responsive educational systems. The second, tangible culture, is a culture that can be viewed as quite old or relatively new depending on one's perspective, as it emerged as a response to the virtual culture and finds meaning in its roots, community, and

spiritual grounding. This culture values predictability, particularly in value-based, face-to-face education in an established physical location.

Tierney's framework of organizational culture serves as the second tier through which this dissertation views culture (1988). Table 2 outlines the six elements, which make up organizational culture, according to Tierney (1988).

Table 2

Tierney's Elements of Organizational Culture

Element	Description
Environment	How does the organization define its environment? What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)
Mission	How is it defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement exists?
Socialization	How do new members become socialized? How is it articulated? What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?
Information	What constitutes information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?
Strategy	How are decisions arrived at? Which strategy is used? Who makes decisions? What is the penalty for bad decisions?
Leadership	What does the organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders?

Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. (Tierney, 1988, p. 8)

Tierney (1988) claimed each cultural element exists in institutional settings, but what is generally different at every institution is the way in which they manifest themselves, the forms in which they take, and the level of importance placed on them.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) argued that while one of the aforementioned six cultures is generally viewed as the dominant culture on a college campus, the other five exist simultaneously and interact regularly with the dominant culture. Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) pointed out that some scholars view the existence of multiple cultures on one campus as symptomatic of a troubled, fragmented institution. However, Tierney (2006) stated that one cannot lead others to believe that all the members of the institution perceive the environment in exactly the same way. Toma, Dubrow, and Hartley (2005) argued that one strong, coherent, and unified culture benefits an academic institution greatly. Smart and St. John (1996) also believed that an institution's culture "must be strong in order to achieve maximum effectiveness" (p. 220). They have defined a strong culture as, "one in which there is congruence between the espoused beliefs and enacted practices" (p. 223) and a weak culture as one in which the espoused beliefs do not match the enacted practices. However, Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) argued that dynamic academic institutions always embrace opposing viewpoints and perspectives. The authors suggested the six cultures "live" together on each campus and help make higher education institutions vibrant, challenging, and an environment in which diversity of thought is highly valued.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) further pointed out the work of Birnbaum (1988) in which he argues that various cultures can be integrated effectively. In referencing Birnbaum's work, Bergquist and Pawlak posited that while multiple cultures on one campus may mean one culture in conflict with other cultures, all cultures must be acknowledged and appreciated in order to

create a *self-correcting, cybernetic* (Birnbaum, 1988) institution. In addition, the authors further stated that generally speaking, each culture has an opposite: developmental is the opposite of the collegial, advocacy culture grew out of opposition to the managerial culture, and the tangible culture is in opposition to the virtual culture and that each pair needs the other and often finds meaning in its opposition to the other (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Although cultures and those individuals aligning with them may be in opposition with one another, each culture provides meaning and context for a specific group of individuals (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008).

The Duties and Responsibilities of the Higher Education President

Clark Kerr (University of California), William Friday (University of North Carolina), Father Theodore Hesburgh (University of Notre Dame), Hanna Gray (University of Chicago), John Slaughter (University of Maryland), William Bowen (Princeton University), James Fisher (Towson University), and James Koch (Old Dominion University) are “hallmark” presidents in higher education. These leaders were not only the face of their institution during their tenure, but portraits of the highest standards in American university presidencies who performed their duties and responsibilities with excellence and grace. The higher education president is the ultimate leader of the institution, charged with behavior that has meaning and to perform with purpose with their respective institution’s mission and culture driving their every thought and action (Birnbaum, 1988). Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) noted the importance of leaders having a thorough understanding of culture, as it is essential to their role as leader if they are going to lead well.

While being president of a higher education institution has never been simple, the job is increasing in complexity with each passing academic year. The decisions, actions, and communications made by the president are under mounting scrutiny and are reflective of the

institution's culture (Tierney, 1988). Responsibilities such as clearly articulating the institution's mission, knowing self, maintaining a sense of trustworthiness, empowering others, and maintaining positive relationships with external stakeholders as well as senior level administration, faculty, staff, and students are some of the duties contributing to the escalating pressure university presidents feel in their role. Further, each of the aforementioned duties and responsibilities are highly complex and involve multiple layers. Through the lens of academic cultures, the major themes extracted from the literature regarding the duties of the average higher education president are expounded upon in the paragraphs that follow.

Institutional Mission

It may very well be the single most important aspect of any college or university (Bolman & Deal, 2008). As does the culture, an institution's mission provides purpose and a context within which the primary intentions of the institution are fulfilled (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). In the current literature that speaks to the responsibilities of college presidents, clearly articulating the mission of the institution is the number one theme and the number one duty on the successful president's priority list – a list heavily influenced by the institution's culture(s). As Robert Birnbaum (1988), professor of higher education at the University of Maryland, College Park and former president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education wrote in his book, *How Colleges Work*, presidents have a responsibility to place focused attention at the top of his or her priority list where they should find the institution's mission. When an institution's mission is set, with the goal of staying relevant in a changing world, regularly evaluating the mission is of primary concern. Presidents must keep in mind that every decision, influenced by the institution's culture(s) will have some degree of impact on the institution and should therefore be in keeping with the institutional mission (Birnbaum, 1988; Smart, Kuh, &

Tierney, 1997). Tierney (1988) has asserted that university presidents must be aware of their institution's culture in order to make tough decisions, as these decisions may lead to an institution's sense of purpose and identity. In addition, according to Tierney, only through an understanding of the institution's culture can the president adequately articulate decisions in a way that will speak to the various stakeholders on campus. Further, Tierney (1988) stated that presidents must have a complete understanding of the culture within which they are working to effectively implement decisions. Cultural influence is particularly important when change is on the horizon, as individuals find comfort in their culture because it provides them with a way to perceive, think, and feel about the changes about to, or is currently taking place (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008).

In 1996, James Fisher, President Emeritus of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and former president and President Emeritus of Towson University, and James Koch, former president and President Emeritus of Old Dominion University and former president of University of Montana wrote in their co-authored book, *Presidential Leadership: Making A Difference*, that “Unless the president articulates a special vision, mission, or cause for the institution, he or she will not be viewed as a true leader” (Fisher & Koch, p. 68). The authors noted that Pruitt’s (1974) study comparing effective with ineffective university and college leaders concluded that the effective president had a ‘mission’ or ‘vision’ that was carried out in their daily life as president of their respective institution. Fisher and Koch have posited that the president with a clear mission *acts* like a president with a clear mission.

Following the responsibility of clearly articulating the institution’s mission, Fisher and Koch (1996) stated that a president has a duty to participates in speaking engagements and ceremonies with the ultimate (and explicit) goal of promoting the mission of the institution and

instilling trust from those stakeholders outside of the institution. Speaking engagements by the institution's president, while it is implicit, also reveal the institution's culture to the audience. It is important, according to Fisher and Koch, that some speaking engagements be followed by a question-and-answer period. Question-and-answer sessions can be an opportunity for the president to demonstrate his or her expertise more informally than in a scripted speech and direct "outsiders" back to the institution's mission. Finally, in regard to speaking engagements and ceremonies, Fisher and Koch (1996) noted the responsibility of giving careful thought to their inauguration speech. While culture(s) already exist, a presidential inaugural speech helps to set in motion the changes necessary to maintain, improve, or change the existing culture. Having said that, Birnbaum (1988) noted that cultures are implicit, unobtrusive, and not subject to intentional manipulation by administrators, but rather the role of senior administrators such as the president is less about creating a new culture and more about sustaining the existing culture. Birnbaum agreed that presidential speeches are a perfect opportunity to "strengthen and protect" the existing culture by clearly articulating it to the public. University presidential inaugurations are perfect opportunities to set the tone of trust, and institutionalize and set the tone of presidential power while reminding stakeholders of the institution's mission and its importance to the success of the institution. Arthur Padilla (2005), former vice-president of the University of North Carolina higher education system, discussed higher education presidential responsibilities in his book, *Portraits in Leadership*. The author stated that college presidents have a responsibility to bring with them superior abilities in the areas of communication and listening, generally speaking, superior interpersonal skills. The successful college leader is responsible for being an effective communicator across a diverse range of stakeholders. Padilla asserted that

anytime a president is speaking publically, he or she is ultimately speaking about the institution's mission and culture(s).

College presidents have a duty to identify a relevant off-campus adversary around which the institution can rally (Fisher & Koch, 1996). The authors noted it is the president's responsibility to insure that the issue is relevant to the institution's mission and the issue will ultimately be influenced by the institution's culture(s). Identifying an off-campus issue for the campus to support can also help when the community immediately surrounding the campus inevitably develops a problem with the university. Padilla (2005) described the duty presidents have to develop a capacity for observing their organization unemotionally and objectively. He indicated the need for this capacity is related to the ability to make clear and solid decisions within the institution's culture(s) in an effort to further stakeholder trust in the institution and in its mission. Smart, Kuh, and Tierney (1997) wrote that the effectiveness of an institution is a function of how it reacts to external forces and internal demands in accomplishing its educational mission.

As Birnbaum (1988) stated, presidents have the obligation of consistently reminding administrators, faculty, staff, and students of the ultimate goal, the main mission of the institution. In Padilla's book, he concurred with Birnbaum and wrote about the importance of continually emphasizing the institutional mission to all stakeholders so there is consensus, agreement, and understanding of the mission. William Bowen (2011), former president of Princeton University, outlines several responsibilities for a successful leader of an institution of higher education in his book, *Lessons Learned*. Bowen listed articulating clearly and forcefully what his or her beliefs are on important university-related matters, specifically, the institution's mission. Steven B. Sample (2002), former president of the University of Southern California,

stated in his book, *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*, one of the ultimate responsibilities the higher education president is charged with is the ability to clearly articulate their vision for the institution. Holden Thorp, Chancellor of the University of North Carolina higher education system and Buck Goldstein, University Entrepreneur in Residence and Professor of the Practice in the Department of Economics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in their co-authored book, *Engines of Innovation: The Entrepreneurial University in the Twenty-First Century* (2010) agreed with the previous research by listing some of the common responsibilities of successful university leaders. Thorp and Goldstein (2002) stated higher education presidents must be able to articulate the mission and values of the institution clearly and passionately. Thorp and Goldstein write that successful university presidents allow the mission and vision of their institution to motivate, inspire, and organize the university's daily life.

James M. Kouzes, Chairman Emeritus of the Tom Peters Company and an executive fellow at the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University and Barry Z. Posner, Dean of the Leavey School of Business and professor of leadership at Santa Clara University write in their co-authored book, *Academic Administrators Guide to Exemplary Leadership* (2003), that presidents of colleges and universities must not only be able to articulate the mission of the institution, but also have the obligation of using the mission to inspire all stakeholders. Inspiring a shared vision does not just happen, according to the authors, and is dependent upon the institution's culture(s). Kouzes and Posner found that successful university presidents were able to establish a climate of trust and clearly articulate their vision in the followers' language. Louis S. Albert (2002), Vice-Chancellor for Educational Services at San Jose/Evergreen Community College and former interim president and vice president and director of professional service with the American

Association for Higher Education (AAHE) wrote a piece on community college leadership for the *Field Guide to Academic Leadership*. He first stated that community college presidents must lead their institutions with its mission and culture in mind. He argued that while successful community college leaders may lose sight of the big picture from time-to-time through the administration of day-to-day activities, they are consistently intent on coming back to the institution's mission and purpose.

Higher Education President Must Know Him/Herself

It is difficult at best to know what type of followers work best with a president if the president does not know who he or she is as the ultimate leader of an institution. It is equally important that the president understand the culture(s) at play within an institution in order to place the right people in the right places at the right time (Collins, 2001). Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) noted that the culture(s) of the institution serve as a container, establishing roles, rules, attitudes, behaviors, and practices. Padilla (2005) stated that self-awareness and trustworthiness are keys to a successful presidential tenure. University presidents are charged with the responsibility of being adept at being trustworthy, handling stressful situations, managing their emotions, dealing with ambiguity, and being responsibly proactive as well as reactive. Self-awareness, according to Padilla, is a hallmark of a mature and successful leader. Padilla posits that successful college leaders have a duty and are able to quickly identify and acknowledge their own limitations, as well as the limitations the current culture(s) present. He notes this ability is of two-fold benefit to the president: 1) this ability aides in helping make personal connections with employees and making him or her seem more human to their associates; and 2) allows the president to easily, without defensiveness, surround himself or herself with equally strong or stronger individuals who might be more experienced and proficient at certain tasks. Padilla

(2005) acknowledged that to lead organizations that are at their hearts complex and complicated, as are universities, is extremely difficult. The level of difficulty increases when limitations are placed on the leader, demanding presidents be highly skilled at persuasion, motivation, and communication. Adding further to the difficulty of the position of university president are the critical responsibilities of being adept at both passive reflection and active participation. Padilla asserted the difficulty for most presidents resides in the reflection part of their job, as most extroverted presidents feel unproductive during reflection. However, according to Padilla (2005), despite reflection feeling unproductive to most college presidents, it is integral to understanding one's self as president, developing a sense of objectivity towards the institution, and creating an environment in which honest feedback is welcomed. Padilla (2005) studied six successful university presidents, which yielded 11 themes, two of which were a commitment to personal renewal and the ability to "see" the institution [and its culture(s)] from an "aerial" view, an ability resulting from quality time spent on reflection.

In Bowen's (2011) book, he discussed the idea of knowing one's self as well. He stated that while it may not be a formal responsibility of a university president, understanding one's self and one's leadership style and abilities are imperative to successfully leading an institution of higher education. Padilla (2005) posited that understanding one's own leadership style will allow the president to tailor his or her leadership style to the institutional culture. Bowen further stated every college president must make time for personal rejuvenation. Steven Sample (2002) stated that leadership is a concept that is elusive and tricky and it is difficult to determine an effective leadership style that would be successful for everyone. With a sufficient amount of time spent getting to know one's own "presidential personality," the process of determining what leadership style is the most effective for both the president and the institution's culture(s) is

made easier (Sample, 2002). Sample makes one final general statement about leadership asserting that it is never finished or complete, but is ongoing. Though much slower to change, an institution's culture(s) are similarly always changing (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). By allowing one's self the time to reflect, the president is by default allowing himself or herself the ability to see that the work of a college president is always evolving and therefore, reflection is a regular responsibility (Sample, 2002).

Part of getting to know one's self through reflection also means allowing one's self to "think freely" (Sample, 2002). The president of a company or an institution of higher learning must first allow his or her mind to entertain outrageous ideas and then apply the issues of ethics, time, cost, legality, and practicality to the issue. Sample noted that thinking freely takes great effort on the part of the leader because it is an extremely unnatural act. He stated that leaders must be able to consider multiple organizational combinations and culture(s) prior to making a decision. He noted that he does not suggest leaders pursue illegal or ridiculous ideas, but that they at least allow a few moments to think freely in a way that might produce an original idea.

Kenneth A. Shaw (2002), Chancellor Emeritus and former president of Syracuse University, Southern Illinois University, and The University of Wisconsin system offers advice to new college presidents in his text written for the *Field Guide to Academic Leadership*. Shaw wrote that a successful college president has a duty to know him or herself. He writes that presidents must know their strengths, weaknesses, and leadership style. Shaw asserted that successful college presidents must not only know themselves, they must also know their territory. He stated that every incoming president is walking into an institution with its own history and culture and it is crucial to the president's success that he or she have a panoramic view of the college. Shaw also claimed that new presidents must be ready to take action on key

issues after about two to three months in office in order to be successful. He stated that stakeholders will expect to see action from the new president within the first academic term (Shaw, 2002). Shaw warns that new presidents are charged with keeping in mind that they will be taxed more than ever before emotionally and physically. He also suggested that new presidents rely on his or her dedication to the position, to the institution, and to his or her colleagues to be successful.

Maintaining humility is critical to the success of college presidents (Birnbaum, 1988). Birnbaum stated that the importance of presidents to be sensitive to the possibility that not all of his or her decisions will be received well or will yield positive results, especially considering whatever culture(s) are currently at work. Birnbaum (1988) further stated that presidents have a responsibility to be a good bureaucrat. This responsibility of an institutional president is imperative to the president not suffering a reduction in his or her reputation or ability to keep his or her followers productive and positive. While the role of the president as leader will mean being a good bureaucrat regarding the routine events on a college campus, the role of university leader also means remembering that much of what happens on a day-to-day basis is a result of the current culture(s) and any instability, inconsistency, and/or resistance to change.

Presidents must also be flexible. Birnbaum (1988) stressed the importance for college presidents to be flexible and by default, value inconsistency. Flexibility is a key characteristic that presidents of higher education institutions must possess, particularly regarding “shades of gray.” Birnbaum has asserted university presidents view the institution and its successes and failures through multiple frames, keeping in mind there is always more than one way to view an issue or situation and more than one culture at work. Presidents use their multi-frame perspective as a means to consider intuition. He stated the importance of remembering not all

decisions are black and white and not every rule can always be followed to the letter. Sample (2002) echoed this, positing that there is no single formula for becoming a successful leader and any leader deemed successful in one particular culture may or may not be successful in another culture. Sample further stated that while every leader is different, those who aspire to be leaders can develop leadership skills by studying successful leaders and noting what was successful for them and then carefully applying those skills to his or her own situation. Sample (2002) asserted successful higher education leaders is that he or she has a responsibility to maintain his or her intellectual independence by thinking gray and thinking freely in an effort to enhance their intellectual creativity. A successful leader is skilled at seeing the shades of gray in all situations and cultures.

Successful leaders, according to Sample (2002), have a duty to listen first and talk later. Sample stated that leaders do not simply listen, but artfully listen. Artful listening not only makes people feel good, but it is a powerful way to acquire new ideas and gather and access information, particularly cultural information (Sample, 2002). Sample stated that successful leaders listen artfully especially when meeting with his or her official advisors, in particular, those advisors in his or her inner circle. Artful listening, he continues, is closely related to thinking gray in that leaders who listen gray will be able to cautiously absorb what others are saying without prematurely offering a response (Sample, 2002). He concluded by stating artful, as well as gray, listening are not just a suggestion – they are a necessity if one aspires to be a successful leader, as listening in these ways allows valuable information about the institution, especially cultural information.

Higher education presidents have a responsibility to be well read. Therefore, it is helpful for college presidents to have an “intellectual” characteristic. According to Sample (2002),

people are what we *read* not what we *eat*. Therefore, leaders must be “an intellectual” and be strategically selective in what they choose to read and how much time they devote to reading. Failing to make conscious decisions with regard to what one reads is one of the worst mistakes a leader can make, according to Sample. Sample has claimed leaders are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by what they choose to read. Having said that, Sample (2002) stated leaders are often times influenced as much by their readings as they are by their inner-circle advisors. Sample’s advice to leaders is to spend less time reading newspapers and more time reading what he calls ‘supertexts’ because they offer insight into human nature and culture that newspapers do not or cannot offer. Being well read, regarding cultures in particular, helps the president perform one of his or her most important duties: bringing together the diverse perspectives represented on their campus (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). A successful leader must have a firm grasp on human nature and culture in order to lead. “No leader worth his salt would let outsiders choose his chief lieutenants for him, and by the same token he shouldn’t let someone else choose his books” (Sample, 2002, p. 70).

