2-17-2014

Interim administrative appointments in a postsecondary organization

Valerie Renee Culler

Follow this and additional works at: http://commons.emich.edu/theses

Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation

Culler, Valerie Renee, "Interim administrative appointments in a postsecondary organization" (2014). Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations. 628.

http://commons.emich.edu/theses/628
Interim Administrative Appointments in a Postsecondary Organization

by

Valerie Renee Culler

Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Leadership and Counseling

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Dissertation Committee:

James Barott, PhD, Chair

David Anderson, EdD

David Clifford, PhD

Ronald Flowers, EdD

Ypsilanti, Michigan

February 17, 2014
Dedication

My husband, Kevin
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the members of my committee, who guided me through this journey. The patience, encouragement, and investment in teaching that I received from my committee through this process were invaluable. To Dr. James Barott, my chair, whose commitment to me through the process never wavered. To committee members Dr. David Anderson (who is a tremendous student advocate), Dr. Ronald Flowers, and Dr. David Clifford.

Finally, to my husband, Kevin, who patiently dedicated so much time and energy to helping me achieve my educational goals. From driving me to Gaylord every weekend for Dr. Barott’s extra seminar, to gracefully accepting so many cancellations of weekend plans so I could work on my research, to supporting me through all of the low and high points of this process, you have been my rock.
Abstract

The appointment of individuals to interim administrative roles is a practice that is common within postsecondary institutions in the United States. The purpose of this study was to answer three questions: (a) what were the experiences and perspectives of individuals who worked in interim administrative roles, (b) what were the organizational rationalities that led to the appointment of people to interim administrative roles, and (c) what were the experiences and perspectives of individuals who worked under interim leadership?

This was a qualitative research study that was framed through the constructivist paradigm. The study took place at a public research university in the Midwestern United States. It is a complex organization that has numerous undergraduate and graduate programs, a medical school, and a law school. The annual enrollment is just under 30,000 students. Data were gathered through interviews with employees of the organization who had worked in interim administrative positions; analysis of university documents, department memos, and newspaper articles; and the researcher’s participant observation.

Core technology, marginality and centrality of positions within the organization, resource dependency, and conflict were key concepts for the conceptual framework of this study. Three categories of interim administrators were identified in this study: (a) interim academic administrators, (b) interim support services administrators, and (c) high level interim administrators.

The results of the study showed that there are multiple meanings for the use of interim administrators for the organization and the person, and the meanings vary depending on context. The needs of the organization often do not align with the expectations of interim administrators, leading to interim appointments that are forced and negative experiences. During periods of
conflict, there are opportunities for interim administrators in high-level positions to leverage promotions if they understand the political forces and manage conflict. Finally, this study showed that while the organization conserves resources by placing people into interim roles, there are also significant costs. Keeping interim deans in place for extended periods of time threatens to slow down strategic planning and the hiring and promotion of tenure-track faculty. Administrators who serve as interims for long periods are prone to burnout.
Table of Contents

Dedication .......................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................... iii
Abstract ............................................................................................................................. iv
List of Tables ..................................................................................................................... xiii
List of Figures .................................................................................................................... xiv
Chapter One: Introduction ................................................................................................. 1
  Background of the Study .................................................................................................... 1
  Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................................ 2
  Significance of the Study .................................................................................................. 3
  Research Questions .......................................................................................................... 4
  Definition of Special Terms ............................................................................................. 5
Chapter Two: Research Methods .......................................................................................... 8
  Research Tradition .......................................................................................................... 8
    Subjectivity .................................................................................................................... 9
    The researcher as instrument ....................................................................................... 10
    Reliability ..................................................................................................................... 12
    Validity ......................................................................................................................... 13
  Research Design .............................................................................................................. 14
    Unit of analysis ............................................................................................................ 14
    Sampling ....................................................................................................................... 17
    Instrumentation ............................................................................................................ 18
  Moral, Ethical, and Legal Issues ...................................................................................... 20
Chapter Three: Literature Review ................................................................. 23

Organizational Theories .............................................................................. 23
  Organizational rationality ......................................................................... 25
  Organizational rationality revisited ......................................................... 27
  Rational, natural, and open systems ......................................................... 28
  Loosely coupled systems ........................................................................ 31
  Conclusion: organizational theories ......................................................... 32

Cultural Theories ........................................................................................ 32
  Institutional theory .................................................................................... 34
  Conclusion: cultural theories .................................................................... 37

Conflict Theories ........................................................................................ 37
  The function of conflict ............................................................................. 38
  The scope of conflict ................................................................................ 39
  Polity ........................................................................................................... 40
  Power and influence .................................................................................. 41
  Conclusion: conflict theories .................................................................... 41

Executive Succession .................................................................................. 41
  Top management jobs ............................................................................. 43
  New executive leaders ............................................................................. 49
  Insider vs. outsider: organizational socialization .................................... 52
  Succession planning .................................................................................. 55
  Conclusion: executive succession ............................................................. 56

Interim Administrative Roles ...................................................................... 57
Core Technologies: UX Main Campus .................................................................................105

Academic unit: UX Main Campus ..................................................................................105

Core technology: teaching .............................................................................................105

Core technology: training (preparing students for work) ............................................107

UX Main Campus outputs ...............................................................................................108

Task/Resource Environment: UX Main Campus ...............................................................108

Managerial activities of student services offices: UX Main Campus .........................108

Support services inputs: UX Main Campus ..................................................................108

Bridging activities: UX Main Campus ..............................................................................111

Buffering activities: UX Main Campus ...........................................................................113

Support services maintenance activities: UX Main Campus .......................................114

Support services outputs: UX Main Campus ..................................................................118

UX Main Campus: connection with students .................................................................119

Support services unit’s bureaucratic structure: UX Main Campus ...............................120

Institutional Environment: UX Main Campus .................................................................123

Cultural Environment: UX Main Campus .....................................................................123

Organizational subculture: UX Main Campus ...............................................................128

Summary: School of Medicine vs. UX Main Campus ....................................................129

Marginality vs. Centrality and the Use of Interim Administrators in the

Academic Core ..................................................................................................................131

UX hiring process in the academic unit .......................................................................132

Central vs. marginal core technologies .........................................................................133

Interim academic administrator assignments by core .................................................141
Summary .................................................................................................................. 223
Practical Applications .............................................................................................. 225
Implications for Future Research ........................................................................... 229
Limitations of the Study ......................................................................................... 231
Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 232
References ............................................................................................................... 233
Appendices ............................................................................................................. 243
Appendix A: Indicators of Centrality and Marginality ............................................. 244
Appendix B: UX Organizational Charts ..................................................................... 276
List of Tables

Table 1: Scott’s Three Pillars of Institutions .................................................................35
Table 2: Staffing in the UX School of Medicine Office of Student Affairs .........................92
Table 3: Departments of UX Main Campus Student Services Unit that Bring Inputs ............109
Table 4: Departments of Student Services Unit that Provide Maintenance Activities ..........114
Table 5: UX 2012-2013 Tuition and Fee Schedule ............................................................117
Table 6: UX 2012-2013 Additional Fees by Level .............................................................118
Table 7: Departments of Student Services Unit that Provide Output Activities ................118
Table 8: UX Schools and Colleges, Ranked from Central to Marginal ...............................137
Table 9: Timeline of UX School of Medicine Deans .........................................................141
Table 10: Overall Number of Interim Administrative Positions in Academic Departments .....145
Table 11: Number of Interim Academic Administrative Positions by School/College ..........146
Table 12: Time of Service in an Interim Academic Administrative Role .............................146
Table 13: Interim Deans by College and School ...............................................................147
Table 14: Overall Number of Interim Administrative Positions in Support Services

Departments .........................................................................................................................152
Table 15: Number of Interim Administrative Positions by Department .............................153
Table 16: Time of Service in an Interim Administrative Role .............................................153
Table 17: Interim Administrators in the College of Lifelong Learning ...............................172
Table 18: Interim Administrators in the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs ...173
Table 19: Interim Directors in Graduate Admissions ...........................................................176
List of Figures

Figure 1: The Case as the Unit of Analysis ..........................................................15
Figure 2: Leavitt’s Diamond: A Model of Organization ..........................................23
Figure 3: Parson’s (2003) and Thompson’s (2006) Concepts of Organizational Rationality .....25
Figure 4: Muwonge’s (2012) and Schinn’s (2013) Model of Organizational Rationality ..........27
Figure 5: The Manager’s Roles ..............................................................................44
Figure 6: Executive Leadership: A Model of Competing Roles ...............................48
Figure 7: Research Award Dollars at UX, as Published by the UX Division of Research ........77
Figure 8: Percentage of UX Research Dollars ..........................................................77
Figure 9: Scholarly Activities Required of UX School of Medicine Faculty, from the UX School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty Handbook ...................79
Figure 10: UX School of Medicine Student Research Announcement .......................80
Figure 11: UX School of Medicine Student Research Announcement (2) ......................81
Figure 12: Percentage of UX Students Enrolled in the School of Medicine ..................82
Figure 13: Teaching Activities Required of UX School of Medicine Faculty, from the UX School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty Handbook .....................84
Figure 14: Service Activities Expected of UX School of Medicine Faculty, from the UX School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors Faculty Handbook ..........................86
Figure 15: Flyer for UX School of Medicine Co-Curricular Program .........................88
Figure 16: Diagram of the “Grant Life Cycle” from the UX Division of Research .............99
Figure 17: UX Technology Budget Document ..........................................................111
Figure 18: Retention Rates for First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Undergraduates ..........116
Figure 19: Registrar’s Office Self-Service Tools .......................................................119
Figure 20: Financial Aid Office Self-Service Tools ..........................................................120
Figure 21: Example of Standard UX Job Posting for Director in Support Services Unit ..........122
Figure 22: UX Talking Points on Graduation Rates ......................................................................126
Figure 23: Central and Marginal Schools within UX ................................................................136
Figure 24: UX State Appropriations vs. Tuition and Fees ..........................................................156
Figure 25: Percentage of UX Resources from State Appropriations ...............................................156
Figure 26: UX Enrollment from 2001 to 2011 ........................................................................158
Figure 27: Muwonge’s (2012) and Schinn’s (2013) Model of Organizational Rationality .......200
Figure 28: Summary of Interim Academic Administrator Assignments by Core ......................213
Figure 29: Comparison of Institutional, Task, and Cultural Environments of UX Main
Campus vs School of Medicine ................................................................................................215
Figure 30: Summary of Interim Administrator Categories ..........................................................224
Chapter One: Introduction

The nature of the workforce in the 21st century is changing. Advances in technology and the downsizing of organizations have led to significant changes (Stanley, 2009). Years ago, a person may have hired into an organization with the expectation of working at the same institution for 30 years and, after that significant period of employment, eventually retire from that organization. Today, it has become increasingly common for individuals to work for several different organizations over the course of their careers (Baber & Waymon, 2007). Internal promotional opportunities are not always available, and people may need to move from one organization to another in order to advance to the next stage of their professional lives. Voids in organizational roles as people come and go are often filled by interim administrators. The appointment of individuals to interim administrative roles is a practice that has become quite common within postsecondary institutions in the United States (Mouly & Sankaran, 1999), and it is not unusual for interim appointments to last for periods of one year or longer.

Background of the Study

There is an understanding that the role as an interim administrator is not permanent. People are asked to take these positions on a temporary basis, while the administration decides how to start the search process for hiring a person who will be offered the job permanently and while that search is conducted.

I have worked under the direction of interim directors and interim vice presidents in several organizations. I have seen people come and go from organizations after serving in interim roles for extended periods of time. Some individuals left the organization, defeated and bitter after the experience. Others left seemingly no worse off for the experience but eager to
move on to another role. Serving as interim administrators impacted their professional lives, their employees, and their bosses. The impact was sometimes positive and sometimes negative.

Prior to starting this research, I made a lot of assumptions about why postsecondary organizations use administrators in interim roles so often. The purpose of this research was to study the phenomenon of interim administrative appointments within postsecondary educational organizations through the lens of a qualitative researcher. This process required me to continue to learn the methods of qualitative research and broadened my study of the organizational dynamics that go hand-in-hand for administrators working in an interim capacity.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was threefold. One purpose was to gain knowledge in understanding how the appointment of administrators into interim roles impacts organizations, as well as to gain an understanding of the meaning of the interim role to those individuals who agree to step into those positions. The phenomenon of interim administrative appointments impacts both the organization and the individual, and the purpose of this study was to understand this phenomenon as it relates to both.

Understanding the core technologies and task environments of the organization, as well as the forces of the organizational politics and the types and sources of conflict, was central to understanding the experiences of interim administrators. There is very limited literature about the
experiences of interim administrators and the impact of interim administrators on organizations, so this study added to that knowledge base.

Another purpose of the study was to use the research process as a vehicle through which I learned more about what it means to be a leader in an educational organization. The research process helped me to develop my own leadership skills. As a mid-level administrator at a college, I am at a midpoint in my career path and continue to experience new challenges that the leaders of educational organizations face on a day-to-day basis. This research process required me to learn new skills that will allow me to continue to build upon my leadership abilities.

Finally, this study provided me with an opportunity for personal growth. This was not something I anticipated when I first started thinking about the topic for my research project. With the guidance of my dissertation chair, I selected a topic for my research project that was not just interesting but was also meaningful and important to me. The research process required me to learn more about myself on a personal level and in my role as an education leader, as well as to examine my own career goals and consider the challenges that are ahead in the field of education. The purpose of this research study was as much about learning about myself as an educational leader as it was about adding to a scholarly body of knowledge in the field of educational leadership.

Significance of the Study

Despite the increasing popularity of the practice of appointing individuals to interim administrative positions in organizations, very little research has been done regarding this practice. This research helped to fill a gap about a phenomenon that has become common practice at colleges and universities. For individuals who are asked to accept interim positions and are considering accepting the offer, this research should provide some insight into the
experiences of others who have at one time served in an interim role and how the period of interim service impacted both their professional and personal goals. For individuals in leadership roles who are responsible for making the choice of filling a vacant position in the organization through appointing a person to the position on an interim basis, this research should provide some insights into how appointing people to interim roles could impact the organization as well as its employees.

This research also provides a framework for understanding the role of an interim administrator within a postsecondary educational organization, which may have analytic generalizability to other educational organizations. For this study, I explored organizational characteristics (core technologies, resource dependency, and conflict) that are common in educational organizations. The discovery of how the interim administrator copes with organizational resource dependency, status within the organization, and conflict is information that should be useful to other organizations.

**Research Questions**

This research was an interpretive study designed to understand the meanings of the experiences of individuals who have served as interim administrators in postsecondary organizations. Interpretive studies are “about making sense of social situations by generating explanations for what’s going on within them” (Hatch, 2002, p. 180). The research questions used to frame this study were:

1. What were the experiences and perspectives of individuals who worked in interim administrative roles?

2. What were the organizational rationalities that led to the appointment of people to interim administrative roles?
3. What were the experiences and perspectives of individuals who worked under the leadership of interim administrators?

Definition of Special Terms

Listed here are special terms that the researcher used frequently in the study. These definitions will provide the reader with an understanding of the concepts used in the research, so as to better understand the results of the study.

**Boundary Spanning**: The process of carrying out communication across external or internal organizational boundaries (Johnson & Chang, 2000).

**Bridging**: The techniques of the organization that are used to increase the number and types of relationships with other organizations as a means to establish independence and security in the environment (Scott, 2003, pp. 203-211, 229).

**Buffering**: The process of reducing environmental fluctuations; protecting or sealing off the technical core of the organization from the influences or disturbances of the environment (Thompson, 2006, pp. 20-21).

**Conflict**: When there are competing interests or disagreement, there is conflict. The source of conflict “rests in some perceived or real divergence of interests” (Morgan, 1997, p. 167).

**Core Technology**: The work done by an organization to produce an outcome. The desired outcome is specifically defined and there are organizational structures and processes in place in order to produce the desired outcome (Thompson, 2006, p. 10).

**Culture**: Behavior patterns, language, and customs of a particular group are all aspects of a group’s culture. The knowledge that one acquires as a member of the group. “The acquired
knowledge that people use to interpret experience and general social behavior” (Spradley, 1979, p. 5).

**Institutionalization:** the process by which participants in the organization begin to share common values, commitment, and a sense of purpose, based on the way in which the organization itself takes on a special character to its participants (Selznick, 1996).

**Loose Coupling:** Occurs when there are two events, each of which retains its own identity, but the events are responsive to one another, as well. The events are attached in some way, while at the same time they remain separate and distinct from one another (Weick, 1976).

**Natural System:** Natural system theory describes participants of organizations as having their own agendas and competing interests, and the organization is viewed by participants as a valuable resource (Scott, 2003, pp. 28-30).

