STAKEHOLDERS, ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY, AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE IN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENTS

by

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Communication and Information Sciences in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama

2016
ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education use their website to share mission statements that communicate their identities to stakeholders. A content analysis examining the presence and frequency of components related to stakeholders, organizational identity, and organizational image of the mission statements of the U.S. News and World Top 200 National Universities and Top 200 Liberal Arts Colleges was conducted. Stakeholder theory and theories on organizational identity and organizational image were used to guide the study. Some significant differences in the presence of the examined components in mission statements of national universities and liberal arts colleges were identified. Specifically, differences exist between institutional types as to the types of stakeholders named, geographic scope of institutional influence, core competencies, strategies, and products outlined within the sampled mission statements.

Theoretical implications for the continued use of Stakeholder theory and theories of organizational identity within the field of higher education and among strategic communication scholars, as well as practical implications for the same, are discussed. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings, as well as areas of future research, are discussed.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the guidance, support, and encouragement of my program advisor and dissertation chair, Dr. Lu Tang, whose commitment to my success across the years and miles has been unwavering.

Additionally, I want to extend my gratitude to the members of my committee for asking the right questions, pushing me to succeed, and sharing their brilliance: Dr. Mark Nelson, Dr. Eyun-Jung Ki, Dr. Claire Major, and Dr. Andy Billings.

I deeply appreciate the support of my friend, colleague, mentor, and advisor, Dr. W. Ross Bryan, who convinced me to get into this mess many years ago and then did everything necessary to make sure I got out of it in one piece.

This endeavor would not have been possible without the support of my coworkers and funding made available to me through my employment in Housing and Residential Communities and The Division of Student Affairs at The University of Alabama.

Thank you to my parents and family for establishing an expectation of hard work, determination, and academic success early on, and for their support, interest, and encouragement since.

To Miles and Liam, my beautiful boys, who have never known me to not be a student, I am eternally grateful for the hugs, kisses, “good lucks,” and “good jobs” that filled my heart with the desire to keep working, both for your future and to set the example for the kind of success I know you will someday exceed. I love you both with all my heart.
And finally, my undying love and gratitude to my amazing wife, Stephanie Brewer, without whom none of this would ever have come to be. You sacrificed, supported, encouraged, cajoled, proofed, edited, suggested, loved, trusted, scrimped, saved, and gave in order for me to achieve my goal. You have been the best possible partner through this journey, and I will be forever in your debt. IWLYA AOYIP

Anyone who has undertaken one knows that the process of conceptualizing, constructing, and completing a dissertation inevitably involves the assistance, directly or indirectly, of a significant number of people. If I have inadvertently left you out of this acknowledgement, please accept this as my gracious apology and sincere appreciation of your contributions.
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Mission statements “dictate the core activities of an organization” (Fugazzotto, 2009, p. 285) and act as a “declaration of an organization’s ‘reason for being’ and distinguish one organization from other similar enterprises” (David et al., 2014, p. 96). While mission statements have been around much longer, research into them really began in the mid-1970s with the work of Peter Drucker (1973), who identified guidelines for creating and managing them. In the interceding forty years, management literature has suggested that well-developed mission statements are a foundational tool for strategic management and communication (King and Cleland, 1979; Collins and Rukstad, 2008; David, 1989; David, David, and David, 2014), and organizations of all kinds have widely adopted them as part of their efforts to “describe [their] reason for existence by highlighting [their] priorities in a capacity that motivates all organizational constituents to embrace it” (Woodrow, 2006, p. 316).

Colleges and universities are experiencing an age of continued growth, but also one where state and federal budget allocations continue to be threatened, reduced, or altogether lost (Douglass, 2010). This places significant pressure on the school to maintain its funding and endowment in order to not only continue operation in general, but to “insulate the organization from pressures to forego its [educational] tradition” (Taylor and Morphew, 2010, p. 484). Historically, they may have been able to exist peacefully without developing and implementing traditional corporate strategic management techniques, skating by via Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) “logic of confidence” behavior, through which institutionalized organizations can signal their legitimacy through vague, occasional “displays of confidence, satisfaction, and good faith”
Now, however, the marketization of higher education dictates that colleges and universities must face the challenge of attracting consumers. As a result, colleges and universities have found themselves “obliged to engage in self-promotion and marketing more intensively than in the past” (Morrish and Sauntson, 2013, p. 61). Additionally, they must answer to pressure from accrediting bodies to have legitimate strategic plans and supporting evidence that they are committed to achieving their institutional mission (Davis, Ruhe, Lee, and Rajadyahsha, 2007).

As a result, mission statements in higher education have become an important marketing strategy (Morrish and Sauntson, 2013). They regularly appear on the university’s marketing material, including its website (Camelia and Dorel, 2013; Morrish and Sauntson, 2013; Davis et al., 2007; Noel-Levitz, 2010). Universities have been found to use mission statements in ways similar to corporations (Williams, 2008; Leuthesser and Kohli, 1997; Swales and Rogers, 1995). As they move toward a more corporate-like interpretation of their mission, colleges and universities must undertake the effort internally and externally to craft statements that are more in line with the practices prescribed in the management literature (David, 1989; Pearce II and David, 1987; Braddy, Meade, and Kroustalis, 2006). Very little is known however, about the characteristics of the mission statements of colleges and universities. This study fills the gap in the existing literature by providing a systematic examination of university and colleges’ mission statement content, specifically examining different stakeholders identified, as well as organizational identities and images communicated.

**Research Purposes and Research Questions**

As the pressure to identify and communicate their strategic mission and plans increases, colleges and universities have responded by developing and disseminating mission statements
more widely than ever before. Mission statements are a tool for communicating organizational identity to stakeholders (Pearce II and David, 1987; Braddy et al., 2006; De Goede, Van Vianen, and Klehe, 2011; Dineen, Ash, and Noe, 2002; Cable, Aiman-Smith, Mulvey, and Edwards, 2000; Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, and Keeping, 2003); therefore, the current study will be guided by stakeholder theory and theories of organizational identity.

Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson and Preston, 1995) will provide one lens through which university mission statement content will be analyzed. Freeman (1984) states that many interested parties, divided into primary and secondary groups, are involved in the daily decision-making needs of an organization, from traditional figures like management and shareholders, to more esoteric groups like governmental bodies, communities, or even competitors. Organizational behaviors in managing the often-competing needs of these various stakeholders can be explored using this theory. Three lines of research based on stakeholder theory have been identified: descriptive, instrumental, and normative (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). The descriptive approach explains the basic functions of how an organization is managed, the instrumental approach uses empirical data to draw connections between stakeholder management and how organizations achieve their goals, and the normative approach examines how philosophical guidelines, including cultural values, define the organization. Guided by stakeholder theory, this dissertation will examine the stakeholders identified by colleges and universities in their mission statements.

Organizational identity is another theoretical foundation of the current study. Organizational identity is the central, distinctive, and enduring character unique to an organization (Albert and Whetten, 1985), expressed in both intangible and substantive ways (Gustafson and Reger, 1995). By expressing an identity, organizations encourage identification
by stakeholders through cultural alignment (Scott and Lane, 2000). Corporations employ their mission statements for just such a purpose (Pearce II, 1982). Accordingly, this dissertation will examine the organizational identities communicated in colleges and universities’ mission statements.

It is also important to differentiate between different types of higher education organizations. National universities generally focus on research and confer degrees to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. Liberal arts colleges focus on undergraduate education, typically conveying more than half of their undergraduate degrees in liberal arts disciplines such as such as languages, literature, philosophy, cultural studies and psychology (Morse, Brooks, and Mason, 2015). There are typically significant differences in location, size, cost of attendance, reputation, and total enrollment size between these two types of schools (Labianca, Fairbank, Thomas, Gioia, and Umphress, 2001), all of which may affect their stakeholders. Because they have significantly different missions, it will be valuable to compare them for their different expressed identities, images, and stakeholders.

**Significance of the Study**

By exploring the topic and answering the questions above, this study will seek to provide several theoretical and practical implications for academicians and higher education professionals. First, this study will create a new, theoretically based model for the assessment of mission statements of universities and colleges. Though Pearce and David’s (1987) typology has been used extensively to describe the content of corporate mission statements (Duriau, Reger, and Pfarrer, 2007), it was developed with corporations as its sole focus. Little research has been done on higher education mission statement content (Camelia and Dorel, 2013; Palmer and
Second, this study connects stakeholder theory to university mission statements. Universities exist at the nexus of many different stakeholders (Connell and Galasinski, 1998; Morrish and Sauntson, 2013), perhaps more than most corporate or non-profit organizations (Palmer and Short, 2008). Balancing the needs of these stakeholders is essential to the success of any organization, including institutions of higher education. There exists little research on the use of mission statements within the framework of stakeholder theory (Donaldson and Preston, 1995) despite the ubiquitous use of the term “stakeholder” in the management literature over the past 20 years (Laplume, Sonpar, and Litz, 2008). There is even less literature on stakeholder theory and stakeholder management within higher education strategic management research. For these reasons, this study will be an important step toward establishing a framework for the uses of college and university mission statements in stakeholder management.

Third, this study will provide another meaningful way to differentiate between two categories of schools with widely disparate historical charges: national universities and liberal arts colleges. Generally, these two categories of schools have been differentiated by factors such as class size, graduation rate (Eckles, 2010), or impact on critical thinking skills (Pascarella and Blaich, 2013). Both exist, however, in an environment where there is simultaneously more pressure for people to attend colleges or universities in order to signal their fitness for employment (Goyette, 2008) and more pressure on college and university resources (Noel-Levitz, 2010; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Accordingly, their strategic management plans must both evolve to meet the changing environment. By generating a database of their mission statements, one of the core strategic communication tools (King and Cleland, 1979; Collins and
Rukstad, 2008; David, 1989; David et al., 2014), it will be possible to explore whether these types of institutions can be differentiated by their mission statement content.

Finally, this study may have practical implications for those practitioners charged with the writing of mission statements at institutions of higher education. By identifying what content is included in the top institutions by type, the study will provide a benchmark for future mission statement authors. This will allow the emulation of best practices of similar and successful institutions, in order to mirror their success (in recruiting, accreditation or for some other purpose) or to purposefully differentiate themselves from competing institutions through the inclusion or exclusion of certain types of content.

Chapter Overview

The following pages will be organized into five chapters. Chapter Two will review the current literature and discuss research questions. Chapter Three will outline the research method and analyses to be performed in this study. Chapter Four will present the findings of the analyses. Chapter Five will discuss the importance and implications of the findings from the study. The coding sheet used in this study will be located in Appendix A.
CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Mission Statement

A mission statement is essential to any organization. A mission statement articulates who an organization believes itself, or wants itself, to be and what it does (Drucker, 1973; Pearce II, 1982; David, 1989; Falsey, 1989; Bart, 2001). Sometimes, it also describes an organization’s goals, plans for achieving those goals, its values and beliefs, its unique features or nature, and its priorities (Falsey, 1989; Pearce II and David, 1987). It can be viewed solely as a tool for communication (Bartkus, Glassman, and McAfee, 2000), limited to communicating strictly the organization’s function and future goals.

Pearce and David (1987) summarized key components of mission statements as “the operational, ethical, and financial guiding lights of companies” (p. 110). Bart and Tabone (1999), claimed that there does not seem to be an agreed-upon, singular operationalized definition of mission statements. They synthesized the most common components into a single phrase, stating that it is "a formalized document defining an organization's unique and enduring purpose," (p. 19), answering fundamental questions about why the organization exists, what its purpose is, and what it wants to achieve.

Despite the broad range of practical tools developed to assist management with the process of creating a useful organizational mission statement, one “[c]onsistent theme running through the organizational development literature … is an acknowledged widespread failure in their implementation” (Fairhurst, Jordan, and Neuwirth, 1997, p. 243). Researchers have attributed this failure to the fact that mission statements are often developed and written
unilaterally by an organization’s leadership or senior management without input or approval by the general membership (Rogers, Gunesekera, and Yang, 2011; Swales and Rogers, 1995).

So, if a mission statement is supposed to be the text which drives organizational identity and behavior, but which is generally understood to be non-representative of the membership at large and poorly implemented, then the question of why they exist is naturally raised. Institutional pressure has been proposed as one possible motivation for publishing mission statements. In the higher education literature, it has been suggested that colleges and universities have been prodigiously generating mission statements for the past thirty years in response to increasing pressure from accrediting agencies to have a mission (Wilson, Meyer, and McNeal, 2012; Davis, Ruhe, Lee, and Rajadhyaksha, 2007; Morrish and Sauntson, 2013). These agencies have requirements not only for the presence of a mission statement, but also for the types of content present (Davis et al., 2007).

**Historical Mission Statement Research**

Effectively beginning with Drucker (1973), management literature began to study the structure, purpose, and power of mission statements in driving organizational identity and behavior. Drucker (1973) suggested that a mission statement is the answer to the management question of whether the organization is currently doing the things that will allow it to be successful in the future. This suggestion led to further research into existing mission statement practices and philosophies, most influential of which were the works of Pearce and colleagues. Pearce (1982) looked at mission statements as a tool for strategic communication and suggested that the fundamental purpose of an organization’s mission was to set it apart from other, seemingly similar, organizations. A typology of the components of mission statements was first
proposed by Pearce and David (1987), and largely laid the foundation for later research on this topic.

Following this development, mission statement research split into two paths. One line of research focused on identifying common key components of mission statements through a descriptive approach (e.g., Gibson, Newton, and Cochran, 1990; David, 1989; Sufi and Lyons, 2003). The other line of research attempts to assess the relationship between mission statement content and some measures of organizational performance (e.g. Germain and Cooper, 1990; Bart and Baetz, 1998; Bart, 1997; Bart and Hupfor, 2004), mostly in the for-profit realms of health care and Fortune 100 companies.