In addition to being an “intellectual,” Sample (2002) has asserted university presidents have a responsibility to maintain an energetic and a “doer” personality. Successful college or university presidents must not only *be* president, they must *do* president (Sample, 2002). Leaders of colleges and universities must be willing to do what the job of president requires and not just be willing to take the title. According to Sample, too often members of an institution of higher learning spend their career trying to make it to the top only to realize once there that they do not really want to do what the job requires. The successful college or university leader must be willing to do what it takes to ‘do his or her part’ for the betterment of the institution (Sample, 2002). Thorp and Goldstein’s (2010) study also found similar results. Execution was one theme

that resulted in their interviews of successful university presidents. By execution, the authors described it as a willingness to master the intricacies of institutional culture and matters they saw as important to the institution and understood they themselves would have to be part of the execution – they would have to *do* president. Furthermore, they wrote that successful presidents have a responsibility to have a ‘hands-on’ approach to leading the institution. Sample (2002) asserted that the president must be willing to perform the same duties he or she is asking his or her subordinates to perform, thereby demonstrating how successful leadership is less about the leader and more about the followers and the culture(s) within which they are working. Kouzes and Posner (2003) discovered through their research five practices of successful academic leaders. The first practice falls in line with presidents who *do* – they model the way. When modeling the way for the followers within an institution, successful leaders knew that what they *did* was far more meaningful than what they *said* (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Generally speaking, college presidents must possess highly developed “people skills.” Thorp and Goldstein (2010) noted the personal style, or people skills, of the president as being a critical characteristic of a successful university leader. A successful college president must be skilled at interacting with individuals representing various ethnic cultures, as well as those individuals representing various academic cultures. Presidents must also be as comfortable in the cafeteria as he or she is in the state legislature or university boardroom (Thorp & Goldstein, 2010). Presidents are often out of their office talking with custodial staff, grounds keepers, faculty, and students and must have highly developed interpersonal skills remaining sensitive to various cultures (Padilla, 2005). In relation to working effectively with various types of people, Bowen (2011) stated that presidents are often charged with becoming members of internal and external boards and outside agencies primarily for two reasons: institutional mission promotion

and fundraising, both of which are reflections of the institution's culture. Successful university presidents make those around him or her feel important and valued, stated Thorp and Goldstein.

University leaders must retain the characteristic of patience in order to be successful as a president. Fun, exciting, terrifying, burdensome, and even an ego trip, according to Sample (2002), the aforementioned adjectives describe the responsibility of decision making for a leader. Decision-making is a critical element of leadership and the long-term effects of those decisions often determine a leader's legacy and the institution's perceived and/or actual culture. Decision-making also relies heavily on the decision-maker's level of patience. Because an institution's culture(s) are often times deeply embedded within the institution, decisions prompting change may take time to implement, and the president must hold a great deal of patience in order to "wait it out." Sample (2002) stated that the timing of certain decisions are just as important as the decision itself and successful leaders apply this to their practice with every decision that must be made. With the duty of making decisions often comes conflict. Successful college presidents must be fearless regarding conflict, something that is almost inevitable when varying cultures are represented. Bowen (2011) has claimed it is unwise to shy way from conflict. At the same time, it is particularly wise to have the policy to back up the decision or belief (Bowen, 2011).

Fisher and Koch (1996) have claimed conflict is naturally invited by the organization of a college or university and is something the authors consider to be of great value to the institution and to its president. Fisher and Koch (1996) posited that one of the first signs of an unhealthy organization or one so structured that creative and innovative work cannot be done is perfect harmony, the absence of conflict. The authors further claimed that conflict is necessary and that without conflict, there is no tension and without tension, there is neither movement nor

constructive disagreements, and little need for a president. According to Kouzes and Posner's (2003), successful leaders are willing to challenge the process even if it means inviting conflict.

Empowering Others

According to Robert Birnbaum (1988), university presidents have a responsibility to the institution's members to encourage leadership across the institution, within its various schools, departments, and cultures. Birnbaum stated that quality leaders recognize the leadership potential in all participants within the organization. Presidents have a duty to nurture an educational culture in which stakeholders trust the president and his or her ability to empower others to correct errors, make suggestions, and provide honest feedback (Birnbaum, 1988). Steven Sample (2002) noted the responsibility that presidents must work for those individuals who work for him or her. Sample has claimed that successful presidents are willing to do whatever is necessary to support a culture in which their subordinates feel empowered, respected, and successful. Successful leaders know that leading an organization is less about them as it is about the women and men he or she has appointed to serve with him or her (Sample, 2002). Kouzes and Posner (2003) confirmed that presidents must empower the institution's members by stating presidents have a responsibility to create a culture in which others feel empowered to act independently, in accordance with the institution's mission. Furthermore, presidents must maintain a culture in which the institution itself is empowered to search for opportunities in which it could innovate, grow, and improve. Every single case in Kouzes and Posner's (2003) study involved some level of innovation, growth, and improvement on the university president's and institution's part. Successful leaders, according to Kouzes and Posner, instilled among those expected to produce results a culture that fostered a sense of trust, empowerment, and personal ownership. Filan and Seagren (2003) echoed this sentiment stating

leaders must encourage, inspire, empower, and recognize and celebrate achievements of those within the institution.

Relationships: People and Community

“...get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats” because “people aren’t your number one asset – the RIGHT people are!” – Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

People are important. Trust between individuals is important. The culture(s) within which trust is an expected outcome is important. University presidents have a responsibility to get to know the people of the institution so that they feel they can trust their president. McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany (1998) noted that the most critical time frame for organizational members to develop trust in their leader is at the beginning of their relationship. In the beginning of a leader’s tenure, it is imperative that the leader build around him a team that he or she trusts (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany). Padilla (2005) claimed that presidents of colleges have a duty to understand the importance of surrounding himself or herself with strong colleagues who understand the culture and mission of the institution.

The faculty, administration, staff, and support staff such as housekeepers, cooks, and maintenance workers are critical to successful presidential leadership, according to Fisher and Koch (1996). They asserted that the key to successfully leading people is the ability to identify with the employees and their culture, letting them know he or she trusts in their ability to perform, cares for them and recognizes their contribution to the institution’s mission. Fisher and Koch stated that the ultimate objective is to stay in touch with the people, most importantly the students, as they are an excellent barometer for the current culture(s) at play within an institution. Arthur Padilla (2005) asserted that presidents must make personal connections with employees, thereby making him or her seem more “human” to the institution’s members. Padilla’s (2005)

study of six successful university presidents confirms that presidents must be connected to their institution, specifically its people, the single most important representation of an institution's culture.

Successful university presidents must know intimately who is serving the institution and its community with them (Thorp & Goldstein, 2010). Presidents owe it to the institution, its members, and its community to invest in the time it takes to get to know the members and cultures of the institution and develop a sense of trust between the institution's members (Thorp & Goldstein, 2010). Thorp and Goldstein asserted that presidents must understand that their role is more about creating positive and productive relationships and less about focusing on the structure of the organization, as a productive organizational structure is a result of productive relationships. Kouzes and Posner (2003) found in their research that the number one component to successful leadership was positive relationships and positive relationships do not happen without trust. Kouzes and Posner asserted that effective leadership is contingent upon a positive relationship between the leader and the follower and without a positive relationship between the university president and the followers, the university culture will be one of distrust, negativity, and dysfunction. At its core, Kouzes and Posner wrote, leadership is less about the title and more about caring, encouraging relationships and what is done, or not done, to nurture those relationships. The authors stated that to be able to communicate in their followers' language, the successful leader must *know* their followers and their culture, which is a direct result of having developed and nurtured positive relationships with his or her followers. The successful leader understands the power of building relationships with his or her followers because good results are only a product of good relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Finally, Kouzes and Posner stated that successful leaders encouraged the heart of their constituents. In their study,

encouraging the hearts of their followers and other stakeholders, Kouzes and Posner (2003) found, gave them the necessary boost to carry on with their duties despite being tempted to give up when things were hard. The results of Filan and Seagren's (2003) study echoed this indicating the third of the six most critical components to a successful higher education presidency is establishing and maintaining positive relationships with those inside the institution and those in the community. The authors noted that the ability to establish and maintain relationships is contingent upon the leader's ability to understand the represented cultures, motivate and encourage those within them, read nonverbal messages from the members, provide and accept honest feedback, and be trustworthy. The ability to connect individuals, departments, cultures, and the institution as a whole with the community is critical to successfully leading an academic organization (Filan & Seagren, 2003).

Bowen (2011) stressed three critical responsibilities of a president. For the purposes of this dissertation, only the first is be discussed here. He stressed that one of the most important and urgent responsibilities of a president is to hire a chief assistant. He stated there is no substitute for having someone highly skilled on multiple levels and possesses impeccable judgment. A good chief assistant is not only the 'gatekeeper' to the president, but an invaluable source of data, specifically, the culture of the institution (Bowen, 2011). A good chief assistant can also determine what material and or invitations *need* to come to the president's desk and what need *not* make its way to the president's desk. Lastly, a chief of staff can help further the president's agenda and influence in relation to institutional culture (Bowen, 2011).

In conclusion, the duties of the university president are complex yet simple, dull yet exciting, draining yet invigorating, and overwhelming yet rewarding. University presidents, as highlighted in this dissertation, are charged with many and varied responsibilities influenced by

the institution's culture(s). While academic culture determines the responsibilities and duties of a president, the culture must be one of trust in order for the institution to be successful.

Assistants to the President in Higher Education

Miles (2000) asserted that the assistant to the president is possibly the most recognized and quickly growing of all support positions. A review of the existing literature on assistants to the president in higher education must include a brief review of the history of the position, as it is important to establish how the position has evolved over time.

History of Assistants to the President in Higher Education

One of the first assistant to the president positions ever recorded was at Oberlin College on November 16, 1904 (Bassham, 2009). As the demands on institutional presidents increased in number and in complexity, the number of assistants to the president in higher education increased as well (O'Reilly, 2000). Often referred to as assistant to the president, presidential assistant, or chief of staff, the assistant to the president position grew so much that by 1969, it was estimated that there were 225 assistants to the president in American higher education institutions (Bassham, 2009). The position of assistant to the president had grown extensively in size and scope by the year 1987 when then assistant to the president at the University of Washington, Pamela Transue, founded the professional association known as the National Association of Assistants to the President in Higher Education (Curchack, 2009). With the ever-increasing complexity of the responsibilities of today's university presidents, more and more decisions are made by the president's senior staff members (Stiles, 2008). Perhaps the most important senior staff member, the assistant to the president, is at the forefront of the decision-making on behalf of the respective institution (Fisher, 1985).

National Association of Presidential Assistants in Higher Education (NAPAHE)

The NAPAHE association's original intent upon its founding in 1987 was to provide an arena in which assistants to the president from all over the United States could discuss mutual concerns, problems, and professional interests (Stiles, 2008). The organization's mission outlines an emphasis on professional development and its objectives include 1) educating the public regarding the position; 2) professional development opportunities; 3) supporting research regarding assistants to the president; 4) nurturing existing assistant to the president relationships through networking; and 5) encouraging individual assistant to the president and institutional involvement with higher education events and policy issues (Stiles, 2008). The NAPAHE organization conducted a survey in 1994, which indicated that there were more than 2,000 assistants to the president in higher education institutions nationwide (Stiles, 2008). However, at the annual NAPAHE meeting in 1993, only approximately 100 assistants were in attendance (Curchack, 2009).

This section of the literature review highlights studies and reports conducted on assistants to the president in higher education. Due to the dearth of empirical studies on assistants to the president, a great deal of this literature review is derived from six existing dissertations on assistants to the president, as well as published reports from American Council on Education Series on Higher Education from *Other Duties as Assigned: Assistants to the president in Higher Education* (2009), and opinion pieces from the Chronicle of Higher Education and Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges written by experienced assistants to the president and presidents. The six dissertations are Carlson (1991), Miles (2000), O'Reilly (2000), Stiles (2008), Bassham (2009), and Gifford (2011). Each author of the previously mentioned dissertations references the preceding dissertations extensively.

Four themes were noted from the existing literature on assistants to the president in higher education: 1) diversity, 2) influence/power, 3) trust, and 4) relationship with the president. The last two, trust and relationship with the president, are the focus of this dissertation. Diversity was found to be evident among the assistants to the president' duties/job responsibilities/job descriptions, career path, personality type, personal characteristics, demographical information including, but not limited to: education level, gender, race, and age, and the type of institution in which the assistant to the president is employed. Influence refers to the level of direct and/or perceived influence within the institution. Trust was noted as essential to the assistant to the president's relationship to the president. Finally, the assistants to the president' relationship to the president is discussed briefly. The dearth of literature in this area, as well as the assistant to the president in relation to the institutional type, highlights the need to further explore these areas regarding the higher education assistant to the president.

Diversity

There is a high level of diversity regarding the duties and responsibilities of the higher education assistant to the president (Carlson, 1991). Among some of the duties performed by the average assistant to the president are managing the president's staff, office, and agenda; representing the president at various functions and committee meetings; interacting with the Board of Trustees and outside constituents; coordinating special events and projects; preparing internal and external correspondence and presidential speeches (Carlson, 1991). Carlson (1991) indicated that the majority of responsibilities for which the assistant to the president is expected to perform are staff responsibilities. However, the assistant to the president also has line responsibilities, some of which include overall management of the president's office, also known as the most prominent office on campus (as cited by Xu and Bassham, 2010) and the resolution

of conflicts and problems (Carlson, 1991). According to Carlson's findings, the management of the president's office may involve controlling the incoming and outgoing communication, access to the president, maintaining a global view of the institution to enable him or her to decide on issues much like the president might.

Individuals in this position are usually relied upon by the president for support regarding issues and problems directly related to the office of the president (Miles, 2000). Stiles' (2008) findings revealed most APs perform both clerical and administrative roles in their daily activities. Stiles posited that in order for the position of assistant to the president to become a profession, there must be delineation between executive secretary and assistant to the president. In Gifford's (2011) study, the data revealed that most assistants (77.4%) are typically responsible for eight or more different duties. According to Gifford's (2011) results, the most common duties were helping presidents manage their time, work, and general communications, reporting to system offices, state and accreditation agencies, and institutional planning (to include academic affairs, student services, and administrative operations).

Nine common managerial duties of typical assistants to the president, according to Gifford's (2011) study were 1) writing for oral and written presentations designed to further the president's message; 2) development or fundraising and resource raising for the institution; 3) chief of staff including policy planning and coordination across the institution; 4) student affairs, which also included enrollment management; 5) legal affairs ranging from labor relations to board governance; 6) public relations and community relations included interactions with the many communities that the institution interacts with including alumni, businesses, neighbors, and government agencies; 7) board relations including staffing and coordination of the institution's

governing body; 8) constituent relations including student groups, religious organizations; and 9) academic coordination which includes technology and medical affairs.

Marc Schaeffer (2009) discussed the six-functions of management represented by the acronym POSLED – planning, organizing, staffing, leading, evaluating, and developing (as cited by Quehl, 1978) and the four “frames” for interpreting the events of organizational life – structural, human resources, political, and symbolic (as cited by Bolman & Deal, 1985). Schaeffer stated that the responsibility of the assistant to the president in managing the presidential office is important for two reasons: 1) the work of the president ultimately affects the progress and success of the institution. In addition, he asserts that the ability of the president to do his or her job is directly affected by the effective and efficient operations of the president’s office; and 2) the perception of the board of trustees, the campus community, and the external community is derived from those members’ opinion of the president’s staff.

POSLED, the acronym for the six-functions of management, are of particular importance for presidential office staff (Schaeffer, 2009). Every president and assistant to the president is in a constant state of planning – determining what needs to be done. Schaeffer stated that organizing is the act of arranging the methods to be used to carry out what has been planned. Staffing, while sometimes strictly the president’s job, sometimes falls on the assistant to the president in terms of recruiting, training, and motivating others in the presidential office (Schaeffer, 2009). Motivating leads to the next function of management, which is leadership. Schaeffer stated that this is basically measuring the extent to which the plans were fulfilled and evaluating the performance of the personnel charged with the tasks. Lastly, Schaeffer (2009) stated that developing is essentially providing professional development through programs and services that allow employees to extend their professional capabilities.

Gifford (2009) has asserted that managing the president's schedule is one of the most important duties of the presidential office staff. Managing the calendar of the higher education president is more, according to Gifford, art than science, requiring knowing what is important to the president and that means spending enough time with the president in an effort to understand his or her priorities and leadership style.

With every president, there are certain demands on his or her time that cannot and should not be ignored (Gifford, 2009). Depending on the institution and institutional type, these demands might include faculty governance meetings, meetings with senior staff, board of trustee meetings, and graduation events (Gifford, 2009). The successful management of the president's time also means the assistant to the president must have a thorough understanding of the culture of the institution, such as whether or not the campus community expects the president to be highly visible (Gifford, 2009). Gifford also stated that while there are many internal events that take up much of the president's time, there are external events to consider as well, such as fundraising, serving on local boards, and participation in national events and/or organizations. Together, both internal and external demands on the president dictate his or her calendar. It is crucial that the assistant to the president bear in mind that the routine obligations can easily overtake the time the president has available and eliminate time for more important, but less urgent, tasks. The assistant to the president must ensure that tasks in which the president is asked to participate in are tasks in which his or her attention is required, and not another senior staff member (Gifford, 2009).

As a result of institutional advancement being a primary responsibility of the president, it becomes at least a de facto responsibility of the AP (Lingenfelter & McGreevey, 2009). Lingenfelter and McGreevey presented a simple definition of institutional advancement:

managing the institution's external and institutional-individual relationships. Where and when does the AP intersect with institutional advancement? According to Lingenfelter and McGreevey, first is through communications with internal and external constituents, interactions that carry significant consequences – either good or bad – depending on how they are managed. Lingenfelter and McGreevey also claimed that the level of contact most assistants to the president in higher education have with the institution's governing board and other volunteer leadership organizations is typically unparalleled by anyone except the president and advancement vice-president. The university president is the chief officer in terms of dealing with constituencies, which by default; interactions with constituencies become a top priority for the AP as well (Lingenfelter & McGreevey, 2009).

Steven Givens (2009) asserted that dealing with complaints that make their way to the president's office is a large part of the assistant to the president's list of duties. Givens stated assistants to the president must be prepared before the complaints come to the president's office by establishing protocols and policy for how and when the complaints will be managed. He also claimed that assistants to the president must listen completely to the person(s) with the issue to be addressed, giving them the full attention they deserve. In addition to listening and giving the individual attention, he points out that the AP must immediately obtain any other "sides" necessary to fully evaluate the situation (Givens, 2009). As part of the protocol and policy mentioned earlier, Givens further stated that the assistant to the president delegate responsibility and response for the situation. In addition, APs must document all complaints and the action(s) taken (Givens, 2009). Finally, Givens noted that there will be those individuals who demand an extreme amount of time and attention and to handle these individuals with proper procedures and communication that is clear and respectful.