**Open System:** Open system theory describes organizations as being dependent on resources and information from the outside environment, and as a result, the outside environment can influence and shape the organization (Scott, 2003. pp. 28-30).

**Organization:** Organizations are made up of social structures, participants, goals, technology, and they exist in an environment. Social structures are “patterned or regularized aspects of the relationships existing among participants in an organization” (Scott, 2003, p. 18).

**Politics:** Politics is the means by which those in authority allocate values (Easton, 1953, p. 129) and how conflict is socialized (Schattschneider, 1975, p. 7).

**Rational System:** Organizations are “instruments designed to attain specified goals” (Scott, 2003, p. 33). The actions of the participants within the organization are intentional, purposeful, and well organized. Goals are clearly defined, and efforts are coordinated to ensure
that there is efficiency in actions taken to achieve the goals. Behavior is rational and understood through rules and clearly defined directives (p. 34).

*Task Environment:* The task environment of an organization is its materials and resources (Thompson, 2006, p. 27).
Chapter Two: Research Methods

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of individuals who work in interim positions in postsecondary institutions, as well as to understand the organizational factors that impact interim appointments. This research was framed through the constructivist paradigm. Within this paradigm, there is a relationship to the items of ontology (what is the nature of reality), epistemology (what can be known and what is our relationship with what is known), and methodology (how do we gain knowledge); knowledge “is often presented in the form of case studies or rich narratives that describe the interpretations constructed as part of the research process” (Hatch, 2002, pp. 11-13, 15-16; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 35).

Research Tradition

Constructivists answer the ontological question by making the assumption that there are no absolute realities. Our individual experiences and perspectives help us construct our own realities (Glesne, 2006, p. 7). For example, my reality may be different than my neighbor’s reality, because my life experiences are different than my neighbor’s life experiences. I construct my own reality based on the meanings I make of my experiences, and there is nobody else who will experience the things I experience in exactly the same way. The nature of reality is subjective, as multiple realities are constructed. The reality is unique to the individual who constructs that reality (Hatch, 2002, p. 15).

Constructivists answer the epistemological question by explaining that knowledge is symbolically constructed and, as such, knowledge cannot be objective. The truth of the world, the understanding of the world, is different from one person to the next, and there is no universal agreement on what is the truth (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). People create their own meanings and their own realities, and they construct knowledge around those created meanings and realities. There
is no hard and objective reality on which to construct knowledge (Schram, 2006, p. 102). We create our findings and we create knowledge based on those findings. The construction of knowledge is subjective, and the relationship I have with what I know about a situation can be different than the relationship my neighbor has with what she knows about the same situation.

Constructivists answer the methodological question by explaining that qualitative researchers attempt to “reconstruct the constructions” that participants use when they make sense or assign meaning to their worlds (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). This often requires the researcher to spend extended periods of time observing the participants in their own settings, or spending extensive amounts of time interviewing participants. Hermeneutic principles, which are interpretive principles about the construction of the meaning of language, are important because researchers use the hermeneutic principles as a means of understanding how participants have constructed meaning in their worlds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105).

In framing this research study using the constructivist paradigm, I as the researcher acknowledge that certain assumptions were brought into the research. These assumptions include that there are no absolute realities, knowledge is subjective and symbolically constructed, and the way in which people make meaning of the world is based on their own unique construction of meaning and/or creation of their own reality of events.

**Subjectivity.** According to Hatch (2002, p. 9), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding human activity. Qualitative researchers describe, analyze, and interpret the data that they collect, and, in doing so, qualitative researchers make subjective judgments as they move from description to interpretation. Subjectivity is inevitable. Qualitative researchers must reflect upon their own subjectivity and how they will monitor their subjectivity as they move through the research process (Peshkin, 1988).
It is accepted among qualitative researchers that it is impossible to be completely objective when they are engaged in the research process (Hatch, 2002, p. 9; Janesick, 2003, p. 56). Qualitative researchers do not subscribe to the theory that bias avoidance is required in order to complete a quality research process. Rather, qualitative researchers are known to select research topics about which they are passionate and have developed an intellectual curiosity (Glesne, 2006, pp. 119-121; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, pp. 9-13) for their research projects, because caring about what one is studying then makes the project meaningful. However, every researcher will experience affect and have biases, and these influences can be quite strong when one is passionate about a topic. When the researcher is emotionally involved with the research project, it can be challenging and uncomfortable because the researcher strives to ensure that the integrity of the research process will not be questioned and that the research will be considered trustworthy by others (Schram, 2006, pp. 137-138).

**The researcher as instrument.** Qualitative researchers are instruments in the research process (Janesick, 2003, p. 57). Sometimes qualitative researchers adopt the role of an observer, sometimes they become participants in the research setting, and other times they actively conduct interviews with research participants (Spradley, 1979, pp. 55-68; Spradley, 1980, pp. 53-62; Stake, 1995, p. 91). In any of these roles, the qualitative researcher acts as an instrument in the research process; therefore, the affect and biases of the researcher must be understood and accounted for in the research report, because affect and bias influence the research process (Peshkin, 1988).

Throughout the research process, qualitative researchers must make choices as observers, participants, interviewers, or in any other role the qualitative researcher adopts. Researchers have to make choices about what data to attend to as well as how to interpret the data. There is never a
problem with a lack of data for researchers to gather. It is just the opposite. There are so much data available that qualitative researchers must make choices about what data are significant and meaningful versus the data that they are willing to forego because they are less important to the research. It is impossible to collect, analyze, and interpret everything that is taking place in the qualitative research setting (Schram, 2006, p. 134). The way in which qualitative researchers make choices in their data collection and understand and interpret the data they have gathered, though, will be influenced by their own values and beliefs. The issue at hand is acknowledging, understanding, and accounting for the extent to which personal qualities or attributes influence our research (p. 135).

The phenomenon I was interested in studying was the experiences of individuals who accept positions as interim administrators at the director, dean, or vice presidential level at colleges or universities. I was interested in understanding how the interim experience impacted the person, as well as the organization. I had a personal interest in this research because I know many individuals, including my spouse, who have accepted interim administrative positions, and these are people whom I admire and respect for their professional accomplishments. More often than not, the people I know who accepted interim administrative positions experienced a lot of disappointment during their interim appointments, and the roles ended with negative outcomes. The personal relationships I already had with individuals who had been appointed to interim roles influenced my understanding of this phenomenon. I had an emotional involvement with the research project, so in order to attend to questions that could arise about the trustworthiness and my own subjectivity throughout the research process, as well as the validity of my research, I had to monitor and reflect on my role as an instrument in the research (Glesne, 2006, p. 37).

Part of being attuned to your subject lenses is being attuned to your emotions. Your emotions help you identify when your subjectivity is being engaged. Instead of trying to
suppress your feelings, you use them to inquire into your perspectives and interpretations
and to shape new questions through re-examining your assumptions….The goal is to
explore such feelings to learn what they are telling you about who you are in the
relationship to what you are learning and to what you may be keeping yourself from
learning. (Glesne, 2006, p. 120)

One way in which I monitored my own subjectivity was to keep a critical reflective
journal on the research process and my role, which is something that Janesick (2003, p. 56)
suggested. Glesne (2006, pp. 123-124) stressed the importance of continuing to read about
monitoring subjectivity, reflecting on it, and talking about it with others who are involved with
the research project (such as co-researchers or the professor overseeing your research)
throughout the process. Hatch (2002, p. 193) suggested writing up a report or a statement about
what you believe and how your values align with your study and, in doing so, being as honest as
possible. Hatch claimed that the process of writing forces a person to organize and express this in
a way that is different than just thinking about or talking about one’s subjectivity.

Monitoring my subjectivity was a very difficult part of the research process. As a novice
researcher, I needed the guidance of my dissertation chair throughout the research process to
ensure that I was doing an adequate job of monitoring and addressing my subjectivity, especially
since I knew I had strong feelings and a passionate personal interest in the phenomenon I was
studying. At times I resisted my chair’s guidance, and when I did my research suffered. It took
many meetings and lengthy discussions with my dissertation chair to learn to keep my
subjectivity in check, and I have grown personally and become a better researcher through the
experience.

Reliability. The traditional definition of reliability is based on a quantitative paradigm
and is concerned with the repeatability of a study (Janesick, 2003, pp. 69-71). Qualitative
research, though, is context dependent (Stake, 2003, pp. 141-142), and repeatability of a study is
not a practical goal for the researcher. In qualitative research, the reliability criterion is based on identifying and documenting accurate patterns, themes, and other phenomena in the context of the study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300), reliability in qualitative research corresponds to “dependability.” If the research is dependable, then the researcher has satisfactorily established the reliability of the study. For qualitative research to be considered reliable, there should be consistency among the data and the data should be trustworthy to the audience reviewing the research study (Golafshani, 2003).

**Validity.** Qualitative researchers must address concerns of validity of their research. In the context of qualitative research, the term *validity* means the extent to which the descriptions and explanation of the data match. When the explanation of the data fits with the description of the data, then the research is considered to be valid (Janesick, 2003, p. 69). It is important to remember that interpretation of data is subjective and there is no single correct way in which to interpret data. One reader of the written research report may consider the research to be valid. Another reader of that same written research report may disagree, because that individual interprets the explanation and description of the data differently.

Eisner (1991, pp. 107-114) offers three additional standards of measuring the credibility (or the validity) of the data in qualitative research. These standards are structural corroboration, consensual validation, and referential adequacy. The researcher looks for recurrent behavior, actions, and themes in the data, and structural corroboration is achieved when the themes are plausible and embedded in a thick context. Consensual validation is achieved when people who have a competent understanding of the research subject agree that the “description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematic” of the data are accurate. Referential adequacy is
achieved when the researcher is able to locate supporting data to the research subject in other outside sources, such as brochures, catalogs, newspapers, memos, photos, and so forth.

In the qualitative research paradigm, internal validity is defined as the extent to which the data are considered to be credible (Hoepfl, 1997). Qualitative researchers rely on the use of triangulation of the data, which is the process of collecting multiple types of data and relating the data in order to increase a reviewer’s confidence of the findings (Glesne, 2006, p. 36) in order to establish internal validity (Hoepfl).

External validity is defined as the extent to which the outcome or results of the study are transferable to other similar contexts. External validity is achieved when researchers are able to generalize the findings of the study to different settings (Hoepfl, 1997).

Research Design

Unit of analysis. “What we see in the social order depends upon the unit of analysis we choose” (Greenfield, 1979, p. 101). Qualitative researchers must answer the questions of what phenomenon they will study and when they will begin and end their data collection. The amount of data available to collect can be staggering, so qualitative researchers set parameters for their data collection. In doing so, researchers “bound” the territory of their study by selecting a unit of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). The unit of analysis is the unit in which the phenomenon occurs. This is illustrated in Figure 1.
Figure 1. The case as the unit of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25).

For this study, the unit of analysis is the organizational set. An organizational set refers to the fact that there are multiple partners an organization deals with, such as suppliers or government agencies, and the organization has different relations based on which partner it is interacting with in the environment (Blau & Scott, 1962, pp. 195-199). The boundary defines employees and the university as the context of the study. More specifically, for the purpose of this study, I was interested in studying the experiences of interim administrators who worked in student support services departments or in the academic departments in the organization.

I conceptualized the organization (referred to in this research project as University X, or UX) as being composed of three distinct units: the School of Medicine; all other colleges and schools within the university, which I referred to as UX Main Campus; and the student support services unit. The student support services departments are distinctly non-academic in their functions. Departments such as the financial aid office, records and registration, student and residence life, and the cashier’s office all exist to support the business operations of the organization, and employees in these departments are separated from the instruction and research that takes place in the academic schools and colleges of the organization.

The tasks and the roles of faculty who work in academic departments, even at the level of the department dean or chair, are very different from the tasks performed by employees who
work in student support services departments. The accomplishments, research, and publications of the faculty are used to elevate the status of the college or university. The current market for postsecondary education is very tight, because there are so many organizations competing for enrollment. Those organizations that can market themselves as being elite and highlight rigorous scholarship gain an edge in the market. Therefore, the organization relies on the accomplishments of the faculty to build this reputation (Bok, 2003, pp. 8-17). In contrast, the operations that take place in the support services unit of the organization, while critical to the overall operations of the organization, are not highlighted and lauded. Superior business operations are not nearly as exciting to prospective students as a state-of-the-art chemistry lab that is headed by an award-winning professor. As a result, administrators in the non-academic units have very different roles and influence in the organization than do the faculty.

In many postsecondary organizations, faculty members have the opportunity to earn tenure, which affords a certain level of job security and protects academic freedom. Many organizations will have an academic senate and shared-governance, which allows the faculty a fair amount of influence with the executive administration in terms of setting policies. A president of a postsecondary organization may even be removed if the faculty band together with a vote of no confidence. The faculty, by the nature of their role, have a significant amount of power and influence in the organization.

Administrators who work in student support services departments, by contrast, do not have the same power or influence in the organization as faculty. Administrators in these departments typically do not have the opportunity to earn tenure. Most postsecondary organizations I am familiar with in the Midwest employ administrators in the student support services unit in either an at-will capacity or via short-term contracts that are renewable every
year or two. Administrators in these departments usually do not have their own senate and are often not invited to participate in the shared-governance structure. They are segregated from the faculty on many levels and do not share an equal zone of influence with the faculty in the organization.

For this research project, I studied interim roles of academic administrators in the schools and colleges of the university (deans, associate deans, and assistant deans) and interim roles within the student support services unit (directors, associate directors, and assistant directors). What little research does exist regarding interim administrators has been focused only on interim deans and department chairs in the academic unit of organizations. Interim administrators who work in the student support services unit had so far been overlooked in the research.

**Sampling.** It is impossible to study every person or every organization that is related to the phenomenon the researcher will study. There are limits to whom and what the researcher may study based on constraints of size, time, cost, or inaccessibility (Singleton & Straits, 1999, p. 135). Therefore, the researcher must select a sample to study, in order to make the research project manageable and realistic (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). For the purpose of this study, I chose to study a single research university in the Midwest, which I knew had an extensive history of placing employees into interim administrative appointments. Limiting my study of the interim phenomenon to one organization allowed me to study the interim phenomenon in a rich context, and it kept the scope of my research manageable for a dissertation.

Qualitative researchers make decisions about the study which are helpful in determining the sampling techniques that are appropriate for the research study. According to Janesick (2003, p. 57), qualitative research is focused on understanding social settings and studying relationships within systems or cultures, and it often requires that the researcher remain in the setting for an
extended period of time. Given these characteristics of qualitative research, the following sampling techniques were used for the study:

*Purposeful Sampling:* In this form of sampling, the researcher intentionally selects units that represent the type of population that the researcher intends to study (Singleton & Straits, 1999, pp. 158-159). Using purposeful sampling was logical for the current study, because I needed to locate an organization in which administrators are or were assigned to roles as interims, in order to find potential participants for the study. I purposefully sought out a specific organization that I knew would be accessible, in order to study the phenomenon of interim appointments.

*Intensity Sampling:* Intensity sampling involves finding information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely (Hatch, 2002, p. 50; Patton, 1990, pp. 169-186). For the purpose of this study, I sought out administrators who had served in interim roles for at least a year. Some of them had served in interim roles multiple times or for extensive periods of time.

*Instrumentation.* Researchers must determine the means through which they will gather the information about the phenomenon they are studying. In qualitative research, the measuring instrument is the researcher, and the measurement procedure is the process by which the researcher gathers data (Singleton & Straits, 1999, p. 212). The following instrumentation was appropriate for the research design of the study:

*Participant Observation:* Through participant observation, the researcher becomes part of the social setting (Glesne, 2006, p. 49). Participant observation is a means by which the researcher is able discover patterns of behavior and observe the actions and relationships of participants within that social setting. Hatch (2002, pp. 72-73) listed several strengths regarding
data that are gathered through observations in the field. First, observation leads to a better understanding of the phenomenon in the context in which the phenomenon takes place. Next, participants have learned to take certain everyday activities for granted in a setting that is very familiar to them, but to the qualitative researcher, it is an opportunity to observe behaviors or actions that may not come about during an interview session. There are also opportunities to learn about sensitive information from listening to talk or observing actions that take place in the open setting, which may not come up during the interview process. Finally, observations allow the researcher the opportunity to inductively begin to understand how the participants understand their setting.

According to Spradley (1980, p. 54), the researcher as a participant observer observes the people and activities of the social setting, and, when appropriate, the researcher engages in activities within the social setting. For the purpose of this current study, I was a participant observer in the university based on a period of employment with the organization.