There has been a minor resurgence in the past several years of interest in mission statement component research, with much of it coming after a study by Jones, Lovett, and Little (2008) who noted that the percentage of Fortune 500 companies featuring mission statements had increased by 18% in only two years between 2005 and 2007. Scholars have been examining the phenomenon, beginning with King, Case, and Premo (2010) who examined component make-up, specifically ethical statements. They followed up with additional studies on mission statement components (King, Case and Premo, 2011; King, Case and Premo, 2012; King, Case and Premo, 2014), comparing mission statement contents of multinational corporations in different countries. Each study has generally found that certain components may be more common than others depending on the setting.

Bartkus and Glassman (2008), along with Williams (2008), linked mission statement content and organizational performance. This topic of research has since been conducted in the fields of education (Palmer and Short, 2008; Stemler and Bebell, 2012), social enterprise (Bagnoli and Megali, 2009), and non-profit organizations (Kirk and Nolan, 2010). Research
findings in this area have been mixed, with some studies finding typically weak positive links between content and performance and others suggesting that no such link exists (Bartkus, Glassman and McAfee, 2000).

**The Five Main Areas of Mission Statement Research**

Over the past 40 years, research into mission statements seems to have centered on five main areas. These areas include: (1) to describe mission statements in political or historical context, (2) to discover or define discursive frames embedded within the mission statements, (3) to determine mission statement content composition, (4) to explore the mission statements’ components’ relationships to an organization’s performance, and (5) to compare the mission statement of different types of organizations. In the following section, a review of these five areas will be provided. This will include the main topics studied, methods used, and major findings.

**Mission Statements in Political and/or Historical Context**

Research into mission statements has been used to place mission statement structure or content in a political or historical context. These researchers seek to explain the content and structure choices made by mission statement creators through the lens of historical or political factors which might have influenced their choices. Primarily falling in the realm of critical theory, this type of research attempts to get beyond basic descriptive efforts and work toward connecting the composing of a mission statement with the context in which the organization exists.

Most of the research in this area examined linguistic or stylistic choices employed by the mission statement creators over time. For instance, Swales and Rogers (1995) explored how corporations use language to project their corporate values and philosophy on their stakeholders.
Rogers et al. (2011) looked at Dana Corporation’s Philosophy and Policies of Dana (PPD) documents at two separate times in the organization’s history, 1987 and 2004, to determine how the organization had managed their mission documents in regards to changing political and financial realities over time. King, Case, and Premo (2012) examined the mission statements from corporations in the United States and nine other countries since 2001.

Methodologically, research into the political or historical context of mission statements tends to be critical in nature. This makes sense as critical theory most closely focuses on power structures in their context and over time. Swales and Rogers (1995) utilize a genre-oriented approach to organizational communication, as suggested by Yates and Orlikowski (1992), to argue for the inclusion of context in any thorough exploration of mission statement texts. Rogers et al. (2011) conducted a critical textual analysis of the rhetoric in the PPD document over time, using two different textual analysis frameworks: the Ashridge Mission model and the Strategic Triadic model. The authors analyzed and compared the PPD from 1987 to the PPD from 2004 and discussed the contexts relevant to the revision of the document.

Typically, findings in the research of political or historical context of mission statements suggest that the passage of time, the time frame in which the mission was created, and extant political pressures influence the content and composition of organizational mission statements. Swales and Rogers (1995) argued that the development and dissemination of a mission statement was ensconced in the social, historical, and political context of the organization. Rogers et al., (2011) found that Dana Corporation's focus shifted from internal rhetoric to external stakeholders between 1987 and 2004 as a result of a dramatic decrease in profits precipitated by a collapsing heavy truck industry in 1999. King, Case, and Premo (2013) conclude that differing political, social, and financial climates dictate that corporations must identify and use different
language in order to communicate their identity to their stakeholders. An example of this would be the different emphasis each country’s corporations tend to place on goals and objectives in their respective mission statements. Where the United States most often emphasizes being a leader in the stated industry, French corporations emphasize the company’s core values first and foremost, with producing a quality product coming second.

**Framing and Mission Statements**

Another area of mission statement research has been in identifying efforts at framing the organization, its stakeholders, or its mission through the content or linguistic structure of the mission statement. Ryan (2007) asserts frames can be employed as metaphors for “thinking about the way things operate in different arenas” (p. 9). This research is undertaken in an effort to determine some purpose behind the mission statement(s) being researched and has taken the form of either critical analysis or quantitative content analysis.

For example, in order to underpin their suggested new approach to contextual linguistic interpretation of the texts of mission statements, Swales and Rogers (1995) explored three separate corporate mission statement documents and identified common, persuasive linguistic features included to encourage identification through exhortations to action or involvement. They suggest organizations use powerful rhetorical language in an effort to frame the corporation as something to which the stakeholders can feel committed through identification. In another study, one of a series of articles about how colleges and universities generate and disseminate their mission statements, Abelman and Dalessandro (2007a) explored the differences in frames between non-profit and proprietary, or for-profit, colleges and universities.

Methodology in this area of mission statement research varies widely, including each of the three major methods areas, quantitative, qualitative, and critical. Swales and Rogers (1995)
offered specific language choices that suggest inclusion such as the use of first-person-plural pronouns. Ryan (2007) conducted quantitative content analysis to examine word frequency, correlated with structural data such as budget or age of the organization, and word clusters which emerged from the computer-assisted tool.

Regardless of the method employed, framing effects have been observed in most studies of this type. Findings are consistent in showing frames in which the mission statements exist are typically identified. In their linguistic framing research, Swales and Rogers (1995) found that the corporate documents included in the study each seem to offer some guidance on interpretation by readers through the use of historical platitudes, credos, and rhetorical devices such as repetition. These are interpreted as attempts to suggest to readers a frame for interpretation of the organization’s identity, beliefs, purpose, and goals. Ryan (2007) identified three frames used in non-profit organizations’ mission statements: education as social change, economic justice work as key to women’s rights, and communities are formed in struggle. These frames provide insight into the purpose of mission statements for non-profit organizations, as well as some clue as to the motivation for choices in both language and methods for disseminating the mission statements. Abelman and Dalessandro (2007a) found that the mission statements at for-profit schools are intentionally framed to be more approachable, pragmatic, results-oriented, and compelling, while non-profit schools are more idealistic. Effectively, the mission statements are framed to serve as a sales pitch for profit-driven institutions, whereas non-profit schools, due to their differing funding structure, can be more esoteric and philosophical in their language choices.

**Mission Statement Content Composition**

Another line of research on mission statements focuses only on its content components (Bart, Bontis, and Taggar, 2001). Studies into the content of mission statements have identified
components of mission statements and then reported the frequency of appearance and relationship to other components through the use of word clustering or categorical sorting (Whitbred and Gumm, 2004). The purpose is ultimately descriptive. It can be an attempt to define or describe something that has not yet been explored for the purpose of establishing a baseline for future research efforts.

In one of their studies, Abelman and Dalessandro (2007b) compared the differing word choices in mission statements of historically black colleges and universities [HBCUs] with those at non-HBCU institutions. Tian (2005) explored how companies used mission statements to communicate corporate social responsibility to stakeholders. Additional studies have been conducted on educational institutions (Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend, 2011; Ozdem, 2011), airlines (Kemp and Dwyer, 2003), and corporations in general (Pearce II and David, 1987; Morris, 1994; Peyrefitte and David, 2006).

Basic content analysis methods, such as frequency coding, are well-suited for this type of study because they have high descriptive power. Often, modern content analysis uses some type of computer-assisted coding. Abelman and Dalessandro (2007b) conducted a computer-assisted content analysis of HBCU mission statements using the DICTION, which is "expressly concerned with the types of words most frequently encountered in contemporary American public discourse" (Hart, 1984, p. 110). Tian (2005) also conducted a computer-assisted content analysis using CatPac, which performs the basic functions of identifying categories of content from existing texts, as well as clustering words or phrases together to allow researchers to examine any semantic relationships between high frequency words.

Abelman and Dalessandro (2007b) found that fewer HBCUs have well-developed, clear vision statements compared to non-HBCU institutions. They attribute this to the idea that
HBCUs tend to stem from a single, well-defined historical mission, which helps give definition to the institutions but may also limit their ability to differentiate themselves as unique. Tian (2005) found that two significant clusters emerged: ethical/philanthropic and economic/legal, both of which suggest that corporations utilize their mission statements to underpin their corporate social responsibility initiatives.

**Mission Statements Components and Organizational Performance**

Beginning with Pearce and David (1987), the research into how mission statement content components related to organizational performance came to the forefront of the literature. In an attempt to use the massive amounts of content-describing research for some purpose, studies have been completed aiming to tie the content identified to some kind of organizational performance over time. Bart and Baetz (1998) looked for some specific mission statement content components that differentiated firms’ performance at higher levels. Bart, Bontis, and Taggar (2001) explored the relationship between mission and organizational performance in 83 large Canadian and US organizations. O’Gorman and Doran (1999) studied small and medium-sized businesses in Ireland, looking at their mission content in relation to their performance. Williams (2008) used Pearce and David’s (1987) typology to conduct a content analysis of the mission statements of Fortune 1000 high- and low-performing corporations.

This research tends to be quantitative in nature, comparing vast databases of content frequencies, such as word counts or clusters, with traditional indicators of firm performance, such as profits or longevity. As a result, the findings can be useful in describing some phenomenon of a specific organization or type of organization.

Bart and Baetz (1998) suggested that some mission statement components are correlated with positive performance differences between organizations. Specifically, statements that
“contained no financial goals, identified a firm’s values/beliefs, defined a firm’s purpose(s), and were relatively short (p. 945)” were found to be the most significant in terms of correlation with firm performance. Williams (2008) found that high-performing companies exhibit more of Pearce and David’s (1987) typological categories than low-performing ones. Additionally, both types of organizations have similar values strategies, including significant concentration on goodwill statements. In contrast, Bart et al. (2001) found that employee behaviors, instead of mission statements, had the most impact on firm performance. Additionally, there are mediating elements which can confound the relationship between mission statement and organizational performance, specifically employees’ understanding of the mission and their sense of urgency in implementing it in their daily work.

One study of particular note for this current research was conducted by Palmer and Short (2008) who opened a new line of research into higher education mission statements with their work examining the content of mission statements in colleges of business from across the United States and its relationship to performance. They conducted a content analysis examining the components of mission statements in colleges of business using Peace and David’s (1987) typology, focusing on the relationship between the content of mission statements and the business schools’ performance. Palmer and Short (2008) suggest that there are significant differences in the performance of schools that more frequently include the components of the typology.

**Comparison of Organizations Based on Mission Statement Components**

Researchers also compare the mission statements of different types of organizations. Research in this area has been critical in nature, utilizing linguistic research methods to cluster mission statement content into categories that can then be compared across organizations.
Morrish and Sauntson (2013), using a theoretical perspective based on a neoliberalism framework, explored the growth of UK university mission statements from a market perspective in an effort to compare content differences between research-focused schools and business-focused schools. Sun and Jiang (2013) studied differences in corporate ideologies and identities between Chinese and US companies based on differences in language in their mission statements.

Sun and Jiang (2013) conducted a corpus metaphoric study of words used in US and Chinese corporate mission statements. They developed their own corpus using Wmatrix, a computer-based tool, and identified three metaphors on which to compare the corporations from the different countries. Morrish and Sauntson (2013) used the APPRAISAL framework of linguistic analysis to identify the authors' attitudinal disposition(s) in the text of the mission statement. In both instances, by utilizing a common research framework, these authors were able to draw direct comparisons between groups of organizations via the content of their mission statements.

Such research often confirms the differences in mission statements used by different types of organizations. Morrish and Sauntson (2013), in their study of the content differences between research and business schools, found significant differences in the JUDGMENT and APPRECIATION categories of the APPRAISAL system for the differing mission groups. They attributed this to the different purposes of the universities studied. Specifically, the newer, business-oriented schools were likely more subject to governmental pressure to describe in their mission statements how they add value to their graduates, whereas the older, more-established research universities could focus on language describing their overall impact. Sun and Jiang
(2013) concluded that Chinese companies tend to be more energetic and competitive whereas US companies tended toward language that was more ethics and responsibility oriented.

**Mission Statements in Higher Education**

Colleges and universities were late adopters in the recognition of the importance of having an effective mission statement (Birnbaum, 2000); however, mission statements are now an expected part of the practice of strategic management in higher education. Little to no research exists examining organizational image and identity in college or university mission statements, though research has suggested that there is possibly overlap in the content and purpose of higher education and corporate mission statements (Chait, 1979; Martin, 1985; Kuh, Schuh, and Witt, 1991; Hartley, 2002; Morphew and Hartley, 2006). It is possible that college and university mission statements differ in identity and image content from corporations, but no established research paradigm exists at this time that has addressed this issue. For the purpose of making these differences clear, it is worthwhile to examine the content and purpose of higher education mission statements from theoretical perspectives which often drive research in corporate environments: stakeholder management and organizational identity and image (Dobni and Luffman, 2003).

**Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholders are groups or individuals “who benefit from or are harmed by, and whose rights are violated or respected by, [the organization’s] actions” (Freeman, 2001, p. 41). Stakeholder theory was conceived in contrast to the primary theory of corporate management at the time, which focused on returning value only for the shareholders at the cost of all else, in the name of efficiency. In contrast, stakeholder theory states that many interested parties are involved in the daily decision-making needs of an organization, from traditional figures like
management and shareholders, to more esoteric groups like governmental bodies, communities, or even competitors; likewise, it addresses organizational behaviors in managing the often-competing needs of these various stakeholders. Freeman (1984) originally applied the theory to corporations; however, stakeholder theory has been expanded through a growing body of research in the past thirty years to apply to organizations in general (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, and de Colle, 2010), although most of the research has still been focused on corporations (Laplume, et al., 2008).