Several of the “other” common jobs an assistant to the president might assist with include 1) weather, natural disaster, and health emergencies; 2) research fraud, embezzlement, athletic scandals, and policy violations; 3) filling the “cracks” of the institution when the president is unable to do so; and 4) communicating with constituencies and media (Cummins, 2009).

Lingenfelter (2004) wrote that the work of a assistant to the president can range from setting institutional policy to making notes at meetings. Lingenfelter asserted that the responsibilities of assistants to the president can vary, ranging from administrative to senior staff level, depending on the institution. The scope of the assistant to the president’s role is largely dependent on four factors: 1) the needs of the president; 2) the size, scope, and mission of the institution; 3) the assistant to the president’s level of education, experience, and talents; and 4) the specific needs of the institution (Lingenfelter, 2004). According to Lingenfelter, from the five aforementioned factors emerge the responsibilities of the assistant to the president. Some common duties include supporting the president and managing the daily operations of the president’s office, coordinating events, overseeing presidential initiatives or projects, managing the image of the president and the institution, and because institutional advancement is a primary responsibility of the institution’s president, by default, it becomes the responsibility of the assistant to the president as well (Lingenfelter, 2004).

Malloy (2003) described some of the many the responsibilities of a assistant to the president ranging from data collection and daily oversight of the president’s office ensuring that the fundamentals of the office are properly addressed with a personal flavor that otherwise might be non-existent. Further, Malloy (2003) asserted that because of the close connection to the office of the president, assistants to the president can serve as a delegate in internal meetings and with external stakeholders. Many times, according to Malloy, the assistant to the president will

represent the institution at external events, thus furthering the president's agenda and message as well as magnifying the presence of the president. Moreover, assistants to the president can defuse negative situations and protect the president from unnecessary chaos (Malloy, 2003). Malloy concluded the article by claiming academic presidents need assistants to the president dedicated to assisting them in their multiple responsibilities.

The president's leadership style answers questions related to whether or not the AP has a voice in decisions made regarding institutional policy, procedures, and events (Curchack, 2009). Curchack noted that the assistant to the president's input may be requested if the AP has a certain expertise or skill-set needed. Also depending on the leadership style of the president, the AP may be asked to mentor new vice-presidents, stand in for the president at certain functions, offer the latest research on a certain policy or issue (Curchack, 2009). The typical assistant interacted regularly with the president and other senior level administrators such as vice-presidents and trustees (O'Reilly, 2000). In terms of line vs. staff responsibilities, male APs held more line responsibilities by 10% than female assistants to the president (Sinsabaugh, 2009). Sinsabaugh pointed out, however, that the majority of assistants to the president did not have any line responsibilities.

The paths from which assistants to the president arrive at the assistant to the president post are many and varied. According to Miles (2000), the lack of widely known paths to the post contributes to the misunderstanding of the role. It seems logical then to investigate the preparation of individuals holding the assistant to the president position in higher education. Related to career, Stiles (2008) noted that while previous studies indicated that assistants to the president may have reached the AP post through either academia, clerical administration, or other industries such as business, clergy, and the military, today most assistants to the president

are from within higher education. Stiles' findings indicated that assistants to the president are staying in their positions longer than in previous years. It should be noted that Stiles indicated his response rate was low and this affected the reliability of the findings.

Curchack (2009) revealed possible routes that assistants to the president took prior to moving into the AP role. Route possibilities to the AP senior administrative status may include 1) existing line responsibility – possibly appointed to the post while already in charge of an administrative unit and may even retain their administrative supervisory role responsibilities; 2) institutional reorganization; 3) formal position creation; 4) informal ascension to the status – by being in what Curchack (2009) called the “circles of power,” having access to the highest levels of information regarding the institution. Curchack has mentioned that one of the main factors that determine if the AP reaches this status is the leadership style of the president.

While some view the role of the assistant to the president the height of one's professional career, others see the position as a stepping stone to higher-ranking positions. Schoenfeld (2009) has acknowledged that the AP position can be a step up on the ladder of leadership or a career in itself. Ross (2009) noted a key point regarding the stability of the position of the AP and that is that without the president; the assistant to the president has no professional existence. With this in mind, Ross focused on life after the AP role. Ross has offered that one way to ensure success after the AP role is to engage in meaningful professional development opportunities while in the position. According to Ross, one of the best ways to ensure quality professional development and quality opportunities after the AP post is to join a professional organization, which, for this position, is membership in the National Association of Assistants to the president in Higher Education (NAPAHE), currently the only official professional organization for assistants to the president (2009). Ross outlined some of the roles assistants to the president have assumed

following their post as an AP. They include 1) from AP to director of a major national or regional commission; 2) from AP to faculty member; 3) from AP to associate provost or dean; 4) from AP to a post within the U.S. Department of Education; 5) from AP to vice president in a corporation or vice president within the institution; 6) from AP to university president, and finally, Ross (2009) revealed that among the 16 contributors to this edited volume were, at one time, APs whom are now in roles such as 1) vice president for advancement; 2) vice president for university relations; 3) vice president for student affairs; 4) director of institutional research; and 5) president of the university. Lingenfelter (2004) stated that assistants to the president have moved on from the role to take on positions such as academic deans, vice presidents, and even presidents. He noted one former assistant to the president, Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, eventually became president of the University of Hartford, and later, president of George Washington University. Despite many APs moving on to higher-ranking positions within higher education, according to O'Reilly (2000), the average AP at specialized institutions was not eager to leave the post nor aspired to become president of their, or any other, institution. The APs found comfort in knowing that while the president himself or herself may come and go, the Office of the President would always be there as long as the institution was active (O'Reilly, 2000).

The personality type of a assistant to the president plays a significant role in his or her success as an AP and also in the relationship with the president. Bassham (2009) has asserted that his study found that the overwhelming personality-type of assistants to the president were ESTJs. Extravert, Sensing, Thinking, Judging are individuals that like to organize projects, operations, and people. Bassham explained that these individuals accept and follow clear standards and expect others to do the same. The next personality-type majority was ISTJs: Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging (Bassham, 2009). This group has a strong sense of

responsibility and loyalty to organizations, families, and relationships and value working at a steady pace and will work to get the job done as long as it makes logical sense. The third highest-ranking personality-type was ESFJs: Extravert, Sensing, Feeling, Judging (Bassham, 2009). This group of individuals is others-centered, value completing tasks accurately and on time, experiential facts, and emotional stability and security in the environment. In addition, ESFJs work to ensure no conflict or tense situations (Bassham, 2009). Bassham asserted that being informed about personality preferences of assistants to the president leads to both questions and answers in terms of what personalities generally hold these positions. Questions, Bassham (2009) stated, come from the fact that a majority of assistants to the president were extraverts and with the job tending to be in the background, one may wonder how they derive pleasure from the position. Answers, according to Bassham, in terms of those introvert personalities and how these individuals typically enjoy being in the background. Because the materials and statements that originate from the president's office are seen as a reflection on the president, assistants must also possess the perfectionist personality, one who is a stickler for details (Katrenicz, 2009).

The personal characteristics of higher education assistants to the president vary greatly. In 1993, Constance Cook, then assistant to the president to the president at the University of Michigan and vice-chair of the National Association of Assistants to the president in Higher Education (NAPAHE), wrote an article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* entitled “Gatekeeper, Facilitator, Gofer, Flunky.” The article was written to highlight some of the common characteristics every assistant to the president must have to be successful, regardless of their president or institution. Cook (1993) mentioned that a desire for a fast-paced and often times drama-filled environment is a must because that type of environment is at the core of the

presidential office. Cook asserted that APs must have the ability to remain calm under pressure and act rationally. APs also understand the importance of good interpersonal skills because, as Cook stated, most anything an AP says is seen by those not in the presidential office as having been approved by the president himself. Loyalty to the president, the president's goals, and the institution is also important, which is why Cook has suggested the AP be completely comfortable with the president and his or her goals, as well as the mission of the institution before accepting the job. Cook goes on to highlight this point by reminding readers that the president's office is the one place on a college campus where the welfare of the entire institution is the priority. With the welfare of the entire institution as the number one priority, this means the AP holds a true respect for all stakeholders of the institution, including faculty and other staff (Cook, 1993). Because the AP is often the sole person responsible for making many decisions that are handed down from the president's office, Cook suggested that assistants to the president have integrity and the ability to make good judgments. With the nature of the position being primarily a shadow role, APs need a high level of self-confidence, but that self-confidence must be balanced with the right amount of humility (Cook, 1993). Cook (1993) stated that APs possess exceptional organizational skills and a tolerance for vagueness. She further stated that the AP role is one with responsibilities for everything and nothing, making him or her the ultimate generalist.

Laura Katrenicz (2009) drew from the opinion piece of former assistant to the president Constance Cook's 1993 article on the qualities of a good assistant to the president. Katrenicz listed ten traits the ideal assistant to the president in higher education possesses: 1) be a good listener; 2) honesty and good judgment; 3) credibility; 4) sensitivity and diplomacy; 5) attention to detail; 6) composure; 7) modesty; 8) loyalty; 9) sense of humor; and 10) tolerance for ambiguity.

Katrenicz (2009) explained that being a good listener for a assistant to the president means hearing what the president does not hear and seeing what the president does not see. She named honesty and good judgment was the second ideal quality of a good AP. Katrenicz stated that when the president and the AP are alone, the president will be looking for honest advice and counsel from his or her assistant. Credibility was listed as the third trait a good assistant to the president must have, according to Katrenicz. Katrenicz indicated that APs must demonstrate their trustworthiness not only to their president, but all constituents of the college.

The ability to work effectively with diverse populations and with tact and courtesy is part of the sensitivity and diplomacy, the fourth essential trait, a quality assistant to the president holds (Katrenicz, 2009). Because the materials and statements that originate from the president's office are seen as a reflection on the president, assistants must also possess the fifth essential trait according to Katrenicz, which is perfectionist personality, also known as being a stickler for details. Composure is the sixth trait Katrenicz named as important for a assistant to the president to possess. The assistant to the president has the ability to remain composed in all situations, despite that the volume of details that pass through the AP's desk can be overwhelming (Katrenicz, 2009).

Katrenicz (2009) named modesty as the seventh important trait an AP demonstrates, as what the AP does and says will likely be presumed to be the actions and words of the president to a certain degree. The eighth essential quality of a good assistant to the president is loyalty, what drives the AP to always act in the best interest of the president and the college in an effort to preserve the president's image among all stakeholders (Katrenicz, 2009). Having a sense of humor and a tolerance for ambiguity are the ninth and tenth must-haves in order to survive as a assistant to the president, according to Katrenicz. Richard Haven and Kevin Boatright (2009)

would also add the ability to write effective speeches for the president. Curchack (2009) outlined the characteristics of assistants to the president who are seen on their campuses as senior administrators. Some of the characteristics were 1) employed by master's and doctoral degree-granting and research institution; 2) hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in humanities, social sciences, or education; 3) have more experience than other APs; 4) have higher base-salaries than the normal for most assistants to the president; 5) have regular interaction with board of trustee members; and 6) are male in gender.

James L. Fisher (1985), then President of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, wrote an article published in the November/December report of Association of Governing Boards entitled *Assistants to the president: An Unsung Resource*. In the article, Fisher comments that

This loyal and able officer can be the president's *most important* staff member. He or she belongs to the president, for this staff role is defined exclusively in terms of the president's best interests...the assistant is the professional and even personal confidante, perhaps the only person on campus with whom the president doesn't have to dust things off before saying them. (p. 34)

Fisher (1985) continued by outlining a list of 12 characteristics assistants to the president in higher education seem to have. They included the following: 1) their focus is on other people; 2) they identify with others as individuals rather than as a group; 3) they are not immediately judgmental; 4) they do not complain about limits or constraints they cannot change, but work with what they have; 5) they naturally develop deep connections with others; 6) they hold their president in the highest regard; 7) they do not depend on the job or institution for their personal happiness; 8) they generally derive pleasure from the little things in life; 9) they recognize and acknowledge the value others can contribute; 10) they need time alone to rejuvenate; 11) they

usually possess creativity skills and put them on display via assignments and tasks; and 12) they are happy people overall – laughing quite a bit both on and off the job.

John R. Quattroche (1985) contributed to the Association of Governing Boards

November/December report with an article entitled *Board secretaries: Keeping it together*. In his article, Quattroche highlighted several credentials that board secretaries, who are often times also the assistant to the president, must have to be successful in the position. First, Quattroche mentioned this individual has an extensive knowledge of institutional administration. Second, according to Quattroche, would be a broad knowledge of higher education policies and practices, as well as current issues facing the academy. Board secretaries, or APs, further possess a thorough understanding of the president's and trustee members' roles within the institution and what factors usually make each role successful (Quattroche, 1985). Finally, Quattroche asserted that board secretaries, or APs, maintain a high level of energy and extensive experience in the higher education setting. Quattroche ended the piece by stating that the board secretary is at the core of a successful leadership team, ensuring that policy makers are equipped with the tools necessary to fulfill their obligations to their institutional community as well as the community at large.

Gabriela Montell (2000) asserted that the assistant to the college president is often times seen as the president's alter ego. As the higher education's alter ego, the AP is expected by many to be able to think, talk, write, and act like, his or her president (Montell, 2000). Montell then touched on the growing number of APs with doctoral degrees, often because their presidents have earned their doctorate and to be seen as an alter ego, one must be similar in most respects. The assistant to the president role is one that often intrigues those who have a desire to play a central role at an institution, without being “on the front lines” of the institution (Montell, 2000).

The demographical information available regarding higher education assistants to the president reveals a high level of diversity in terms of the AP's education level, gender, race, and age, and the type of institution in which the assistant to the president is employed. In addressing the educational background of assistants to the president, Carlson (1991) stated that most assistants possess a minimum of a master's degree and many hold a doctoral degree. The doctoral degree can be especially helpful, as most assistants to the president (according to Quattroche, 1985) need an extensive understanding of institutional administration, a thorough knowledge of the major issues facing higher education as a whole, an extensive understanding and awareness of institutional policies and practices, and a broad understanding of the role of academic presidents and university trustees.

Miles (2000) noted that the education level of assistants to the president was significant in terms of the type of AP position held. Doctoral degrees assured higher-level assistant to the president positions than any other education level (Miles, 2000). While undergraduate major did not measure as important in the path to the AP position as simply having a doctoral degree, results did show undergraduates with a major in business were likely to hold higher-level assistant to the president positions. According to O'Reilly (2000), the average education level earned was a master's degree and studied business, education, or humanities. In Sinsabaugh's (2009) report, she elaborated on the education level of assistants to the president and reveals that of the total sample, 18.6% of women held doctoral degrees, while 43% of men held doctoral degrees.

With regard to race and gender, Miles (2000) found that female assistants to the president were more likely to have held secretarial/clerical roles prior to the AP position than men. Minorities in the AP position were scant overall (Miles, 2000). O'Reilly (2000) found that the

typical assistant to the president at specialized institutions with less than 499 students was a middle-aged white female. Stiles (2008) revealed that there is an increasing number of female APs. Stiles asserts that this could be due to title inflation, meaning the growing number of female assistants to the president could be due to a more prestigious title to an already existing position with or without any added responsibilities or compensation. He goes on to say this trend might account for some of the increase in the female assistant to the president population (Stiles, 2008). With regard to the relationship of gender and education level, most APs held a master's degree and a significant number held doctoral degrees, albeit most doctoral degree holders were male (Stiles, 2008). Also related to gender, Stiles' study found that most assistants to the president, both male and female, were older than the age of 45 (Stiles, 2008). Stiles noted another gender-related finding, which was that the gender of the institution's president/chancellor was predominantly male, just as the gender of the assistant to the president was predominantly female. Comparable to demographics from previous studies conducted by Stiles (2008), O'Reilly (2000), Miles (2000), and Carlson (1991), Bassham's study revealed most assistants to the president in higher education are white females between the ages of 51 – 60 and hold at least a bachelor's degree (2009).

Bassham (2009) found that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and career stage. Bassham further stated that age was only a predictor to affective commitment, explaining that affective commitment increased with assistants to the president' age. In contrast, however, Bassham found that the career stage variable of age is not strongly linked to the three-component commitment. Emily Sinsabaugh (2009) published a report based on the 1995 survey sponsored by NAPAHE in which she outlined results specifically related to gender of assistants to the president. She states that the behavior known as *homosocial*

reproduction, which is the human propensity to reproduce one's self, is sometimes why opportunities for women may be enhanced at institutions where women already hold senior level leadership positions and why institutions typically lead by males usually hire males to succeed outgoing leaders (Sinsabaugh, 2009). Sinsabaugh asserted that in the field of higher education overall, females are typically represented in higher numbers in clerical or administrative/staff positions that are less central to an institution's primary mission.

In terms of gender issues related specifically to assistants to the president in higher education, Sinsabaugh posited that it is likely that the gender of the AP has more to do with the personal preference of the current president of the institution and his or her working style and expectations for the assistant to the president role. In terms of gender and institutional type, the data from the 1995 survey revealed almost 60% of AP at Master's I and II, Doctoral I and II, and Research I and II institutions were male (Sinsabaugh, 2009). However, while the percentage of nearly 60% is the same regarding the female AP population, women APs were mostly at baccalaureate liberal arts I and II and associate of arts colleges (Sinsabaugh). In terms of line vs. staff responsibilities, male APs held more line responsibilities by 10% than female assistants to the president (Sinsabaugh, 2009).

A new finding in comparison to previous studies was regarding salaries of APs. Bassham (2009) reported that compared to Carlson (1991) and O'Reilly (2000), this study revealed a 4% to 6% increase in salary ranges. Additionally, Bassham's study outlined the regions in the United States in which assistants to the president were more likely to be employed. Assistants to the president in higher education are most likely to be employed in the Atlantic and Central regions of the U.S. (Bassham, 2009).

Taking data from the 1995 survey sponsored by NAPAHE, Elizabeth Schoenfeld (2009) contributed to the publication *Other Duties as Assigned: Assistants to the president in Higher Education*, with her article *A Career as a Assistant to the president*. Schoenfeld revealed that the survey indicated that nearly half of the 800 respondents were the first incumbents of the position and almost one-third had been in the position for two years or less, while 21% had been at the post for ten years or more. Schoenfeld (2009) also referenced the 2005 survey, also sponsored by NAPAHE, in which the respondent data revealed 25% held the position for less than two years, and a quarter had been at the post for at least 25 years.