**Interviewing:** In qualitative research, interviews may be informal or formal. Researchers are able to gather data through friendly conversations or through asking participants to meet for a formal interview (Spradley, 1979, p. 58). Each type of interview has its own strengths and weaknesses, which are addressed by the researcher in the written research report. Standardized interviews fit most neatly with researchers who follow a positivist research paradigm, while informal interviews are often used by researcher who follow a constructivist paradigm (Hatch, 2002, pp. 92-95). For the purpose of this study, I conducted informal interviews with individuals who had accepted one or more interim appointments within the organization. The participants each signed a release form that gave me permission to tape the interviews, with the understanding that I would not refer to them or the organization by name in the research, but that
descriptions that would be included in the written document could allow the organization to be identified by someone who reads the work. I completed the verbatim transcriptions of those interview sessions. I interviewed seven individuals overall (one dean and six student services directors). Each interview session was scheduled for one hour in a setting of the participant’s choice.

**Unobtrusive Measures:** Kimball (1987) is known to have said that a social system leaves (pp. 12-14), so part of the job of the researcher is to learn to see, analyze, and construct meaning of the research setting (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, pp. 88-90). The buildings, the construction of space, the construction of office locations, where the administrators spend their time, who goes out to lunch with whom, and so on are measures that can answer the researcher’s questions without the researcher actually needing to ask anyone the questions. According to Stake (1995, p. 68), reviewing documents is another way for qualitative researchers to gather data and can lead to unexpected findings. Documents such as pictures, memos, or meeting minutes can often be used as a substitute for periods of activity, such as meetings, that the researcher was not able to observe directly. For the purpose of this study, I incorporated unobtrusive measures into the data collection and analysis. I used newspaper articles, university publications, employment contracts, budget materials, catalogues, employment directories, pictures, and information about building structures, cost, and space to learn about the complex operations of the organization.

**Moral, Ethical, and Legal Issues**

All researchers need to consider moral, ethical, and legal issues when conducting studies. Researchers must take steps to protect participants of the study from harm (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005, pp. 21, 466), and it is the obligation of the researcher to respect the request for
confidentiality from participants (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 51). I studied an organization where I had worked for a period of time, and I respected the request of the participants in my study to not disclose their real names or the name of the organization. It was important to provide descriptive details of the organization in this study and in doing so, I acknowledged that one might be able to identify the organization through the descriptive details. I disclosed that information to each of the participants on the release form that they signed and reiterated it at the end of each interview session. Each participant was given a copy of the release form to keep, as the form had the contact information for my dissertation chair, in case the participant felt any level of discomfort or distress about the process and wanted to contact my advisor to discuss his or her concerns. I also provided each of the participants with a transcription of his or her interview session and gave each participant the option to edit anything out of the transcription that he or she did not want me to use in the study. I also gave each participant the option to change his or her decision to have anything from the interview included in the study at any time. Participants had the right to stop the interview at any time. I worked with my dissertation advisor to make decisions about what details needed to be edited to address any concerns.

Participants had the right to know the aim of my research. I worked with my chair to make decisions regarding to what extent and how quickly I should disclose the aim of my research to the participants of the study, and for guidance on how to conduct informal interviews. It was important not to mislead or “dupe” the participants. I interviewed some individuals who already knew me, some people who had never met me prior to the interview, and some individuals who had worked with me at one time. It was very important for me to be clear about my motivations for this research, because even when this study was over, I would continue to
interact with many of the individuals who participated through common professional associations. I had a responsibility to make sure that the professional relationships I have with participants were not ruined as a result of their participation in the study.

I anticipated that the amount of risk to all participants in the study would be minimal. Before data collection began, I was required to submit a proposal for the study to Eastern Michigan University’s Institutional Research Board (IRB). The IRB agreed that the study had minimal risk. I was instructed make sure that the consent form for participants disclosed that anonymity could not be guaranteed due to the small sample size, but that I would take measures to maintain the confidentiality of participants in dissemination and the research write-up by camouflaging the institution through the assignment of a false identity following the interviews. The consent form also instructed participants that they could stop the interview at any time with no penalty, and they could contact my dissertation chair at any time if they had any concerns regarding the research project.
Chapter Three: Literature Review

In order to understand the organizational forces that lead to the persistence of using individuals in interim administrative roles, as well as to better understand the meaning of interim appointments to those individuals who accept interim roles, one must first understand the purpose and role of the organization itself.

Organizational Theories

The term organization is an abstraction. It is used by people on a daily basis, but what do we mean when we refer to an organization? Is an organization a group of people? Is an organization a set of buildings? The concept of an organization is quite complex. In an effort to simplify the concept of an organization, Scott (2003, p. 18) adapted a model that was initially proposed by Leavitt in 1965, which breaks down the organization into its central features.

![Figure 2. Leavitt’s diamond: A model of organization. Source: Adapted from Leavitt (1965), Figure 1, p. 1145.](image)

According to this model, organizations are made up of social structures, participants, goals, and technology, and they exist in an environment. Social structures are “patterned or
regularized aspects of the relationships existing among participants in an organization” (Scott, 2003, p. 18). The values, norms, and beliefs that govern roles and behavior are part of the social structure of the organization.

Participants are the social actors within the organization. These are individuals who make contributions of some sort to the organization. Everyone belongs to and participates in multiple organizations during his or her lifetime (Scott, 2003, p. 21). For example, a person may be a member of a church, an employee of a university, and a volunteer with a local charity. The degree to which individuals participant in and contribute to the organizations will vary depending on their interests and needs at that time.

Scott (2003) defined organizational goals as “ends that participants attempt to achieve through their performance of task activities” (p. 22). Sometimes the goals of the organization are ambiguous, and other times they are clearly defined.

The technology of the organization is the type of work that is done. It is the process of taking a specific input and transforming it to a specific output (Scott, 2003, pp. 22-23). Some organizations process materials. In a manufacturing plant, for example, the technology could be the process of taking rubber and transforming it into a car bumper. In educational organizations, people are “processed.” For example, the technology of a community college could be the process of admitting the student into nursing classes; three years later, the student has passed a series of courses and graduated as a nurse. All organizations have a technology and something or someone that they process for an intended output.

Finally, all organizations exist within environments. The environments may be physical, social, cultural, or technological. According to Pfeffer and Salancik (2003), “The environment includes every event in the world which has any effect on the activities or outcomes of the
organization” (p. 12). There is so much going on in the different environments surrounding organizations that organizations have to have systems for screening and processing information, in order to make determinations of which aspects of the environment to attend to at any given time (p. 13).

**Organizational rationality.** Parsons (1956) and Thompson (2006) also developed a model that is very useful for conceptualizing organizational structures. There are similarities to Leavitt’s model in the Parsons-Thompson model in that organizations have participants and technologies, and they exist in an environment. However, unlike Leavitt’s model, the Parsons-Thompson model divides an organization into three distinct levels: the technical core, the managerial core, and the institutional core.

![Figure 3. Parson’s (2003) and Thompson’s (2006) concepts of organizational rationality.](image)
The core technology is the work done by an organization to produce an outcome. The desired outcome is specifically defined, and there are organizational structures and processes in place in order to produce the desired outcome (Thompson, 2006, pp. 45-46). The level of managerial activities of the organizational structure carries out tasks through the processes of planning, establishing goals, and determining rewards. The managerial activities also mediate between the technical core and the task environment. The institutional activities of the organization also act as a mechanism to mediate between the organization and the environment. The social, political, and cultural make-up of the organization are defined at the institutional level and help shape the technical and managerial levels of the organization (pp. 10-13).

The task environment of an organization is its materials and resources. Different core technologies of the organization have different task environments. In order to survive, the organization is dependent on resources from the task environment. Additionally, an organization’s dependence on the environment is directly proportional to its needs and inversely proportional to the number of supplies (Emerson, 1962). Emerson states that an organization’s power over another entity depends on the resources that are controlled by that entity, how important those resources are to the organization, and how many other entities there may be to act as potential suppliers to the organization.

Managers engage in activities to bring inputs from the task environments into the cores, activities to maintain the cores, and activities that move inputs into outputs. Managers bridge and buffer the task environments in order to manage inputs and outputs, and they set boundaries in order to keep the cores from being overwhelmed. Understanding the task environment of the organization, as well as the ability to bridge, buffer, and span boundaries, is essential in order to
protect the organization from uncertainty and to protect the core technologies of the organization (Thompson 2006, pp. 20-24).

**Organizational rationality revisited.** Additionally, Scott (2003, p. 132) explained that an institutional environment exists, which consists of government and professional organizations that have specific and intricate rules and regulations, which organizations adhere to. Following such agreed-upon rules and regulations is necessary for the organization to maintain legitimacy and support from other like organizations. Muwonge (2012) and Schinn (2013) expanded upon the work of Parsons (1956), Thompson (2006), and Scott (2003) to rework the model of organizational rationality.

![Figure 4. Muwonge’s (2012) and Schinn’s (2013) model of organizational rationality.](image)

The cultural environment of an organization is concerned with constructing meaning. From their perspective, the primary function of an educational organization is to transmit culture. Organizations transmit culture by teaching members of the organization what things mean. All
cultures are concerned about survival, so members of a specific culture engage in tasks that promote survival. Over time, people develop norms, shared expectations, and rules about how things are done that help them survive (Morgan, 1997, pp. 138-145).

This model of organizational rationality breaks down the extremely complex concept of organizations into a meaningful framework that explains the levels and functions of organizations and their participants. If one understands the core technologies of an organization and the managerial activities taking place, as well as the social, cultural, and political meanings transmitted by the institutional core of the organization to participants, then one may begin to understand, develop meaning, and predict behavior within the organization.

**Rational, natural, and open systems.** There are competing perspectives in the study of organizational structure. At times these perspectives differ, at times they share common characteristics, and inevitably they do complement one another. Given the complexity of organizations and their functions, when studying organizations it is beneficial to have an understanding of these various perspectives, because it broadens the analytical framework through which one studies an organization. Three perspectives which have historically persisted and researchers have reinvented time and time again are the rational, natural, and open systems perspectives of organizations (Scott, 2003, pp. 31-32).

Researchers who view organizations as rational systems view organizations as “instruments designed to attain specified goals” (Scott, 2003, p. 33). The actions of the participants within the organization are intentional, purposeful, and well organized. Goals are clearly defined, and efforts are coordinated to ensure that there is efficiency in actions taken to achieve the goals. Behavior is rational and understood through rules and clearly defined directives (p. 34).
Bureaucracy of organizations is explained through the rational systems perspective. The actions within the organization are standardized and highly predictable. Skills are standardized through training and indoctrination. Standard products or services are offered based on the specific skill set and knowledge of the individuals working in the organization. Mintzberg (1979) defined this structure as professional bureaucracy. The activities and functions of the individuals working for the organization are designed to sustain and maintain the organization (Scott, 2003, p. 45). Universities are certainly one type of organization that can be understood as a professional bureaucracy. One example of this is the academic division of the university. Professors are highly trained professionals with a particular specialized knowledge base. They are given autonomy within the classroom and laboratories to carry out instruction and research based on a specialized field of study, but these activities are also constrained by a specific and well-defined set of expectations and rules that are understood and adhered to by their colleagues. Within a professional bureaucracy, the behavior of the people employed by the organization is rational and understood through rules and clearly defined goals. According to Morgan (1997, pp. 33, 49), bureaucratic organizations are successful and effective, with their hierarchical staffing charts and well-defined rules, when the environment of the organization is stable and the organization has sufficient buffers and boundaries in place to ensure that the organization is protected from turbulent forces. One of the most important objectives in a bureaucratic organization is to achieve efficiency, and this is done by hiring experts to run departments, establishing rules for the activity that takes place, and “motivating proper performance of expert officials by providing salaries and patterns for career advancement” (Thompson, 2006, p. 5). The actions of the organization are highly predictable in the stable environment.
The natural systems theory of organizations is quite different than rational systems theory. While rational system theory states that behavior is rational and understood through rules and clearly defined directives, natural system theory describes participants of organizations as having their own agendas and competing interests, and the organization is viewed by participants as a valuable resource. The organization is really a social system made up of participants who sometimes share common objectives and other times have competing agendas, and the organization seeks to survive through the conflict or consensus of the participants. According to natural systems theory, participants in the organization do not gain power solely through the formal positions they hold within the organization. Rather, they are able to gain power through informal sources and through interpersonal connections to other participants in the organization (Scott, 2003, pp. 28-30).

Both rational and natural systems theory describe organizations as systems that are closed from their surrounding environments. Open systems theory, in contrast, describes organizations as being dependent on resources and information from the outside environment, and, as a result, the outside environment can influence and shape the organization. The survival of the organization depends on factors that take place inside and outside of the organization. The goals of participants may vary widely and are often times in competition. There are many activities taking place within the organization, and many of these activities are interdependent on one another. Sometimes the activities are closely related and highly dependent, which theorists define as tightly coupled. Other activities are only marginally related but still impact one another, and such activities would be defined as loosely coupled (Scott, 2003, pp. 28-30). Open systems are composed of many loosely coupled parts (p. 101) with many interdependent activities. Many theorists describe educational organizations as open systems, or loosely coupled systems.
Loosely coupled systems. Weick (1976) described educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. Loose coupling occurs when there are two events, each of which retains its own identity, but the events are responsive to one another as well. The events are attached in some way, while at the same time they remain separate and distinct from one another. A postsecondary institution provides an excellent example of a loosely coupled system. A postsecondary institution is divided into multiple subsystems, such as academic departments and administrative departments. Within those larger subsystems, there are additional divisions based on task and functional responsibilities. For example, the administrative subsystem may be broken down into the registrar’s office, the financial aid office, counseling services, academic advising, student multicultural affairs, international student services, and residence life. These smaller divisional units all have distinct task responsibilities. Sometimes there is a need for individuals in various units to work together on a project; for example, for a period of time the registrar’s office and the financial aid office may loosely couple to achieve a goal. During the time in which the two units are loosely coupled and individuals in those units work together on a shared project, both units continue to retain their own distinct identities and functions. The registrar’s office staff never stops overseeing responsibility for student records, and the financial aid office staff never stops the tasks necessary to help students with financing the cost of education.

Loose coupling, by definition, suggestions that loosely coupled interactions or relationships are easily dissolvable and never meant to be permanent (Weick, 1976). The attachment between loosely coupled events is more than likely weak and sporadic. When the two loosely coupled units remain largely independent of one another and share only a weak and temporary common bond, the effect can be that each unit fails to see the importance of the other unit and that response time to issues is slow. Postsecondary educational organizations are not
highly rational systems. Postsecondary educational organizations are not exceptionally efficient or fast in processing their outputs. Rather, they are complex organizations, divided into multiple subsystems and microsystems that are largely independent and distinct from one another, but come together through loosely coupled interactions.

**Conclusion: Organizational theories.** The organizational theories outlined above provide the basis for understanding the organizational forces that lead to the persistence of using individuals in interim administrative roles. Organizational theories by themselves, though, do not provide a thorough understanding of the actions taking place within the organization, or by the organization’s participants. To better understand the phenomenon of interim administrative appointments, one will find incorporating cultural theories and political theories into the study of the organization to be greatly beneficial.

**Cultural Theories**

The term *culture* is widely used to describe aspects of organizations, yet it is also a term that is often poorly understood because it is so abstract. While there are a multitude of definitions for *culture*, one definition that is concise and easily understood was developed by Schein. Schein (1990) defined organizational culture as:

…a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p.111)

The concept of culture helps to explain the behavior of organizational participants. Culture helps to explain change or lack thereof within an organization. According to organizational theory, an organization seeks to survive in its environment. Because the goal of the organization is to survive, over time participants learn patterns of behavior that help them solve problems and cope
to the extent that the organization continues to persist. Therefore, the behavior persists because participants in the organization come to believe that the pattern of behavior is a successful means of coping with problems; norms are established and passed on to other people who join the organization. When the viability of the organization is threatened, then participants will be motivated to change their behavior. As long as the organization persists, though, trying to change patterns of behavior and norms is very difficult for participants within the organization (Morgan, 1997, p. 147).

The cultural environment of an organization is primarily concerned with the construction of meaning, and one of the primary functions of an organization is to transmit culture, or those meanings, to participants. The norms, which are shared expectations and values of the organization’s participants, are transmitted to newcomers to the organization, who are expected to adapt to the group’s shared beliefs. Different cultures have different expectations, and these expectations are socially constructed. The organization imports expectations from the environment, and roles are developed over time with any culture based on what it has taken in the past to survive. Over time, these expectations become second nature, and participants of the organization develop a common understanding with one another that there is a certain way in which things must be done within the organization. This creates strong feelings of resistance to change (Morgan, 1997, pp. 145-149). Culture can be so strong at times that the group comes to believe the culture is sacred.