There is a distinct lack of examination of stakeholder theory in the higher education literature, despite the possibility that colleges and universities may have more stakeholders than other types of corporations (Palmer and Short, 2008) due to their nature as both public and private entities. Early efforts at identifying college and university stakeholders focused primarily on the teaching function of the university (Mainardes, Alves, and Raposo, 2010). Ever expanding lists of possible stakeholders were described by Weaver (1976), which identified four stakeholders: government, management, teaching staff, and customers, Licata and Frankwick (1996) which emphasized students, former students, the business community, the general public, and teaching and administrative staff. Rowley (1997), added parents and family and current and future employers to the list. Burrows (1999), expanding on work by Trow (1998), compiled what may be considered the most complete list of higher education stakeholders available, identifying 12 stakeholder categories including governmental agencies, customers, suppliers, and partners, and then assigned possible stakeholder groups/entities to those categories. Dobni and Luffman (2003) used this as an impetus for arguing for the usefulness of stakeholder theory in future higher education research. Later, Jongbloed, Enders, and Salerno (2008) found that organizational legitimacy of institutions of higher education is more and more often tied to their
management of various publics and suggested that stakeholder theory may be useful as a tool for coordinating management efforts. As noted earlier, colleges and universities are increasingly creating and disseminating mission statements for many different possible purposes. It is reasonable to consider stakeholder management as one of those purposes. This raises the question of how those stakeholders are identified and addressed in the mission statements themselves, and leads to two of the research questions addressed in this study. These questions are interesting because they can be used to describe the intended audience(s) for the institution’s strategic communication. As strategic communication increases in urgency for colleges and universities, understanding their intended audience(s) could be a key to their success.

RQ1: Which stakeholders are explicitly identified in mission statements from institutions of higher education?

RQ2: What is the relative weight/importance of named stakeholders in mission statements from institutions of higher education?

Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is the central, distinctive, and enduring character of an organization (Albert and Whetten, 1985). It is what an organization believes itself to be. Some researchers believe it is objectively formed and held; it exists as a consistent reality independent of any individual perspective or observation (Suchman, 1995), even though it is subjectively determined by internal stakeholders, such as top managers (Scott and Lane, 2000). Others claim it is changeable, in that it is constructed through evolving narratives that paint a picture of the organization’s soul or essence (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, Ashforth and Mael, 1996). Whichever claim the researchers state, one thing seems to be consistent – “identity goes to the core of what something is, what fundamentally defines that entity” (Ashforth and Mael, 1996, p. 20).
Albert and Whetten (1985) are regarded as the seminal researchers into the notion of organizational identity. Their notion of character is purposefully broad so as to be inclusive of many the different aspects of an organization that might contribute to its identity. These may include its mission, vision, values, actions (or inactions), rituals, norms, or other aspects of its structure or purpose. This construction allows for an identity to be defined as relatively stable and self-defining. There are three core attributes of identity that they use in their definition – centrality, distinctiveness, and continuity.

According to Albert and Whetten (1985), centrality refers to the position of the identity within a network of attributes about the organization. Identity exists in the middle of any organizational hierarchy, where internal and external stakeholder needs meet. It is mostly tied to an organization’s mission (Ashforth and Mael, 1996), regardless of what that mission is, or as McMillan (1987) notes, an organization is what it does. Because of its centrality, organizational identity is not randomly formed or arbitrarily affected by external events. It is protected by the network around it, and instead relies heavily on key or powerful organizational members, such as founders (Cheney, 1983), for input.

Distinctiveness is measured by comparison to others. Uniqueness suggests purpose for an organization; when an organization states their distinct nature or purpose, they are suggesting that they are the only organization capable of accomplishing their mission, which offers an important reference point for members (Martin, Feldman, Hatch, and Sitkin, 1983). Claims of distinctiveness are self-serving, as comparisons to other organizations often center on direct competitors (Porac and Thomas, 1994) and paint the organization in a positive light (Ashforth and Mael, 1996) regardless of objective reality. The content of an identity changes as the referents change, as context of the comparison defines the salience of its content (Turner, Oakes,
Haslam, and McGarty, 1994). This suggests that organizational identity is not fixed and absolute, but instead is flexible enough to position an organization in various comparisons.

Continuity and stability are two features necessary for an organizational identity to be enduring. Continuity of identity is a function of the organization’s ability to communicate it coherently, clearly, and consistently over time (Ashforth and Mael, 1996). Throughout the lifespan of the organization, the identity will grow in both depth and breadth (Kimberly, 1987). Depth is enhanced through specific experiences over time, while breadth is accumulated through responding to challenges and change. As an organization responds to these two needs, it may develop multiple identities to manage its growing responsibilities (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

One way to operationalize Albert and Whetten’s (1985) identity characteristics is offered by Gustafson and Reger (1995). They organize (classify?) the organization’s identity attributes into intangible characteristics and substantive attributes. Intangible characteristics provide context for the organization and are reflected in the organizational values and culture. These characteristics are not tied to any particular process or product. Substantive attributes are concrete features that are typically associated with a particular product or process of the organization. By utilizing both of these, the organization can convey both what it does and how or why it does them. This may be a particularly useful operationalization for this study, which seeks to identify both tangible structures and intangible cultural aspects of the sample institutions.

Mission statements may serve to “heighten [stakeholders’] awareness of themselves as similar to an organization and to other organizational participants on some dimension or dimensions” (Scott and Lane, 2000, p. 50) by affording them access to something which is typically more abstract. By communicating organizational identity through the projecting of
organizational image via the publication of the mission statements, organizations may thus encourage stakeholder identification, which increases motivation to achieve group goals and interaction with the group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and encourages supportive actions among organizational members (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994; Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn, 1995). This leads to the next two research questions. By cataloging the abstract and substantive identity-related components, it will be possible to develop a useful reference database for practitioners to utilize in their efforts to craft mission statements similar to top-ranked institutions.

**RQ3A:** How do higher education institutions use mission statements to describe their organizational identity in terms of abstract characteristics?

**RQ3B:** How do higher education institutions use mission statements to describe their organizational identity in terms of substantive attributes?

**Organizational Image**

In discussing organizational identity, it is important to consider the often-related concept of organizational image. Scholars have debated the exact definition of organizational image for decades. It has been defined as the way that organizational members believe external stakeholders perceive the organization (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991), now relabeled as “construed external image” by Dutton, et al. (1994, p. 248). Whetten, Lewis, and Mischel (1992) coined the term “desired image” to refer to the way that top management of an organization would like external public to see the organization. Bromley (1993) equated image with reputation or the impression that organizations leave on external constituents. The common piece of the various definitions is that image relies on external appraisal of the organization (Gioia and Thomas, 1996). This stands in contrast to identity, which is based on the perception of the organization by internal stakeholders.
Managers chose a specific image for strategic reasons (Scott and Lane, 2000). These reasons are dependent on the purpose for projecting the image. Reputation building, for example, serves a different purpose than spurring future action, although they may coincide. Thus, image is communicated intentionally to stakeholders for several purposes. It could be an attempt to emphasize organizational identity to others (Whetten et al., 1992), or to manage reputation (Bromley, 1993), or to project an ideal future-self version of the organizational identity (Gioia and Thomas, 1996). Images can also serve as a proxy for intimate knowledge when a stakeholder lacks familiarity with the organization (Alvesson, 1990). Regardless of the purpose, the communication of organizational image “often acts as a destabilizing force on identity, frequently requiring members to revisit and reconstruct their organizational sense of self” (Gioia, Schultz, and Corley, 2000, p. 67). That same destabilization allows an organization to adapt to its changing environment in ways that a fixed organizational identity would not (Gioia et al., 2000).

Gioia and Thomas (1996) demonstrated this in their research on universities seeking to thrive in a changing academic environment through the projection of a desired future image. In one example, through the repetition of images that portrayed the future of the institution as an elite research university, the administration was able to alter the organization’s identity over time through increased prestige and reputation among its stakeholders. This interrelatedness of image and identity is an important consideration in research about modern organizations which exist in a saturated media environment (Gioia et al., 2000).

Higher education is facing increased competition to attract students (Morrish and Sauntson, 2013) while simultaneously facing increasing budgetary pressure (Douglass, 2010), which they are partially addressing by maximizing their operational efficiency and monetizing their intellectual property (Slaughter and Rhodes, 2004). The projection of a desired future
organizational image may support a school’s efforts in all three by improving its prestige and reputation as an institution with some particular value that distinguishes it from its competition. Mission statements can serve as part of the strategic communication of these types of images (Sufi and Lyons, 2003). As a result, this study will examine higher education mission statements for image components for a similar reason as identity-related components: to catalog and describe those components used by top-ranked institutions for the purposes of comparison and reference.

**RQ4: What image components are included in mission statements from institutions of higher education?**

As noted previously, one common topic in mission statement research is the comparison of similar organizations via the content of their mission statements. It is useful to be able to compare and contrast like organizations based on their mission statement content. By identifying the differences between them, it may be possible to more granularly define each group or cluster of organizations. In the case of colleges and universities, these differentiations could lead to more capacity for selectivity on the part of a potential stakeholder. Specifically, this study is interested in the differences between national universities and liberal arts colleges. As institutions of higher education, they may superficially be similar, but there exist granular differences in their core missions, values, available resources, and expected outcomes. This raises the question of whether those differences are perceptible in their mission statement content. It is reasonable to believe that they will differ significantly between samples depending on their demographic description. It is also interesting to consider whether there are differences among schools that might otherwise be considered similar due to their inclusion among the top-ranked institutions of their type. To that end, this study will consider three hypotheses:
H1: The mission statement content regarding to named stakeholders will differ significantly between the Top 200 National Universities and the Top 200 Liberal Arts Colleges.

H2: The mission statement content regarding components of organizational identity will differ significantly between the Top 200 National Universities and the Top 200 Liberal Arts Colleges.

H3: The mission statement content regarding components of organizational image will differ significantly between the Top 200 National Universities and the Top 200 Liberal Arts Colleges.
CHAPTER 3 - METHOD

Based on the preceding review of literature, the following research questions and hypotheses were proposed:

**RQ1:** Which stakeholders are explicitly identified in mission statements from institutions of higher education?

**RQ2:** What is the relative weight/importance of named stakeholders in mission statements from institutions of higher education?

**RQ3A:** How do higher education institutions use mission statements to describe their organizational identity in terms of abstract characteristics?

**RQ3B:** How do higher education institutions use mission statements to describe their organizational identity in terms of substantive attributes?

**RQ4:** What images are included in mission statements from institutions of higher education?

**H1:** The mission statement content regarding to named stakeholders will differ significantly between the Top 200 National Universities and the Top 200 Liberal Arts Colleges.

**H2:** The mission statement content regarding components of organizational identity will differ significantly between the Top 200 National Universities and the Top 200 Liberal Arts Colleges.

**H3:** The mission statement content regarding components of organizational image will differ significantly between the Top 200 National Universities and the Top 200 Liberal Arts Colleges.

The current study addressed these research questions and hypothesis through the use of quantitative content analysis of college and university mission statements available via each institution’s website.
Content Analysis

Laswell (1948) formulated what is generally considered to be the core question of all content analysis: “Who, says what, to whom, with what effect?” (p. 37). Berelson (1952) applied this question to communication research and defined content analysis as an objective and systematic analysis of the manifest content of communication. Content analysis is modernly defined as a form of quantitative research which involves the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, 2005). It summarizes messages, relies on the scientific method, and is not limited as to variables that may be measured (Neuendorf, 2002).

Content analysis looks at content variables associated with media uses and effects and is used most often in framing, agenda-setting, cultivation, and all persuasive theory research (Riffe, at al., 2005). It is considered a form of documentary analysis and is particularly suited to research where the communicator’s language use and structure is critical (Neuendorf, 2002). Documentary analysis offers several advantages over other methods in the examination of texts: (1) documents are stable and can be accessed repeatedly over time; (2) studying documents is unobtrusive; (3) documents are exact in that they contain the specific names and details of the subject being studied; and (4) documents have broad coverage in that they cover broad swaths of events, time, and settings (Yin, 2003). In this study, the researcher has defined a document as the mission statement posted by a college or university on its website for access by the general public.

This study assumed a post-positivist paradigm. It has its epistemological basis in modified objectivism, which has a goal of seeking objectivity under the knowledge that true
objectivity is impossible (Creswell, 2009). Ontologically, the researcher was operating under the belief that, while an objective reality exists, it cannot be understood. Quantitative content analysis is a reasonable choice for this type of research in that it allows for statistical analysis to determine significance of any findings.

**Sampling**

A list of subject schools was developed from the 2015 U.S. News and World Report’s “Best National Universities” list and “Best Liberal Arts Colleges” list, each of which ranks 200 schools (and scores many more for which it does not publish ranks), as well as providing other useful, structural data which will be helpful in differentiating between, or clustering together, the schools for purposes of analysis. Systematic sampling of the Top 200 ranked schools was used to select 100 from each list.

Mission statements were collected from colleges and universities in the sample by visiting their respective website, searching for the institutional mission statement, and copying it into a database for analysis. Only documents explicitly labeled as the institution’s mission statement were collected; vision, value, or goal statements were not included in this study. This is consistent with previous studies on college or university mission statements (Morphew and Hartley, 2006; Palmer and Short, 2008).

This study chose U.S. News and World Report’s “Best National Universities” list and “Best Liberal Arts Colleges” list for several reasons. As one purpose of this study is to determine which components the top institutions include in their mission statements, choosing to examine schools which are ranked among the top 200 is essential for success. This is in keeping with the spirit of this study to generate a useful referential tool for practitioners based on sound research in this area. As practitioners will reference their benchmark institutions when designing mission
statements, providing a list of components from high-performing schools should be of the utmost practical use. Per H1, differentiation will still be examined. The choice of types of institutions to include was made based on the breadth of perceived difference between the two categories. National universities generally focus on research and confer degrees to undergraduates, masters-level, and doctoral-level students. Liberal arts colleges focus on undergraduate education, typically conveying more than half of their undergraduate degrees in liberal arts disciplines such as such as languages, literature, philosophy, cultural studies and psychology (Morse et al., 2015). There are typically significant differences in location, size, cost of attendance, and reputation between these types of schools, all of which may affect their intended audience(s) and eventual stakeholders. An exploration of the similarities and differences of their mission statements may reveal interesting and significant findings regarding their value content and stakeholders. Additionally, these lists are generally accepted as being representative of the broad range of possible schools (public vs. private, costly vs. affordable, etc.) within their respective categories (Taylor and Morphew, 2010). This provided a convenient starting point for identifying a useful and representative sample of the over-4,000 different colleges and universities in America at the present time.