Influence

Assistants to the president are often the holders of a significant amount of indirect, and sometimes direct, influence. According to O'Reilly (2000), the AP position has the potential to be the most influential and key presidential staff member. The high level of implied influence and power of the assistant to the president position is reason to delve deeper into the role. Stiles (2008) posited that because APs become independent from their president and do exercise indirect authority and power because of their close proximity to the president, it is important to research the relationship between higher education assistants to the president' sources of power and their situational leadership styles.

In Stiles' (2008) findings, it is stated that the three preferred uses of power by assistants to the president were legitimate, referent, and coercion. Stiles goes on to say assistants to the president preferred to use power in situations where they could use their authority, enforce discipline, or influence others through personal charisma (2008). According to Stiles, there was an association between the supporting leadership style and the use of legitimate, referent, and coercion power sources. Results indicated that the preferred leadership style was the coaching

style (Stiles, 2008). Stiles noted that what he finds unique about his findings is that while the referent leadership style is considered as a personal source of power and used with the supporting leadership style, legitimate and coercion were no. These are positional sources of power and used in relation to directing leadership styles of directing and delegating.

Finally, Curchack (2009) offers a glimpse of what assistant to the president's with influence and implicit power on their campuses look like 1) their suggestions are usually taken seriously and acted upon; 2) they derive influence from various contacts both inside and outside the institution; 3) the president, other senior staff, and faculty see them as equals; and 4) their firm grasp of institutional policy and procedures gives them influence and power.

Relationship

As a assistant to the president, the AP develops a significant relationship with his or her president. Malloy, then president of the University of Notre Dame describes the relationship between the president and his or her assistant as one that must be open, confidential, and frank. Malloy (2003) described his experience as president and having a assistant to the president to help him with is duties as president. He wrote that every president needs a dependable sounding board, a second ‘set of eyes and/or ears,’ and encourager in difficult times. Schoenfeld (2009) pointed out that because of the close nature of the relationship and because presidents want to insure as much as possible the continued success of the relationship, most presidents moving from one institution to another will take staff from their previous institution with them to the new institution. It is evident in the scant amount of literature regarding the relationship between the assistant to the president and the president that more research is needed. This dissertation intends to address this issue along with its other research questions.

Trust

Stiles (2008) noted in his dissertation that trust in the execution of their duties is one area that needs further attention in the research regarding assistants to the president. He noted the significance trust in relation to higher education assistants to the president is the strong possibility, according to Miles (2000) and Montell (2000), that assistant to the president is perhaps the fastest growing administrative position in higher education today (Stiles, 2008). Trust in leadership is inextricably linked to employee commitment to an organization's leadership and to the organization as a whole (Bass, 2008). Further, Bass (2008) notes that when a leader is perceived by subordinates as expressing genuine feelings and thoughts, the subordinates are more likely to view the leader as someone who is trustworthy.

Assistants to the president must trust those around him or her and those around him or her must be able to trust the assistant to the president. One reason trust is crucial to this role is the confidential information the assistant to the president is dealing with on a daily basis (O'Reilly, 2000). O'Reilly noted the president's professional confidant is someone the president must trust completely in order to be able to speak openly and honestly, without fear of being judged or quoted. If a successful trusting relationship is established between the president and his or her assistant to the president, the significance of the role of the assistant to the president is even higher because of the restricted details the assistant to the president is made privy to on the job (O'Reilly, 2000).

As noted by past university presidents, surrounding one's self with trusted colleagues is essential to a successful presidential tenure and assistants to the president must be at the top of the trusted priority list in order to help lead the institution. According to Bass (2008), one is unlikely to lead successfully without the existence of trust between the leader and those

surrounding him or her. Daughdrill (1988) noted, “Unless you can develop the trust and respect of others, you cannot lead” (p. 299). As trust grows between a president and his or her assistant to the president, it is common for the assistant to the president to become an extension of the president and serve the president and the institution in any way the president sees fit (O'Reilly, 2000). This reciprocal representation behavior is further developed when the president and assistant to the president acknowledge their mutual respect for one another and shared belief in the same basic values and organizational mission (Bass, 2008).

William Tierney's Framework of Trust Within Higher Education Organizations

As Malloy (2003) stated, it is imperative that the relationship between the university president and his or her assistant be based on mutual respect and trust. For the purposes of this dissertation, Tierney's (2006) conceptual framework of trust within higher education organizations and the Grammars of Trust from his book, *Trust and the Public Good*, is used as the lens through which the research questions and data collected may be viewed, analyzed, and understood.

“Trust has been relatively overlooked in higher education...thus, academic organizations appear to be ripe for investigation” (Tierney, 2006, p. 42-43). Tierney claimed that in order for an environment to be productive, it must be one where trust exists. Trust, according to Tierney, can serve as a substitute for incentives, threats, coercion, regulations and/or policy, and mandates in environments in which members have a high degree of autonomy in terms of their work performance. Trust in academic environments, therefore, is a complex process in which two or more individuals participate in a series of interactions that may require one or both individuals to display some level of risk or faith in the other party (Tierney, 2006).

According to Tierney, trust can be a shared experience, a conditional experience, and a learned experience. He claimed the three aforementioned experiences serve as the key conditions in which to frame how trust in higher education organizations becomes understood. Tierney wrote in his book that the ways in which an organization's members make meaning is directly related to whether trust is universal, brief, or non-existent. Furthermore, how a member of an organization is socialized upon arrival, as well as the repeated actions from veteran members seen by the new member, will affect how the new member learns the culture of trust within a particular organization.

Trust as a Shared Experience

From the perspective that trust is a shared experience between two or more individuals, it can be said, according to Tierney, that trust occurs when both parties involved in a particular interaction share the idea that what is good for one, is good for the other. Tierney offered five characteristics of trust as a shared experience: 1) involved parties share a common interpretations of events/details; 2) involved parties share common interests in the organization; 3) there is communication of cultural facts; 4) based in structures and common beliefs, trust emerges from reciprocity and mutuality; and 5) trust cannot be concluded as something that is rational – trust is communicated through cultural meanings rather than rational facts.

Through the perspective that trust is a shared experience, it can be said that individuals trust one another because it is mutually beneficial. Long-term working relationships such as a university president and his or her assistant to the president are generally the most successful when their relationship embodies the essence of trust. Tierney asserts that academic organizations like higher education institutions personify the type of cultural characteristics where trust can potentially flourish.

Trust as a Conditional Experience

Trust as a conditional experience is based on one-to-one interactions between a truster and a trustee (Tierney, 2006). The critical element in this experience is that trust is never guaranteed and is always in transition. The trust between the higher education president and his or her assistant to the president occurs over an extended period of time and is highly contingent on the cultural environment in which these two individuals and the institution are embedded. Just as a new university president must establish a climate of trustworthiness in order for trust to develop, the president must establish a climate of trustworthiness between him or herself and his or her assistant to the president, and vice-versa, in order for trust to develop (Tierney, 2006).

Trust as a Learned Experience

Tierney (2006) wrote that trust in academic organizations can also be a learned experience. In this light, trust is learned over time, as interactions between parties are part of the ongoing social contexts of the organization's members. He outlined three characteristics of trust that are learned. They include 1) an individual's background influences his or her ability to trust, how quickly or slowly he or she trusts, and whether or not trust that is developed will be maintained; 2) trust is affected by the contexts of the culture; and 3) trust is guided by social interactions that invite trust into the culture. The three experiences of trust and some of their more common characteristics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Tierney's Experiences of Trust and Characteristics

Experience	Characteristics
Shared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a common interpretation of events • Fosters shared interests in the organization • Allows for the communication of cultural facts • Emerges from reciprocity and mutuality that are based in structures and beliefs • Cannot be summarized as rational
Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenced by an individual's background • Affected by cultural contexts • Guided by socializing mechanisms that induct individuals into the culture
Conditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenced by assumptions about social and moral obligations to the organization • Influenced by the temporal context • Affected by the competence of the trusted

Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* serves as the conceptual framework that all data collected will be analyzed against and coded and categorized accordingly. In Table 4, Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* are outlined.

Table 4

Tierney's Grammars of Trust

The Grammar of Trust As	Explanation
A repeated interaction	Interactions between two or more individuals, organizations
A dynamic process	"Without trust, or its proxy, interactions that lead to a result could not take place."
An end	Trust is developed over time as a result of actions worthy of trust
An exchange	A utilitarian exchange, a reciprocal relationship
Utilizing faith	Faith in the other party, a psychological orientation
Taking risks	Making a choice to trust that another individual will perform an expected action
An ability	Trust is an ability that is learned over time, there are conditions of trust
A rational choice	"The trusted have incentives to fulfill the trust, and the trusters have information and knowledge that enables them to trust."
A cultural construction	"The social bonds and shared identities that enable trust to occur."

Trust and the public good: Examining the cultural conditions of academic work (Tierney, 2006, p. 44-57)

Summary of Literature Themes

Some of the major themes derived from the literature on the complex duties of the higher education president were: institutional mission, know himself/herself, empower others, and relationships. Three major themes derived from the literature on assistants to the president were: diversity, influence, trust, and relationship. The three major themes extrapolated from the literature on cultures of higher education institutions were 1) different schools of thought regarding how many cultures can/do exist on one campus; and 2) the meaning of culture, and its in academic institutions.

Conclusion

This review of three related bodies of literature establishes the context for this research study. I reviewed the varied cultures of higher education institutions, the current literature regarding duties and responsibilities of the higher education president, higher educational assistants to the president, and Tierney's (2006) conceptual framework of trust in higher education institutions. Chapter III is devoted to the research methods of this study.

CHAPTER III:

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methods to be used to conduct this qualitative research study. Following a brief overview of the study's purpose and key research questions, and topic selection and rationale, the chapter provides information regarding the research design and rationale, site selection and rationale, participants, researcher's philosophical positionality, data collection and analysis. Next, quality considerations are discussed. Finally, a summary and conclusion is presented.

This study sought to understand qualitatively the role of trust between the university president and his or her assistant through the lens of institutional culture at a small, private liberal arts university in the southeast region of the United States. I focused on understanding the role of trust between the university president and his or her assistant in light of the institutional culture because the concept of trust finds meaning within the active culture (Tierney, 2006).

The three key research questions for this study include the following:

1. What does trust look like between the higher education president and the assistant to the president according to the research participants;
2. What are the most common ways in which trust is experienced by the higher education president and assistant to the president;

3. How does institutional culture influence the role of trust between the president and assistant to the president?

The research questions in this study were developed based on the concept that a healthy institutional culture is imperative to a productive president-assistant to the president relationship. Therefore, a healthy institutional culture is essential to the successful development and sustainment of trust within an institution. Specifically, trust is crucial to the success of the president-assistant to the president relationship and the institution as a whole (Fisher, 1985).

Immediately following the dissertation committee approval of the dissertation proposal and The University of Alabama Institutional Research Board (IRB), I began data collection. Interviews and observations were conducted on campus over a three-week time period. Document analysis of public institutional data via the campus website and catalogs also began immediately following committee and IRB approval.

Topic Selection and Rationale

In a time when the value of higher education is being questioned, tuition rates are skyrocketing, and unemployment figures for new college graduates remains high, the “knowledge industry” seeks to prove it is worth the time and financial investment required to earn a college education. Parents, students, and other stakeholders seek an institution they believe can be trusted, an institution they believe will provide a quality education for their children, and an institution from which the education their children will receive will add to the students’ lives upon graduation in order to enroll and invest in financially exclusive institutions. In order for stakeholders to trust in an institution from the outside looking in, there must be trust within the institution – and that generally does not happen unless there is a culture in place to support trustworthiness. Trust should start at the top – with the institution’s president and his or

her cabinet members as the leaders of the institution. The purpose of attempting to understand the role of institutional culture and the role of trust between the president and his or her assistant to the president was to understand how the role of trust between these individuals is influenced by the current culture(s) on campus. This study attempted to understand the role of trust between two senior-level administrators at a private, liberal arts university.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design took the form of an exploratory, descriptive case study, as is defined by the unit of analysis (Merriam, 2009), which was a small, private liberal arts university in the southeast region of the United States. This study sought to understand the role of trust between the university president and his or her assistant to the president considering the institutional culture(s) at play. The goal of this case study was to provide a rich, thick description of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). The exploratory, descriptive case study research method design was chosen as the most appropriate based on the unclear definition of Assistants to the President role and the unit of analysis and the research questions (Merriam, 2009). The goal of this dissertation was to fill the knowledge void of the role of trust between a university president and his or her assistant to the president when considering campus culture(s) with real-life, rich data. With the preceding distinctions in mind, I selected a single-site qualitative case study as the method most appropriate to answer the research questions.

The primary data source for this research study were interviews with the university president and his assistant to the president, as well as other members of the President's Cabinet. While interviews served as the primary source of data, they also informed on-campus observations and document analysis, which served as secondary forms of data for this study. As this is a qualitative study, I was the primary data collection and analysis instrument. I remained

flexible in the data collection process, appropriately responding to the data as it was collected and analyzed.

Site Selection and Rationale

The site chosen for this study met the institutional profile and researcher established criterion of a regionally accredited small, private liberal arts university in the southeast region of the United States. Further, I chose the site because of my familiarity with the institution and with the accrediting body over the region in which the site is located, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Finally, the site was chosen because on-site interviews and observations were geographically and economically feasible. The name of the institution, its specific location, and the names of those interviewed and observed have been changed in the final study to protect the anonymity of the institution.

The institution is primarily an undergraduate, residential institution experiencing significant growth in enrollment. The institution is known for its loyalty to the faith on which it was founded and for its dedication to the traditional liberal arts. There are a small number of graduate degrees offered at the institution, in addition to two doctoral degrees.

Study Participants

I sought to better understand the role of trust between the university president and his or her assistant to the president in light of the institutional culture(s). Therefore, I employed purposeful sampling to determine the participants of the study, as typical sampling “reflects the average person, situation, or instance of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam, 2009, p. 78). Because I only investigated the institution’s president, assistant to the president, and other senior administrators for three weeks, I employed purposeful sampling regarding those to be interviewed and observed. I selected a sample from participants who I deemed “information-

rich” (Creswell, 2008) from whom the most could be learned in an effort to best answer the research questions (Merriam, 2009).

As the leaders of the institution, the target population for this study consisted of the university president and his or her assistant to the president, as well as other senior-level administrators such as the Provost and Associate Provost, Vice-Presidents, and others considered to be in the President’s Cabinet. The aforementioned senior-level administrators are a significant portion of the population through which institutional culture is carried out (Padilla, 2005) and hold a great deal of power in terms of institutional policy and culture. Senior level university administrators set in motion the institutional agenda (Hoppes, 2009). With this in mind, this group of individuals comprised the participant population of this study.

Researcher’s Philosophical Positionality

Merriam (2009) described the philosophical perspective of qualitative research as “what one believes about the nature of reality...and the nature of knowledge” (p. 8). For this study, I employed the philosophical perspective of interpretive research. Interpretive research assumes there are “multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event” (Merriam, 2009, p. 8) or phenomenon. In addition, the purpose of this dissertation was to describe, understand, and/or interpret the role of trust between the university president and his or her assistant to the president.

Data Collection

Following the University of Alabama College of Education dissertation committee approval and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, data collection began immediately. A total of 12 interviews, 12 hours of observation, and nine hours of document analysis was conducted. Participant interviews were conducted individually. Participants were interviewed

separately during the final phase of data collection for points of clarification if needed. Document analysis of the research site via institutional website, brochures, and catalogs began immediately following dissertation committee and IRB approval and continued through the end of data collection. As is custom in qualitative research, I was the primary data collection instrument. Data collection was conducted over a three-week period.

Case study research is most appropriately conducted using multiple methods of data collection (Yin, 2003). Data was collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis to create triangulation of data sources and therefore, support the reliability and validity of the study findings (Creswell, 2003). While interviews allow for personal insights and experiences (Yin, 2003), data derived from interviews does not come without its challenges. According to Yin, interview challenges might include the design of the interview questions and personal biases of the interview participants. Interview data was derived from semi-structured, open-ended interviews with research participants. During each interview, I paid particular attention to participants' expressions, word choice, and questions for important cues, themes, and meanings. Transcription of interview data began immediately following each interview. Interviews and observations may also yield fieldnotes – text recorded by me during interviews and observations. Fieldnotes were used to help verify points made in interviews and/or data collected from documents. Documents – public records included minutes of meetings, letters, brochures, and memos - were analyzed and researcher notes aided in the document analysis process (Creswell, 2008). The fieldnotes derived from interviews and observations were highly descriptive, providing a significant level of detail into the environment. The fieldnotes included a reflective component, as I reflected on feelings, reactions, perceptions, interpretations, etc. An

interview protocol served as my instructions for the interview process, interview questions, and space for handwritten fieldnotes by me from the interviewee.

Interview questions were developed based on six types of questions offered by Merriam (2009). They include the following:

1. experience and behavior questions which seek information about participant actions, behaviors, and activities;
2. opinion and values questions that reveal participant beliefs or opinion;
3. feeling questions which generally yield thick, rich adjectives;
4. knowledge questions which seek participant knowledge on a topic;
5. sensory questions that encourage the interviewee to describe sights, sounds, smells, etc.; and
6. background/demographic questions which will reveal personal participant data such as age, gender, education, etc.

Observations allowed me to observe the research participants in their natural environment. The observations also served to supplement interview and document analysis data. I employed an observation protocol used to guide the information recorded during an observation during data collection. As noted by Creswell (2008), the observational protocol consisted of data such as a chronology of events, detailed description of the research participants and their environment, pictures or drawings of the research participants' environment, and researcher fieldnotes related to the observations. Merriam (2009) added that observations allow the observer to capture the interactions of those being observed, their conversations, and subtle factors such as body language. I also noted my own role in the observation environment. The value of observation in this study was found primarily in the fact that observations allowed for

me to describe a phenomenon such as assistants to the president with data collected on site (Merriam, 2009).

Documents represent the actual language and words of the participants and provide a rich source of information with which I augmented data gathered through interviews and observations (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Appropriate permissions were obtained prior to the use of documents. Public documents used in this study served to answer research questions, further clarify interview and observation data, and were analyzed for rich, thick data. Documents from the site added to the validity of the research study, as they aided in this study's accuracy, credibility, and meaningfulness (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Documents are generally "real life" artifacts and represent true depictions of the study participants' natural environment. I followed a document authentication protocol to confirm the validity of the document offered by Merriam (2009). I determined

1. the history of the document;
2. the credibility of the source providing the document;
3. if the document is original;
4. the original purpose(s) of the document;
5. the author(s) of the document;
6. where the author(s) received the information to create the document;
7. if the author(s) had a bias toward the document and if so, what and why; and
8. other points of information that might add to the study.