Within any social setting, the behavior, language, and the symbols that surround individuals within that cultural setting create a culturally constructed dialogue. People learn through that culturally constructed dialogue, and culture is transmitted to the people in that social setting. Culture is taught and culture is learned (Spindler & Spindler, 1987). This is certainly true
within the education system, as the schools are very well designed to transmit culture. According to Spindler and Spindler, the schooling process is a “calculated intervention in the learning process” (p. 3). Culture is transmitted through the processes of teaching and learning, and educational systems are designed to facilitate teaching and learning. Within a community, schools are one of the most effective vehicles for transmitting culture, teaching people ways of acceptable behavior, and teaching people appropriate language, all per the community’s expectations and unspoken rules.

Within an organization, a subculture may also emerge based on the experiences of that organization, and groups within the organization learn a different set of norms (Muwonge, 2012, p. 21). As Schein (1990, p. 117) explained:

Once a group has many subcultures, its total culture increasingly becomes a negotiated outcome of the interactions of its subgroups. Organizations then evolve either by special efforts to impose their overall culture or by allowing dominant subcultures that may be better adapted to changing environmental circumstances to become more influential.

Finally, an organization has a history with other like organizations, and as Scott (2003, p. 132) explained, there is an institutional environment in which like organizations conform to an agreed-upon set of rules and regulations. In doing so, the organizations are able to maintain legitimacy and support from other like organizations.

**Institutional theory.** Organizations have a great deal of power in terms of allowing, controlling, and restraining behavior of the participants. Boundaries are set by organizations and guidelines are defined so that individuals learn and know what is considered to be acceptable behavior, and participants of the organization are socialized to act in a specific manner based on these constraints (Scott, 2000). The process for creating and perpetuating enduring social groups is known as the process on institutionalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Scott’s analytical
framework of the three pillars of institutions provides a model for understanding the processes of
the phenomenon of institutionalization and the institutional environment.

Table 1

*Scott’s Three Pillars of Institutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of compliance</th>
<th>Regulative</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Cultural-Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basis of order</td>
<td>Regulative rules</td>
<td>Binding expectations</td>
<td>Constitutive schema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Mimetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Instrumentality</td>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Common beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Shared logics of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of legitimacy</td>
<td>Legally sanctioned</td>
<td>Morally governed</td>
<td>Comprehensible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognizable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Culturally supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Scott, pp. 28-34)

The regulative pillar regularizes behavior. The organization has established rules, and there is an expectation that participants will follow those rules. The organization also has a system of punishments and rewards as a means to control and influence behavior. Participants who comply with the rules may expect to be rewarded, and those participants who deviate from the rules may expect to be punished (Scott, 2000).

The normative pillar influences behavior through rules that are developed based on the norms and values of the organization. A normative system has defined goals and objectives, and the norms and values of the organization define the appropriate behavior and actions of the
participants for pursuing those goals and objectives. Within a normative pillar, the participants have roles (social positions that are usually defined by a title), and sometimes the rules of the organization apply only to participants who occupy a specific role. Other rules apply to all participants. As a result, normative systems constrain the behavior of participants based on the rules, which are defined by the values and norms, but normative systems can also empower participants, because their roles may allow for certain levels of responsibility, along with other privileges. The norms and values of the organization help to create a stable social order (Scott, 2000).

Finally, there is the cultural-cognitive pillar. Organizations are surrounded by symbols, all of which have meaning to the participants or the organization. The meaning of the symbols is subjective, and each participant must make sense or meaning of these symbols. The way in which participants make meaning of objects, activities, and symbols is shaped by the external cultural framework of the organization, as well as their own individual experiences and individual internal interpretations. Within the organization, participants follow rules because they are taught the organizational culture and they understand and believe that there is a specific way in which things must be done. The culture of the organization is transmitted to the participants. They are taught the culture, they learn the culture, and they follow a script for action. They develop a common meaning and understanding of the symbols that surround the organization. Roles arise from a common consensus among participants that certain repetitive patterns of behavior mean that a participant should fall into a specific role (Scott, 2000).

In addition to Scott’s (2000) three pillars of institutions, there is a fourth pillar known as the affective pillar, which was defined by Brandon (2004). According to Brandon, the affective pillar “is constructed from cathectic or emotional elements that enter into the institutional
foundations of a cultural group through emotion-laden attachments transferred through practices that provide logic of action” (p. 45). The need to belong to the group is basic human nature, and it is natural behavior for the individual participants of an organization to bond together and form social groups (Bastian & Haslam, 2010). People want to be liked by others, and they need to be accepted as members of groups. When people belong to a group, they experience emotions that come about because of their identification as a member of that group. If an individual identifies strongly with the group and is a highly committed member of the group, then the individual is likely to be influenced by the emotions of the group (Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007).

According to Brandon (2004), the social group is capable of transferring group emotion to the individual member, thus influencing or “motivating” the behavior of the individual member. Not surprisingly, symbols are often used to evoke emotions and motivate individuals to respond to situations that will be acceptable to the social group. The participant’s actions may be driven by the emotion, importance, and meaning that the participant attaches to the institutional symbol. Scott’s three pillars of institutions and Brandon’s affective pillar logically explain the powerful forces within organizations that allow, control, and restrain behavior of the participants.

**Conclusion: cultural theories.** Culture is a strong socializing agent, and it effectively brings people together because they share similar values, norms, and expectations, or it keeps people apart because they have differences that they are unable to bridge. To more fully understand how such similarities and differences impact the operations and outputs of organizations, it is beneficial to transition to conflict theories.

**Conflict Theories**

Many organizational theorists have studied organizations and interpret the behavior of organizations and their participants based on researching the organization through a cultural lens.
To understand the values, norms, and shared expectations of the participants is important when it comes to understanding the makeup of the organization and the actions of participants. Just understanding the culture, though, is to stop short of fully making sense of the workings of the organization. While culture is an important factor in the setting of rules and expectations of the organization, the dominant organizing force within an organization is really conflict. Conflict sets organizational structure; it is used to segregate people out of an organization when necessary, or to bring people together as a cohesive unit (Brunsson, 1986).

Participants of the organization may come from similar or different cultural backgrounds. Different cultural groups have different values, and despite the myths that abound that our nation is a melting pot and diversity is embraced, the reality is that our nation continues to be largely divided by race and class (Mukherjee, 2009). Within organizations, one continues to see groups segregated by race and class as well, thus creating cultural boundaries that segregate people into various groups. The values of the groups are often in conflict with one another, and people align with one another based on having similar values.

**The function of conflict.** Conflict is an organizing force within the organization. Organizations have limited resources and the demands placed upon the organization are always greater than the organizations can meet, due to limited resources. There will always be a gap between what the various constituent groups of the organization want and the resources that the organization has to meet all of the demands. What results from the gap between demands and resources is social and political conflict for the organization. Demands on the organization act as stressors, which stimulates conflict (Easton, 1953, p. 56).

Scribner and Englert (1977, p. 22) explained that every society has specific things that are valued by that society. When the item that a society values is scarce, there is the potential for
conflict to flare among members. What will result will either be chaos as members fight for an allocation of the scarce item, or the society will put into place methods to make decisions about allocating such scarce items that are valued and sought after by members. The result is individuals or groups within the society engaging in behavior that is meant to influence others for the purpose of gaining access to whatever the person or the group is seeking. Such actions are defined as “political” behavior. According to Scribner and Englert, “Insofar as individuals, groups, and agencies attempt to influence either the allocation process or its outcomes, those individuals are engaged in political activities” (p. 22).

While educators and educational administrators may want to claim that schools are apolitical organizations, it simply is not true. Resources in educational settings are often very scarce. Schools compete for scarce resources from local, state, and federal governments, as well as private donors. Schools compete for students to bolster enrollment and tuition revenues. Individuals who are part of educational systems consistently engage in political behavior as they attempt to influence allocation of both values and resources (Scribner & Englert, 1977, p. 22).

The scope of conflict. The scope of conflict is determined in part by who is involved in the conflict, and this includes how many people overall are involved in the conflict. Who and how many people are involved in the conflict impacts the balance of the conflict and the potential outcomes (Schattschneider, 1975, pp. 2-3).

According to Schattschneider (1975, pp. 2-4), every conflict has two central parts: the individuals who are directly involved in the conflict and the spectators who watch the conflict unfold. Conflict is contagious, and even though spectators are not directly involved in the conflict, they are drawn to the conflict and can become very influential in shaping the outcome. Spectators are not neutral toward the conflict. Everyone has opinions: everyone will choose a
side of the conflict on which to align. The extent to which the spectators eventually become involved in the conflict can greatly impact the end result, so the individuals who are centrally involved at the center of the conflict must make a choice as to whether they wish to attempt to keep the conflict privatized or if they will benefit from socializing the conflict. By privatizing the conflict, the people who are centrally involved with the conflict can settle the conflict without the intervention or influence of the public. People who are in a position of power and already have a lot of influence on the outcome of the conflict are more apt to want to privatize the conflict, because by limiting the number of people involved, they maintain a great amount of control in determining the outcome. By socializing the conflict, the people who are centrally involved in the conflict open the problem up to the public and by doing so give up a significant portion of their own influence for determining the outcome. By socializing the conflict and involving more people, the balance of conflict can be drastically changed.

**Polity.** Polity is defined by the relationship of its constituent groups to its policy-making process (Iannaccone, 1991). These rules are the policies and laws that are authoritatively made by the governance of the organization. Politics is the development of policy from conflict, and policy is the authoritative allocation of values (Schattschneider, 1975).

Schattschneider (1975) defined politics “as the socialization of conflict” (p. 38). In order to understand which individuals have significant influence in the policy-making process, one must understand who does and does not have citizenship rights within the organization. In this context, citizenship is defined by the person’s status within the organization. It is those individuals with citizenship rights who have the authority to influence and set policy (Iannaccone, 1991). Citizenship rights can fluctuate, depending on the zone of influence one has based on one’s role within the community or organization (Morgan, 1997, pp. 153-155).
**Power and influence.** Within the organization, people have goals they are trying to accomplish. Power is important because people attempt to influence the goals and processes to get what they want. In politics, when one has power, then one has choice. People can use power for the discretion to do what they want, or they can use it for influence. People from various groups negotiate and cut deals all the time in order to meet their objectives, achieve specific goals, or to influence policy (Thompson, 2006, pp. 126-127; Morgan, 1997, p. 157).

**Conclusion: conflict theories.** Organizations are politically charged entities, and conflict is always present under conditions of resource scarcity, regardless of the type of organization. The dominant organizing force of any organization is conflict, and participants of organizations cannot help but to become involved in political behavior and power struggles as they attempt to influence the actions and decisions of organizations. The study of conflict and politics is essential to understanding the nature of organizations and the actions of participants. By combining organizational theories, cultural theories, and conflict theories, one is better able to understand the complex dynamics of organizations and their participants.

**Executive Succession**

The foundation for understanding organizations and their participants has been laid through the review of organizational, cultural, and conflict theories. This next section of the literature review is about the phenomenon of executive succession within organizations, which is a topic that has been researched extensively over the last 30 years (Pitcher, Chreim, & Kisflavi, 2000). While studies on executive succession have primarily focused on for-profit business organizations, planning for the exit of top leaders is not unique to business organizations. Educational organizations also experience the turnover of high-level leadership, so understanding the strategies of businesses to plan for executive succession, including the
placement of people into interim positions, could provide insight into strategies that educational organizations could adopt.

Despite the number of studies that have been completed, researchers agree that the results from studies on executive succession have yielded a great deal of conflicting information over the years (Pitcher et al.; Kesner & Sebora, 1994). The root of the problem of so many conflicting results from the various studies, many researchers agree, has to do with the wide variation in measurement techniques employed by researchers (West & Schwenk, 1996), which are often inconsistent or weak in their explanatory power (Pitcher et al.).

That measurement should prove difficult is not surprising since executive succession is subject to a host of influences including, but not limited to, age and size of the firm, condition of its founding, sector of activity, variability of profitability in the industry, current and past performance, structure, composition and allegiances of boards of directors, power of the incumbent CEO with respect to his or her board, personal characteristics of that CEO, and the availability of alternative candidates. (Pitcher et al., p. 21)

With so many different variables and their interactions to consider, attempting to explain the phenomenon of executive succession through statistical studies alone is difficult (Thomas, 1988).

There is much interest in what happens to an organization when someone in an executive level position, such as a CEO, leaves the organization. Individuals in such high-level positions have a significant impact on an organization (Child, 1972; Herrmann & Datta, 2002), not only because of their authority to make decisions at the highest level but also because of what they come to symbolize within and about the organization; regardless of whether or not it is true, people hold tightly to their beliefs that one powerful individual has the ability to control organizational outcomes (Lieberson & O’Connor, 1972). Turnover within these highest level positions can be traumatic for organizations (Kesner & Sebora, 1994), because people are fearful of the changes that will come from new lines of communications and shifts in relationships,
which threaten to disrupt the balance of operations that organizational participants are accustomed (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985).

There are some who will argue that a change in leadership can improve an organization’s performance, while others argue that a change in leadership is disruptive to the organization and has a negative impact on organizational effectiveness. There is also the possibility that a change in leadership will have minimal, if any, impact on the organization (Brown, 1982). To answer the question of how leader succession impacts an organization, one needs to closely examine the organization, its participants, and the roles of the organization’s leaders in the top management positions.

**Top management jobs.** In organizations, the nature of top management jobs, such as that of a CEO or a university president, are complex and ambiguous (Denis, Langley, & Pineault, 2000). Executives are judged based on the overall performance of the organization and, as a result, must be able to juggle multiple and competing roles (Hart & Quinn, 1993). According to Mintzberg (1975), “The manager’s job can be described in terms of various ‘roles,’ or organized sets of behaviors identified with a position” (p. 52). Mintzberg labeled ten different roles managers take on and then further categorized them as interpersonal roles, informational roles, and decisional roles (p. 53).
Interpersonal roles develop out of person’s formal authority and status. As a figurehead, the manager must perform ceremonial duties. As a leader, the manager is in charge of the people in his or her unit and takes responsibility for hiring, training, and disciplinary activities. The manager must also motivate and encourage employees. While the manager has formal authority and power based on his or her position, the extent to which he or she is able to exercise that power is dependent on the person’s effectiveness in the leadership role. Finally, in the role of the liaison, the manager makes contacts with people outside of his or her direct line of command. (Mintzberg, 1975, pp. 53-54).

A high level manager has a wealth of knowledge about the organization, in large part due to the fact that the manager has so many interpersonal relationships with people inside and
outside of the organization. A manager is expected to know more about what is happening in his or her unit than anyone else in that unit. Processing information is a key part of any manager’s job. When acting as a monitor, the manager scans the environment for information. As the disseminator, the manager makes choices about what information to pass on to selected subordinates who might otherwise not have access to that information. In the role of the spokesperson, the manager will pass information on to individuals outside of his or her direct reporting unit (Mintzberg, 1975, pp. 54-55).

Managers have key roles when it comes to the decision-making process in organizations within the units they operate. According to Mintzberg (1975), managers have four distinct decision-making roles. In the role of the entrepreneur, a manager is aware of the need to adapt to the changing environment in order to improve his or her unit. Some types of change are beyond a manager’s control, so he or she involuntarily reacts to the change by assuming the role of a disturbance handler. A manager is also a resource allocator, and in this role the manager must make decisions about who gets what and how much within his or her unit. Finally, the manager takes on the role as a negotiator who actively works to resolve conflict (pp. 55-58).

The job of top management is so complex because, Mintzberg (1975) argued, the effectiveness of top managers rests on their ability to successfully execute all of these roles concurrently. The ten roles form a “gestalt,” and no role can be eliminated if the job is to be left intact (p. 58). In their research, Hart and Quinn (1993) similarly agreed that “CEOs who achieve mastery of diverse and seemingly conflicting roles will deliver higher firm performance than those executives with less encompassing approaches to their jobs” (p. 544).

Other research studies support many of Mintzberg’s points about the numerous roles top-level executives take on in their jobs. Top-level executives are expected to be savvy internal
networkers as well as external boundary-spanners (Hart & Quinn, 1993; Daft & Weick, 1984). They are expected to identify important events outside of the organization, trends in the environment, organizational threats, and opportunities for the organization, in order to make decisions that will significantly impact the future of the organization (Jackson & Dutton, 1998). Many of the issues encountered by organizations are ambiguous, and it is left to the executives at the highest level to provide an interpretation of the issue and make the decision as to how to act upon the issue (Daft & Weick).