**Measurements**

A quantitative content analysis of college and university mission statements was conducted, utilizing an adaptation of Palmer and Short’s (2008) operationalization of Pearce and David’s (1987) eight-item typology, for the purposes of determining and describing their content in an effort to address the stated research questions. Pearce (1982) suggested eight key components for mission statements. Pearce and David (1987) later refined these components and were the first to explore mission statement content in the corporate environment. Their typology
has since been used to examine mission statement content in other industries, including healthcare (Forehand, 2000) and airlines (Kemp and Dwyer, 2003). Institutions of higher education have moved ever closer to corporate-style organization, under pressure to produce assessment data that supports their expenditures (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004) and an increasing reliance on accreditation standards which often include mission statements. Recently, Pearce and David’s (1987) typology has been applied to the study of higher education mission statements (Palmer and Short, 2008), specifically in accredited business schools, with some success. Palmer and Short’s (2008) coding definitions provide the basis for the coding definitions in this study. Table 1 shows these definitions in the context of the typology.

Table 1: Components of Mission Statements for Colleges and Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission element</th>
<th>Coding Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The specification of target customers and markets</td>
<td>Who are the institution’s customers? (e.g., undergraduates or graduates, conventional students or non-conventional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The identification of principal products/services</td>
<td>What are the institution’s primary products or services? (e.g., degree types, research opportunities, support services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The specification of geographic domain</td>
<td>Where does the institution compete? (e.g., urban, suburban, or rural, any specific location mentioned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The identification of core technologies</td>
<td>Is the use of technology in program delivery specified? (e.g., technologies such as distance learning, connected classrooms, or other technological tools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expression of commitment to survival, growth, and profitability</td>
<td>Is the institution committed to performance objectives? (e.g., specific growth, enrollment, or financial goals or other types of performance referents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The specification of key elements in the institution’s philosophy</td>
<td>What are the basic beliefs, values, and priorities? (e.g., statements or words that express philosophical ideals, beliefs, or values)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The identification of the institution’s self-concept</td>
<td>What is the organization’s distinctive competence or competitive advantage? (e.g., strengths over other institutions, something that makes the institution unique)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first two research questions for this study addressed explicitly named stakeholders. This is coded as variables V1 - V3. These variables coded specifically named stakeholders, number of times they are mentioned, and their weight relative to all named stakeholders operationalized as a ranking of their first appearance in the document (adapted from Trow, 1998; Gioia et al., 2000; and Palmer and Short, 2008). The ranking order in V3 was also useful in analysis of any named stakeholder for their status as primary or secondary stakeholders as described by Freeman (1984). Those with mean rankings of between 1.000 and 2.999 were considered primary, while those with mean rankings above 3.000 were considered secondary.

The third research question sought to categorize and count statements related to organizational identity, and was coded as variables V4 through V12. This study utilized Gustafson and Reger’s (1995) operationalization of organizational identity into intangible and substantive categories. These variables coded for the presence and frequency of the institution’s product(s), specific strategies employed by the institution to deliver their product(s), core competencies, and geographic scope (adapted from Palmer and Short, 2008). Variable 4 was adapted from Gustafson and Reger (1995). The specific coding categories listed in V5: technological means, service learning, classroom instruction, research spaces, online education, and other were developed inductively from a careful reading of existing mission statement texts. The categories in V7 were adapted from Morphew and Hartley (2006). The coding categories in V9 were identified by the researcher to be inclusive of all reasonably possible geographic locations. The categories in V11: academic growth/knowledge attainment, personal
growth/development, career preparation/employment, being a better citizen, community improvement, and other were adapted from Morphew and Hartley (2006). More detailed breakdowns of each of these variables are outlined in the codebook in Appendix A.

The fourth research question was aimed at identifying statements related to the organization's image and was coded in variables V13 through V16. These variables coded for the presence and frequency of statements about the institution’s diversity and coordination with community partners. These were adapted from Palmer and Short’s (2008) typological categories.

Finally, five demographical characteristics were collected about each institution: ownership, geographic location, full-time enrollment, type, and religious affiliation. These are salient to higher education in that they comprise dimensions which colleges and universities are most likely to use to differentiate themselves from competitors (Labianca et al., 2001). Table 2 shows a summary of all research questions, variables, and components of each variable that were coded.

Table 2: Variables and Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **RQ1:** Which stakeholders are explicitly identified in mission statements from institutions of higher education? | **V1 – Stakeholders** | 1. Students - Undergraduate  
2. Students - Graduate  
3. Students - unspecified  
4. Faculty  
5. Community members  
6. Alumni  
7. Staff  
8. Gender  
9. Other |
|                   | **V2 – Stakeholder frequency** | A count of the number of times each component appears |
| **RQ2:** What is the relative weight/importance of named stakeholders in mission statements from institutions of higher education? | **V3 – Weight** | 1. Students - Undergraduate  
2. Students - Graduate  
3. Students - unspecified  
4. Faculty  
5. Community members |
|                   |             | Identifies where each stakeholder appears relative to others by rank order (1, 2, 3, etc.) |
V4 – Intangible identity
Words or phrases which set the context for the organization, describe organizational culture, or outline organizational beliefs, values, and priorities.

0. Not present
1. Present

RQ3A: How do higher education institutions use mission statements to describe their organizational identity in terms of abstract characteristics?

V5 – Strategies
Statements about how their products are delivered/created, or statements about methods of teaching, research, or service

1. Technological means
2. Experiential Learning
3. Classroom instruction
4. Research spaces
5. Online education
6. Creative Activity
7. Residential Space
8. Study Abroad
9. Other

V6 – Strategy frequency
A count of the number of times each component appears

RQ3B: How do higher education institutions use mission statements to describe their organizational identity in terms of substantive attributes?

V7: Core Competencies
Statements about the fundamental knowledge, skill, or expertise of the institution; the institution’s main strength(s)

1. Teaching
2. Research/Knowledge creation
3. Service
4. Specific academic focus area
5. Other

V8 – Competency frequency
A count of the number of times each component appears
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V9: Geographic Scope</th>
<th>Statements which define the geographic scope of where the institution conducts its business and/or offers its services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V10 – Geographic frequency</th>
<th>A count of the number of times each component appears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V11: Products</th>
<th>Statements about outcomes or products offered by the institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Academic growth/knowledge attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Personal growth/development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Career preparation/employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Citizenship Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Community improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Leadership Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V12 – Products frequency</th>
<th>A count of the number of times each component appears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V13: Diversity</th>
<th>Explicit statements about common diversity categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Sexual Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Socio-economic status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V14– Diversity frequency</th>
<th>A count of the number of times each component appears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V15: Partnerships</th>
<th>Statements about social responsibilities the institution recognizes in relation to its stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0. Not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V16: Partnerships frequency</th>
<th>A count of the number of times this component appears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

RQ4: What image components are included in mission statements from institutions of higher education?
### Demographical Variables

#### V17: Degree
What is the highest degree offered by the institution?
- 1. Bachelors
- 2. Masters
- 3. Doctorate

#### V18: Religion
Is the institution religiously affiliated?
- 0. No
- 1. Yes

#### V19: Size
What is the total student enrollment?
- Number of enrolled students

#### V20: Setting
What is the geographic setting of the institution?
- 1. Urban
- 2. Suburban
- 3. Rural

#### V21: Ownership
Is the university privately or publicly owned?
- 1. Private
- 2. Public

#### V22: Word Count
A word count of the mission statement
- Number of words as determined by Word

### Analysis

This study included two types of statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics for presence and frequency were reported for all coding categories. A chi-square test was used to describe significant differences between school types to satisfy H1.

### Coder Training

The researcher developed a codebook outlining the variables to be coded for this content analysis (See Appendix A). Coding of the collected mission statements was undertaken by two coders: the researcher and a colleague, a higher education professional administrator and faculty.
member, acting as a trained, independent coder. The researcher coded the full sample, with the trained, independent coder coding a systematically selected set of 48 of the total study sample. Coder training followed Neuendorf's (2002) outline for repeated training and revision. The independent coder was trained via example and discussion from the original codebook. All coder training utilized example mission statements that fell outside the study sample. Throughout the coder training and codebook revision process, open coding was utilized in order to determine any emergent coding categories that have not been previously identified by the researcher. During the first round of coder training, coders practiced coding ten example mission statements together from the codebook. Throughout this first round, consensus-building discussion was conducted to help coders understand the codebook variables, process the reasons for any coding discrepancies between coders, and identify areas of the codebook which need revision to help mitigate or prevent any discrepancies. After the first round, revisions were made to the codebook based on the coders experience coding the first example batch. After initial revisions, coders test coded ten different example units independently using the updated codebook. After independently coding the second example batch, coders discussed their results and revisions to the codebook were made. A third round of test coding served as the pilot coding, utilizing 20 sample texts from outside the study sample, and was followed by a reliability check using Krippendorf's (2004) alpha. Alpha was determined to be sufficient for reliability and the study sample was then coded.

**Intercoder reliability**

Intercoder reliability was determined through the measurement of Krippendorf's (2004) alpha. Krippendorf's alpha was used due to its general applicability to all content analyses and its specific fit for this study. Krippendorf's alpha can be used reliably "regardless of the number of
observers, levels of measurement, sample sizes, and presence or absence of missing data” (Hayes and Krippendorf, 2007, p. 77). This makes it a reasonable choice for all content analyses.

For this study, which utilizes primarily nominal, ordinal, and ratio data with two observers, Krippendorf's alpha was a good fit. It is equal to Scott's \( \pi \) (pi) for two-observer nominal data and for ordinal data is identical Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient \( \rho \) (rho) (Hayes and Krippendorf, 2007). Because it allows for reliability with missing data, something neither Scott's nor Spearman's measures allow for, it is more flexible and robust. For these reasons, Krippendorf's alpha was used to determine reliability.

Including the researcher, two coders were trained. The other trained coder coded approximately 25.3% of the sample mission statements \( (n=48) \). Krippendorf’s (2004) alpha was calculated using the Hayes SPSS macro (Hayes and Krippendorf, 2007) for each component category. The coefficient was .936 for stakeholders (V1-V3), .834 for intangible statements (V4), .925 for strategies (V5-V6), .901 for core competencies (V7-V8), .983 for geographic scope (V9-V10), .878 for products (V11-V12), and .975 for image components (V13-V16). The number of co-coded statements is sufficient to test intercoder reliability, and all coefficients are within acceptable limits (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, 2005).

**Coder Limitations and Biases**

The researcher and independent coder were both professional practitioners in the field of higher education. This introduced the potential for bias or perceptual misconception as a result of proximity to the topic or preexisting expectations for content. To address this, existing coding categories from existing studies and rigorous reliability testing were used in this study to limit threats to validity.
CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

This study captured applicable demographic data about the sampled schools and their mission statements. In terms of the highest degree offered, the majority of campuses offered up to doctoral level programs ($n=113, 59.5\%$). Campuses with master’s level programs ($n=35, 18.4\%$) and bachelor’s level programs ($n=42, 22.1\%$) were also represented. Campuses were identified in terms of their religious affiliation (non-affiliated, $n=132, 69.5\%$; and affiliated $n=58, 30.5\%$), their setting (urban, $n=89, 46.8\%$; suburban, $n=74, 38.9\%$; rural, $n=26, 13.7\%$; and not identified, $n=1, 0.5\%$), and ownership (private; $n=128, 67.4\%$; and public, $n=62, 32.6\%$). Mean enrollment was $12,297.674$ ($SD=13,095.632$). Mean word count of all mission statements was $116.219$ ($SD=126.172$).

All national universities in the sample offered doctoral programs ($n=102, 100\%$). The majority of them were not affiliated with any religion ($n=87, 85.3\%$). In terms of setting, $59.8\%$ were urban ($n=61$), $34.3\%$ were suburban ($n=35$), $4.9\%$ were rural ($n=5$), and $1.0\%$ were not identified ($n=1$). In terms of ownership, $45.1\%$ were private ($n=46$) and $54.9\%$ were public ($n=56$). Mean enrollment was $21,258.892$ ($SD=12,048.837$). Mean word count was $130.382$ ($SD=139.279$).