I conducted 12 formal interviews with key stakeholders as the primary source of data during a three-week period of August 2012. Each interviewee was asked to review and sign the IRB approved Participant Information Sheet. Each interview was digitally recorded and

transcribed within a one-week time frame to support ongoing data analysis. Interview protocols were developed for each participant group. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research is not prefigured, but rather it is highly emergent. As a result, I expected to adjust protocols as data emerged. Research participants were given the option to respond to the interview in written form should they desire to not be digitally recorded. Any informal communication with research participants was documented through the use of a research journal. Appendix B outlines the interviews with participants and anticipated timeline.

Observations served as the second method for collecting data. The goal of observations was to develop a more in-depth understanding of the espoused and enacted “values, beliefs, and assumptions” that are expressed in interviews with participants and revealed in research documents (Schein, 1999, p. 19; Hoppes, 2009). Presidential weekly meetings with the institution’s vice-presidents comprised the environment for the observations.

The final method of data collection I employed was document analysis. I analyzed public documents pertaining to the institution as a whole, senior leadership within the university, interoffice memos, formal and informal communications between administration and other stakeholder groups within the university, and documentation such as the university website, university newspaper, and local newspaper. No formal approval was sought for the use of public documents.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began simultaneously with data collection, as qualitative data analysis must begin from the initial stages of data collection to make appropriate adjustments if necessary and to begin coding the data and documenting themes to prepare for the presentation of findings (Merriam, 2009). Findings were informed primarily according to Tierney’s *Grammars of Trust*

(2006), but were not restricted by this framework (see Appendix C). As any theoretical framework is partial, data were also analyzed for findings not aligning with the *Grammars of Trust*. The concept of trust is intangible, data did not develop into a checklist of terms, but rather through the emergence of themes in written and oral language that indicated the relative trust-health (Hopkes, 2009) of the president and his or her assistants to the president.

Initial findings were used to adjust interview protocol and to identify potential follow-up measures (additional interviews, documents). Interview data was categorized in order to reveal consistencies within categories. The interview data also served as one way to determine any needed adjustments to research questions, interview/observation protocols, and to determine if any additional or follow-up interviews and/or observations were needed. Observational data collected was categorized to help determine consistencies between observational participants, as well as inconsistencies between espoused values, beliefs, and assumptions and the enacted values, beliefs, and assumptions.

The primary source used to confirm validity of the study's findings came from extensive use of analysis triangulation. I employed strategies such as multiple interviews, document analysis, and peer debriefing for validity of the study findings. I further added to the validity of the study by keeping a data collection journal to document the adjustments made to research questions, interview protocol, fieldnotes from interviews and observations, notes from document analysis, and all analysis procedures.

Quality Considerations

For the purposes of this dissertation, it should be noted that my career in higher education administration has been exclusively in the private university sector. Further, I completed

coursework at the target institution. I acknowledge that my personal and professional experiences may have influenced data collection, as well as data analysis.

I fully complied with the University of Alabama's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the IRB requirements established by the institution represented in this study. As the institution under investigation may deem trust and institutional culture as sensitive information, I have withheld the identity of the institution, specific location, and the participants of the study. All participants were made aware of my role in the project, my employment position within the institution, and my immediately surrounding organizational structure.

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss in detail the methods I employed to seek answers to my research questions. I sought to describe the rationale for the topic, research design, as well as the rationale for site selected for the study. The research participants were described with an explanation for the process used to determine who may participate in this research project. In an effort to divulge my philosophical viewpoint, my philosophical positionality was discussed. Next, data collection and analysis methods were outlined. Finally, quality considerations were presented.

It is my opinion that the current global economic climate leaves the burden of convincing the public to earn a college education at their institution to the higher education administrators of institutions around the world. Institutions are charged with educating the public on the value of a college education and convincing them that the risks involved in financing a college education are worth any possible sacrifices. With a multitude of institutions to pick from when deciding on where to attend college, each institution must find ways to prove their distinctiveness, prestige, and unique value to attract students.

This qualitative study sought to fill the knowledge void regarding trust between the university president and the president's assistant to the president through the lens of institutional culture. Researching trust through interviews, observations, and document analysis allowed for opportunities to better understand how the individuals in the roles researched perceive trust within the context of institutional culture.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

Institutions of higher education are widely known to be examples of multiple, varied, and intersecting collaborations happening at any given moment. At the center of any successful collaboration is trust (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president is often said to be critical to the success of an institution in that their trust in each other sets the tone for the rest of the President's Cabinet and the institution as a whole (Hurley, 2012). Kouzes and Posner concurred stating the president and assistant to the president must place trust in one another to achieve extraordinary results as a team of two collaborating for the success of the entire institution. Shockley-Zalabak, Morreale, and Hackman (2010) have posited that trust is not only fundamental to the success of a relationship or organization; it is the *main* ingredient in the recipe for prosperous institutions. Studies examining the emotional intelligence of organizational leaders indicate that those leaders considered successful exhibited high levels of trustworthiness via integrity and concern for professional peers and subordinates as well as concern for their responsibilities (Goleman, 1998).

This chapter presents the results of this study, which explored trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president. Data were collected using interview, observation, and document analysis data gathered during a three-week data collection period at a southeastern private liberal arts university. As is custom in qualitative research, participant stories form the foundation on which the results are built. Therefore, the results are presented largely in the form of a story – the collective story of the individual research participants at the

institution being studied. The individuals participating in this research hold long-term knowledge of, and experiences with, trust at the institution under investigation. The individuals' stories of trust are the purest form through which data could be gathered relative to this dissertation topic and it is through analyzing their stories that I answer the research questions presented in this dissertation:

1. What does trust look like between the higher education president and the assistant to the president according to the research participants;
2. What are the most common ways in which trust is experienced by the higher education president and assistant to the president;
3. How does institutional culture influence the role of trust between the president and assistant to the president?

The chapter is divided into five sections. First, a brief discussion of the research participants and their formal and informal interactions with one another is presented. The first section is followed by the presentation of the three most significant *Grammars of Trust* (Tierney, 2006) represented in the data collected, followed by a brief presentation of the results in relation to the remaining *Grammars of Trust*. The third part of this chapter consists of a discussion of the results in relation to the three experiences of trust (Tierney, 2006). The fourth section of the results chapter is a summary of the data in relationship to the three specific research questions. The fifth section of the results chapter expounds on the results of the study that speak to the overall purpose of this research inquiry: What is trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president? Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of the results presented in this chapter, followed by a conclusion to end the chapter.

Interactions of Significance

Trust within organizations is multifaceted and multidimensional (Shockley-Zalabak, Morreale, & Hackman, 2010). Relationships within organizations are often multifaceted and multidimensional as well which means the interactions are likely just as complex as the trust itself. The stories presented here served as the avenue through which I would come to understand trust between the president and assistant to the president at the institution under investigation. To understand how each participant and their respective story relates to another, Figure 1 illustrates the formal connection between the president and those comprising his immediate circle of relationships.

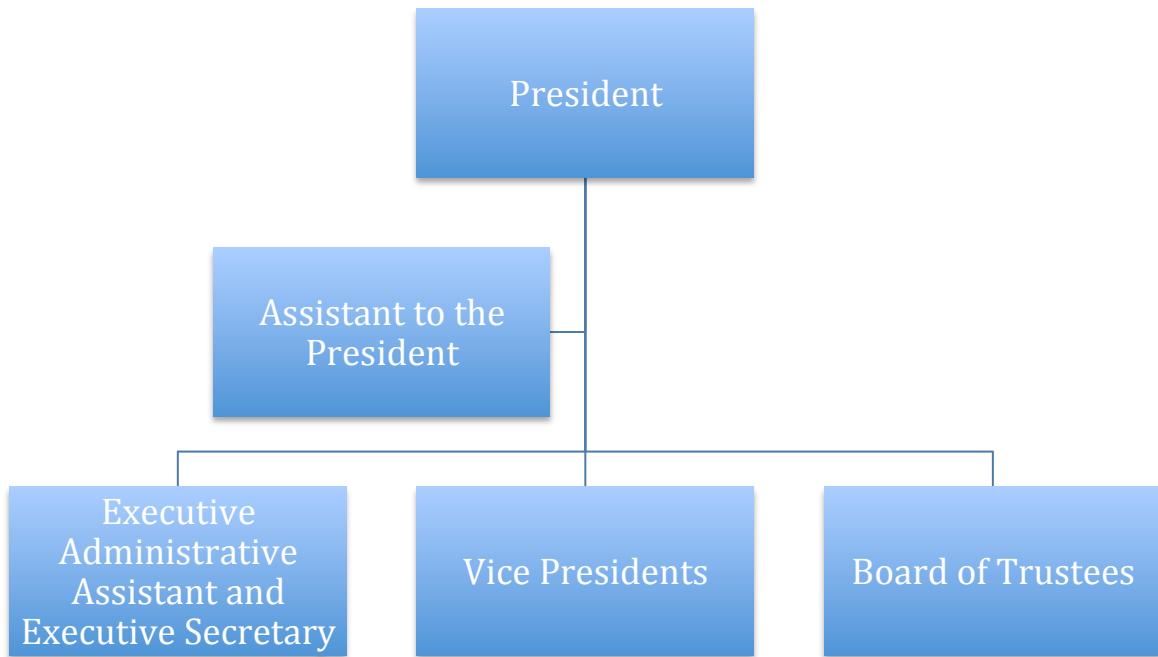


Figure 1. Formal flow of interactions with the institution's president

Figure 1 not only represents the connection of administrators to the president, but it is representative of the administrators interviewed for this study. The administrators chosen for this study were selected because of their significant relationship with the president and assistant

to the president. I began data collection by contacting the president of the institution directly via email. I received a reply within two working days, which to me implied a certain level of trust in me and my role as a researcher from the president, considering the president had not met me prior to this study. This first display of trust set the tone of what was to come in the sense that all administrators quickly replied to my request for an interview indicating their desire to be part of this study. What I was not aware of until a follow-up interview with the president was that behind the scenes, there was a bit of hesitation from one administrator in particular. This administrator went to the president and asked if they (the interviewees) would be expected to divulge confidential information. The president noted that “was not [his] impression of this research.” Once reassured that I was exploring trust specifically between the president and the assistant to the president and not looking for specific decisions or details, the administrator was on board. I was never told which administrator had these reservations, but given my time with all of the vice presidents, both interviews and observations, I have some idea of who it may have been. I cannot help but wonder if this hesitation is in direct conflict with the impression I received that the cabinet is one that is exceptionally trusting of one another.

As expected, the president of the institution interacts with the assistant to the president, executive administrative assistant and executive secretary, vice presidents, and board of trustee members on a regular basis. The president and assistant to the president often interact via some form of technology (email, text messages, video conferencing) due to scheduling conflicts eliminating the option to meet face-to-face. Recognizing that communication is vital to trust (Shockley-Zalabak, Morreale, & Hackman, 2010), the president and assistant to the president will “meet” electronically if need be, as a measure of nurturing the trust between the two of them. The president of this institution values a “no surprise approach” and to help in the open

line of communication, meeting regularly with the assistant to the president (through whatever means necessary) is key. During a follow up joint interview with the president and assistant to the president, they both noted the rare occurrence of both of them being in the same room at that time of year (Fall season/back to school). The president stated, “It’s too rare...I’ve, I’ve never been able to completely resolve that.” He further stated that

[the assistant to the president’s] good about going ahead and putting himself on my calendar at certain times and putting things in front of me and making me look at them or giving me a quick summary of things. There are only so many hours in the day, and, and that’s a problem and the other unfortunate thing, and this really gets into trust, because even though you would think this relationship ought to take priority, because we’re familiar with each other...a lot of the time, our time gets bumped.

When the president mentioned that his time with the assistant to the president often gets bumped for whatever reason, it struck me as significant that he also acknowledged that bumping time with the assistant to the president was only possible because “we’re familiar with each other.” Unfortunately, it is akin to bumping time with a family member. It may not be the right option, but circumstances dictate that it is the only option at the time.

The president’s interactions with the executive administrative assistant and executive secretary are limited. He places significant trust in them individually and collectively to handle the operations of the office efficiently and in keeping with the mission of the institution. As the executive administrative assistant stated,

I am responsible for all of his travel arrangements and the intricate details of each, each, of each of his trips. He shows his trust in me, for example, when I hand him his travel folder and he doesn’t even open it to check it. I mean, that means a lot to me that he trusts me that much. He trusts that I have done adequate planning, the proper research, to determine the best flights, the best routes, you know, all that stuff. He told me one time that he didn’t even look at his flight number until he got to the airport at the time I told him he needed to be there, that is a serious amount of trust he has in me to do my job and do it right. I don’t take that lightly.

The president spends more time interacting with the executive administrative assistant than the executive secretary. As the executive secretary said,

He spends a lot more time with her than with me. I think that's because, well, she handles more of the serious stuff like his agenda and special projects and I mainly serve as his gatekeeper. You know, I'll field calls, I'll tell someone that he's behind closed doors if he's asked for some quiet time and I'll only send calls through to his office if it's an emergency or a Board member. I try to be aware of his time and aware of what his priorities are, for that hour, that day, that week. I just try to help him make the most of his time.

Interactions with the vice presidents are fairly balanced being approximately equally part spontaneous and equally part planned. Both the president and vice presidents as a group noted that there are many times when the president will have a spur-of-the-moment discussion with a vice president or visit with a vice president in the hallway outside of the president's office or at the president's house. One vice president stated that he and the president have "shared more heart-to-heart talks" that were not planned or official in terms of their respective professional roles. The spontaneous conversations between this particular vice president and the president are unique in that this vice president serves as the president's Sunday school teacher. Many of their informal conversations are faith related. As this administrator said,

I may be in a bit of a unique position here at the university in that there are times, and I think he'd probably tell you this, that on occasion I'll kind of say okay, now, I'm about to take my employee hat off and I'm about to be your Sunday school teacher for the next five minutes and we're going to talk about this issue.

In terms of the planned interactions between the president and the vice presidents, there is usually a weekly meeting with the President's Cabinet and the University Council. While these meetings are planned and an agenda is set to guide the meetings, one vice president stated that "the president likes to engage in conversation, and our meetings tend to go long," which often leads to a deviation from the meeting's agenda.

The president's interactions with the board of trustees are the most limited in terms of formal meetings. The president indicated that he often engages in phone and email conversations with various members of the board during the week in between formal board of trustees meetings. Many times the president will make it a point, at a minimum, to be in touch with the board chair and vice chair. One board of trustee member detailed his interactions with the president:

We communicate regularly by phone, email, and in person on a wide variety of subjects. I trust [the president] to provide me full and appropriate disclosure of certain situations and he likewise trusts me enough to seek my opinion, often on sensitive issues that require discretion and confidentiality.

The president of this institution understands that the success of the institution is in large part due to consistent and transparent communication displayed by his interactions with his inner-most circle. Shockley-Zalabak, Morreale, and Hackman (2010) asserted that trust is achieved by understanding that it is communication-based and that communication is key to success, either individual or organizational.

Interpretation of Data Through the Lens of Tierney's Grammars of Trust

The ultimate goal of this dissertation was to expound on trust's role in this critical relationship between the president and the presidential assistant. William Tierney's (2006) *Grammars of Trust* were central to collecting and analyzing the data for this dissertation. As such, Table 5 provides a look at the *Grammars of Trust* and an explanation of individual grammars while Table 5 provides an outline of *Grammars of Trust* and an explanation of the possible manifestations of each respective trust grammar (Hoppe, 2009).

Table 5

Tierney's Grammars of Trust and Reflective Manifestations of Trust

The Grammar of Trust As	Manifestations of Trust
A repeated interaction	Longevity, repeatedly, consistency, over time, sustainability, build
A dynamic process	Change, engagement, building, maintaining, repairing, simplification, expectations, responsive
An end	Transparency, stability, as a result of
An exchange	Relationships, supportive, exchange, expectation, risk, truth, honesty
Utilizing faith	Readiness to believe, assumptions, faith, positive outlook, belief, hope
Taking risks	Competence, vulnerable, survival, values, control (or lack thereof), choice
An ability	Leverage, individual experience, cooperation, return
A rational choice	Accountable, structure, failure, individual fault
A cultural construction	Governance, socialization, mission, the way things happen, organizational history

Note: Extrapolated from Cherron R. Hoppes (2009) dissertation, *Trust in times of challenge: Exploring the relationships of faculty and administrators at small, private under resourced colleges and universities* (p. 98)

A review of the *Grammars of Trust* (Tierney, 2006) alongside possible manifestations of each respective trust grammar (Hoppes, 2009) indicates the interconnectedness of the grammars of trust rendering the task of separating one concept from another difficult at best (Hoppes, 2009). The effort to fully understand trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president at the institution being studied required individual and collective interviews with the two aforementioned individuals as well as those immediately surrounding the two (the President's Cabinet and administrative secretaries), observations, and document analysis.

Interviews with each participant revealed the participant's personal perception of trust between the president and assistant to the president at the institution under investigation and affirmed Tierney's claim that "trust is an elusive concept that frequently seems to defy definition" (Tierney, 2006, p. 41). Some interviews yielded detailed accounts of trust, while data collected from other interviews returned answers that came across almost staged. As a whole, the interviews did not indicate one clear description of the role of trust between the president and the assistant to the president, but revealed characteristics and behaviors of trust (and possible distrust) as well as the importance of the concept to the successful longevity of the institution. The president clearly understands the impact trust (or lack thereof) has on an institution of higher education and the relationships within, as does his assistant to the president. Both the president and assistant to the president easily offered their own individual perception of trust's role in their relationship and in a follow up joint interview with both individuals, the two quickly agreed on their mutual perception of trust between the two of them.

The manifestations of trust (Hoppe, 2009) in connection with Tierney's (2006) *Grammars of Trust* offer a guide to understanding the data collected at the institution studied. Taken together, these guided the data coding and analyzing process as well. A visual representation of the dependent and independent ways in which Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* interact with one another (Hoppe, 2009) is provided (see Figure 2).