According to Daft and Weick (1984), individuals in at the highest level of the organization often find themselves in situations where they must make decisions quickly, before competitors in the market gain an edge and before people’s interests change. They must often work with data about the environment that is ambiguous and is subject to numerous interpretations, so they must try to settle on a course of action for the organization that can be agreed upon by other participants in the organization. This is challenging when organizational participants have conflicting values and competing agendas. The top-level executives are called upon to formulate strategies and drive the decision-making process. Given these expectations and the responsibilities assumed by top-level executives, regardless of whether or not it is true, it does make sense that the role of an executive is highly symbolic within the organization and, as such, that people continue to hold tightly to their beliefs that it just takes one powerful individual at the top of the organizational hierarchy to control organizational outcomes (Lieberson & O’Connor, 1972).

Hart and Quinn (1993) made the point that there is an overwhelming amount literature devoted to leadership theory and the roles of executives. They felt that there was a need to
integrate a number of the leadership theories in order to develop a model that could provide “a more complete picture of the range of executive leadership roles,” (p. 551).

Hart and Quinn (1993) developed a framework that identified four competing demands on executives: innovation, commitment, efficiency, and performance. They defined innovation as “the future positioning of the organization in terms of strategic direction, products, and service.” They defined commitment as “the development and motivation of people and the maintenance of a distinctive identity and value system.” They defined efficiency as “the management of ongoing operations and the critical evaluation of alternative projects and programs.” They defined performance as “the execution of plans and the achievement of results in the market place” (p. 551).

Then Hart and Quinn (1993) defined four leadership roles associated with each of the demands. The first leadership role is that of vision setter. The vision setter defines the mission of the organization and creates the sense of organizational identity. This requires monitoring social, economic, and technical trends in the environment. Second, leaders must also be motivators. In the role of the motivator, the leader establishes meaning for organizational participants and creates excitement within the organization. Third, leaders of the organization must also adopt the role of the analyzer. In this role, leaders leave the day-to-day management of the organization to the lower level managers and instead focus their attention on “the efficient management of the internal operating system in the interest of serving existing product-markets” (p. 553). Finally, leaders take on the role of the task master. In the role of the task master, the leader takes responsibility for the organization’s overall performance and is accountable to the organization’s stakeholders.
Flexibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain: The Organization</th>
<th>Domain: The Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand: Commitment</td>
<td>Demand: Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE: THE MOTIVATOR</td>
<td>ROLE: THE VISION SETTER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Focus</th>
<th>External Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain: The Operating System</td>
<td>Domain: The Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand: Efficiency</td>
<td>Demand: Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE: THE ANALYZER</td>
<td>ROLE: THE TASK MASTER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictability

*Figure 6. Executive leadership – A model of competing roles. Source: Stuart Hart and Robert Quinn, (1993), Exhibit 3, p. 552.*

Despite their desire to create a more complete picture of the role of the top executive, the outcome of Hart and Quinn’s (1993) model demonstrates a great deal of overlap with Mintzberg’s (1975) model of competing managerial roles. In each of their studies, Minztberg and Hart and Quinn identified that executives adopt multiple roles and must execute those roles simultaneously. Executives must be tuned into what is going on in the outside environment, take responsibility for efficiency in the organization, and drive innovation to move the organization forward. Much of the work that top executives perform is intangible and difficult to define. The role of the top executive transcends the day-to-day operations of organizations and cannot easily
be broken down into simple definitions. Models such as those proposed by Mintzberg and later Hart and Quinn are useful tools for making sense of the complex roles of organizational leaders.

**New executive leaders.** Executive leaders hold a critical and powerful role within organizations. They often drive decision-making at the highest level. Turnover, voluntary or involuntary, of executives can generate anxiety among the other participants in the organization, because change is difficult to adapt to and people have concerns about what sweeping changes a new leader will introduce in the organization (Denis, Langley, & Pineault, 2000; Hoffman, 2005; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985).

Individuals who step into the highest-level leadership roles within organizations commonly face significant challenges. Denis, Langley, and Pineault (2000) studied the experiences of a new CEO who had recently been appointed to a large local teaching hospital because the former CEO voluntarily retired. They chose the setting of a hospital because it was a large, complex organization and it represented an extreme case of executive succession. The hospital was well-respected and the medical staff held high-status and were very influential with the board. The researchers’ main sources of data were documentary evidence (such as board meeting minutes, management meeting minutes, press clippings, and other internal reports), in-depth interviews, and information from their own observational study of the hospital operations. The researchers conducted twenty-nine formal interviews between the months of June 1993 and December 1994. They interviewed the hospital CEO, nine senior managers, five senior physicians, two board members, and ten managers and employees at other levels.

From their research, Denis, Langley, and Pineault (2000) concluded that at the beginning of a new leader’s tenure, the organization has its own strategy and values, but the organization also has its own expectations for the new executive. Conversely, the new executive also has his
or her own values, goals, ideas, and agenda for the organization. Once the new executive arrives at the organization and begins work, the executive and organization have to interact, and actions, learning, and adaptation have to take place from both the organization and the new executive. New executives are constrained by the organization, and if the organization is not in a crisis mode, they cannot make their mark too quickly, particularly in highly complex organizations that are bureaucratic in nature. In addition, the alliances that exist between long-time organizational participants limit the new executive’s ability to influence great change too rapidly if the executive’s ideas for change conflict with the motives of the other participants.

Denis, Langley, and Pineault (2000) also determined that a new executive entering a highly complex organization will slowly increase his or her credibility by being flexible with the other participants. In their study, the new CEO’s actions were viewed more positively when that leader made an effort to meet the expectations of and was in agreement with other members of the organization. By doing so the new leader slowly gained credibility with the participants, and as his credibility grew, participants allowed the executive more leeway in his future actions. Integration and acceptance within the organization, though, was not immediate and it was not without challenges. The new CEO was initially criticized by the physicians for an agenda that did not match their view of the hospital as a prestigious organization and seemed to have limited potential. The CEO had to sway key influential physicians and board members to support his ideas in order to gain more credibility and move his vision forward. At the end, there were compromises on the part of the CEO to make the relationship work. In order to define his role and make his mark upon the organization, the CEO had to engage in political behavior at every turn. Overall, the results of the study showed that the new CEO successfully integrated himself into the organization by gaining the approval of other powerfully placed people inside and
outside of the organization and was able to introduce some change (but not radical change) without debilitating conflict.

In contrast, in one of the earliest leader succession studies (Gouldner, 1954), the researcher described the entry of the new leader of an industrial plant as fraught with conflict. The arrival of a new plant manager resulted in a major upheaval of the organization’s patterns, and the new leader immediately became bitterly embattled with the employees. The new manager, Peele, was an outsider and unknown by the employees of the plant. The former plant manager had passed away, and Peele was brought in from the outside for the purpose of implementing major changes at the plant. He was instructed by his bosses to increase productivity within the plant. In order to meet this challenge, Peele made immediate, sweeping changes in policies and went about setting strict disciplinary measures. He demoted certain managers and replaced them with other people from the outside. This infuriated employees who had been a long history working at the plant and assumed they had earned the right to be promoted. Once Peele realized he needed the support of the longtime employees, the “old lieutenants” (p. 75) who were influential with the staff, his efforts to gain their friendship and trust by promoting them were in vain, so he eventually looked to take steps to replace them. The employees of the plant were a close-knit group, with many family members and neighbors from within the community employed there. Peele’s ability to make changes in the organization was constrained by the resistance of the workers, who deeply resented the change from a more lenient environment to one that required a much stricter following of the rules. For change to occur, Peele was force to implement measures that drove the plant to a state of increased bureaucracy, so that he could fall back on rules to enforce the new changes. Peele’s situation was challenging, because he felt compelled to please his bosses by increasing efficiency and productivity, but the
desires of his bosses conflicted with the culture of the plant and the values of the employees. Gouldner’s study on the emerging pattern of bureaucracy in the plant demonstrates the intense challenges that top-level managers may face in the role of the successor.

The two cases of executive succession described in this section contrast sharply. In the first case, the new CEO of the teaching hospital experienced a relatively smooth transition as the successor. In the second case, the new plant manager, Peele, experienced intense conflict and a very rocky transition as the successor. Comparing the experiences of the successors in both cases demonstrates how important it is to consider the reasons for leader succession (voluntary versus involuntary turnover), the size and complexity of the organization, and the organization culture, values, and environment, in terms of studying the impact of leader succession on organizations, as well as the experiences of the successors.

**Insiders vs. outsider: organizational socialization.** Whether individuals are recruited from inside or outside of the organization to assume a new role, they will undergo a period of organizational socialization (Van Maanen, 1978). Hart (1991) identified three tactics that organizations use to socialize new members and individuals who have transitioned from one job inside the organization to another role in that same organization.

The first tactic is based upon the context in which the individual is socialized. If the individual is socialized independently rather than with a group, the person tends to feel lonely but is also more likely to push an agenda of new ideas. The person is not hampered by the opinions of a group. When the new person is paired with a mentor, though, he or she tends to feel more constrained when it comes to taking risks, and the mentor, who is an established employee in the organization, very effectively influences the conformation of the new person’s behavior to meet organizational norms (Hart, 1991).
The second part of socialization involves organizational content. Anyone who is new to the organization or new to a position within an organization must absorb a new knowledge base specific to his or her position. Sometimes information is taught to the person in a sequence that builds logically, like in a mathematics course. Other times, information is presented randomly and the person has to absorb and make sense of how bits of information connect. When information is taught from a structured, sequential syllabus, it leaves the person with much less flexibility to be creative and try to reorganize or redevelop processes. On the other hand, teaching people content in a structured sequence often leads to high commitment from new members, because the organization’s priorities are easily identifiable and people do not have to guess how or where they should focus their attention (Hart, 1991).

Finally, the sociality of the organizational environment matters in the socialization process. The successor will experience either serial socialization, in which it is clear that the successor is to follow a pattern defined by the person who came before him or her, with a strong role model within the organization to demonstrate and teach the successor the organizational norms and values, or the successor will experience disjunctive socialization, in which there is no clear role model and the expectations of the person are ambiguous. Through disjunctive socialization, the successor has more freedom in terms of trying to define his or her role (Hart, 1991).

Newly appointed executives must make decisions about how far they will go to influence strategic change within the organization and how quickly they will move to introduce major changes. Once people have entered the organization, they undergo a “fitting in” stage (Hart, 1991, p. 459). Whether or not they have the power and support of other organizational members to move quickly or to introduce radical changes is largely influenced by the extent to which the
new executive has been socialized to the executive position to become the “heir apparent” by his or her predecessor (Bigley & Wiersema, 2002, p. 708).

Individuals who are groomed by senior members of the organization to eventually step into an executive leadership role receive the benefits of developing a deep knowledge of the organization’s operations, structure, and culture. They are socialized into the organization and are afforded opportunities to participate in the decision-making process at the highest level before formally assuming the executive role. “Because the process is individualized, it is thus likely to bring the cognitive orientation of the incoming CEO into congruity with that of the incumbent CEO” (Bigley & Wiersema, 2002, p. 711).

While it may seem like a great idea to look to promoting individuals to executive positions from within the internal ranks of the organization because the individual will already be socialized to the organization, there is a downside to consider. Individuals who are promoted internally after having been a member of the organization for a significant length of time, or have only ever worked for that organization, will be less likely to initiate major change (Denis, Langley, & Pineault, 2000). The longer one’s commitment and involvement within the organization, the more likely it is that the individual will continue to adhere to the status quo and be reluctant to take risks (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). When organizations recruit for executive roles people who have never worked for the organization before, those outsiders bring with them external networks of peers, as well as ideas from their experiences working at other organizations, which helps to make them more cognizant of market trends (Denis et al.).

If the organization does not seek to change, then appointing the heir apparent to an executive position will be a good fit for the organization. The person is already socialized to
conform to the values and norms of the organization and is not likely to seek to disrupt the status quo. If the organization seeks to change, though, such as during a crisis period in which the survival of the organization is threatened, then recruiting someone from outside of the organization to step into the executive role will be an important factor to consider in the selection process (Datta & Guthrie, 1994). Outsiders are more likely to take risks and are more willing to accept the challenge of trying to implement significant changes in the organization.

**Succession planning.** At some point, all enduring organizations will have to cope with the loss of individuals in key roles (Hart, 1991). Organizations are segmented into departments, units, and roles; jobs are structured so that if one person leaves, the operations of the organization will not crumble. However, replacing individuals in executive positions is a significant event, because when key people leave the organization, it does raise concerns about whether there will be a break in the continued stability or forward development of the organization (Carlson, 1961). It is important that organizations not be caught off guard when key individuals leave. Organizations will benefit from having a formal succession plan in place (Cingoranelli, 2009).

In our current environment, organizational leaders are aware that the baby boomer generation is preparing to retire (Cingoranelli, 2009). As a result, organizations are entering an era in which numerous individuals in executive level roles are preparing to retire. The question remains as to whether or not organizations have planned properly to fill those vacancies, so that operations will continue uninterrupted. Succession planning should be considered a high priority for organizations (Heffes, 2002).

There is a sizable body of literature in the business field that addresses the importance of succession planning and steps organizations should consider (Cingoranelli, 2009; Pomering &
Cunningham, 2000; Malburg, 1999; Furry, 2004; Kahn, 1999; Marshall, 2007; Swan, 2004). Some plans call for the use of interim management by experienced associate executives to carry on operations during the transition period (Swan). Other plans call for grooming internal employees to prepare them to step into the executive role when turnover occurs (Cingoranelli). A point of a caution, though, for organizations that develop succession plans that entail grooming internal candidates to be promoted when vacancies occur, is that when organizations train too many individuals to fill future vacancies, it may result in eventually having too many qualified people to fill a limited number of positions. The effect is that people will either need to leave the organization to find more challenging positions, or they remain at the organization, frustrated in their roles and potentially unsupportive of others (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). Of course, using individuals in interim roles while a search committee is formed to recruit potential candidates has its own set of pitfalls. If the person who serves in the interim role is allowed to apply for the permanent position and does not get the job, it is not uncommon for that person to be so uncomfortable in his or her old role that the individual subsequently leaves (Farquhar, 1991).

**Conclusion: executive succession.** The process of executive succession can be unsettling to anyone who has a vested interest in the organization and its participants. Any enduring organization will at some point experience leader succession, though, and organizations need to be prepared to manage the transitions. College and universities today are no exception. Turnover occurs on a regular basis and very often, the strategy of the college or university is to temporarily fill high level managerial positions by appointing people to interim administrative roles. While a signification body of literature exists on the topic of executive succession in business, very little research has been done regarding how colleges and universities plan and prepare for the turnover of high-level leadership. There is some literature that indicates the use of interim administrators
to fill vacated positions is a common approach. What little research has been completed regarding interim administrative appointments will be covered in the next section.

**Interim Administrative Roles**

When vacancies in administrative positions come about due to retirements, promotions, transfers, or resignations, organizations often appoint individuals to interim positions in order to temporarily fill the vacant post (Alley, 2005; Beem, 2003; Santora & Sarros, 2008). This is true for K-12 schools, universities, hospitals, and other for-profit or nonprofit corporations. The literature that is available regarding the experiences of interim administrators is quite limited, and what does exist is primarily anecdotal (Beem; Goss & Bridson, 1998). In their written reports, the authors discussed the pros and cons of serving as interim administrators, the pros and cons of appointing others to interim roles, and the impact that serving as an interim had on themselves, their peers, subordinates, and the organizations where they served. Due to the scarcity of literature on interim administrators in the field of postsecondary education, this review of the literature was expanded to include literature about interim administrators in the fields of K-12 education, healthcare, and business.

**Interim superintendents.** The dynamics of a position, such as the average length of the workweek and the political demands of the job, have an impact on the average length of tenure for someone who hires into that position. The average length of a superintendent’s tenure is only six to seven years (Natkin, Cooper, Alborano, Padilla, & Ghosh, 2002). Rapid turnover among superintendents is a challenge for school districts in terms of maintaining stable leadership (Fenwick, 1996), and a limited applicant pool (due largely to the fact that teachers and administrators perceive the demands of the job to outweigh the benefits of a generous salary) makes filling vacancies for superintendent positions very difficult for many school districts. The
search process to hire a superintendent is typically long because the applicant pool is so limited. Because the school district would suffer without leadership, the solution is to appoint an interim superintendent who will take control of the decision-making processes and oversee the operations of the school district while the search process is ongoing (Fenwick).

Within the school district, it is typically difficult to find an internal candidate who is prepared to assume or is interested in assuming the role as an interim superintendent. Therefore, it has become common practice for school districts to recruit interim administrators from amongst the ranks of retired school administrators, preferably individuals who at one time served as superintendents prior to their retirement (Beem, 2003). These individuals have nothing to lose by accepting an interim appointment since they are already retired, they are not seeking permanent full-time employment, and they are not trying to develop a career. The main benefit to accepting an interim appointment as a superintendent is that the person may temporarily supplement his or her income. If the additional income is enough of an incentive to put up with the administrative hassles a superintendent deals with on a regular basis, then an interim position is ideal for a retiree (Beem). At the end of the appointment, the retiree who acted as the interim superintendent is able to step down and leave the position with no concerns about the next step in his or her career.