About half of the liberal arts colleges ($n=42, 47.7\%$) offered only bachelor’s degrees, and $39.8\%$ offered master’s level programs. Only $12.5\%$ ($n=11$) offered doctoral degrees. These liberal arts colleges were equally likely to be religious ($n=43, 48.9\%$) or non-religious ($n=45, 51.1\%$). Their geographic settings were: urban ($n=28, 31.8\%$), suburban ($n=39, 44.3\%$), and rural ($n=21, 23.9\%$). Most were private ($n=82, 93.2\%$) with only $6$ colleges public ($6.8\%$).
Liberal arts colleges were much smaller with a mean enrollment of 1,910.807 ($SD=864.606$). Mean word count was 98.070 ($SD=106.630$). See Table 3 for a summary of these demographic variables.
Table 3: Results for Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
<th>Overall (N=190)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100.</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Affiliation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.7</td>
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<td>Setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Enrollment: 21258 12048 57479 0 864 4203 12297 13095 57479

Word Count: 130 139 571 98 106 570 116 126 571

* Calculated only for schools with frequency ≥ 1 for measured demographic
Table 4: Results for Descriptive Analysis of Named Stakeholder Presence, Frequency, and Rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
<th>Overall (N=190)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>$M^a$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>1.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>2.136</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate</strong></td>
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<td>23.5</td>
<td>1.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>23.5</td>
<td>2.500</td>
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<td><strong>Unspecified Student</strong></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>1.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>63.6</td>
<td>1.678</td>
</tr>
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<td>Rank</td>
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<td>22.7</td>
<td>2.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
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<td>29.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>29.4</td>
<td>2.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
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<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alumni</strong></td>
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<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
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<td>23.5</td>
<td>4.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Gender</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------</td>
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<td>0 0 10 11 10 5.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A 1.6 0.976 1.60 0.699 2.00 1.40 0.966 3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A 1.4 0.966 1.40 0.966 3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9 8.8 6 6.8 15 7.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.55 1.01 1.67 1.03 1.60 0.986 3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.22 1.78 2.50 2.34 2.33 1.95 5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Calculated only for schools with frequency ≥ 1 for named stakeholder
RQ1 asked which stakeholders were explicitly identified in National University and Liberal Arts College mission statements. See Table 4 for results of descriptive statistics. For all sampled schools ($n=190$), unspecified students were named most as stakeholder ($n=115, 60.5\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.687$ ($SD=1.217$)$^1$. Faculty was the second most-named stakeholder ($n=56, 29.5\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.839$ ($SD=1.156$). Community was the third most-named stakeholder ($n=55, 29.5\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.255$ ($SD=0.552$). Staff was the fourth most-named stakeholder ($n=33, 17.4\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.364$ ($SD=0.822$). Graduate students were the fifth most-named stakeholder ($n=24, 12.6\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.583$ ($SD=0.654$). Undergraduate students were the sixth most-named stakeholder ($n=23, 12.1\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.304$ ($SD=0.765$). Alumni were the seventh most-named stakeholder ($n=16, 8.4\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.313$ ($SD=0.602$). Other was the eighth most-named as stakeholder ($n=15, 7.9\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.600$ ($SD=0.986$). Specific gender, either “men” or “women,” was named least often overall as stakeholder ($n=10, 5.3\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.600$ ($SD=0.699$).

Separating the data into subgroups, for national universities ($n=102$), unspecified students were named most as a stakeholder ($n=59, 57.8\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.661$ ($SD=1.108$). The second most-named stakeholder was faculty ($n=36, 35.3\%$), with a mean frequency of $2.056$ ($SD=1.264$). Community was the third most-named stakeholder ($n=30, 29.4\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.200$ ($SD=0.484$). Graduate students ($n=24, 23.5\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.583$ ($SD=0.654$) and staff ($n=24, 23.5\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.458$ ($SD=0.932$), were tied for fourth most-named stakeholders. Undergraduate students were the

$^1$ All frequency means reported in this chapter were calculated only for schools which had a frequency of one or more.
sixth most-named stakeholder \( (n=22, 21.6\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.318 \( (SD=0.780) \). Other was the seventh most-named stakeholder \( (n=9, 8.8\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.556 \( (SD=1.014) \). Alumni were named least often as stakeholder \( (n=7, 6.9\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.429 \( (SD=0.535) \). Specific gender was not listed as a stakeholder group \( (n=0, 0\%) \).

The data for liberal arts colleges \( (n=88) \) showed that unspecified students were named most as stakeholder \( (n=56, 63.6\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.714 \( (SD=1.331) \). Community was the second most-named stakeholder \( (n=25, 28.4\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.320 \( (SD=0.627) \). Faculty was the third most-named stakeholder \( (n=20, 22.7\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.450 \( (SD=0.826) \). Specific gender was the fourth most-named stakeholders \( (n=10, 11.4\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.600 \( (SD=0.699) \). Staff, \( (n=9, 10.2\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.111 \( (SD=0.333) \), and alumni \( (n=9, 10.2\%) \) with a mean frequency of 1.222 \( (SD=0.667) \), were tied for the fifth most-named stakeholder group. Other was the seventh most-named stakeholder \( (n=6, 6.8\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.667 \( (SD=1.033) \). Undergraduate students were the eighth most-named stakeholder \( (n=1, 1.1\%) \), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \( (SD=0.00) \). Graduate students were never listed as a stakeholder group \( (n=0, 0\%) \).

With regard to RQ1, both institution types name unspecified students most often, with community and faculty rounding out the top three depending on type. All other stakeholder categories showed some level of presence in this sample, although most fall below 30% utilization regardless of type.

RQ2 asked the relative weight or importance of the named stakeholders. This was determined by their placement relative to other named stakeholders within the same mission statements, with the first-appearing stakeholder being ranked with a 1 and each subsequent named stakeholder being ranked accordingly. For all sampled schools \( (N=190) \), gender-specific
pronouns \((n=10)\) were the most high-ranked \((M=1.400, SD=.966)\), followed by unspecified students \((M=1.539, SD=0.949)\), undergraduate students \((M=2.087, SD=1.593)\), faculty \((M=2.125, SD=0.916)\), community \((M=2.236, SD=1.515)\), other \((M=2.333, SD=1.952)\), graduate students \((M=2.500, SD=.978)\), alumni \((M=3.188, SD=2.040)\), and staff \((M=3.455, SD=1.121)\). Primary stakeholders, which were defined as those with a mean rank between 1.000 and 2.999, included gender-specific pronouns, unspecified students, faculty, community, other, and graduate students. Second stakeholders, which were defined as those with a mean rank of 3.000 or higher, were alumni and staff.

Looking at the results by school type, for national universities \((N=102)\), unspecified students ranked the highest, \((M=1.678, SD=1.106)\), followed by undergraduate students \((M=2.136, SD=1.612)\), faculty \((M=2.167, SD=1.000)\), other \((M=2.222, SD=1.787)\), graduate students \((M=2.500, SD=.978)\), community \((M=2.600, SD=1.734)\), staff \((M=3.458, SD=1.215)\), and alumni \((M=4.429, SD=2.070)\). In contrast, among liberal arts colleges \((N=88)\), undergraduate students ranked highest \((M=1.000, SD=0.00)\), followed by unspecified students \((M=1.393, SD=0.731)\), specific gender pronouns \((M=1.400, SD=.966)\), community \((M=1.800, SD=1.080)\), faculty \((M=2.050, SD=.759)\), alumni \((M=2.222, SD=1.481)\), other \((M=2.500, SD=2.345)\), and staff \((M=3.444, SD=0.882)\). For national universities, primary stakeholders included unspecified students, undergraduate students, faculty, other, graduate students, and community. Secondary stakeholders were staff and alumni. For liberal arts colleges, primary stakeholders were undergraduate students, unspecified students, gender-specific pronouns, community, faculty, alumni, and other. The only category identified as a secondary stakeholder for liberal arts colleges was staff.
RQ3A asked how institutions use mission statements to describe their organizational identity in terms of abstract characteristics. Abstract characteristics were coded as the presence of intangible statements of identity, or sentences containing general statements about organizational values, beliefs, culture, or identity. For all sampled schools ($n=190$), intangible statements of identity were present 40.5% of the time, with 32 (31.4%) present for national universities ($n=102$) and 45 (51.1%) present for liberal arts colleges ($n=88$). The results for RQ3A seem to indicate that statements of abstract identity are frequently included in the mission statements of both types of institutions.
Table 5: Results for Descriptive Analysis of Substantive Identity Attributes: Core Competences (V7-V8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
<th>Overall (N=190)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>M*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>1.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research/Knowledge Creation</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>1.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>1.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Academic Focus</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>4.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1.294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Calculated only for schools with frequency ≥ 1 for named stakeholder
This study also addressed substantive identity components, which are concrete features typically associated with a particular product or process of the organization (Gustafson and Reger, 1995). For purposes of this study, substantive attributes include the institution’s core competencies, geographic scope, products, and strategies for delivering those products.

The first substantive attribute coded was the institution’s core competencies. For all sampled schools \((n=190)\), research/knowledge creation was listed most as a core competency \((n=113, 59.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.504 \((SD=0.878)\). Teaching was the second most-named core competency \((n=94, 49.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.394 \((SD=0.734)\). The third most-named core competency was specific academic focus \((n=93, 48.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 2.559 \((SD=3.245)\). Service was the fourth most-named core competency \((n=60, 31.6\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.250 \((SD=0.541)\). Finally, the fifth most-named core competency was other \((n=23, 12.1\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.271 \((SD=0.518)\). See Table 3 for a summary of these variables.

Among national universities \((n=102)\), research/knowledge creation was listed most as a core competency \((n=85, 83.3\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.647 \((SD=0.960)\). Teaching was the second most-named core competency \((n=59, 57.8\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.542 \((SD=0.858)\). The third most-named core competency was service \((n=41, 40.2\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.268 \((SD=0.593)\). Specific academic focus was the fourth most-named competency \((n=31, 30.4\%)\), with a mean frequency of 4.161 \((SD=4.927)\). Other was the fifth most-named core competency \((n=17, 16.7\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.294 \((SD=0.588)\). In contrast, among liberal arts colleges \((n=88)\), specific academic focus was the most-named core competency \((n=62, 70.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.758 \((SD=1.411)\). Teaching was the second most-named core competency \((n=35, 39.8\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.143
The third most-named core competency was research/knowledge creation ($n=28$, 31.8%), with a mean frequency of 1.071 ($SD=0.262$). Service was the fourth most-named core competency ($n=19$, 21.6%), with a mean frequency of 1.211 ($SD=0.419$). Other was the fifth most-named core competency ($n=6$, 6.8%), with a mean frequency of 1.000 ($SD=0.000$).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
<th>Overall (N=190)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>M^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>Region</td>
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<td>World</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>1.087</td>
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</table>

^a Calculated only for schools with frequency ≥ 1 for named stakeholder
Geographic scope is another substantive identity attribute examined. See Table 6 for results of the descriptive data analysis of this variable. Overall, world was listed most as geographic scope ($n=107$, 56.3%), with a mean frequency of $1.271$ ($SD=0.592$). Nation was the second most-listed geographic scope ($n=46$, 24.2%), with a mean frequency of $1.261$ ($SD=0.492$). The third most-listed geographic scope was state ($n=41$, 21.6%), with a mean frequency of $1.512$ ($SD=0.746$). The fourth most-listed geographic scope was other ($n=30$, 15.8%), with a mean frequency of $1.067$ ($SD=0.254$). Region was the fifth most-listed geographic scope ($n=21$, 11.1%), with a mean frequency of $1.048$ ($SD=0.215$). City was the sixth most-listed geographic scope ($n=19$, 10%), with a mean frequency of $1.579$ ($SD=0.902$). The seventh most-listed geographic scope was community ($n=16$, 8.4%), with a mean frequency of $1.063$ ($SD=0.250$).

Among national universities ($n=102$), world was the most-listed geographic scope ($n=60$, 58.8%), with a mean frequency of $1.300$ ($SD=0.591$). State and nation were both listed as the second most-listed geographic scope ($n=37$, 36.3%) with state having a mean frequency of $1.568$ ($SD=0.765$) and nation having a mean frequency of $1.324$ ($SD=0.530$). The fourth most-listed geographic scope was other ($n=23$, 22.5%), with a mean frequency of $1.087$ ($SD=0.288$). The fifth most-listed geographic scope was city ($n=15$, 14.7%), with a mean frequency of $1.467$ ($SD=0.834$). Region was the sixth most-listed geographic scope ($n=14$, 13.7%), with a mean frequency of $1.071$ ($SD=0.267$). The seventh most-listed geographic scope was community ($n=8$, 7.8%), with a mean frequency of $1.000$ ($SD=0.00$).

The data for liberal arts colleges ($n=88$) showed world was the most-listed geographic scope ($n=47$, 53.4%), with a mean frequency of $1.234$ ($SD=0.598$). The second most-listed geographic scope was nation ($n=9$, 10.2%), with a mean frequency of $1.000$ ($SD=0.00$).
Community was the third most-listed geographic scope ($n=8, 9.1\%$), with a mean frequency of 1.125 ($SD=0.354$). Region and other were both the fourth most-listed geographic scope ($n=7, 8.0\%$), both with a mean frequency of 1.000 ($SD=0.000$). State and city were both listed as the sixth most-listed geographic scope ($n=4, 4.5\%$), with state having a mean frequency of 1.000 ($SD=0.00$) and city having a mean frequency of 2.00 ($SD=1.155$).
Table 7: Results for Descriptive Analysis of Substantive Identity Attributes: Products (V11 - V12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
<th>Overall (N=190)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>M&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Growth</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>40.2</td>
<td>1.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Growth/Development</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td><strong>Citizenship Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>45.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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</table>

<sup>a</sup> Calculated only for schools with frequency ≥ 1 for named stakeholder
Product refers to the outcomes and areas of growth the institution intends for its students to attain. See Table 7 for results of the descriptive data analysis of this variable. For all sampled schools \((n=190)\), academic growth was listed most as products \((n=90, 47.4\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.244 \((SD=0.567)\). Community improvement was the second most-listed product \((n=82, 43.2\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.146 \((SD=0.389)\). The third most-listed product was personal growth/development \((n=76, 40\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.105 \((SD=0.309)\). Leadership skill development was the fourth most-listed product \((n=72, 37.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.028 \((SD=0.166)\). The fifth most-listed product was citizenship skills \((n=55, 28.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.091 \((SD=0.290)\). Career preparation/employment was the sixth most-listed product \((n=43, 22.6\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.116 \((SD=0.391)\). The seventh most-listed product was other \((n=21, 11.1\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\).