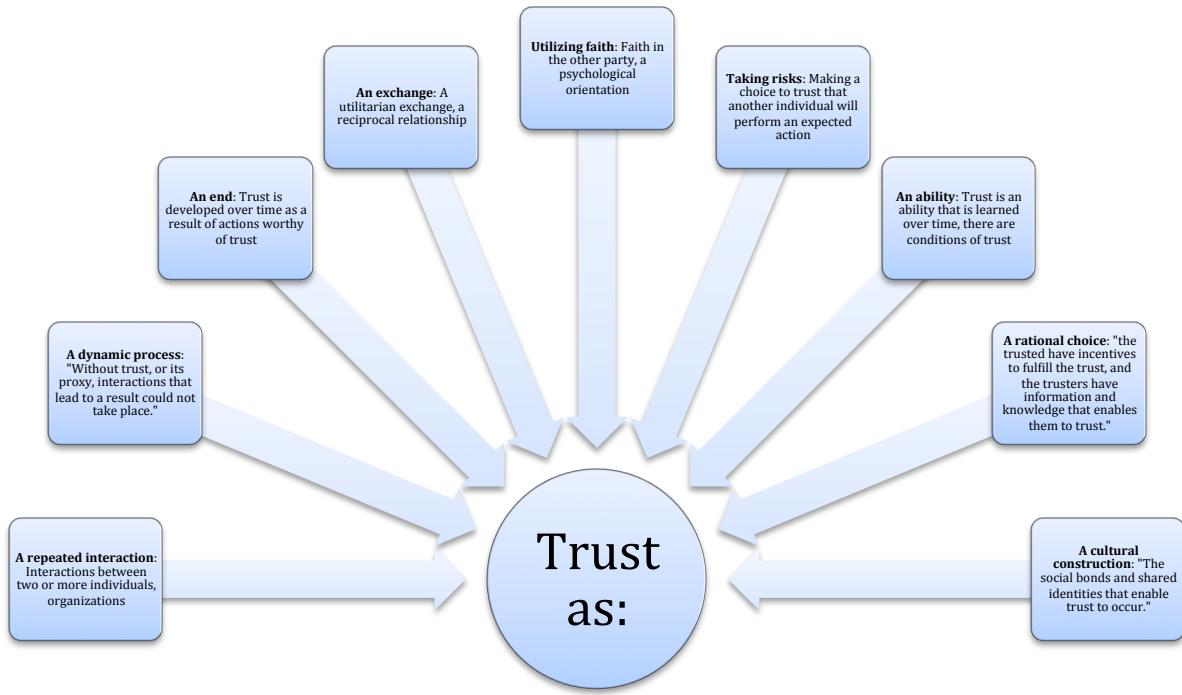


Figure 2. Visual representation of the dependent and independent ways in which Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* interact with one another and definitions of each grammar

While the data collected indicated there was evidence of each respective grammar at this particular institution, evidence of some grammars was present in the data more often than others.

The three most significant *Grammars of Trust* represented in the data are discussed below.

Following the discussion of the three most represented grammars, data reflecting the remaining grammars is presented. As not to exclude any pertinent data, this section ends with a brief discussion of the data collected from some of the interviews that did not align completely with any specific grammar.

The Three Most Significant *Grammars of Trust* Derived from the Data

Trust as Faith

The institution studied for this dissertation is one rooted in the Christian faith, founded as a Baptist college. As such, I expected the data collection phase to yield results associated with the Christian faith. Most of the interviewees attributed the trusting culture of the institution to the president's belief in the Christian faith and to the institution's commitment to Christian traditions. Two administrators grounded their entire interview in the Christian faith. When I interviewed the president, he began our interview with a prayer. Another administrator seemed to view the purpose of the institution to be to advance the Christian faith first and academics second. During my interview with one particular vice president, it was stated, "You have to be a member of an [state] Baptist church to be a member of the board of trustees of [the institution]." One administrator indicated that many times when the president meets with him, they often engage in conversation regarding their personal faith in Christ and refer to Biblical wisdom for guidance in dealing with certain challenges and opportunities both personally and professionally. The administrator framed the trust between he and the President as being:

quite extraordinary...the things that I look at that engender trust...[the President] doesn't have a big ego...he always comes back to what's best for the long term interest for the

University and its students...it always focuses on what's best for the students long-term in the context of [the institution's] mission, academic excellence undergirded by a Christian worldview and, and so I like that and, and then the last thing I think is the personal way he walks with the Lord.

I'm going to be honest with you, I've been in his office many times and we'd have a thorny thing we're talking about or a decision we need to make and he'll say we need to pray about this first and, and that's not in front of the audience for show, that's just [me and him] in the office and saying okay, we really do need to see what the Lord wants us to do here and seek His guidance and he's just serious about that. And so when you see a guy that lives that out, it's real easy to trust him.

Referring to the success the institution has enjoyed, this same vice president explained:

It's decidedly Christian, but it is also a place where truth is explored and knowledge is gained and we don't hold anything back in terms of trying to be as cutting edge as we can possibly be with the education that we're giving the students. I think I would have a hard time if I were in what you might call a Bible college where the theology might be great, but you're not, they don't have very good math teachers or the quality of the education that the students come out with might not quite as good. I might also have just as much trouble if I were in a completely secular university that might have incredible academic prowess, but didn't honor God. I would have a real hard time with that. I look at myself as having been called here by God Himself...

A lot of faith-based institutions have drifted from [the Christian faith]...ever so slightly. Little pieces of the world crept in and eroded the original mission and it might have taken many years to happen. I think it's the hand of God Himself, if you want to be truthful about it. I tell families sometime when they say, well, I want my son or daughter to go to a Christian university. I say, I want you to come into this with your eyes wide open because there is no such thing as a Christian university. Jesus came to the world to save individuals, not schools. Now, there are universities that are maintained and undergirded by people who are largely Christian and would want their faith and the truth of the Scripture to be gained by the students...but it is not an absolute requirement that a student, that when a student comes here they say I'm a Christian person and it is not an absolute requirement that they be one when they leave. It's just, you want them to have every chance when they're here to learn about it. So, I think the grace of God is just evident around here.

During my interview with another vice president, he noted that after many years in another industry, it became clear to him that this vice president's position was where God wanted him to be. He explained, "I gave it a lot of thought and a whole lot of prayer, for God to reveal to me. I'm blessed in so many ways, what do You want me to do, and this

is it. I think God had been working me into some position, and I tried to open my eyes and my heart." When I asked this vice president about his relationship with the president, he immediately framed his response in the context of faith: "I got to know him first by getting to know his faith and what he was about."

While religious faith was a large portion of the data collected, Tierney (2006) noted that faith in terms of the *Grammars of Trust* refers to faith in another individual and their ability to follow through with what the other party has entrusted him or her to do. For example, the president of this institution strategically placed individuals around him in terms of the President's Cabinet that held expertise in areas in which he felt the institution needed expertise. As one vice president stated,

I think he hired me because he felt I had a pretty broad understanding of [it]. I don't think he was pitching to me [at the time he was talking to me about the position], I really don't. I think he knew the institution needed expertise in this area and he was just talking to someone who had experience to get their advice. I think it was really God revealing to me, as someone with [specific] experience, what I could do for others and help in the Lord's kingdom.

In the context of the higher education president and assistant to the president, it was clear the president places a great amount of faith in his assistant to the president to be focused on the institution's mission. The President often times will have the assistant to the president draft written responses to a university constituents or donors and sign it without having read the correspondence, having faith in the assistant to complete the task assigned with integrity and accuracy. The president noted this type of faith in another individual is crucial to his successful presidency, as he cannot respond to every single university stakeholder by himself and he must have faith that the assistant will help him with these responsibilities in a way that reflects a presidential response. The president gave an example, stating,

I just earlier today kicked a thing on email to [the assistant]. I got an email from alum that had received an award. Well, I forwarded that to [the assistant] saying, could you draft a short letter to him of congrats and so that'll appear back on my desk. It will be a beautiful letter, and I'll sign it, and it'll be from me, but [the assistant] will have written it.

Trust as an Exchange

“The...assumption is that the parties are bound together through a sense of mutuality over time,” suggested Tierney (2006, p. 49). In the context of this dissertation, both the president and assistant to the president are bound together through their devotion and loyalty to the institution first and foremost, as represented by the following statement from the president:

[the assistant] had another opportunity or two that has arise since we've been doing this. I have always encouraged our best people to be open to other things and that I'm not trying to put them in a box here. So it may be that he gets some kind of fabulous opportunity...and if that happens, then great, I would hope [the assistant] would do that.

Followed by their individual commitment to the institution, the second avenue through which both individuals become bound together over time is through their exchanges between each other. The President gave an example of this when he stated that during meetings, at times he can look around the room and make eye contact with his assistant and know exactly what the assistant is thinking. He explained, “We’re around each other enough that you pick up on those things. That doesn’t substitute for a *true* exchange, but I think that certainly has to be a reflection of a level of trust when you can get to that point with somebody.” The president and Assistant are undoubtedly involved in a reciprocal relationship. Both parties are constantly involved in an exchange of trust. The assistant trusts in the president and in turn, the president trusts in the assistant. Trust as an exchange in this specific relationship means the president will engage in behaviors that are trustworthy assuming the assistant will do the same in return and vise versa (Tierney, 2006). An example of this exchange is when the president trusts the assistant enough for the assistant to not only represent the president, but also the institution when

the president is unable to be physically present. As the “face” of the institution, the president is likely whom donors and other alumni want to visit with before making a decision to donate funds in support of the institution. However, because the president cannot be in all places at all times, the Assistant is often called on to stand in for the president. According to the president,

The main thing is that it's impossible to be two places at one time. That's the first thing. So to have someone who can represent me without me having to send a vice president and appear to be playing favorites, it was no problem at all for me to ask [the assistant] to stand in.

This kind of exchange involves a high level of trust that the assistant will represent the president in the way the president wants to be represented. Another example of trust as an exchange is the president’s State of the University address given just three days prior to my joint interview with the President and Assistant. When asked what role the assistant had in the president’s address, he stated, “[The president] began to put some ideas together, circulate those ideas around, we looked at them, had some thoughts, sent them back.” The president stated that the assistant “responded first and best, he read it with good insights and gave me a good candid response and I had to prompt everybody else to go ahead and respond and what I got from the others was more surface oriented.” The president went on to highlight the assistant’s constructive insights like asking him if he had ever thought about the issue in a certain way or tell the president he thinks the president may be headed in the wrong direction. A high level of trust seems evident in order for such exchanges to take place between the higher education president and assistant.

Trust as a Cultural Construction

“Unlike a rational choice, trust as a cultural construction has no predetermined conceptions of what is rational or irrational, logical or illogical. Meaning occurs within the contexts and situations themselves” (Tierney, 2006, p. 56). In this regard, trust at the institution, in particular trust between the president and assistant, is one that requires commitment to the

institution's mission, which is "intentionally Christ-centered." One administrator indicated that the institutional culture is one that

requires academic excellence in a Christian community where the intellectual, physical, and spiritual health of students, faculty, and staff is valued and can allow or inhibit the actions by the President, and thus, the relationship, especially trust among [the president's] direct reports...change in assistants change the senior administration culture, but it takes time for the campus culture to adapt.

According to one board of trustee member when asked if he believed that the culture of the university impacts the role of trust between the president and assistant, he responded by stating, "Indeed it does, as the influence of Christ should guide us in all relationships. Christ seeks our best in all endeavors, and the academy is no exception. Trust among the president and other administrators is vital to and wholly consistent with [the institution]'s mission." This board of trustee member goes on to say that

The culture of [the institution] is well summarized by its motto and we view [the institution] as an institution that is larger, more timeless, and more significant than any individual. We have all been entrusted to act as stewards of this great institution for only a portion of its existence. This creates an environment of trust that should shape the relationships among all who work at [the institution], from the president all the way to those persons who hold the most humble of positions.

During one administrator interview, the interviewee was asked to describe the culture of the institution. This particular administrator gave a "laundry list" of terms, "Service-oriented, compassionate, hypocritical, caring, self-righteous, entitled, demanding, faithful, loyal, petty, kind," while another administrator described the culture as one that might be a "haven for many employees and a thorn for others."

Data Representing Tierney's Remaining *Grammars of Trust*

As a Repeated Interaction

As is the general nature of most organizations, higher education institutions are ripe with repeated interactions. At this institution, the president frequently engages in repeated

interactions with a select group of people: mainly the President's Cabinet. These repeated interactions include, but are not limited to, weekly vice-president meetings, university council meetings, meetings with office staff, and certainly regular meetings with the assistant. These repeated interactions between the institution's president and assistant serve to nurture the trusting environment in which they work. The president and assistant both referenced specific actions by each other during the interviews that were crucial to the development of such a high level of trust between the two of them. In addition, both the president and the assistant noted their belief that the existing trust between them had great influence on the culture of trust not just within the President's Cabinet, but also within the institution as a whole.

The president is seen as dependable regarding scheduled interactions with the assistant, which permeates the culture of their relationship with a sense of stability and calm. This dependability is crucial to the trust of the president and assistant relationship as is evidenced by the president's statement that often times they are both so busy that despite the close proximity of their respective offices, there are days when they do not see each other at all. The assistant to the president stated,

Part of it, just even the location of the office, I don't even see [the president] passing on the fly, nor he me. But when those times, when I feel like, I will go into [the president's] calendar and see, okay, it's been a while since we've sat down and talked and I might schedule a whole hour.

At the time data was being collected for this dissertation, the president of the institution had been working with the same assistant for approximately four years. The time invested in the relationship aided in the atmosphere of trust as well. The trust in the president and assistant relationship had experienced many interactions over the course of the past four years. During the individual interview process, both participants indicated that after having worked together for so long, they were able to read each other well. For example, the president stated, "We've now

been together long enough that I suspect we can kind of read each other's minds." During the joint interview, I asked both individuals if it was a fair to summarize the trust between the two of them as solid. The president stated:

From my perspective, I'm comfortable with that summary statement. I'm sure that if you were doing this again in another 10 years and we were both sitting here talking, the trust would be at a different, perhaps deeper level because time just has that effect on people. But when I talked with [the assistant to the president] about doing this, my clear intention was that he could hang with this as long as I was going to be in this job...my clear hope is that we're going to be working together for the remainder of my time here and that trust level can just keep right on going and improve, get richer, deeper, as the years go on.

In terms of the President and his examples of trust being a repeated interaction, the trustees may have elaborated on this perfectly by indicating that they communicate with the president regularly via phone, email, and face-to-face and agreed the planned as well as spontaneous interactions were needed to further the trust atmosphere. With this type of interaction between the president and the Board of Trustee members as a guide, the president models these same repeated interactions with his Assistant.

As a Dynamic Process

As Tierney (2006) stated, repeated interactions carry with them an ultimate purpose. As individuals or groups intersect with another, an end result is created or the main goal is achieved (Tierney, 2006). In the context of the higher education president and assistant, the repeated interactions create a dynamic process, which is seen in the president's ability to rely on the Assistant to write presidential speeches, represent the president at various functions, and complete assigned duties in a timely, efficient, and positive manner. The assistant noted that

There are certain things that have to be done, just on a routine basis. I'll handle those, like thank you notes to donors and mail, the weekly talking points, getting ready for President's Cabinet and those kinds of things. Once and a while, I will say, okay, make a list of things that are coming up – you're going to give this welcome speech, this other speech, and we'll go through and he'll tell me I've got that, I've done that.

While trust is often described using abstract terms, Tierney (2006) noted that legal documents such as contracts or licenses are generated using specific and clear terminology and are the “savings account” of trust in that, should the trust fail, the contract or license would be referred to as a form of protection. In the case of the higher education president and assistant, the possibility of termination of employment as a form of discipline ensures the assistant to the president remains loyal to the institution and the president. The employee performance assessment might serve as one of the ways in which trust might continue to be built or may erode over time. Because absolute trust is non-existing in most employment situations, the aforementioned contracts or licenses serve as “lubricants” for trust (Tierney, 2006).

As an End

While suggesting that the function of trust is to generate trust may seem contradictory, the more the president and assistant trust one another, the more trust exists (Tierney, 2006). Like repeated interactions, trust as an end indicates trust is built over time as a result of actions and interactions deemed worthy of trust by the parties involved (Tierney, 2006). At the institution under investigation, the president and assistant relationship can only be successful if both parties invest in the other in terms of trust. As one administrator stated, “You have to come into a position in the Office of the President assuming it is an environment of trust, even if you don’t know anyone in the office.” This statement effectively demonstrates what it means to have an initial level of trust in order to build trust. Parents sending their children to college at the institution, particularly those parents who did not attend college themselves make an initial investment of trust in the institution and its people. The institution’s job is to support that initial investment going forward. If that investment is supported successfully, both the parents and the children stand to generate more and more trust in the institution as time progresses.

According to the president of this institution, there was no prior relationship before he hired the current assistant. This meant both individuals would have to first trust in each other in order to build trust in each other. In order to foster this process, the president stated he was clear with the assistant that their relationship would require a “no surprise approach” when it came to working together. The president stated during the interview process that his main objective with the current assistant was to create an environment where the two of them understood the importance of being completely transparent. One administrator also echoed the president’s devotion to transparency saying, “Trust is evident most in the president’s transparency.” The president noted that he told the assistant that while he may not like what he might have to say, it was extremely important that whatever it is, he tell him so he is not surprised later.

Trust as Risk Taking

As might be expected in the Office of the President regardless of the field, there is certainly a great amount of “risk taking” in the President’s Office and in the President’s Cabinet at this higher education institution. Since the Board of Trustees at any institution work most with the president, a great deal of risk is assumed on their part, both collectively and individually. “Creating that trust often means a great deal of communication, outreach, and results or being held accountable when results are not forthcoming,” suggested Hoppes (2009, p. 116). One trustee echoed Hoppes’ statement:

Since trustees cannot make personal observations concerning the day-to-day operations of the university, we rely in large measure on the president to report candidly to the board on both the positive and negative issues concerning the school and to give us a realistic assessment of appropriate courses of action and recommendations for ongoing improvements. Likewise, the president trusts board members to provide their candid opinions, assist the president in the analysis of certain issues, set the long-term vision for the university and support the president and other administrators as they implement strategies approved by the board.

The president parallels the aforementioned sentiment by the board of trustee member by saying, “I *have* to maintain trust from the board of trustees and have to *know* it. Because literally, I could not do the job if I didn’t maintain a strong degree of trust [from the board members].”

The president of the institution certainly engages in a certain level of risk each time he depends on the assistant to perform a certain tasks. Should the assistant to the president not follow through appropriately, the consequences of such results will ultimately come back to the president. One administrator offered the following, “I do believe that [the president] puts a great degree of trust in [the assistant] to get things done that are details that he can’t get to himself, he sends [the assistant] to represent himself at certain things, uses him as one of his sounding boards, write letters, open mail.” In terms of the trust-risk relationship between the president and one particular administrator, the feeling was portrayed as one of confidence to be able to speak “openly, honestly, frankly, and candidly...not fearful to discuss sacred topics, controversial issues, or concerns.”

Trust as an Ability

Trust is not a concept that is “innate” to people (Tierney, 2006). Like other *Grammars of Trust*, trust as an ability is something that is developed and nurtured over a period of time. In the relationship of the president and the assistant, both parties take a risk in trusting the other person. The president at this institution stated, “We both have to trust that we’re going to be honest and complete with the communication. I said to [the Assistant] that we have to have a no surprise policy.” Considering the Grammar of trust as an ability, one administrator offered the following in regards to the president’s *difficulty* with trusting an individual once he loses trust in someone, stating: “Once he loses trust in someone, it is hard for him to regain it.”

Trust as a Rational Choice

According to Tierney (2006), the trusted have incentives to follow through with the trust, and the trusters are generally in a position to trust in large part due to the information and knowledge they hold. Further, Tierney (2006) wrote, trust is an exchange between two parties in which there is a choice to trust in someone before knowing the other individual will reciprocate. During one administrator interview, it was noted that “trust is the basis of our entire relationship” and goes on to indicate the belief that the president would mimic this sentiment. As noted by one administrator, “The president has placed great trust in his assistant to perform his duties, so this investment of trust should motivate him to do his very best.”