The rapid turnover of superintendents and other educational leaders led to the development of a company in Michigan, Professional Contract Management, Inc., which specializes in placing people into interim positions to fill vacancies in K-12 school districts. By contracting retired or former educational employees to fill interim positions in the district, the school board and hiring committee may then take the time needed to conduct a thorough search to hire someone to fill the position on a regular full-time basis (Beem, 2003). Contracting
employees from an outside company eliminates any awkwardness that comes from placing an internal candidate into the interim position and then choosing not to hire that internal candidate for that position on a permanent basis. A company such as Professional Contract Management, Inc., attracts many retired educators who are interested in continuing to work in schools, but who do not want the commitment of hiring into positions for a long-term, permanent basis. They are educators who are experienced and have proven track records. These individuals in their interim roles can provide some stability for districts with vacancies, especially when the positions that are open are high-level administrative positions, such as the superintendents, assistant superintendents, and principals (Wallace, 2003).

**Interim principals.** When a principal steps down from his or her position, school districts are faced with a need to fill a vacancy for a critical leadership role within the school, and rather quickly. There is a great deal of concern about not making a rash choice. Whoever is selected to fill the position needs to be a good fit for the school, which means the person needs to be a good match for the teachers, administrators, students, and parents who have a vested interest in the school. A common strategy to deal with a vacancy in the principal position is to hire an interim principal to assume the role and provide continuity and stability within the school while a search committee takes the time necessary to complete a comprehensive hiring campaign (Prosise, 2003). Interim principals, much like interim superintendents, are often selected from among the ranks of retired principals who still have an interest in working in the school, but only for an abbreviated period of time.

Unlike a superintendent, whose position does not always require or allow for daily contact with students and parents, a principal of a school does have daily contact with students and frequent interaction with parents. Hiring an interim principal does have its disadvantages in
the fact that, because the appointment is temporary and ideally should not extend more than one year, the nature of the interim role dictates that students and parents are going to be required to adjust to new leadership in the school twice, in a short period of time (Prosise, 2003).

It is also difficult for interim principals to establish and carry out school-wide goals that would require changes to structure, workflow, and policies, because everyone working in the school understands that the interim’s role is temporary and there is much ambiguity as to what will happen after the interim principal leaves and the newly hired permanent principal takes over (Beem, 2003). Interim leadership does bring a danger of halting strategic planning (Rud, 2004). This is especially true when the interim principal is someone who works outside the district and clearly does not aspire to move into the role on a permanent basis, such as a retiree who has stepped into the principal role for a period just long enough to allow the district to complete the hiring search process. People are reluctant to change too much amidst so much uncertainty (Prosise, 2003).

Some districts may actually have internal candidates who agree to step into the interim principal position because they do aspire to make a career move. Superintendents and others who are members of the hiring committee scrutinize those individuals in their interim roles and pay attention to their abilities to form connections with the study body, the teachers, and the parents, and lead the schools through some change. Of course, hiring internal candidates can be fraught with problems. It is challenging to become an interim principal and be charged with overseeing and evaluating individuals who were once peers (Beem, 2003). This situation can be so uncomfortable and so challenging that many districts fall back on the solution of finding someone among the ranks of retirees who would like to assume the interim role and return to work for a period of time (Beem).
Interim principals, particularly those individuals who are very experienced and are stepping out of retirement temporarily to accept the interim role, should understand that they can bring a calming presence to a school during this period of transition by not trying to force a lot of change during their brief tenure. Interim principals need to understand the political environment of the school building and make decisions about what issues can be dealt with and what issues are best left alone until the permanent principal is hired. Interim principals should not hesitate to reach out to the superintendent of the district for advice, and superintendents who fill vacancies with interims should recognize the importance of providing their interim principals with guidance about what to change and what issues to leave alone (Wallace, 2003).

Interim chairs/deans. Mundt (2004) explained that if one were to do a Google search on the phrase “acting dean,” several hundred links would come up, the majority of which were announcements for appointments of acting deans at colleges or universities in the United States. As the article by Mundt is several years old, I confirmed that this is still the case by completing a Google search of my own on the phrase “acting dean,” and indeed hundreds of links were identified regarding interim appointments for deans. Interim deans are:

“...key players in maintaining stability, facilitating change, and providing a transitional pathway for a new, permanent leader. An essential theme is that interim administrators do real work that has real consequences, and make real contributions to institutional history and continuity.” (Mundt, p. 496)

At times, the search for a permanent department chair may take up to two years, so the period of time one serves as an interim is significant (Boylston & Peters, 2004).

While it is common in the K-12 school districts to hire interim superintendents and principals from among the ranks of retirees, at colleges and universities, the people who are appointed to interim roles are usually from within the internal ranks of the organization (Mundt, 2004). Accepting an interim deanship appointment is often an important step in climbing the
academic ranks, if moving from the faculty into an administrative role is the path one aspires to embark upon (Kenner & Pressler, 2006). This movement from faculty to administration often takes place within the organization where the faculty member is currently employed.

According to Rud (2004), when internal employees take on an interim role, they can be classified as one of three types of interim departmental leaders. These classifications include the aspiring interim chair, the beguiled interim chair, and the reluctant interim chair. The aspiring interim chair is someone who is interested in the interim position because it could lead to a promotion and acting as the interim might increase the chances of being selected for the role on a permanent basis. The beguiled interim chair is someone who is interested in exploring administrative work, but is not positive yet that a move from the ranks of the faculty into an administrative role is what he or she truly desires. Accepting the interim position gives that person an opportunity to try out administrative work, but with the safety of not being locked into the role permanently. Finally, the reluctant interim chair is someone who does not want to be an administrator but cares about the department and wants to help out the department while the hiring process is carried out to find someone to assume the role permanently. The reluctant interim chair has no interest in taking on an administrative role permanently and will gladly step down once someone is hired.

Regardless of which category (aspiring, beguiled, or reluctant) an interim dean or chair falls into, serving as an interim administrator does provide opportunities for professional growth and career development (Rud, 2004). The downside, though, is that moving from a faculty role to an administrative role can create conflict with other faculty members. It is difficult to supervise those individuals who were once your peers (Alley, 2005), and if interim administrators do not move into the administrative role on a permanent basis, it is important that
they have a plan for how to step down, leave the position, and rejoin the faculty ranks (Mundt, 2004).

Not surprisingly, interim administrators have to overcome the challenge of convincing those people they lead to accept their authority, as well as to accept and support their decisions. It is very common for an interim administrator’s decisions to be challenged, questioned, or ignored. While faculty may respect the individual’s scholarly accomplishments, they do not always readily accept that person’s authority as an administrator, and they scrutinize and question the person’s actions once in the interim administrative role (Rud, 2004). Anyone who agrees to serve as an interim chair needs to be prepared for the fact that not all faculty members will embrace or support him or her in the role of an interim administrator. While it may be flattering to be asked to serve as an interim dean, Mundt (2004) cautioned that the person needs to take some time to assess why there was a vacancy that needed to be filled, why he or she was asked to serve, and to reflect critically on one’s strengths and weaknesses before making a decision about whether to accept an interim position as the dean. In addition, if the person accepting the interim role aspires to be hired into the position permanently, he or she needs to understand that there are no guarantees for a promotion and knowing this, it is critical to have an exit strategy and a plan to resume one’s former position. Negotiating for a sabbatical at the end of the interim appointment is one way to smooth that transition of stepping down from the interim dean role and moving back into the faculty ranks.

Rud (2004) cautioned that while one might assume that an organization does a good job of grooming and developing its own leaders, few educational organizations do this well, and it is not uncommon for the hiring committees to look outside of internal candidates for someone to fill the vacant position fulltime. When individuals who have served in the interim role do not get
the job, it is not uncommon for them to try to reenter the organization at their old position and then be so uncomfortable in that old role that they subsequently leave (Farquhar, 1991). This just supports how important it is for anyone who accepts an interim position to have a clear exit and reentry strategy.

In contrast, Boylston and Peters (2004) take a more theoretical approach in terms of how to be an effective interim department chair. Boylston and Peters suggested that interim department chairs need to fuse leadership theory with practical experience in order to motivate the department members during their interim tenure. In the absence of a formal mentoring program, they suggested interim deans should review decision-making theory, motivation theory, situational leadership theory, and personality trait theory, and mesh that theory with the practical knowledge they have gained through their professional experiences. It is not enough to maintain the stability of a department while in an interim position, they argued, but rather interim deans should strive to raise the department to higher standards.

As with any organization that hires or promotes individuals into interim administrative positions, there are advantages and disadvantages to colleges and universities that appoint interim deans. Strategic planning will be slowed under the direction of an interim dean. However, this slower movement allows faculty some more time to reflect and think creatively about the planning process, and it may encourage more faculty participation in the strategic planning process (Rud, 2004). Interim deans are typically very good at taking care of routine tasks such as managing budgets and appointments of teaching assistants. However, having an interim dean makes it difficult to groom untenured faculty members for promotions, and faculty are often unsettled about an interim dean making decisions about hiring tenure-track faculty (Rud). Whether the pros outweigh the cons of appointing individuals to interim leadership roles
is debatable. To answer that question, one would need to understand the political dynamics of the organization and be knowledgeable about the challenges the organization is facing at the time the interim appointment is being considered.

**Interim healthcare leaders.** It is also becoming very common in the healthcare profession to appoint individuals to interim positions. In the healthcare profession, medical schools and teaching hospitals are experiencing a lot of turnover in departments, and, not surprisingly, appointing interim departmental chairs to fill vacancies is becoming the norm (Grigsby, Aber, & Quillen, 2009). Even though the expectation exists that anyone appointed as an interim department chair should have the leadership skills to immediately take charge with very little warning, preparation, or training, little research has been done regarding how interims should be prepared to carry out their roles (Grigsby et al.). The question remains as to whether or not the individuals who are appointed to interim positions are prepared for the job. Grigsby et al. suggested that formal training programs, mentorship programs, and better planning to groom people to take over as department chairs when others step down should be implemented by medical schools and teaching hospitals to better prepare future interim chairs.

Just as faculty at the department level are often asked to step into interim roles as department chairs, nurses are often asked to assume interim management positions when unexpected vacancies occur within their units. In a short article by Ellis, Martin, and Wagner (2005), the three authors shared anecdotal accounts of their experiences of working as nurses in interim management roles. They described their experiences as positive opportunities for professional growth. Ellis willingly stepped back down to her previous position, while Martin and Wagner both received promotions after serving in interim appointments. Each made choices as to whether to use the interim appointment to simply maintain the stability of the department or
to try to make changes and move the department in a new direction. The authors recommended taking advantage of interim appointments as a vehicle for professional growth.

During periods of nursing shortages in the nation, nurses find themselves with many opportunities to step into interim management positions at different organizations, which is appealing to many nurses if they are not interested in remaining with a single organization for an extended period of time. In fact, the opportunity to accept interim management positions in nursing allows nurses to accept short-term assignments frequently without worrying about the stigma of frequent movement among organizations impacting the quality of their resumes (Mlekoday, 2008). According to Mlekoday, hiring interim nursing managers is appealing because it gives the hospital administrators the luxury of taking their time with the search process for a permanent employee. In the field of nursing, due in large part to the nursing shortage, the length of interim assignments is often negotiable, and the nurses who are considering accepting the interim appointment find they have room to negotiate for flexibility with their schedules. Rather than using interim appointments just as a means of climbing the ranks to a higher administrative level, nurses are actually able to use interim appointments to gain flexibility in their employment opportunities (Mlekoday).

In the healthcare profession, interim appointments are even being used to fill vacancies at the highest-level position of the organization: the hospital’s CEO. Osse (2009) wrote an article in which he described his experience of serving as an interim CEO for a hospital as a second career option after his retirement. He described his experience as “rewarding and challenging and not for the faint of heart” (p. 1). Due to budgetary constraints, during his time as an interim CEO, he had to make tough and unpopular choices to close certain hospital units or make staff changes in order to improve efficiency and service. As an interim CEO, he did not simply maintain stability
of the organization while waiting for the permanent CEO to take over. He had to make significant changes in order to ensure the financial stability of the organization. In the article, he reflected upon the fact that as an outsider who stepped into the interim role, it was much easier to be objective, and because it was an optional second career, he did not concern himself with making decisions that could potentially be career-ending (as a result of being extremely unpopular) for a full-time CEO. One other quality that he felt was important for his successful turn as an interim CEO was that he stepped into the role with a great deal of experience, maturity, and patience that had been developed over a long career of working as a full-time CEO in other hospitals prior to his retirement. These are the same themes that emerged in the articles that were written by interim superintendents and principals in the K-12 education system, who had accepted those positions as second-career options after retirement.

**Interim business leaders.** For-profit and nonprofit corporations also employ individuals in interim leadership positions when vacancies occur. Not surprisingly, just like colleges and universities, it is common practice in businesses to promote internal employees to fill the vacancies, because internal employees already know and understand the organization’s operations (Goler, 2003).

In a study of 43 legal service corporation agencies that experienced executive director turnover between 1985 and 1989, Farquhar (1991) found that many of the agencies appointed internal employees to assume the interim director positions. Farquhar’s findings also indicated that two thirds of the interim administrators encountered significant management challenges, and that while staff reported that the interim administration was more chaotic and stressful than the previous administration, the leadership of the interim director was preferred over the leadership of the former director. One possible explanation for this finding is that the interim directors were
in contention for the jobs on a permanent basis, and employees wanted to like and be liked by anyone who would potentially be the new boss of the agency.

According to Farquhar (1991), depending on the structure of the organization, the search process for a new leader sometimes involved the staff, and the person who accepted that interim directorship often became an important symbol to the staff. When the interim director was not selected to fill the position permanently, if that interim director was well liked by the staff, the reality of another leadership change was unsettling and unpopular to employees. The author suggested that additional research should be conducted to answer the questions of how leadership transitions impact the morale within the organization. Not all of the internal interim directors in Farquhar’s study were selected for the permanent position. Of those who were passed over for the permanent role, almost half left their agencies within a few years of ending their interim assignments.

In another research study about interim executives, Eisinger (2000) wrote an article about the experiences of three interim CEOs and provided suggestions for how to get the most out of the interim experience. For one interim CEO, Miller, it was made clear by the administration that he was expected to assume the role on a temporary basis only, he should not expect to be promoted to the role full-time, and that he would have the full support of the senior management team to keep operations running smoothly during the six months they needed to conduct a thorough search for a permanent CEO. Because the firm was very open about the fact that there would be no possibility of a permanent promotion, and his colleagues were involved in the decision of appointing him to the interim position, Miller believed those were key reasons as to why the senior management team was so supportive of him during his period of interim service. In addition, because the administration was open about the fact that he would have no
opportunity to assume the CEO position on a permanent basis, he was excited about his time as an interim because it gave him the opportunity to learn new skills and enhance his resume for future promotional opportunities. The only downside to the experience was that he often felt that he worked double-duty, because he still maintained many of the responsibilities of his former position, and he assumed a new set of duties as the interim CEO. In addition, when the permanent CEO was hired, Miller spent six months working closely with the CEO to help that person transition smoothly into the firm. Overall, though, his experience as an interim CEO was positive.

The next interim CEO in Eisinger’s (2000) article was someone who had worked for a company for 12 years and was a senior vice president at the time the CEO resigned. Mallon was asked to assume the interim CEO position for a six-month period while the company conducted a search to hire a permanent CEO. Unlike the firm where Miller worked, this company allowed internal applicants to apply for the position. During his time as an interim CEO, Mallon focused on building and strengthening relationships with people in the company who would be supportive of him when he applied for the position on a permanent basis. Before assuming the interim position, Mallon also recognized that there were five senior vice presidents in the company and only one would be chosen to act as the interim, which was bound to create some discomfort within that group. He found it challenging to be in a position of supervising those individuals who had once been his equals on the organizational chart. Eisinger did not disclose in the article whether Mallon was offered the CEO position at the end of his interim service.

The last person Eisinger (2000) interviewed for the article was an individual who worked for a company that specialized in placing people into high level administrative positions on a temporary basis when companies experienced turnover and needed to fill vice president and
CEO positions quickly. Nichols stated that he was well suited for working for companies during periods of major transitions or mergers. He had also worked in interim roles for start-up companies. According to Nichols, he was well suited for working for companies in crisis. Nichols had worked as an interim CEO six times, and in each organization he worked for, he found that it was essential to work closely with the board to identify the expectations and then to bring the staff up to date quickly with information about those expectations. A major responsibility of an interim CEO, according to Nichols, is to minimize the uncertainty in the organization. Nichols felt there was a definite advantage to be an outsider and an interim, because he never carried that baggage that long-time employees might have, and he could evaluate the organization from a neutral perspective. He also did not have to worry about making unpopular decisions with the board, because as an interim who was hired from an outside firm, he was not worried about jeopardizing his chances for the full-time CEO position.