Among national universities \((n=102)\), community improvement was the most-listed product \((n=46, 45.1\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.239 \((SD=0.480)\). The second most-listed product was academic growth \((n=41, 40.2\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.098 \((SD=0.300)\). Leadership skill development was the third most-listed product \((n=36, 35.3\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.00)\). Citizenship skills was the fourth most-listed product \((n=26, 25.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.077 \((SD=0.272)\). The fifth most-listed product was personal growth/development \((n=25, 24.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.00)\). The sixth most-listed product was career preparation/employment \((n=20, 19.6\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.100 \((SD=0.447)\). Other was the seventh most-listed product \((n=6, 5.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.00)\).
The data for liberal arts colleges ($n=88$) showed personal growth/development was the most-listed product ($n=51, 58.0\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.157$ ($SD=0.367$). The second most-listed product was academic growth ($n=49, 55.7\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.367$ ($SD=0.698$). Community improvement and leadership skill development were both the third most-listed product ($n=36, 40.9\%$), with community improvement having a mean frequency of $1.028$ ($SD=0.167$) and leadership skill development having a mean frequency of $1.056$ ($SD=0.232$). The fifth most-listed product was citizenship skills ($n=29, 33.0\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.103$ ($SD=0.310$). Career preparation/employment was the sixth most-listed product ($n=23, 26.1\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.130$ ($SD=0.344$). The seventh most-listed product was other ($n=15, 17.1\%$), with a mean frequency of $1.000$ ($SD=0.000$).
Table 8: Results for Descriptive Analysis of Substantive Identity Attributes: Strategies (V5 - V6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
<th>Overall (N=190)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technological Means</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>8.8</td>
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<td>Classroom Instruction</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<td>Research Spaces</td>
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<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>Creative Activity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.20</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Calculate only for schools with frequency &gt;= 1 for named stakeholder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.00 0.00</td>
<td>1.00 0.00 6 6.8 7 3.7</td>
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<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>1.00 0.00 0 0 0 1.00 0.00 0 1.00 0.00</td>
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</table>

a Calculated only for schools with frequency >= 1 for named stakeholder
Another substantive identity examined is strategies, which refer to the primary methods for delivering its intended products as identified by the institution. See Table 8 for results of the descriptive statistics of this variable. For all sampled schools \((n=190)\), the most-listed strategy was experiential learning \((n=20, 10.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.350 \((SD=0.671)\). Research spaces were the second most-listed strategy \((n=13, 6.8\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.00)\). The third most-listed strategy was classroom instruction \((n=11, 5.8\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.00)\). Creative activity \((M=1.400, SD=0.516)\) and residential spaces \((M=1.100, SD=0.316)\) were tied for the fourth most-listed strategy \((n=10, 5.3\%)\). The sixth most-listed strategy was technological means \((n=8, 4.2\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Other was the eighth most-listed strategy \((n=7, 3.7\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Online education and study abroad were tied for the ninth most-listed strategy \((n=5, 2.6\%)\). Online education had a mean frequency of 1.200 \((SD=0.447)\), while study abroad had a mean frequency of 1.400 \((SD=0.548)\).

Among national universities \((n=102)\), experiential learning was the most-listed strategy \((n=9, 8.8\%, M=1.222, SD=0.667)\). The second most-listed strategy was technological means \((n=8, 7.8\%)\). Technological means had a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Research spaces was the third most-listed strategy \((n=7, 6.9\%)\) with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). The fourth most-listed strategy was creative activity \((n=5, 4.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.200 \((SD=0.447)\). Classroom instruction was the fifth most-listed strategy \((n=4, 3.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). The sixth most-listed strategy was online education \((n=2, 2.0\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Study abroad and other were the least listed
strategies \((n=1, 1.0\%)\), each with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Residential spaces were never listed as a strategy \((n=0, 0\%)\).

The data for liberal arts colleges \((n=88)\) showed experiential learning as the most-listed strategy \((n=11, 12.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.455 \((SD=0.688)\). Residential spaces were the second most-listed strategy \((n=10, 11.4\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.100 \((SD=0.316)\). The third most-listed strategy was classroom instruction \((n=7, 8.0\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Research spaces and other were tied for the fourth most-listed strategy \((n=6, 6.8\%)\), each with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). The sixth most-listed strategy was creative activity \((n=5, 5.7\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.600 \((SD=0.548)\). Study abroad was the seventh most-listed strategy \((n=4, 4.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.500 \((SD=0.577)\). Online education was the least listed strategy \((n=3, 3.4\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.333 \((SD=0.577)\). Technological means were never listed as a strategy \((n=0)\).

With regard to RQ3B, these findings are relatively equitable across the board in both presence and frequency of use of components related to substantive attributes of organizational identity. Experiential learning was the most commonly utilized. Few categories show more than 10\% presence regardless of institution type.
Table 9: Results for Descriptive Analysis of Image Components: Diversity and Partnerships (V13-V16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
<th>Overall (N=190)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Present</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>1.143</td>
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<td>Diversity - Gender</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.000</td>
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<td>Diversity - Orientation</td>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>Diversity - Other</td>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
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<td>24.5</td>
<td>1.360</td>
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Calculated only for schools with frequency ≥ 1 for named stakeholder
RQ4 asked what image content was included in national university and liberal arts college mission statements. For this study, image content was distilled to statements about diversity by type. Overall, unspecified diversity was most-listed \((n=78, 41.1\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.231 \((SD=0.302)\). Partnership statements were the second most-listed component \((n=32, 16.8\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.281 \((SD=0.581)\). The third most-listed component was diversity-gender \((n=12, 6.3\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). The fourth most-listed component was diversity-other \((n=11, 5.8\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.091 \((SD=0.302)\). Diversity-race was the fifth most-listed component \((n=9, 4.7\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.111 \((SD=0.333)\). Diversity-religion was the sixth most-listed component \((n=7, 3.7\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). The seventh most-listed component was diversity-socioeconomic status \((n=6, 3.2\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.167 \((SD=0.408)\). Diversity-age and diversity-orientation were the eighth most-listed components \((n=1, 0.5\%)\), both with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\).

Among national universities \((n=102)\), diversity-unspecified was listed most \((44, 43.1\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.298 \((SD=0.594)\). The second most-listed component was partnership statements \((n=25, 24.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.360 \((SD=0.638)\). Diversity-race was most-listed \((n=7, 6.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.143 \((SD=0.378)\). The fourth most-listed component was diversity-gender \((n=5, 4.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Diversity-other was the fifth most-listed component \((n=4, 3.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). The sixth most-listed component was diversity-religion \((n=3, 2.9\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Diversity-age and diversity-socioeconomic
status were the seventh most-listed components \((n=1, 1.0\%)\), both with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Finally, diversity-orientation was never listed as a component \((n=0)\).

The data for liberal arts colleges \((n=88)\) showed diversity-unspecified as the most-listed component \((n=34, 38.6\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.147 \((SD=0.360)\). Diversity-gender, diversity-other, and partnership statements were the second most-listed component \((n=7, 8.0\%)\) with diversity-gender and partnership statements having a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\) and diversity-other having a mean frequency of 1.143 \((SD=0.378)\). Diversity-socioeconomic status was the fifth most-listed component \((n=5, 5.7\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.200 \((SD=0.447)\). The sixth most-listed component was diversity-religion \((n=4, 4.5\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). The seventh most-listed component was diversity-race \((n=2, 2.3\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Diversity-orientation was the eighth most-listed component \((n=1, 1.1\%)\), with a mean frequency of 1.000 \((SD=0.000)\). Diversity-age was never listed as a component \((n=0)\).

In short, in terms of components of organizational image, the word “diversity,” separate from any other modifier, was the most commonly present component. Fewer than half of all sampled mission statements featured language indicating support of external partnerships.
Table 10: Results for Chi-square Tests Comparing National Universities and Liberal Arts Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>National Universities (n=102)</th>
<th>Liberal Arts Colleges (n=88)</th>
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<th>Adjusted p</th>
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### Products

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Image Components

#### Diversity Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p</th>
<th><strong>p</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>2.206</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0.343</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>1.165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic Status</td>
<td>3.414</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified diversity</td>
<td>0.395</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.409</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership statements</td>
<td>9.245</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.01
** p<.001
^ df=1 for all tests
H1 predicted there would be significant difference in mission statement content between the two sample groups in terms of stakeholders identified. A set of chi-square tests were conducted to compare the likelihood of different stakeholders mentioned by national universities and liberal arts colleges in their mission statements. Holms-Bonferroni sequential correction was used to adjust the p value. Significant differences were found to exist between institutional types in three of the nine categories. National universities were more likely than liberal arts colleges to specifically list undergraduates ($\chi^2 (1) = 18.536$, adjusted $p = .001$) and graduate students ($\chi^2 (1) = 20.369$, adjusted $p < .001$). Liberal arts colleges were more likely than national universities to specifically list specific gender ($\chi^2 (1) = 12.235$, adjusted $p = .017$). No significant interaction was found for the categories of unspecified student, faculty, community, alumni, staff, and other. H1 was partially supported.

H2 predicted there would be significant differences between the two sample groups in regards to mission statement content related to organizational identity. A series of chi-square tests were conducted comparing the frequency of naming specific identity components by national universities and liberal arts colleges. Holms-Bonferroni sequential correction was used to adjust the p value. Significant differences were found to exist between institutional types in six of the 29 categories. For substantive strategies, liberal arts colleges were more likely than national universities to specifically list residential setting ($\chi^2 (1) = 12.235$, adjusted $p = .017$). No significant difference was found for the categories of technology, service learning, classroom instruction, research spaces, online coursework, creative activities, study abroad, or other. For core competencies, national universities were more likely than liberal arts colleges to list research ($\chi^2 (1) = 52.016$, adjusted $p < .001$), while liberal arts colleges were more likely than
national universities to list specific academic focus ($\chi^2 (1) = 30.343$, adjusted $p < .001$). No significant interaction was found for the categories of teaching, service, and other. In regards to geographic scope, national universities were more likely than liberal arts colleges to specifically list state ($\chi^2 (1) = 28.105$, adjusted $p < .001$) and nation ($\chi^2 (1) = 17.468$, adjusted $p < .001$). No significant interaction was found for the categories of community, city, region, world, and other. When naming specific products within identity components, liberal arts colleges were more likely than national universities to specifically list personal growth ($\chi^2 (1) = 22.018$, adjusted $p < .001$). No significant interaction was found for the categories of academic growth, career preparation, citizenship, community development, leadership, and other. Based on these findings, H2 was partially supported.

H3 predicted there would be significant differences between the two types of institutions with regard to components of organizational image. For named image components, there were no significant interactions between national universities and liberal arts colleges in diversity statements, age, race, gender, religion, orientation, socio-economic status, unspecified diversity, and other. Nor were there any significant interactions in partnerships or partnership statements. H3 was not supported.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that partial support for H1 and H2 exists, but none exists for H3. The mission statements show some differences between school types in regards to the presence of named stakeholders and identity-related components.
CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

Mission statements in higher education are becoming a “key ‘platform’ in a university’s marketing strategy” (Morrish and Sauntson, 2013, p. 61), and regularly appear on the university’s marketing material, including its website (Camelia and Marius, 2013; Morrish and Sauntson, 2013; Davis et al., 2007; Noel-Levitz, 2012). Mission statements act as tools for communicating organizational identity to stakeholders (Pearce II and David, 1987; Braddy et al., 2006; De Goede et al., 2011; Dineen et al., 2002; Cable et al., 2000; Cober et al., 2003). This study examined the content of mission statements of top-rated national universities and liberal arts colleges in the United States guided by the stakeholder theory, and theories of organizational identity and organizational image.

General Discussion

**Named stakeholder presence, frequency, and rank.** Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson and Preston, 1995) states there are many interested parties involved in the daily decision-making needs of an organization, and until now, no research in the communication or higher education literatures has conducted a systematic cataloguing of stakeholders named in college and university mission statements. Knowing who colleges and universities believe to be their stakeholders allows us to understand to whom today’s colleges and universities believe they are accountable. The majority of schools in the sample named at least one stakeholder in their mission statement, and many mentioned multiple stakeholders. It appears that both national
universities and liberal arts colleges recognize the need to manage stakeholder identification through the inclusion of key stakeholders in their mission statement. Not surprisingly, students are the stakeholder mentioned most by both national universities (57.8%) and liberal arts colleges (63.6%). For national universities, students had the highest average ranking ($M=1.678$). Among liberal arts colleges, this stakeholder category also had a higher average ranking ($M=1.393$) than all other categories except undergraduate students ($n=1, 1.1\%, M=1.000$), which was only named once. This finding suggests that both national universities and liberal arts colleges see students as their primary stakeholder. Given their purpose and reason for existing, this is a logical conclusion to draw.

Beyond a shared emphasis on students in general as a stakeholder, national universities and liberal arts colleges tend to give different weight to different stakeholders. National universities were significantly more likely to name graduate students and undergraduate students as stakeholders than liberal arts colleges. Liberal arts colleges did not name graduate students at all, and only mentioned undergraduate students once. This is probably related to differences in the breakdown in types of degrees offered by the two types of schools. The entire sample of national universities ($n=102, 100.0\%$) conferred up to doctoral degrees, but the distribution was much broader for liberal arts colleges, the plurality of which only offered bachelor’s ($n=42, 47.7\%$), while some proffered master’s degrees ($n=35, 39.8\%$), with a few granting doctoral degrees ($n=11, 12.5\%$). Because so many liberal arts colleges offered only undergraduate degrees, it could be assumed that the unspecified students named most as the stakeholder would be undergraduates, and as such there is no reason to differentiate the student class standing within the mission statement. Given the broad nature of national universities, naming
undergraduates or graduates could serve a purpose in projecting an identity of opportunity for all levels of students in order to avoid alienating any given population, causing them to self-select out of pursuing that type of institution.

In addition, liberal arts colleges were more likely to identity a specific gendered pronoun such as “man” or “woman” (n=10, 11.4%), a practice never used by national universities. Some colleges identify as single-gender institutions, serving only men or women, and naming them in their mission statement may serve a purpose in notifying potential applicants of a key part of the school’s identity: its single-gender composition.

Abstract statements of identity. This dissertation analyzed mission statements for the presence of abstract statements of identity, conceptualized by Gustafson and Reger (1995) as intangible statements about values, beliefs, or culture. For example, Lawrence University’s mission statement includes the phrase “[t]he university is devoted to excellence and integrity in all of its activities,” which suggests some basic values of the institution without any substantive basis or evidence. Liberal arts colleges (n=45, 51.1%) were more likely than national universities (n=32, 31.4%) to make abstract statements, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Substantive attributes of identity. Substantive attributes, or those concrete things and processes of an organization that are readily identifiable and definable (Gustafson and Reger, 1995), were analyzed for presence, frequency, and significant difference.