As noted earlier in the results chapter, one administrator noted that taking a position in the President’s Cabinet, either administrative level or vice-president level, requires a immediate initial choice to trust others. It is the responsibility of the trusters and the trustees to cultivate that trust in order for it to develop further. One administrator posited that even at regular meetings with the president, there is an initial decision to trust regardless of how many times the President’s Cabinet has met previously. Cabinet members make a rational choice to trust that what is said in a particular President’s Cabinet meeting will be kept confidential. In doing so, everyone in the room then leaves the meeting with the responsibility to further the development of trust by keeping statements confidential, creating an environment of trust in advance of the next meeting. In terms of administration and faculty trust, one administrator believes there continues to be a lack of trust to some degree from a small group of the faculty toward the administration, but goes on to acknowledge that this might be common on many campuses. The administrator suggested that even a small number of faculty holding any level of distrust in the administration can work to erode the culture of trust.

Interpretation of Data Through the Lens of Tierney's Three Experiences of Trust

As Tierney (2006) wrote, trust within higher education is a process that is often complex and one in which the individuals involved participate in a series of interactions that either build or erode trust. Considering the notion that trust is a series of interactions between two or more individuals, it could also be said that trust is a series of experiences between two or more individuals. Table 6 highlights each respective experience of trust and some of the correlating characteristics as offered by Tierney (2006).

Table 6

Tierney's Experiences of Trust and Characteristics

Experience	Characteristics
Shared	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers a common interpretation of events• Fosters shared interests in the organization• Allows for the communication of cultural facts• Emerges from reciprocity and mutuality that are based in structures and beliefs
Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot be summarized as rational• Influenced by an individual's background• Affected by cultural contexts• Guided by socializing mechanisms that induct individuals into the culture
Conditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influenced by assumptions about social and moral obligations to the organization• Influenced by the temporal context• Affected by the competence of the trusted

Trust as a Shared Experience

Within the context of this research study, trust was overwhelmingly *shared* between only the president and the assistant. Seldom was trust a shared experience in which the vice-presidents and/or board of trustees were involved. With this in mind, the shared experiences of trust between the higher education president and the assistant largely dealt with the assistant's

representation of the president, written communications drafted by the assistant on behalf of the president, and research by the assistant for the benefit of the president. The president at this institution was deliberate in his choice to make his own decisions without the assistant making decisions for him. According to the data, this is a result of the president's leadership style and not a reflection of the level of trust between the two individuals. As Tierney (2006) stated, shared trust is found at the intersection of the president and the assistant mutually understanding that what is good for one, is good for the other.

With the aforementioned five characteristics of trust as a shared experience, the president and assistant both indicated on more than one occasion that they had a mutual devotion to the institution first and foremost. In addition, the president and assistant experience shared trust through their mutual interest in the institution in terms of both individuals being in the same office, with the same goals.

Trust as a Learned Experience

The senior-level executives interviewed and observed continual behaviors by fellow executives including the president and assistant which indicated trustworthiness. In addition, the interviewees noted preceding reputations on the part of fellow senior-level administrators displaying characteristics of trust that aided in their *learning* the other individual could be trusted. Further, the culture affects the level of trust institutional stakeholders may feel. This particular institution's culture seemed to be widely regarded by the study's participants as one of trust. When probed as to why the institution's culture is believed to be one of trust, the interviewees noted repeated social interactions that further developed the sense of trust among constituents.

Trust as a Conditional Experience

Trust as a *conditional* experience on this campus was unique in that only one research participant acknowledged that “conditions” on trust are expected and their existence does not mean the culture is one of distrust. Most participants acknowledged that while trust is never guaranteed and actions can happen that might erode extant trust, the majority of research participants conveyed a sense of confidence in their belief that the trust they felt in the institution and in their fellow cabinet members was solid. The research participants indicated that the institutional culture, particularly within the circle of senior-level executives, was one of trust resulting from repeated trustworthy behaviors.

Overall, the two trust experiences revealed in the data collected most were *shared* and *learned*. The data gathered through interviews, document analysis, and observations did not reveal any sort of “conditions” placed on their trust in the institution or in each other as members of the president’s cabinet. All research participants seemed confident that the trust they felt was strong and had no reason to feel that it was weak and therefore, conditional.

Results to Overall Research Question

The role of trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president, based solely on data collected from this institution, is nothing short of complex. As Tierney (2006) wrote,

Trust is an elusive concept that frequently seems to defy definition...a dynamic process in which two or more parties are involved in a series of interactions that may require a degree of risk or faith on the part of one or both parties...Trust, then, does not only mean that an individual may be honest. Trust also implies consistency. What a person says is what he or she will do. Trust in some instances, then, has little to do with ethics or morality, and more to do with actions that meet expectations. (p. 41)

The institution studied for this dissertation exemplified the intricate description of trust offered by Tierney. Few are able to assign one specific definition to the term, but all are willing to

acknowledge trust's power, influence, positivity, negativity, complexity, and value. Without trust, relationships are often unsuccessful. The relationship between the higher education president and assistant is not immune to the need for trust. Because certain policies, practices, and traditions exist in academe that imply trust such as face-to-face meetings, communication and organizational structures, and an honest belief in education for the greater good, it is often easy to assume conditions of trust exist which can be a dangerous assumption at times (Tierney, 2006). Based on the data collected, the president's cabinet at this institution is highly trusting in large measure because of the trust between its President and Assistant.

Summary of Results and Conclusion

Setting the context for the results, the first section of the chapter addressed the informal and formal interactions of those participating in the research. Tierney's (2006) *Grammars of Trust* guided the next section of this dissertation's results, specifically the three grammars determined to be the most significant in this study. While evidence for all *Grammars of Trust* existed, some grammars were present more often than others. In keeping with the fact that the institution under investigation is one founded on the Christian faith, the grammar "utilizing faith" was a prominent theme throughout the data.

Tierney's (2006) three experiences of trust were highlighted next. The two experiences most evident at this institution were the shared and learned experiences. Research participants acknowledged that all trust is conditional to some degree, but only one participant openly and honestly addressed that trust has conditions, regardless of the religious faith. Both the president and assistant view the role of trust between the two of them as solid. Both parties indicated their belief that trust is central to the success of their relationship and to the success of the institution. In addition, the trust between the president and assistant is believed by all research participants to

be highly influential in terms of the institutional culture. The role of trust, via the institutional culture, is evident first in the institution's mission, second in the people with whom the president chooses to surround himself and his office, and third, in the practices of the president. The President does much to engender trust from all institutional stakeholders, namely practicing transparency to the extent he deems appropriate, commitment to the institution, and to the institution's people. Without question, concluding on one definition or one description for the concept of trust is a difficult task at best. The term is one of extreme importance and extreme vagueness.

In conclusion, the goal of this chapter was to present the results of the study by outlining the data gathered through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Assigning a definition or description to trust was not a goal for this project. The ultimate goal of this dissertation was to take full advantage of the case study research method and explore the role of trust between the president and assistant at this particular institution.

CHAPTER V:

INTERPRETATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this chapter is to go beyond the data presented in chapter four and present my interpretations of the data collected from this study and outline possible implications for future studies in this topic area. The first section of the chapter consists of an overview of the study's purpose. A summary of the literature review presented in chapter two follows the first section. A brief outline of the data collection methods from chapter three makes up the third part of this chapter. The fourth section of chapter five is devoted to a brief summary of the results collected, summary of the answers to the research questions, and interpretations of the results. Possible limitations of the study and implications for future studies on this topic are offered. In the final section, a short discussion on the relationship of the findings with the theoretical framework and the literature is presented, followed by the conclusion.

William Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* (2006) served as the theoretical framework through which this study's research questions and subsequent results found meaning. The research questions for this dissertation were as follows:

1. What does trust look like between the higher education president and the assistant to the president according to the research participants;
2. What are the most common ways in which trust is experienced by the higher education president and assistant to the president;
3. How does institutional culture influence the role of trust between the president and assistant to the president?

The Study's Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore trust between the higher education president and the assistant to the president. The study sought to add to the knowledge base already in existence regarding assistants to the president in higher education. While the first assistant to the president was recorded at Oberlin College in 1904, the professional position of assistant to the president did not truly begin taking its seat at the table of senior administrators until the mid 1980s. With this in mind, this study sought to shed light on the position and inform what the position is and where it fits within the context of higher education administrators.

The data collected for the study were derived from interviews, observations, and document analysis, as the research questions set forth align with qualitative data collection methods. Based on the data collected, the trust between the higher education president and the assistant to the president did not yield one single description, but seems highly collaborative in two general areas: trust and tasks. The higher education president and assistant must collaborate in both their ongoing trust in one another and their trust that tasks will be completed in alignment with the institution's mission. In order for the higher education president and assistant to have a successful relationship, the two must first place trust in the other individual, followed by placing trust in the exchange of tasks.

A Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review consisted of a discussion on the varying cultures of higher education institutions, the complex responsibilities and duties of the higher education president, the professional position of assistant to the president, the role of trust and its relationship to academic culture, and Tierney's (2006) *Grammars of Trust*. Some of the major themes derived from the literature on the complex duties of the higher education president were: institutional

mission, know himself/herself, empower others, and relationships. Three major themes derived from the literature on assistants to the president were: diversity, influence, trust, and relationship. The three major themes extrapolated from the literature on cultures of higher education institutions were 1) different schools of thought regarding how many cultures can/do exist on one campus; and 2) the meaning of culture and its in academic institutions.

Outline of Data Collection Methods

The research design took the form of a descriptive case study, as is defined by the unit of analysis (Merriam, 2009), which was a small, private liberal arts university in the southeast region of the United States. This study sought to understand the role of trust between the university president and his or her assistant considering the role of institutional culture(s). The goal of this case study was to provide a rich description of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). The case study research method design was chosen as the most appropriate based on the unit of analysis and the research questions (Merriam, 2009).

Summary of Results

“Utilizing faith” was the grammar most present in the data. This grammar resonates with the faith-based mission of the institution. The second and third grammars most evident in the data were “an exchange,” and “cultural construction.” All of Tierney’s *Grammars of Trust* were evident in the data to some degree, however. The two experiences of trust most common at this institution were the shared and learned experiences. As a group, the participants participating in this study conveyed a sense of defensiveness in terms of trust being experienced conditionally. Of particular interest was the seemingly immediate diversion from the idea, followed by a polite shift in the conversation toward shared and learned trust.

Regarding the three specific research questions set forth in this dissertation, both the president and assistant agree that the trust between the two of them is firm. Both the president and assistant indicated their belief that trust is central to the success of their relationship and to the success of their tenure at the institution. Further, as agreed by all research participants, the role of trust certainly shares a significant relationship with the culture of the institution.

Answering the Research Questions

By obtaining rich, thick data through the use of interviews, observations, and document analysis, the research questions were answered, thereby allowing the opportunity to gain a better perspective on the role of trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president. Taken together, Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* as the theoretical framework for this study and his *experiences of trust* framework provided a research-based backdrop against which the data were analyzed.

Based on the data collected through interviews, observation, and document analysis, the President perceived the role of trust in the relationship with his assistant to the president as one that is solid. He believes the relationship to be one of transparency, respect for each other and the institution, and loyalty to each other and to the institution. The assistant seems to perceive the role of trust as a great responsibility. While the assistant does not view the responsibility as a burden, but rather more like a badge of honor, he does know that the weight of his responsibilities is heavy and he takes the role of trust between the president and himself seriously. The members of the President's Cabinet seem to be fairly distant in relation to the president and assistant and therefore, did not seem to be able to adequately gauge what the role of trust is like between the two. All administrators, however, noted their individual respect for, and trust in, both individuals and acknowledged their perception that the two trust one another.

Experiencing trust is highly subjective between the truster and the trustee. However, in the context of Tierney's (2006) three experiences of trust: shared, learned, and conditional, the least amount of data spoke to trust as a conditional experience within the President's Cabinet. With the exception of one administrator, all participants were quick to defer to their religious faith as the reason their trust in another was not conditional. The one administrator who did acknowledge that trusting others involves some level of risk and is therefore inevitably conditional, was also the most transparent and forthright in his interview responses. This individual brought a sense of honesty to each question. This administrator attributed all of his success, both at this institution and away, to his faith in Christ, but did not use his religious faith to distract from the real-life situations he faces being a vice president – some of those situations include skepticism from faculty and staff, reluctance to accept that the information disseminated to the university's stakeholders as truth, and acknowledgement that while an individual may be following the institution's mission in terms of honoring God, they might struggle to perform their professional role effectively.

The culture of the institution did not seem to influence the trust between the president and assistant, but rather trust between the president and assistant to the president seemed to influence the institutional culture. Those participating in this research project shared a consensus that the culture of the institution was deeply rooted in a Biblical worldview and that two of the key carriers of this culture are in fact the president and assistant to the president. Most of those interviewed felt that while it generally takes a great deal of time for the culture of an institution to change, they did not feel any part of it needs changing. Of course, by default of their position, it is possible that the administrators at this institution are so far removed from the daily detailed

practices within each school or department that what they believe to be an institution-wide culture of trust may not actually be the case.

Interpretations

The results collected in this study are particularly important for several reasons. The first of which is the data's contribution to the knowledge void identified in the literature presented in chapter two. Prior to this study, research had not yet been conducted on the trust between the higher education president and assistant. While the concept of trust is often abstract and described in vague terms, it is critically important to qualitatively examine, as it is widely accepted that trust is vital to the success of any relationship and therefore to the success of any organization. Second, the results of this study are important because they reveal a close relationship between the *grammar of utilizing faith* and a faith-based higher education institution. Further, this particular piece of the data allows current and future assistants to the president an inside look at what can likely be expected should one take a position as an assistant to the president at a faith based institution. Third, the results collected in this study are critical to the career field of higher education assistants to the president because the data revealed the profound impact trust between the president and the assistant to the president has not only on the Office of the President, but on the entire university and its culture.

The implications of this study's findings are important for all stakeholders in higher education. As it is widely accepted that the president of a college or university is one of the most important positions in higher education, it stands to reason that the position of assistant to the president is certainly worthy of thoughtful exploration through scholarly research. In this study, the results of Faith as one of the most evident *Grammars of Trust* and the role of trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president seemed to run parallel. This result

was expected. It would have been disconcerting if faith did not come up repeatedly when researching a faith-based university. William Tierney (2006) claims that faith, in the case of the *Grammars of Trust*, does not refer to religious faith, but to faith in others and their ability to follow through with tasks and with mimicking the received faith in the other individual(s).

Another expected outcome of this study was with respect to the *grammar of trust as an exchange*. Scholar after scholar has confirmed the constant flow of exchanges within academe, as noted previously in this dissertation. In addition to trust as faith, this finding confirms Tierney's assertion that one grammar of trust is the exchanges that take place both on and off university campuses at any given time. While this finding is not surprising, the tightly coupled relationship between trust and exchange was evident to a high degree. As the data was being collected and analyzed, special care was taken with respect to examining the repeated risks that are taken almost always when an exchange takes place. The data shows that while trust may be solid, it is constantly being "tested" via the exchanges.

At the research site for this dissertation's data collection, it was the overall agreement among the research participants that the trust between the president and the assistant to the president did have an influence on the culture of the institution. Of note in the results related to trust as a cultural construction was the immediate reaction from the participants when probed about the relationship between trust and institutional culture. Not one of the participants hesitated at all when discussing their belief that the trust between the president and the assistant to the president influences the overall culture of the institution. This finding confirmed existing research. However, one administrator's choices of words used to describe the culture of the institution were not only in conflict with other administrator responses, but also highlighted the administrator's conflicting personal perspective with respect to the institution's culture. After

data collection was complete and all data had been analyzed, it became clear that these seemingly conflicting descriptors were actually quite accurate. They were accurate for the institution, but also accurate for the field of higher education. Often times, higher education is itself a contradiction. For example, as the knowledge industry, institutions are charged with being pioneers with respect to change and yet, higher education is commonly referred to as the slowest industry to follow through with change.

As Tierney notes, there are three ways in which trust can be experienced (2006). They include 1) shared, 2) learned, and 3) conditional. With respect to this study, only one research participant alluded to any level of “conditional” trust. While it can only be assumed all results conveyed during the data collection phase are accurate, the take away from this finding is cautiously optimistic. It is difficult to conceive that no one else felt (or expressed) trust is conditional among his or her fellow cabinet members. Each research participant acknowledged that trust in general terms is conditional. However, in terms of whether or not they felt conditions were placed on trust between the participant and any other cabinet member or between the president and assistant to the president, each individual seemed confident that if any conditions on their trust did exist, they were insignificant.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study that deserve consideration with respect to trust between the higher education president and assistant to the president. It could be concluded that trust between the higher education president and assistant is crucial to effective daily operations as well as long-term relationship and institutional stability. Next, while three specific grammars were more prevalent in this study’s data, it is likely that different grammars might be revealed in the data more if another institution had been investigated, if the investigation was conducted at another time, or if the study included more than one study site.

Finally, professionals in higher education could conclude that it is important to respect the power of trust, as its existence (or lack thereof) is often the underpinnings of a successful (or unsuccessful) president/assistant to the president relationship and/or a successful (or unsuccessful) institution.

Possible Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

Limitations to the design and results of the study are acknowledged. Five of the possible limitations of this study include the single site, participant pool too broad in terms of those interviewed, the short length of time of data collection, and the current employee status of the researcher. In relation to the validity of the research design, these limitations are addressed in chapter three in the reliability and trustworthiness sections. This section's focus on the aforementioned three limitations is an effort to mitigate any assumptions regarding the validity of this research project and to expound upon each of the three limitations with respect to possible implications for future research.

As noted in Chapter II, there is a dearth of literature focused on assistants to the president in higher education. Further, the dearth of information that speaks to the trust between the higher education president and the assistant to the president is even more significant. As this dissertation is concluded, possible implications for practice and future research options on this topic are presented. The first limitation is the single site for this study. While this may be applicable to small, private, liberal arts, faith-based institutions, it may not be generalizable to other institutional types. With respect to addressing this issue in future research, it is recommended that the president and assistant to the president at multiple institutions and varied institutional types be investigated. Future research projects might also consider limiting the individuals interviewed to only the president and assistant to the president at several and varied

institutions for a more focused look into the trust between these two key institutional players across institutional types. Finally, it is recommended that the role of assistant to the president be investigated qualitatively outside the realm of trust, possibly examining the role through the lens of diversity examining issues such as gender, sexual identity and orientation, race, faith/religious beliefs, and special needs.

The data collection phase for this study was approximately three weeks. It is assumed that a longer length of time spent interviewing specifically the president and assistant to the president, observing the two individuals, and analyzing documents would yield significantly richer and thicker data. As a result of this dissertation and its findings, it is recommended that the data collection time period be extended to no less than one academic semester, preferably extended to one academic year, at multiple sites and varied institutional types.