It is not surprising that Nichols, who specialized in working as an interim CEO for companies in transition, had the opportunity to work as an interim CEO for six different organizations (Eisinger, 2000). The business environment is turbulent and prone to rapid change (Bernhut, 2002; Kloman, 1990). Sometimes companies that have experienced a merger or change in ownership intentionally oust the old senior management and bring in an outsider as an interim leader in order to try to change the culture of the company (Goss & Bridson, 1998).

Companies are becoming more open about the fact that they will employ interim administrators to either lead special projects or to fill vacant positions (Johnson, 2004). In the Netherlands, interim management has become such a respected profession that a professional association has been established, there is an ethical code that interim managers follow, and formal training programs have been developed (Smid, Van Hout, & Burger, 2006). According to
Johnson, it used to be that people who accepted interim assignments were once thought of as people who could not “hold a job.” Today, interim assignments have become so common and specialized in the business environment that interims are now viewed as highly skilled consultants and troubleshooters. Individuals are able to make a career out of working in an interim capacity, and it is an appealing career path for individuals who seek new challenges and constant change in their work environment.

Santora and Sarros (2008) completed a case study in which they examined the effects of placing individuals into interim leadership roles in a non-profit organization. They concluded that there are three major points that organizations must consider if they intend to fill vacant positions with interim administrators. The first key point is that organizations must have a viable succession plan. Too many organizations do not have a plan for how to handle transitions in leadership, and this may become chaotic for organizations when people leave. The second key point, according to the authors, is that organizations should make internal promotions whenever possible. Not all researchers would agree with this statement, but Santora and Sarros claimed that when insiders are overlooked for promotions, they may be tempted to leave and the organization risks losing the talent of highly qualified people. Finally, the authors stated that it is important to realize that not everyone has the desire to be promoted and reach the executive level. Some people are content to remain in lower positions. Knowing who would and would not be interested in moving up the ranks is important when it comes to developing a succession plan. Santora and Sarros only studied one non-profit organization, though, so it is important to note that their conclusions may not be widely generalizable to other types of organizations.

The business literature has revealed that there are many positive aspects of accepting interim assignments. However, there are negative aspects to interim assignments, as well.
Internal employees who accept promotional opportunities by taking on an interim assignment and then are not selected for the position on a permanent basis find that it is difficult to transition into their old roles. They feel conflicted when they have a difference of opinion with the new director and struggle with how to vocalize their concerns, because the new director may feel threatened by someone who once held that role. Sometimes new directors feel threatened by the person who recently stepped down from the interim position. Employees have conflicting feelings about whom they should be loyal to: the new director or the former interim director. If the former interim leaves the organization, employees sometimes feel the need to follow, and the organization can experience significant turnover (Goler, 2003). It is a familiar theme in the literature about interim administrative appointments in the fields of education, healthcare, and business.

**Conclusion: interim administrative roles.** The literature regarding interim administrators is lean, and the majority of what has been written about interim administrators is focused on anecdotal accounts from individuals who worked in interim administrative roles. Due to the fact that there is very little literature about interim administrators in the educational profession, this section of the literature review was expanded to include literature about interim administrators in the fields of healthcare and business.

There were some common themes among all three fields about the experiences of interim administrators. Internal candidates who served in interim roles because they wanted the job permanently often left the organization if they were passed over for the job. People serving as interim administrators but had no interest in taking on the job full-time seemed to enjoy the challenge of the temporary role. Shortages of qualified candidates in some professions, such as
superintendents and nursing, have created opportunities for people to develop second careers after retirement by accepting interim assignments.

There were some differences about interim positions between the different types of organizations, as well. An important difference found in the literature between the K-12 school districts and postsecondary educational organizations in terms of how interim administrators are appointed is that K-12 districts commonly recruit interim administrators from among the ranks of retirees, while postsecondary educational organizations tend to promote internal employees to interim administrative roles. Promoting internal employees to interim roles is beneficial because an internal employee understands the operations of the organization and can quickly assume the role, while an external appointee would need more time to learn the operations. On the other hand, promoting internal employees to interim roles is problematic because an internal interim administrator must now supervise people who were once his or her peers, which is challenging. If the person is interested in the position full-time and is passed over for the promotion, it may create a great deal of conflict and discomfort when the person steps down and resumes his or her former role.

While there is some literature about interim administrators in postsecondary educational organizations, the literature I was able to find focused on the experiences of interim deans and department chairs. I was unable to find any literature about the experiences of interim directors who worked in the student services side of colleges or universities. The role of someone who works for a student services department, such as the business office or financial aid office, is extremely different from the role of a faculty member. As a result, I expect that the experiences and expectations of an employee in the student services division (someone who is not a member of the faculty) who accepts an interim appointment would be very different from those of a
faculty member who accepts an interim appointment as a dean or department chair. Rud (2004) stated that “the benefits, and relatively few deficits, of this role for the individual and for the department make service as an interim chair attractive” (p. 54). This may or may not be the case for non-academic administrators who assume interim positions.

The phenomenon of interim administrative appointments impacts both the organization and the individual, and the purpose of my research study was to understand this phenomenon as it relates to both. In addition, the literature I was able to locate regarding interim administrators really only focused on the impact to the individual. There was very little focus on what impact the act of appointing people to interim positions has on the organization. My study helps fill a gap in the existing literature on this topic.
Chapter Four: Data Analysis

University X (UX) is a public university that is located in the Midwestern region of the United States. It is classified by the Carnegie Classification as a research university with very high research activity. The highest level degree offered at UX is a doctoral degree, and the university has two professional schools: a medical school and a law school. UX offers more than 350 programs and majors through 12 schools and colleges, has an overall enrollment of just under 30,000 students, and has just over 8,000 employees. There are 128 bachelor’s programs, 124 master’s programs, 59 doctoral programs, and 57 certificate, specialist, and professional programs offered at UX. The main campus of UX encompasses 210 acres in the center of an urban city. There are more than 100 buildings on campus for a total of 11 million gross square feet. The campus also includes a 43-acre research and technology park. There are six student residence halls and apartment complexes, as well as seven libraries. UX also has six extension centers in nearby cities.

Core Technologies: UX School of Medicine

A core technology is defined as the activities done by an organization to transform an input to an output. The desired outcome is specifically defined and there are organizational structures and processes in place in order to produce the desired outcome (Thompson, 2006, p. 10). The work is the “means whereby” (i.e. the activities) to produce an end gain.

Academic unit: School of Medicine. UX was founded in 1868 as a medical college. The medical college was founded by five local physicians who felt that the city in which the medical college was located was growing at such a pace that it deserved its own medical teaching school. This information regarding the history of the School of Medicine is published on UX’s School of Medicine website, on the Office of the Dean webpage. Throughout the history of UX, the
dominant academic unit has always been the medical college. It was the unit on which UX was founded, on which it built its reputation, and the reason that UX is able to maintain its status as a research university today. The School of Medicine has three core technologies: medical research, teaching and training researchers and doctors, and medical services that are provided to the community.

**Core technology: medical research.** The dominant core technology of UX is medical research. Among the colleges and schools of UX, the faculty members in the School of Medicine consistently produce the most research and secure the most external grant funding for research projects. As documented in the figures below, the School of Medicine is responsible for bringing in 65% of the overall research dollars for the organization. As a result, the School of Medicine drives the most dominant core technology of UX, which is medical research. While the majority of the research from UX is produced through the School of Medicine, the College of Engineering and the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences do couple with the School of Medicine on a regular basis to engage in medical research. As documented in the 2013 UX Fact Book and on UX’s website, materials and biomedical engineering research is central in the College of Engineering, and research in the health care sciences is prominent of the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Medical research is the dominant core technology of UX.

The UX Division of Research published the following chart in the 2013 UX Fact Book (which is available online at UX’s website, or hard copies may be requested from the UX Division of Research), which shows that the majority of the research award dollars that UX secures are in the health and science professions, specifically through the National Institutes of Health, which is the nation’s medical research agency.
Figure 7. Research award dollars at UX, as published by the UX Division of Research.

From the 2013 UX Fact Book, in FY 2012 total research funding dollars just from the School of Medicine was more than $119,000,000. The total research funding dollars in FY 2012 at UX overall was $182,950,997, of which UX’s School of Medicine brought in 65% of total research dollars for the organization.

Figure 8. Percentage of UX research dollars.

In the School of Medicine, faculty members are hired based on their accomplishments or potential as researchers. They are promoted and secure tenure based on their scholastic achievements: excellence in teaching, while important, is ultimately considered secondary to
their research activity. Not all medical faculty members teach. The School of Medicine employs a number of faculty members who run research labs, but never engage in classroom teaching. There are three tracks for School of Medicine faculty: Research-Educator track, Clinician-Educator track, and Research Track. The UX School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty handbook states, “The assessments of a faculty candidate’s qualifications shall be based upon excellence in teaching and in scholarly achievement.” Below is a picture of the section of the School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty handbook that outlines the factors that are considered in scholarly achievement.
II. SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

- Interdisciplinary and/or cooperative activity in developing and pursuing research programs

- Scholarly activities with resulting publications in refereed journals

- Patents

- Efforts to secure research funding from outside sources

- Success in securing grant support from outside sources

- Publication of invited contributions to the literature (books, chapters, reviews, etc.)

- Production of computer program, audiovisual material, etc. for dissemination professionals

- Presentations at national professional meetings
  a) invited by conveners
  b) selected from submitted papers

- Other publications and presentations

- Recognition by professional colleagues through special awards or honors

- Quality of scholarly activity as judged by expert evaluations from outside the University

Figure 9. Scholarly activities required of UX School of Medicine faculty, from the UX School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty Handbook.

Faculty members are under constant pressure to increase the number of research awards and grants they secure each year. They are expected to publish and present papers on a national level. Even the medical students in the School of Medicine at UX are expected to engage in research opportunities. Faculty and student research achievements are featured prominently on the School of Medicine’s website and in print publications. Students work with their faculty mentors to learn the process of applying for grant funding and in many instances contribute to publications. Below are pictures of the types of research announcements that are frequently
presented to the student body, which I downloaded from the UX School of Medicine’s Office of Graduate Scholars’ website.

Figure 10. UX School of Medicine student research announcement.
Summer Research Announcement

To: Medical Students

From: [Redacted]

Subject: Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships

Date: February 2, 2012

If you are interested in research, the School of Medicine provides an excellent opportunity for you to engage in a research project with a faculty member, through attainment of a Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship (MSSRF) Program. The research activity may be a basic science laboratory project or clinical outcomes study. Typically, the First Year students’ schedule is the only one that can accommodate the time for this program. However, if any Second or Third Year student is able to identify a suitable block of time (8 – 10 weeks) to do research while completing the other requirements of the medical school curriculum, the application will also be considered for funding.

The MSSRF fellowships are competitive and limited in number. Awarded individuals will receive a stipend for 10 weeks of research during the summer (8 week studies are also accepted and will be prorated in amount). This program is strongly encouraged by the Medical School Alumni Association who provides the funding for these fellowships. Information and application forms are available on our website [Redacted].

Briefly, the Medical Student Summer Research Program works like this. You choose an associated research mentor with whom to study. If you are not familiar with the potential mentors available or of a mentor in an area of research of interest to you, some names are available on the website but this is not an all inclusive list. You may call [Redacted] or [Redacted] for more information regarding faculty in a field you are interested in or if you require assistance in locating investigators or deciding upon a potential mentor. In an effort to increase the opportunities for students who wish to perform clinical or outcomes research, we are expanding the program to include adjunct faculty at affiliated hospitals, but we may not be aware of all the possible mentors at these locations. For those interested, there will be a general information and Q & A session held on Tuesday, February 7, 2012, from 12:00-1:30 p.m. in [Redacted]. Please plan to attend.

The only two stipulations imposed for competing for the MSSRF fellowships are that: 1) the student research be a project designed for you to learn and participate in the approach to medical research, including formulating an hypothesis, experimental design and executing the work (as well as analyzing the results) within the 8-10 week fellowship window and 2) that the sponsoring mentor must have an official appointment with University (e.g. official or adjunct faculty appointment).

You may pick up the information packet in the Office of Graduate Scholars in [Redacted] or print off an application from the website. Arrange an interview with the mentor. Once you and your mentor agree on a project, fill out the application forms. You must write your proposal in accordance with the instructions enclosed in the application. Applications will be reviewed, ranked and awarded based upon scoring by a panel of basic and clinical faculty investigators and available funds. Nothing less than an eight-week effort will be funded. The application deadline is Friday, March 16, 2012. Applications should be delivered to Room 1128 [Redacted]. Notification of awards will be given no later than April 8, 2012.

Figure 11. UX School of Medicine student research announcement (2).
In FY 2012, UX secured more than $182 million in research award money for over 1,000 research awards. The majority of the research activity and funding was through the School of Medicine. UX ranks among the top 100 public universities for research activity according to the National Science Foundation, due to the work of the medical school’s faculty. In the past several years, the university has allocated significant resources to renovate and build new facilities that are dedicated to medical research activity, including a new $35 million building for the School of Medicine (construction was completed in 2009), and a $93 million biomedical research facility (they broke ground in 2012) which is documented in the 2013 UX Fact Book.

Structures and functions exist in the academic departments of the School of Medicine to train medical researchers and professors, and this is a very small and select percentage of the overall student body at UX. From the 2013 UX Fact Book, in 2012 the enrollment at the School of Medicine was 1,611 students, while overall enrollment at UX was 28,938.

![UX Students](image)

*Figure 12. Percentage of UX students enrolled in the School of Medicine.*

Although UX maintains its status as a research university, only a small number of the schools and colleges within UX are highly selective and equipped to train students for a career in
research. The School of Medicine, the College of Engineering, and the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences generate the most research activity and as such have developed graduate programs that are designed to train graduate students to become researchers and professors.

As prominently displayed on UX’s marketing materials and website, the vision of the university is “to become the nation’s model public research university engaged comprehensively in its urban community,” and the mission of the university is “to create knowledge through scholarship and research while preparing a diverse body of students to excel in an increasingly complex global society.” A recent ad campaign that was put up on billboards along the highways was “If knowledge is power, then research is king.” The university’s mission and ad campaigns really center on the medical research of UX, because it such is an integral part of the organization’s identity.

**Core technology: teaching and training researchers and doctors.** The second core technology of the School of Medicine is teaching and training researchers and doctors. While considered secondary to medical research, teaching is also a core technology. Teaching is the “means whereby” to produce the desired outcome of student learning. Below is a picture of the section of the *School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty* handbook that outlines the factors that are considered in teaching achievement.
I. **TEACHING**

- The amount of time spent on teaching and the willingness to accept teaching assignments will be considered as general factors when assessing a candidate’s teaching activities. Participation in:

  - teaching in the undergraduate medical school curriculum
  - teaching in the postgraduate medical educational programs
  - teaching in continuing medical education programs (locally, regionally, or nationally)
  - teaching graduate education programs and/or training of postdoctoral fellows
  - the education of students in other Schools/Colleges of the University
  - tutorial work with individual students/trainees as required
  - quality of teaching activities as judged by: student evaluations, faculty/Chairperson assessments, awards from student groups for teaching excellence, etc.
  - active involvement as an advisor to students in need of career development and/or other guidance

*Figure 13.* Teaching activities required of UX School of Medicine Faculty, from the UX School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty Handbook.

In the School of Medicine, the emphasis is on teaching and training medical students to become doctors who remain in the state upon graduation. Each year nearly 60 percent of the medical school’s graduates successfully match with a residency program in the state, and upon completing their residency program they choose to remain in the state to practice medicine. The marketing materials distributed by UX highlight the fact that so many UX medical school graduates choose to remain in the state, because it is a boost to the state’s economy when professionals opt to set up their business practices there. Each year the School of Medicine Dean issues a statement that is published on the website, regarding the outcome of the medical profession’s Match Day ceremony. Her 2012 statement included the following:
Nearly 60 percent of our graduates will enter residency programs at hospitals in the state….This is a testament to the quality of our health care partners. This is also a boon for a state facing a severe physician shortage. And, because many of our graduates who enter residencies…choose to continue practicing medicine here, we benefit the state’s economy and future by producing professionals who choose to live and conduct business here.