The core competencies of the institution – those things it considers its main strength or fundamental skill – were analyzed first. Among national universities, research or the creation of knowledge was present most (n=85, 83.3%) and, when named, is often cited multiple times in
the mission statement ($M=1.647$, $SD=.960$). This is consistent with the overall mission of national universities as large, research-focused institutions granting doctoral degrees. The creation of knowledge and an emphasis on research aligns with their efforts as educational institutions over the past ten years to more clearly define their place in the public political sphere (Pusser, Kempner, Marginson, and Ordonez, 2012) and seek out additional revenue streams to supplement dwindling state and federal support (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Liberal arts colleges did not place the same emphasis on identifying research/knowledge creation as part of their core competencies ($n=28, 31.8\%$), which seems to align with their reduced strategic need for research revenue generation.

Liberal arts colleges’ most-identified core competency was academic program/focus. The phrase “liberal arts” was almost always included in the mission statement, as seen in Grinnell College’s mission: “The College pursues that mission by providing an education in the liberal arts through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas.” A counter-example, where the college identifies specific academic programs outside of the liberal arts, is offered by Harvey Mudd College. Their mission begins “Harvey Mudd College seeks to educate engineers, scientists, and mathematicians well versed in all of these areas and in the humanities and social sciences…” When included, the specific academic focus component also had the highest frequency of use ($M=1.758$, $SD=1.411$) in liberal arts colleges’ mission statements. This is reasonable to expect as an effort at communicating their identity as liberal arts colleges. Liberal arts colleges were significantly more likely than national universities to include language about a specific academic focus.
Another category of substantive identity was statements about the geographic scope of the institution’s influence. World was the most-mentioned location by both national universities ($n=60, 58.8\%$) and liberal arts colleges ($n=47, 53.4\%$). As top-ranked schools, it seems reasonable to expect the expression of their identities would include references to worldwide influence. No other scope was mentioned more than nine times among liberal arts colleges. National universities were significantly more likely to include both state ($n=37, 36.3\%$) and nation ($n=37, 36.3\%$) as locations. As large, public institutions, many of these schools are expected to serve as state schools serving national populations. Drawing the best students from across the country (and around the world) would be vital to maintaining their competitive edge in the rankings, so it could be expected they would seek to identify themselves as serving their home state and the nation at large.

This dissertation also examined the products identified in mission statements. For national universities, the component listed most frequently was statements about community improvement ($n=46, 45.1\%$), which were likely to be mentioned more than once when present ($M=1.239, SD=.480$). This could be seen as an effort at positioning themselves as a public good service due to the ongoing political pressure for schools to define their outcomes and contributions to society (Tierney, 2006).

For liberal arts colleges, personal growth/development statements were most-mentioned ($n=51, 58.0\%$). They were significantly more likely to mention personal grown than national universities ($n=25, 24.5\%$). This could be interpreted as an effort by liberal arts colleges, which are typically smaller and more intimate, to emphasize the personal focus of the educational experience at their institution, as opposed to the perceived larger, more impersonal national
universities. The result supports a basic premise that liberal arts colleges, while not neglecting the other products of a sound education, are more focused on making their students better people, not just better prepared for research or a career. This is consistent with both historical and developing missions throughout the 20th and 21st centuries among liberal arts colleges (Hirt, 2006).

Finally, this study examined the extent to which mission statements included strategies employed by universities and college to deliver their intended products. In general, few schools discussed such strategies. Experiential learning, which included service learning and co-curricular activities, was the category found most frequently among national universities and liberal arts colleges. Only one category – the use of residential space as a mechanism to support the educational outcomes of the institution – showed significant difference between the two school types. Liberal arts college mission statements included this component 10 times (11.4%), while national universities never included it. This may be related to the difference in settings and size between the two types of schools, where liberal arts colleges may choose to emphasize their residential campuses to underscore the intimacy (and thus, connection) present among a smaller student body and to assuage any concerns among potential recruits about where they may need to live or the need to commute given the more suburban and rural settings of that type of institution.

**Statements about organizational image.** Statements about diversity and intentional partnerships with external entities were coded as organizational image components. The image-related coding categories were limited to only these two types of content: diversity and external partnership, both of which identified by Palmer and Short (2008) as reliable indicators of a school’s efforts to construe organizational image to various audiences. This is not fully adequate
to make broad conclusions about an institution’s image-related content in their mission statement. It may be that image-related components may be a low priority for mission statement content by both types of institutions, but further research is necessary to determine the extent to which this is the case. Perhaps, as Lynch (2000) suggests, future research should focus on components related to ownership, resources, or environmental circumstances in which the institution exists.

Among both types of institutions, the non-specific word “diversity,” unattended by any defining category (i.e. age, gender, race, etc.), was most present and most repeated when present. National universities used the word slightly more often than liberal arts colleges, but the difference was not statistically significant. No specific diversity identifier was used more than eight percent of the time by any institution type. This generic statement about a school’s acceptance of diversity may serve as a signal (Spence, 1973) to clued-in observers that the school is aware of the necessity of tolerance in the current political culture shift (Tierney, 2006). Signals are meant to be low-cost ways to communicate otherwise difficult-to-detect attributes about an organization to outside observers. Mentioning a keyword, such as diversity, can indicate a cultural identity attribute to a savvy potential stakeholder without getting caught up in a longer, more complicated definition of the organization’s commitment to serving diverse populations (Braddy et al., 2006). This has been demonstrated to be an effective signal in the management literature (Avery, Hernandez, and Hebl, 2004), with embedded diversity statements reinforcing the idea that the organization values diversity and are likely to include diverse members (Avery and McKay, 2006). This may also serve a unifying purpose between stakeholders (current or future) and the organization. The idea of strategic ambiguity (Eisenberg, 1984) suggests that
organizations symbolically communicate their values in such a way as to enable multiple interpretations amongst various stakeholder groups while allowing them to believe that are still in agreement with one another. As a form of strategic ambiguity, the mention of unspecified diversity may serve such a purpose, enabling equivocal interpretation across the breadth of stakeholders a university must manage without having to individually name or address each possible definition. Statements about external partnerships were mentioned more frequently by national universities (n=25, 24.5%) than liberal arts colleges (n=7, 8.0%), but not significantly so.

**Significant differences between the types of institutions.** H1-H3 hypothesized that there would be significant differences overall between the content of the mission statements depending on the type of school. Chi-square tests found significant differences between the two types of schools on only nine of the 43 categories coded, with no component area having a majority of their categories show significant differences by type. These differences occur in some of the stakeholder components and all of the substantive identity component areas, but none of the image-related categories. The areas that did show significant differences seem to logically align with the different purposes of the two institutional types. This study considers H1 and H2 partially supported, with some evidence that there are identifiable differences between the institutional types on key components. H3 is not supported by the results of this study. Further research will be necessary to determine how these different categories align with institutional goals and outcomes.
Theoretical and Practical Implications

The primary mission of an institution of higher education, like any other organization (Freeman, 1984), could reasonably be expected to be to provide some benefit for their stakeholders. Despite this, there has been little research on these schools’ efforts at managing these stakeholders in the higher education literature. In addition, there is little published research on organizational identity related to higher educational institutions. This study offers theoretical and practical implications in the use of strategic communication by national universities and liberal arts colleges to manage stakeholder identification.

Theoretical implications. This dissertation contributes to the stakeholder theory by exploring its application in a higher education setting. Building on previous works by Trow (1998) and Palmer and Short (2008), this study developed a typology of stakeholders used by national universities and liberal arts colleges and examined existing mission statements for the presence, frequency, and primacy of these stakeholders. Findings suggest that the list is comprehensive and inclusive, with few categories registering below 10% presence across the sample and a limited number of stakeholders coded into the other category by both national universities (n=9, 8.8%) and liberal arts colleges (n=6, 6.8%). This establishes a foundation for using this list in research related to other strategic communication tools in higher education, such as press kits, website content, recruiting materials, emergency management materials, or official communications, such as emails from the college or university president. Stakeholder theory has been identified as an important area of future research within higher education (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Dobni and Luffman, 2003). The development of a usable, universal list of stakeholder categories for future research is a fundamental step to enabling research in this area.
Furthermore, this study contributes to the research of organizational identity theory in a higher education setting. Organizational identity research in higher education is relatively underdeveloped (Weerts, Freed, and Morphew 2013). So, there is a need for the development of theoretical models that can be used to conduct research on identity components specific to higher education. Gustafson and Reger’s (1995) model of identity provided the basis for the categories coded in this study. Operationalization of the abstract and substantive attributes into components relevant to strategic communication of identity in higher education was a necessary part of the development of this research project. The frequency of coded statements conforming to the categories for core competencies, geographic scope, products, and strategies seems to substantiate them as comprehensive and relevant to the study of the strategic communication of organizational identity by institutions of higher education. This provides a tool going forward for the continued exploration of the communication of identity in this setting.

**Practical implications.** This study suggests some practical implications based on its findings. First, it affirms some common practices in the strategic communication of stakeholders and abstract and substantive identity components in a higher education setting. The majority of the component areas studied showed no significant difference by school type. This suggests that it is a common practice to include or exclude them by top-ranked schools regardless of their type. Given the critical nature of communicating organizational identity to potential stakeholders, practitioners may want to make note of those categories that seem to be universally applied in mission statements. As they write their own, they may want to consider Albert and Whetten’s (1985) assertion that distinctiveness is core to an organization’s identity. By choosing to include or exclude certain common components, a school may be able to emphasize or
deemphasize parts of its identity to communicate its distinctiveness to current or future stakeholders.

In higher education settings, mission statements are generally written by existing staff who perform some other function for the university, often by committee. Given the increasing pressure on all units within colleges and universities to produce and perform in order to justify their existence (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004), the time spent on this type of project can be significant (Hinton, 2012), and thus costly. Additionally, Hinton (2012) notes that long, comprehensive mission statements in higher education often suffer from mission creep, taking on many additional areas of suggested action extending far beyond their core mission, potentially stretching their human, political, and financial capital dangerously thin. This complicates the process of outlining institutional use of resources for its primary mission in order to satisfy accrediting commissions. Smaller, denser, more specific mission statements are becoming the norm as a result. By compiling a viable list of stakeholders and identity related components used by top tier schools, all of which must rationalize institutional effectiveness to accrediting commissions, this study enables practitioners to focus their efforts by identifying a list of most-used component types and then utilizing the list to generate a mission statement which still satisfies the basic premise of strategic communication for the purposes of stakeholder management and identity conveyance without having to discover the categories for themselves. In the field of higher education, this type of best practices foundational work is common. Schools can still use stylistic choices to convey their individual institutional flavor, but can skip the time-consuming task of determining which types of components should be included by following the top-tier schools within their benchmark group.
Additionally, this list of stakeholders and identity components could be useful in application to other forms of strategic communication within the higher education realm. When building vision or values statements, recruiting materials, or other strategic tools, administrators can refer to these findings to determine which stakeholders or identity-related components to include, picking and choosing from the comprehensive and inclusive lists explicated by this study.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Contributions to the literature and field aside, this study recognizes several limitations. First, the study only examined top-ranked schools. In 2012-2013 (the last year for which data is available), there were 4,726 degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). The sample for this includes only schools ranked in the top 200 of their respective category, systematically sampled from the ranking lists. This represents not only a small slice of the overall landscape of colleges and universities in America, but one which is considerably higher-performing than many of its contemporaries. It can be reasonably assumed that there are many schools that fall outside of these ranking lists who have published mission statements, and a careful and thorough examination of mission statements which include schools sampled from the overall population will be necessary to draw more powerful conclusions. Future research could generate a larger pool of more representative schools and apply the coding tool to those mission statements in an effort to more broadly examine mission statement content.

Second, this study only examines one part of strategic communication of identity by colleges and universities. Future research could examine vision statements, values statements,
goals statements, annual reports, recruiting materials, or website copy to determine if the stakeholders and components communicated are consistent across strategic communication platforms. This could provide a more comprehensive foundation for establishing stakeholder theory as a management technique for higher education on par with its use in the analogous corporate literature.

Third, the study assumes decisions about content such as stakeholders and identity or image components are independently controlled by the institutions as they develop their mission statements. As mission statements more frequently become part of the accreditation process (Hinton, 2012), future research could examine the effect, if any, that prescribed requirements by accrediting commissions has on the content by cross-referencing any guidance materials provided by the commissions and the coded content of the sample mission statements.

Finally, it would be worthwhile to conduct experimental research to determine how different types of stakeholders respond to mission statements. This would be helpful in developing prescriptive tools for mission statement content creators to use in the course of their work.

Conclusion

This study identified and explicat ed a comprehensive and inclusive list of stakeholders and identity-related components present in top-ranked college and university mission statements. It stands as a key piece of data, establishing foundational precedent for future research in multiple fields. Communication scholars can use these findings as entre into the field of higher education research, a discipline that has been woefully under-explored by researchers from the communication-oriented fields that have extensively covered corporate and non-profit strategic
communication. The opening of a new field of research is a rare and exciting opportunity for future scholars to build a body of knowledge and test existing theories for applicability in a new discipline. Likewise, higher education scholars can use these findings as a springboard from which to begin their own explorations of how previously unstudied strategic communication channels align with commonly-accepted practice and theory in other disciplines, such as the corporate or non-profit realms.

Because colleges and universities exist at the nexus of the nonprofit and for-profit worlds, they offer a unique opportunity to see how theories and practices commonly relegated to one or the other of these behave when they are present together within the same entity. This study has unlocked the potential to bridge this gap in the research.