Finally, it is recommended that the researcher not be employed by any of the research sites. By removing one's self from the project as much as possible, the researcher is likely to collect data without any preconceived thoughts or feelings. While qualitative studies do not generally result in generalizable findings, the results obtained from a study of this nature in which the researcher is not employed at any of the research sites would possibly allow for a more open and honest dialogue specific only to the roles of the higher education president and assistant to the president.

Relationship of Study Findings to the Literature

Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* was the theoretical framework for this study. It played a key role in shaping the research and interview questions. His work also served as the main framework used to analyze the data in a way that would allow the findings to be dissected in several subcategories. While Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* served as the theoretical

underpinnings of this study, as was noted in chapter three, to avoid neglecting data not relating to Tierney's *Grammars of Trust*, I considered the literature presented in chapter two for a more thorough approach to analyzing the data.

With respect to academic culture, Bergquist and Pawlak, (2008) asserted that being open is valued in the developmental culture. With this in mind, the topic of trust and its role between the higher education president and assistant to the president finds meaning in the developmental culture (Bergquist & Pawlak 2008). While trust is often perceived to be rooted in the developmental culture (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008), the *creation* and *maintenance* of trust is ultimately one of the many complex responsibilities of the president of the higher education institution. As noted in the results presented in chapter four, the higher education president cannot do all tasks and be everywhere at the same time. With the help of the assistant to the president, as this dissertation's findings revealed, the burden of creating and maintaining a sense of trustworthiness is shared between both individuals and if effective, is successfully disseminated throughout the entire institution. Further, it is noted in chapter two that assistants to the president are likely to be honest by virtue of their general personality types and characteristics, as Laura Katrenicz (2009) asserted, which makes them natural carriers of trustworthiness.

Implications for Practice

One of the goals of this dissertation was to develop a comprehensive list of implications for practice. The first implication for practice resulting from this study's findings is for the assistant to the president to adopt a "no surprise approach" with the president. By making the president aware of situations and challenges as they are approaching or happening, the trust is maintained and ultimately supports a trusting culture at higher education institutions. Next, the

results of this study suggest the trust between the president and assistant to the president is further developed through the use of consistent and clear communication. As noted in chapter four, it is not uncommon for the president and assistant to the president to not see each other for extended periods of time. With this being a common challenge, the importance of clear and consistent communication between the two individuals is elevated exponentially. The findings resulting from this study further suggest the assistant to the president consistently operate in keeping with the institution's mission. By acting in accordance with the institution's mission, trust is naturally modeled for the rest of the institution. For example, as revealed in chapter four, the institution under investigation was a faith-based university whose mission seeks to honor its faith and commitment to God in all aspects and at all levels of learning. The assistant to the president and president must both be loyal to the institution and its mission in order to be perceived as trustworthy.

Conclusion

As higher education faces tough scrutiny from both outside and inside its halls, the value of trust becomes greater with each passing day. As the president of a higher education institution, this individual must trust those around him to help foster a reciprocal environment and culture of trust. Enter the assistant to the president. The relationship between the president and assistant to the president carries with it a profound sense of responsibility in terms of trust. These two individuals are believed to have a significant impact on the culture of the institution. With this in mind, to have a trusting culture, the president and assistant to the president must experience a deep and meaningful level of trust with one another in order to effectively model trust to those outside the Office of the President and outside the walls of the institution.

In this dissertation, trust through the lens of Tierney's *Grammars of Trust* was explored while simultaneously considering institutional culture at a private, faith-based liberal arts higher education institution in the southeast region of the United States. This dissertation validates how complex trust is and how difficult it is to describe. While trust may be highly complex and hard to describe, this dissertation also confirms that trust must remain a top priority for higher education, as the students, communities, and societies it serves depend on a culture of trust in the one industry touted as the ultimate example for what individuals should aspire to be, where they should aspire to go, and how they should reach those respective destinations.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

President

Interview Protocol

President's perceptions of trust between himself and his assistant:

1. How would you describe the role of trust between you and your assistants?
2. Could the trust between you and your assistants be stronger? If so, how?
3. Could the trust between you and your assistants become weak/weaker? If so, how?
4. What role do you believe trust plays in the duties assigned to your assistants?
5. Has trust/distrust in your assistants ever caused you to 'act on faith/instinct' in terms of responsibility entrusted/not entrusted to him/her?
6. Can you name specific actions or characteristics your assistants possess that aided in your ability/inability to trust in him/her?

President's interactions with his assistants:

- a. How would you describe your interactions with your assistants? Where/How does trust come into play?
- b. How do you think your assistants would describe their interactions with you?

President's interactions with his direct reports, other than his assistants:

- a. How would you describe your interactions with your direct reports? Where/How does trust come into play?
- b. How do you think your direct reports would describe their interactions with you?

President's perceptions of institutional culture:

1. How would you describe the culture at this institution?

2. Do you believe the institutional culture influences the role of trust between you and your assistants? How?
3. What role do you believe the academic culture at this institution has (if any) in shaping the trust between you and your assistants?
4. If you could change anything about the culture of this institution that you believe would significantly impact the trust between you and your assistants, what would it be? Why? How do you believe the change would impact the trust in your relationships with them?

Assistants to the president

Interview Protocol

Opening/General Questions:

1. Educational background?
2. Length of time as administrator?
 - a. Length of time at this institution?
 - b. Length of time in this position?

Assistant to the president's perceptions of trust between themselves and the president:

1. How would you describe the role of trust between you and the president?
2. Could the trust between you and the president be stronger? If so, how?
3. Could the trust between you and the president become weak/weaker? If so, how?
4. What role do you believe trust plays in the duties the president assigns to you? Why do you feel that way?
5. Has the president's trust (or lack thereof) ever caused you to 'act on faith/instinct' in terms of your response to an assignment/duty entrusted to you?

6. Can you name specific actions or characteristics the president possesses/does not possess that aided in your ability/inability to trust in him?

Assistant to the president's interactions with the president:

- c. How would you describe your interactions with the president? Where/How does trust come into play?
- d. How do you think the president would describe your interactions with him?

Assistant to the president's interactions with the president's direct reports:

- a. How would you describe your interactions with the president's direct reports? Where/How does trust come into play?
- b. How do you think the president's direct reports would describe your interactions with them?

Assistant to the president's interactions with the Board of Trustee members:

- a. How would you describe your interactions with the Board of Trustees? Where/How does trust come into play?
- b. How do you think the Board of Trustees would describe your interactions with them?

Assistants to the president' perceptions of institutional culture:

5. How would you describe the culture at this institution?
6. Do you believe the institutional culture influences the role of trust between you and the president? How?
7. What role do you believe the institutional culture has (if any) in shaping the trust between you and the president?

8. If you could change anything about the culture of this institution that you believe would significantly impact the trust between you and the president, what would it be? Why?
How do you believe the change would impact the trust in your relationship?

Direct Reports

Interview Protocol

Opening/General Questions:

3. Educational background?
4. Length of time as administrator?
 - a. Length of time at this institution?
 - b. Length of time in this position?

Direct reports' perceptions of trust between the president and his assistants:

1. How would you describe the role of trust between the president and his assistants?
2. Do you believe the level and/or type of trust between the president and assistants to the president influences the president's work?
3. Do you believe the level and/or type of trust between the president and assistants to the president influences the assistants' work?
4. If you could change the role of trust between the president and his assistants, would you?

How? Why? What impact do you think that change would have going forward between them?

If you would NOT change anything, why wouldn't you? What is it about their trust that has your "vote" of confidence? What is it about their trust that you like?

Direct reports' interactions with the president:

- e. How would you describe your interactions with the president? Where/How does trust come into play?
- f. How do you think he would describe your interactions with him?

Direct reports interactions with the assistants to the president:

- a. How would you describe your interactions with the assistants to the president?
Where/How does trust come into play?
- b. How do you think they would describe your interactions with them?

Direct reports' perceptions of institutional culture:

- 9. How would you describe the culture at this institution?
- 10. Do you believe the institutional culture influences the role of trust between the president and his assistants? How?
- 11. What role do you believe the institutional culture has (if any) in shaping the trust between the president and his assistants?
- 12. If you could change anything about the culture of this institution that you believe would significantly impact the trust between the president and his assistants, what would it be? Why? How do you believe the change would impact the trust in their relationship?

Board of Trustees Member

Interview Protocol

Opening/General Questions:

- 5. Educational background?
- 6. Length of time as administrator?

- a. Length of time at this institution?
- b. Length of time in this position?

Board of Trustee members' perceptions of trust between the president and his assistants:

- 7. How would you describe the role of trust between you and the president?
- 8. Do you believe the trust between the president and his assistants be stronger? If so, how?
- 9. Do you believe the trust between the president and his assistants become weak/weaker?
If so, how?
- 10. What role do you believe trust plays in the duties the president expects from his assistants? Why?
- 11. What role do you believe trust plays in the assistants' execution of duties from the president? Why?

Board of Trustee members' interactions with the president:

- g. How would you describe your interactions with the president? Where/How does trust come into play?
- h. How do you think the president would describe your interactions with him?

Board of Trustee members' interactions with the president's assistants:

- c. How would you describe your interactions with the president's assistants?
Where/How does trust come into play?
- d. How do you think the president's assistants would describe your interactions with them?

Board of Trustee members' perceptions of institutional culture:

- 13. How would you describe the culture at this institution?

14. Do you believe the institutional culture influences the role of trust between the president and his assistants? How?
15. What role do you believe the institutional culture has (if any) in shaping the trust between the president and his assistants?
16. If you could change anything about the culture of this institution that you believe would significantly impact the trust between the president and his assistants, what would it be? Why? How do you believe the change would impact the trust in their relationship?

APPENDIX B
DATA COLLECTION METHODS

METHOD	POPULATION	FREQUENCY
Interviews	President	1 interview
	Assistant to the president	1 interview
	Presidential Administrative Secretary	1 interview
	Presidential Executive Secretary	1 interview
	Provost	1 interview
	VP Operations and Planning	1 interview
	VP Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	1 interview
	VP Business and Financial Affairs	1 interview
	Dir. Public Safety and Emergency Management	1 interview
	Chairman of the Board of Trustees	1 interview
Observations	Vice Chair of Board of Trustees	1 interview
	Board of Trustee Member/Ex Chair	1 interview
	President's Weekly Vice Presidents Meeting	1 observation
	President	1 observation
Documents	Presidential Administrative Secretary	1 observation
	Presidential Executive Secretary	1 observation
	President's Annual Report	
	Board of Trustee Presidential Job Description	
	Assistant to the president Job Description	
	Cabinet Meeting Minutes	
	Student Newspaper	
	University Quarterly Magazine	
	Local City Newspaper	

APPENDIX C FORMS

Office for Research July 30, 2012
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects

Leslie Mann
Department of Higher Ed. Admin.
College of Education

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
R E S E A R C H

Re: IRB Application Exploring Trust between the Higher
Education President and the Presidential Assistant

Dear Ms. Mann:

The University of Alabama IRB has received the revisions requested by the full board on 7/20/12. The board has reviewed the revisions and your protocol is now approved for a one-year period. Please be advised that your protocol will expire one year from the date of approval, 7/20/12.

If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the IRB Renewal Application by the 15th of the month prior to project expiration. If you need to modify the study, please submit the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the IRB Request for Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent forms to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the assigned IRB application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Stuart Usdan, PhD
Chair, Non-Medical Institutional Review Board
The University of Alabama



318 Rose Administration Building
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FAX (205) 348-7189
TDD/FAX (877) 870-3066

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
Human Research Protection Program
Informed Consent Form

Study title: Exploring Trust Between The Higher Education President And Presidential Assistant

Investigator's Name and Title:

Leslie Mann,
University EdD student, University of Alabama

Investigator's Dissertation Chair Name and Title:

Karri Holley, PhD - Associate Professor, Higher Education University of Alabama

Dear [REDACTED] University Administrator,

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is called "Exploring Trust Between The Higher Education President And Presidential Assistant". Leslie Mann is conducting this study. She is a doctoral student at the University of Alabama studying higher education administration. [REDACTED] Prof. Karri Holley is supervising Miss Mann. She is an associate professor of education at the University of Alabama.

What is this study about? What is the investigator trying to learn?

This study is aimed at learning about [REDACTED] trust between the higher education president and the presidential assistant as [REDACTED]. You will be asked questions regarding your perceptions of trust between the two individuals being studied. The information you provide will be analyzed to answer Miss Mann's research questions in relation to trust and academic culture. Miss Mann is attempting to discover the role of trust between the higher education president and presidential assistant in light of [REDACTED] institutional culture(s).

Why is this study important?

This study will help higher education administrators develop a more thorough understanding of the role of trust between the leader of higher education institutions and his or her primary assistant.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to be in this study because you have unparalleled insight into the president/presidential assistant relationship [REDACTED] have been asked to be. Your experiences will enable Miss Mann to answer the research questions set forth in this study.

How many people will be in this study?

About 13 additional administrators are expected to participate in this study. The study will include interviews with [REDACTED] administrators, observations of the University president and presidential assistant along [REDACTED], presidential cabinet members, and viewing of public

[REDACTED] This document is a total of four pages

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 7/30/12
EXPIRATION DATE: 7/19/2013

What will I be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your perceptions of trust between the president and presidential assistant in this study, you. Your answers will be digitally recorded (unless written response is preferred by the participant). These recordings/writings will be stored in a secured location. Only Miss Mann will have access to the digital recordings/written data. The recordings/written data will then be transcribed into words. The original digital recordings/written data will then be destroyed. You will not need to do any additional activities in this study.

How much time will I spend in this study?

The interview and observation will take approximately 1 1/2 hours, respectively. You will not need to spend any additional time on this study.

Will being in this study cost me anything?

The only cost to you from this study is your time.

Will I be compensated for being in this study?

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

What are the risks (dangers/harms) to me if I am in this study?

Minimal* risk is foreseen to you in this study. Your answers to the questions will be kept confidential. The recordings used to capture your answers will be in a secure location. Only Miss Mann will have access to the digital recordings. Once these recordings are transcribed into written words, they will be destroyed. Your privacy will be protected at all times. The interviews will take place in a private place where no one else will be present. Your identity in the written transcript will be changed to a fictitious name/pseudonym. This will ensure that the study report does not reveal your identity or the identity of any other participants. *Minimal risk to the economic well being of participants within this study is anticipated. Any participant wishing to not be digitally recorded will be given interview questions in writing and have the option of responding in writing. Data gathered in written form (if applicable) will be immediately shredded following the coding of the data. Further, as with digital recordings, only Miss Mann will have access to the written data.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

There are no direct benefits in this study for you. You may gain a better understanding of the trust between the president and presidential assistant by participating in this study.

What are the benefits to science or society?

This study will help higher education administrators gain a better understanding of the role of trust between the higher education president and the presidential assistant and therefore, allow administrators to perform more effectively with these individuals. Other similar benefits may be revealed as a result of this study.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy will be protected in a number of ways. The researcher will refer to all research participants in dissertation using a pseudonym, interviews will be conducted in a location of your

choice, and all data gathered will be destroyed immediately following transcription/coding. Your name/title/location will not be published in this study. No one will be able to link your comments back to you specifically.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

Your interview comments will be digitally recorded using a digital recording device. These recordings will be secure and available only to Miss Mann. Only Miss Mann will have access to the recordings. Once the interviews are transcribed into written words, the recordings will be destroyed. The written transcripts will use a fictitious name to protect your identity. No one will be able to determine what comments are yours by reading the study. Miss Mann will keep your name confidential at all times.

What are the alternatives to being in this study?

The alternative to being in this study is not to participate. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind and terminate your participation in this study at any time. You may also decline to answer any particular interview question involved with this study.

What are my rights as a participant in this study?

Taking part in this study is voluntary. It is your free choice. You may decline any participation whatsoever with this study. ~~If ever~~ ~~at any time~~, you may stop at any time. There will be no effect on your relations with ~~anyone~~ ~~anywhere~~ ~~anytime~~. Furthermore, there will be no adverse effect on your relationship with Miss Mann or the University of Alabama.

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board ("the IRB") is the committee that protects the rights of people in research studies. The IRB may review study records from time to time to be sure that people in research studies are being treated fairly and that the study is being carried out as planned.

This document is a total of four pages

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 7/30/12
EXPIRATION DATE: 7/19/2013

Who do I call if I have questions or problems?

If you have questions about the study at any time, please contact Leslie Mann at

If you have questions about the study at any time, please contact Leslie Mann at
If you have questions about your rights as a person in a research study, call Ms. Carpantato Myles at 205-348-8461. She is the Research Compliance Officer of the University. The toll-free number is 1-877-820-3066.

You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns. To do so, please go to the IRB Outreach website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html or email us at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu.

After you participate, you are encouraged to complete the survey for research participants available online at the Outreach website. You may also ask the investigator for a copy of it and mail it to the University Office for Research Compliance, Box 870127, 358 Rose Administration Building, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0127.

I have read this consent form. I have had a chance to ask questions. I agree to take part in this study. I will receive a copy of this consent form to keep.

I confirm that I am over the age of 19. Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

* *Only individuals over the age of 19 may participate in this study.

I give consent to be digitally recorded during this study:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

*Participants who do not agree to be digitally recorded will have the option to have their interview comments recorded only in writing.

I give consent to participate in observations in which Miss Mann will be observing the President's weekly meetings with Vice-Presidents:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

*Miss Mann will honor study participant(s) not wishing to be observed and will only observe meetings in which participants agreeing to be observed are present.

Signature of Research Participant/Date

Signature of Investigator/Date

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A DISSERTATION RESEARCH STUDY
Exploring Trust Between The Higher Education President And The Assistant to the president

Investigator: Leslie Mann

Title: Graduate Studies Coordinator, School of Education, Samford University
EdD Student, University of Alabama, Higher Education Administration

Address:

Contact: [REDACTED]

Investigator's Dissertation Chair: Karri Holley, PhD

Title: Associate Professor, Higher Education University of Alabama

Address:

Contact: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED] University Administrator,

You are invited to participate in a research study titled "Exploring Trust Between The Higher Education President And The Assistant to the president". This study will explore the role of trust between the higher education president and the assistant to the president in light of institutional culture. Please note that your participation is completely voluntary. You will have the option of declining to answer any of the questions during the interview process and restricting observation access at any time. You will also have the option of terminating your participation in this study at any time.

Individual interviews with 14 administrators will capture your perceptions of trust between the president and assistant to the president through the lens of academic culture. The responses will be digitally recorded to capture your comments. Your comments will then be transcribed into written words. The transcription will use fictitious names to protect your identity. The final report from this research project will not identify you as a participant in this study, nor will the name of the research site be revealed. Your confidentiality and privacy will be strictly protected.

For more information about this study and to volunteer to participate, please contact Leslie Mann using the e-mail or phone number provided above.