APPENDIX A - CODEBOOK

RQ1: Stakeholder presence and frequency

V1 – Stakeholder presence
Indicate any which are present
0 – Not Present
1 – Present

1. Students – Undergraduate
   Undergraduate or bachelor’s seeking students identified specifically
2. Students – Graduate
   Graduate, master’s, doctoral, or professional students identified specifically
3. Students – Unspecified
   Students mentioned without degree-level
4. Faculty
   Faculty, professors, teachers, identified specifically
5. Community Members
   Local, regional, state, national, or global non-members of the institution, such as citizens, parents, partners, contributors, governmental agencies, volunteers, “individuals,” friends, society, etc.
6. Alumni – alumni or graduates of the institution, former or past students
7. Staff – staff, non-teaching professionals of the institution, including trustees, the president, administrators, ministers, etc.
8. Gender – identified gender-specific pronouns, such as men or women
9. Other – Any named stakeholder which does not fit into a previous category

V2 – Stakeholder frequency
Count any which are present
If present, indicate total count
If none, mark “0”

1. Students – Undergraduate
   Undergraduate or bachelor’s seeking students identified specifically
2. Students – Graduate
   Graduate, master’s, doctoral, or professional students identified specifically
3. Students – Unspecified
   Students mentioned without degree-level
4. Faculty
   Faculty, professors, teachers, identified specifically
5. Community Members
   Local, regional, state, national, or global non-members of the institution, such as citizens, parents, partners, contributors, governmental agencies, volunteers, “individuals,” friends, society, etc.
6. Alumni – alumni or graduates of the institution, former or past students
7. Staff – staff, non-teaching professionals of the institution, including trustees, the president, administrators, ministers, etc.
8. Gender – identified gender-specific pronouns, such as men or women
9. Other – Any named stakeholder which does not fit into a previous category

RQ2: Stakeholder Weight

V3 – Stakeholder rank
Indicate where each named stakeholder occurs in relation to any other named stakeholders by rank order (1, 2, 3, etc.)

1. Students – Undergraduate
   Undergraduate or bachelor’s seeking students identified specifically
2. Students – Graduate
   Graduate, master’s, doctoral, or professional students identified specifically
3. Students – Unspecified
   Students mentioned without degree-level
4. Faculty
   Faculty, professors, teachers, identified specifically
5. Community Members
   Local, regional, state, national, or global non-members of the institution, such as citizens, parents, partners, contributors, governmental agencies, volunteers, “individuals,” friends, society, etc.
6. Alumni – alumni or graduates of the institution, former or past students
7. Staff – staff, non-teaching professionals of the institution, including trustees, the president, administrators, ministers, etc.
8. Gender – identified gender-specific pronouns, such as men or women
9. Other – Any named stakeholder which does not fit into a previous category
**RQ3: Identity Components**

*V4 – Intangible Statements*
Mark the presence of words or phrases which set the context for the organization, describe organizational culture, or outline organizational beliefs, values, attitudes, and/or priorities

0 – Not Present
1 – Present

*V5 – Strategies named*
Statements about how the institution delivers or creates its products, or statements about the methods the institution uses to teach, research, and/or serve
Indicate any which are present
0 – Not Present
1 – Present

1. **Technological means**
   Content is delivered via some specified technology, such as computers, mobile devices, the Internet, etc.
2. **Experiential learning**
   Content is delivered through some experiential channel, such as service-learning, leadership opportunities, co-curricular activities, practical experience, internships, real-world experience, active-learning, etc.
3. **Classroom Instruction**
   Specific mention of classroom space being used for content delivery, such as “in the classroom”
4. **Research space**
   Content is delivered through laboratories, field study, libraries, computer labs, or other physical spaces dedicated to knowledge creation and dissemination that are *not* classrooms
5. **Online education**
   Specific mention of online or distance education coursework available through the institution
6. **Creative Activity**
   Content is delivered through creative or artistic means, such as creative activity, endeavors, expression, effort, or activity, or artistic expression, ventures, and any mention of art or performance studios or theaters
7. Residential space
   Mention of residential nature of institution in connection to its mission, or any mention of
   living-learning communities, residence halls, dorms, or living environments
8. Study abroad
   Specific mention of study abroad or international/global education initiatives
9. Other
   Any other strategy for delivering content which is not covered by a previous category

V6 – Strategies frequency
Count any which are present
If present, indicate total count
If none, mark “0”

1. Technological means
   Content is delivered via some specified technology, such as computers, mobile devices,
   the Internet, etc.
2. Experiential learning
   Content is delivered through some experiential channel, such as service-learning,
   leadership opportunities, co-curricular activities, practical experience, internships, real-
   world experience, active-learning, etc.
3. Classroom Instruction
   Specific mention of classroom space being used for content delivery, such as “in the
   classroom”
4. Research space
   Content is delivered through laboratories, field study, libraries, computer labs, or other
   physical spaces dedicated to knowledge creation and dissemination that are not
   classrooms
5. Online education
   Specific mention of online or distance education coursework available through the
   institution
6. Creative Activity
   Content is delivered through creative or artistic means, such as creative activity,
   endeavors, expression, effort, or activity, or artistic expression, ventures, and any
   mention of art or performance studios or theaters
7. Residential space
   Mention of residential nature of institution in connection to its mission, or any mention of
   living-learning communities, residence halls, dorms, or living environments
8. Study abroad
   Specific mention of study abroad or international/global education initiatives
9. Other
   Any other strategy for delivering content which is not covered by a previous category

V7 – Core Competencies named
The fundamental knowledge, skill, or expertise of the institution; the institution’s main strengths
Indicate any which are present
0 – Not Present
1 – Present

1. Teaching
   The institution mentions teaching or the dissemination of knowledge as a component of its mission
2. Research/Knowledge Creation
   The institution mentions research or knowledge creation as a focus of its mission, including discovery of knowledge, building theory, invention, intellectual/philosophical discovery, etc.
3. Service
   The institution mentions service as a focus of its mission
4. Specific academic focus
   The institution lists a specific area of academic expertise, such as liberal arts or liberal education, or names a specific area of study, such as business, engineering, mathematics, etc.
5. Other
   Any other mention of a core competency which is not covered by a previous category

V8 – Core Competencies frequency
The fundamental knowledge, skill, or expertise of the institution; the institution’s main strengths
Count any which are present
If present, indicate total count
If none, mark “0”

1. Teaching
   The institution mentions teaching or the dissemination of knowledge as a component of its mission
2. Research/Knowledge Creation
   The institution mentions research or knowledge creation as a focus of its mission, including discovery of knowledge, building theory, invention, intellectual/philosophical discovery, etc.
3. Service
   The institution mentions service as a focus of its mission
4. Specific academic focus
   The institution lists a specific area of academic expertise, such as liberal arts or liberal education, or names a specific area of study, such as business, engineering, mathematics, etc.
5. Other
   Any other mention of a core competency which is not covered by a previous category

V9 – Geographic Scoped named
Statements that define the geographic scope where the institution conducts its business or offers its products
Indicate any which are present
0 – Not Present
1 – Present

1. Community
   Mention of the word “community” such as in “we serve our local community”
2. City
   Use of the word city or mention of a specific city by name
3. State
   Use of the word state such as in “we are the flagship institution of our state” or mention of a specific state by name
4. Region
   Use of the word region or mention of a region-defining word, such as “serving the Southeast”
5. Nation
   Use of the word nation or country, or mention of a specific country such as “the United States”
6. World
   Use of the any word which describes the entirety of the world, such as world, globe, global, Earth, or planet
7. Other
   Any other mention of a geographic scope which is not covered by a previous category

V10 – Geographic Scoped frequency
Statements that define the geographic scope where the institution conducts its business or offers its products
Count any which are present
If present, indicate total count
If none, mark “0”

1. Community
   Mention of the word “community” such as in “we serve our local community”
2. City
   Use of the word city or mention of a specific city by name
3. State
   Use of the word state such as in “we are the flagship institution of our state” or mention of a specific state by name
4. Region
   Use of the word region or mention of a region-defining word, such as “serving the Southeast”
5. Nation
   Use of the word nation or country, or mention of a specific country such as “the United States”
6. World
   Use of the any word which describes the entirety of the world, such as world, globe, global, Earth, or planet
7. Other
   Any other mention of a geographic scope which is not covered by a previous category

V11 – Products named
Statements about the outcomes intended or products offered by the institution to its stakeholders, typically students
Indicate any which are present
0 – Not Present
1 – Present

1. Academic Growth
   Mentions stakeholder outcomes related to academic development, such as intellectual growth, critical thinking skills, knowledge attainment, learning, understanding theoretical or academic topics, study skills, independent thinking, etc.
2. Personal Growth/Development
   Mentions stakeholder outcomes related to personal growth of the stakeholder, such as values/beliefs development, being a better person, understanding themselves, spiritual growth or faith development, etc.
3. Career Preparation/Employment
   Specifically mentions preparing stakeholders for career or employment needs
4. Citizenship Skills
   Mentions stakeholder outcomes related to being a citizen, such as “being a good citizen” or “a productive member of society,” may be allude to participation in democratic society or process, being a good neighbor, contributing to society, or exercising civic duties or responsibilities

5. Community Improvement
   Mentions the institution’s intended outcomes related to impacting their community, or to stakeholders impacting their own communities, including community building, improvement, enrichment, development, or growth

6. Leadership Development
   Specific mention of development of leadership skills or preparing stakeholder(s) to be leaders

7. Other
   Any other mention of a product or outcome which is not covered by a previous category

V12 – Products frequency
Statements about the outcomes intended or products offered by the institution to its stakeholders, typically students
Count any which are present
If present, indicate total count
If none, mark “0”

1. Academic Growth
   Mentions stakeholder outcomes related to academic development, such as intellectual growth, critical thinking skills, knowledge attainment, learning, understanding theoretical or academic topics, study skills, independent thinking, etc.

2. Personal Growth/Development
   Mentions stakeholder outcomes related to personal growth of the stakeholder, such as values/beliefs development, being a better person, understanding themselves, spiritual growth or faith development, etc.

3. Career Preparation/Employment
   Specifically mentions preparing stakeholders for career or employment needs

4. Citizenship Skills
   Mentions stakeholder outcomes related to being a citizen, such as “being a good citizen” or “a productive member of society,” may be allude to participation in democratic society or process, being a good neighbor, contributing to society, or exercising civic duties or responsibilities

5. Community Improvement
   Mentions the institution’s intended outcomes related to impacting their community, or to stakeholders impacting their own communities, including community building, improvement, enrichment, development, or growth
6. Leadership Development
   Specific mention of development of leadership skills or preparing stakeholder(s) to be leaders
7. Other
   Any other mention of a product or outcome which is not covered by a previous category

**RQ4: Image Components**

*V13 – Diversity Factors named*
Statements about the institution’s recognition or value of diversity-related factors
Indicate any which are present
0 – Not Present
1 – Present

1. Age
   Any statement about age-related diversity, such as a specific age, “traditional age,” “adult learners,” or “continuing education”
2. Race
   Any statement about racial diversity or specific mention of any commonly recognized racial identity, including “students of color” or census-based categories
3. Gender
   Any statement about gender diversity not specifically naming stakeholders (e.g. not a phrase like “As an institution serving women,” but instead “we value men and women alike”)
4. Religion
   Any statement about religious diversity or tolerance not including descriptive language about the institution’s identity (e.g. “As a Catholic institution, we believe …”)
5. Sexual Orientation
   Any statement about sexual orientation, sexual preference, LGBTQ, or related language
6. Socioeconomic Status
   Any statement about socioeconomic status, including statements about tolerance or inclusion of varying levels of wealth or SES backgrounds, not including statements about intended outcomes/products related to community improvement, such as “dedicated to addressing poverty”
7. Other
   Any other mention of a diversity category which is not covered by a previous category

*V14 – Diversity Factors frequency*
Statements about the institution’s recognition or value of diversity-related factors
Count any which are present
If present, indicate total count
If none, mark “0”

1. Age
   Any statement about age-related diversity, such as a specific age, “traditional age,” “adult
   learners,” or “continuing education”

2. Race
   Any statement about racial diversity or specific mention of any commonly recognized
   racial identity, including “students of color” or census-based categories

3. Gender
   Any statement about gender diversity not specifically naming stakeholders (e.g. not a
   phrase like “As an institution serving women,” but instead “we value men and women
   alike”)

4. Religion
   Any statement about religious diversity or tolerance not including descriptive language
   about the institution’s identity (e.g. “As a Catholic institution, we believe …”)

5. Sexual Orientation
   Any statement about sexual orientation, sexual preference, LGBTQ, or related language

6. Socioeconomic Status
   Any statement about socioeconomic status, including statements about tolerance or
   inclusion of varying levels of wealth or SES backgrounds, not including statements about
   intended outcomes/products related to community improvement, such as “dedicated to
   addressing poverty”

7. Other
   Any other mention of a diversity category which is not covered by a previous category

V15 – Partnerships
Statements about social responsibilities the institution recognizes in relation to its stakeholders or
geographic scope, or specific mentions of partnering/partnerships with those stakeholders/scope
Indicate any which are present
0 – Not Present
1 – Present

V16 – Partnerships frequency
Statements about social responsibilities the institution recognizes in relation to its stakeholders or
geographic scope, or specific mentions of partnering/partnerships with those stakeholders/scope
Count any which are present
If present, indicate total count
If none, mark “0”
Demographic Information

V17 – Degree level
Indicate the highest degree offered by the institution; utilize U.S. News and World Reports listing to determine this information

1. Undergraduate/Bachelor
2. Master
3. Doctoral/Professional

V18 – Religion
Indicate whether the institution is religiously affiliated; utilize U.S. News and World Reports listing to determine this information

0 – Not affiliated
1 – Affiliated

V19 – Size
Determine the full-time enrollment for the institution; utilize U.S. News and World Reports listing to determine this information

V20 – Setting
Indicate the geographic setting of the institution; utilize U.S. News and World Reports listing to determine this information

1. Urban
2. Suburban
3. Rural

V21 – Ownership
Indicate whether the institution is public or privately owned; utilize U.S. News and World Reports listing to determine this information

1. Private
2. Public

V22 – Word Count
Total count of the words in the institution’s mission statement. Use Microsoft Word’s built-in word count mechanism by highlighting the entire mission statement, not including the institution name, and record the number of words.