An important characteristic of the teaching that takes place within the School of Medicine is the emphasis not only on preparing students to be exceptional doctors, but also to be advocates within the community for improvements in public health. The process of teaching medical students to produce student learning is extremely important at UX. The qualifications of the medical school’s graduates and their reputations as physicians who are committed to serving the community have a significant impact on the reputation of the school. The mission statement of the school, which is published on the website and on various marketing materials, states: “The mission of the UX School of Medicine is to provide the UX community with medical and biotechnical resources, in the form of scientific knowledge and trained professionals, so as to improve the overall health of the community.”

**Core technology: medical services.** The School of Medicine provides health care services to the outside community. In the UX 2011 Fact Book, it states that UX “takes its responsibility to the city and state very seriously,” and this is demonstrated through the variety of services that are offered to the community through the School of Medicine. There is an expectation that faculty from the School of Medicine will regularly engage in service activities, and this is addressed in the UX *School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty* handbook. Below is a picture of the section of the handbook that addresses service requirements.
### III. SERVICE

- Patient care activities (as assigned by appropriate medical school authority)
  a) quality of patient care as assessed by peers
  b) time spent in patient care or referral practice
  c) extent of clinical responsibilities in an organizing capacity (clinical service, emergency room, etc.)

- Willingness to accept service assignments of importance to program, department, or School
  a) assumption of administrative/leadership role when requested
  b) active membership on committees

- Service to the University through participation on committees, task forces, councils, etc.

- Service to the community
  a) participation in local or state professional organizations
  b) active involvement in other community based or governmental organizations
  c) other activities with wide impact on the community (e.g., media, public education programs, leadership in political organizations, voluntary participation in health care activities, election to leadership positions in local or state professional organizations, etc.)

- Service (speaking, teaching, consulting) outside the University which will bring credit to the University and further its mission

*Figure 14. Service activities expected of UX School of Medicine faculty, from the UX School of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Factors for Faculty Handbook.*

Providing medical services is the third core technology of the School of Medicine. Since 1955, a major hospital system in the city where UX is located has purchased teaching, clinical care, and program services from UX doctors. The contract between that hospital system and UX provides a place for UX students and residents to train and learn. The availability of medical services through the hospital system’s ER and community health clinics is vital for the people
who live in the communities surrounding UX. The history of the School of Medicine and the mission of continued commitment to community health care services are featured prominently on its website. From the 2013 UX Fact Book, UX physicians provide $60 million in uncompensated health care services to members of the community.

Medical students are expected to make a significant investment in community service. In 1998, the School of Medicine introduced the co-curricular program so that students can earn academic credit for some of the volunteer hours they put in at community organizations. Medical students are expected to make a yearlong commitment to one or more organizations they volunteer for in the community, in order to develop a meaningful understanding of the commitment a UX physician makes to working with vulnerable populations. Below is a copy of a flyer that promotes one of the co-curricular programs.
Seminars, and volunteer activities student attend as part of Fabric of Society allows them to learn from persons who have been dealt hardships and overcome difficulties due to unfortunate circumstances such as illness; economic or family situations. Once in practice medical students provide care for patients from all walks of life they will be able to draw from their Fabric of Society experiences to advocate for their patients well being.

**Figure 15.** Flyer for UX School of Medicine co-curricular program.

The volunteer service categories for UX medical students includes health and community clinics for underserved populations, medical relief missions, and mentoring activities at local K-12 schools to teach students about living a healthy lifestyle. Providing health care services to the surrounding communities is the third core technology of the School of Medicine.

**School of Medicine outputs.** The medical research core, the medical teaching core, and the medical services core are the three core technologies of the School of Medicine. The outputs
from the School of Medicine include medical research, researchers and doctors (who primarily remain in the state to practice medicine), and medical services.

Task/Resource Environment: UX School of Medicine

The task environment of an organization encompasses its materials and resources (Thompson, 2006, p. 27). The organization receives information and resources from external sources that must be interpreted and acted upon (Dill, 1958). Managers navigate the task environment by engaging in activities to bring inputs from the task environments into the cores, they take on activities for the purpose of maintaining the cores, and they also engage in activities that move inputs into outputs. It is essential that managers bridge and buffer the task environments in order to manage inputs and outputs, and they set boundaries in order to keep the cores from being overwhelmed.

In order to survive, UX is dependent on resources from the task environment, and those resources are managed through the managerial activities of the organization. The managerial activities of the organizational structure also mediate between the technical core and the environment (Thompson 2006, pp. 20-24).

Managerial activities provided by student services offices. The student services unit of UX brings inputs from the task environments into the cores, engages in activities for the purpose of maintaining the cores, and engages in activities that move inputs into outputs. The student services unit at UX is divided into two sections: the student services unit for the UX School of Medicine and the student services unit for the rest of the organization.

Managerial activities of student services offices: UX School of Medicine. The UX School of Medicine maintains its own support services offices that are separate from the rest of the organization. At the School of Medicine, support services fall under the umbrella of the
Office of Student Affairs. The UX School of Medicine is the only school within UX that has counseling services, academic support services, a records office, and a financial aid office that are independent and entirely separate from the main campus. All of the other schools and colleges, including the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and the College of Engineering, rely on the main campus offices to complete those activities. The College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and the School of Law are allowed to have a financial aid officer come to their buildings one day a week for half the work day to meet with students about financial aid, but neither schools are allocated the resources like the School of Medicine to operate independent, full-time offices for those support services.

The School of Medicine also has its own fiscal affairs office that is separate from the main campus of UX. The fiscal affairs office is responsible for all financial and budgeting activity in the School of Medicine.

**Support services inputs: School of Medicine.** The inputs for the School of Medicine include new students and research dollars. The School of Medicine has its own admissions office that is separate from the admissions office of the main campus. There are three full-time staff members in the School of Medicine’s admissions office: the associate dean for admission, who is a medical doctor and has headed this office for more than 25 years; the program/project assistant, who has worked at the School of Medicine in admissions since 1992; and the secretary, who has worked at the School of Medicine in admissions since 2000. There is a also an admissions committee that is convened each year, which is composed of School of Medicine faculty and at least one upper-class medical school student, who select the incoming class.

The admissions process is very personal at the School of Medicine. The introduction on the website of the program/project assistant states:
She has worked in the Office of Admissions at the School of Medicine since coming to UX in 1992. She particularly enjoys getting to know the incoming class each year and tries to know each one by name. She is the main contact for all students and advisors.

For the past seven years, UX School of Medicine faculty and current students have hosted a symposium to meet with prospective students and provide them with guidance on how to prepare for the medical school application process. They break into small groups, so the potential applicants have the opportunity to meet with faculty and current students, rather than just sit in a large lecture hall. Admission for the event is free, but in line with the School of Medicine’s core of community service, it is requested that attendees bring an item to donate to a local family center that the UX School of Medicine student group provides volunteer health care services for throughout the year. The event information is available on the UX Calendar of Events webpage and is traditionally held in August each year.

Students who make the initial cut of the admissions process and are invited to come to the campus for an interview are given the opportunity to meet current students through the UX School of Medicine Stay-Over program. Current students volunteer to act as hosts for interviewees who would prefer to room with a current student instead of staying overnight in a hotel. The intent is to ease some of the stress of the admissions process.

The size of the 2012 incoming class of medical school students was 290 students. The total enrollment for the school is 1,611 students. Tuition revenue is significant. The average annual tuition cost for in-state students is $31,795. The average annual tuition cost for out-of-state students is $64,095. Of the 290 students who entered the School of Medicine in 2012, 226 were in-state and 64 were out-of-state. The tuition revenue for just these 290 students is approximately $11,287,750 for one year of medical school.
**Student support services maintenance activities: School of Medicine.** Once students have been admitted to the UX School of Medicine, there are a number of maintenance activities that are required during their period of enrollment. The maintenance activities for the students are provided by the Office of Student Affairs. Maintenance activities include academic advising, personal counseling, billing, preparing annual financial aid packages, recording grades on transcripts, and registration.

Table 2

*Staffing in the UX School of Medicine Office of Student Affairs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Services</td>
<td>1 assistant dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 counselor for the Class of 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 counselor for the Class of 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 counselor for the Class of 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 counselor for the Class of 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 office supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 program coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 receptionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support Services</td>
<td>1 counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 activities coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Records &amp; Registration</td>
<td>1 registrar and director of curriculum management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 records assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 data entry clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Office</td>
<td>1 assistant director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 financial aid office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 office services clerk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I had the opportunity to take a tour of the UX School of Medicine with the Assistant Dean of Continuing Medical Education. During that tour he took me through the Office of Student Affairs and explained the unique relationship that School of Medicine deans and faculty develop with medical school students. Faculty members encourage students to meet with them on a regular basis. The deans are very accessible to the students, and it is not difficult for a
student to get an appointment to meet in person with a dean. The deans and faculty want students to reach out to them at the first sign of academic trouble so that they can get students back on track before they fall too far behind in their coursework.

The Assistant Dean of Continuing Medical Education explained to me that each medical school class has a counselor assigned to that class, so that students will be able to work with the same counselor throughout their medical school education. This enables the counselor to develop relationships with students. The counselors are all licensed professionals who provide counseling support to students who are struggling with their academic studies, need support on stress and time management issues, or are experiencing anxiety or depression. The counselors are willing to provide referrals to specialists for students who have extreme issues. The dean of counseling services is also very accessible to students who would prefer to meet with the dean rather than their class counselor.

Given the costs of medical school, the School of Medicine has a financial aid office staff that is dedicated to providing service only to medical school students. The financial aid office staff members meet regularly with students to assist them with finding funding to pay for their education, to secure residency and relocation loans, to provide them with information about their loan repayment options, and to help them look for opportunities to eventually have some of their student loans discharged for agreeing to work in medically underserved areas. The discussions are often extensive, as the average amount of debt that UX School of Medicine students graduate with is $165,000. The financial aid office staff gets to know many of the medical students very well. The assistant director shared with me that attending the graduation ceremony is one of her favorite events of the year, because she sees the success of so many students she has gotten to know well over the years.
The office of records and registration for the School of Medicine is responsible for the management of all records for students and alumni of the UX School of Medicine. This office is also responsible for managing the academic calendar, class scheduling, and managing senior programs to ensure that students are placed into the correct elective courses. They maintain the list of faculty advisors, help students deal with health insurance requirements each year, and manage the annual registration event for all students. They also certify the results of the students’ medical licensing exams to confirm whether the student is eligible to register for the next round of courses. The School of Medicine has so many requirements for its students in terms of progressing to register for the next round of courses that the maintenance activities of the office of records and registration for the school of medicine are very specialized.

**Research input: School of Medicine.** The other input from the School of Medicine is the significant research dollars that are brought in each year. The inputs and resources brought into the task environment of the academic unit of UX that are due to the research being done primarily by the School of Medicine faculty are extensive. The School of Medicine employs many tenured faculty members who do not teach. They are employed under a research track and are exempt from any teaching or community service responsibilities, per the School of Medicine promotion and tenure factors. From the 2013 UX Fact Book, in FY 2012 total research funding dollars just from the School of Medicine was $119,000,000. As addressed earlier, the total research funding dollars in FY 2012 at UX overall was $182,950,997, of which UX’s School of Medicine brought in 65% of total research dollars for the organization. Within the managerial core of the academic unit, planning is centered on medical research activity. The goals that are established are medical research goals. Rewards that are given are primarily based on exceptional medical research activity, since teaching is a secondary core activity to research at
UX. Faculty, primarily those who engage in research, are the managers in the managerial core of the academic unit who navigate the task environment by engaging in activities to bring grants and sponsored contracts from the task environments into the cores.

Given the level of autonomy which full-time faculty members have at UX, particularly those who are tenured, the full-time faculty all have the capacity to act as managers within the managerial core by managing the inputs and outputs of their research projects. In fact, the nature of carrying out a research project from beginning to end requires the faculty member who is the primary researcher to adopt a managerial role. Faculty members are responsible for writing their own grant proposals, securing funding for their research projects, and administering every aspect of the research from the pre-award through the post-award grant process.

The UX Division of Research is an office that is devoted to assisting faculty with managing the “grant life cycle.” Below is a diagram developed by the UX Division of Research that depicts the “grant life cycle” that faculty members follow through from beginning to end. It is available on the UX Division of Research website and is a comprehensive diagram that provides additional information for each step of the “grant life cycle” when the user moves the computer mouse over each step. Steps 1 through 5 of the “grant life cycle” address the activities of the researchers to bring inputs into the organization. Step 6 of the “grant life cycle” lists the maintenance activities that researchers must engage in once the research project has been accepted and funded.
Figure 16. Diagram of the “Grant Life Cycle” from the UX Division of Research.

Once a proposal has been accepted and funding has been secured to carry out the research, the researcher has to manage the award, which is a cumbersome task and entails a lot of administrative work that takes a significant amount of time away from conducting the actual research. Managing the award consists of both programmatic management and financial management.

Programmatic management of a research project consists of managing program changes and non-financial reporting requirements and overseeing the roles and responsibilities of
everyone who is involved in the research project. In regard to program changes, most research projects at UX have an external sponsor that is providing funding, or the type of research is governed by federal guidelines. Anytime a situation arises that was not planned, the researcher must work with the Sponsored Program Administration office to communicate and secure approval for changes. Non-financial reporting requirements encompass the technical and progress reports that the primary researcher is responsible for preparing and submitting to the sponsor of the project. The required frequency of the reports and the expected submission dates are determined by the sponsor. Finally, the primary researcher oversees the roles and responsibilities of everyone who is involved in the research project, which entails defining who will perform which tasks, from the pre-award activities all the way through the post-award activities, and making sure all tasks are accomplished. This explanation of the “grant life cycle” is provided in the UX Researcher’s Handbook, which is available to download from the UX Division of Research website.

Financial management of research projects is also the responsibility of the primary researcher. At the School of Medicine, the Fiscal Affairs Office assists the primary researcher with this responsibility. Because so much of the research conducted through UX is funded through the federal government or other outside sponsors, UX is required to comply with numerous rules and regulations put in place by those outside organizations. Some of the common organizations UX researchers must coordinate their projects with include the Federal Office of Management and Budget (which has broad policies governing grant and contract financial administration) as well the National Institute of Health, the Public Health Service, the Department of Education, the U.S. Defense Department, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation, which all have their own agency-specific regulations for
administering grants and contracts. Often times the primary researcher must coordinate cost sharing funds with the sponsor of the research. Mundane activities such as bookkeeping, ordering supplies, and processing salary distributions and vendor invoices have to be managed, which can become an administrative burden when funding for a project comes from multiple sources. Researchers also have financial reporting requirements that must be met, and they must also take the lead role in coordinating with the sponsors of the research to make sure that UX receives the funds.

Because so many faculty members were overwhelmed by the number of steps and actions of managing a research process, individuals in the academic unit of UX felt that the goal of increasing research activity was hindered by the complexity the process. To make strides toward the goal of increasing research activity, several years ago the deans and many prominent faculty members of the colleges and schools approached the executive administration of UX and petitioned for a project that would utilize technology to guide faculty through administering every phase of the research project. They received the support of the executive administration and secured funding and the dedicated attention of the computer technology department at UX to develop an online “dashboard” for the purpose of administering research projects. After several years in development, the outcome was the Researcher’s Dashboard, which is an easy-to-use intuitive tool that streamlines and enhances the pre-award and post-award grant processes for both researchers and administrators and provides a secure, easily accessible gateway to researchers’ proposal and grant information.

To set boundaries in order to keep the cores from being overwhelmed, and to bridge and buffer the task environments in order to manage research projects, faculty work closely with the
Sponsored Program Administration (SPA) Office within the Division of Research, which is a unit that is responsible for the institutional oversight for UX’s external sponsored programs. Faculty take on research projects for the purpose of maintaining the cores, and they also manage every aspect of the research project from the pre-award stage through the post-award stage to move from their initial idea to the final outcome of the research.

**Support services outputs: School of Medicine.** There are several outputs for the School of Medicine. The records office processes degrees, transcripts, and any other requests for materials needed for licensure or hospital staff appointments. The financial aid office processes requests for financial reports that are necessary for student loan deferments or forgiveness. Other outputs from the School of Medicine include research papers and products, medical processes, and residents. Residents are doctors who have received a medical degree and enter into a period of specialized training, working under the supervision of fully licensed physicians. In its most recent graduating class, 96% of UX School of Medicine doctors matched with at least one of their top three picks for a residency program. Overall, the managerial activities of the UX School of Medicine are carried out in such a way that they maintain personal interactions with students and have a “students first” approach to the work.

**Institutional Environment: School of Medicine**

For the UX School of Medicine, the institutional environment is professional and government organizations, such as the National Institute of Health, teaching hospitals, and other medical schools. The institutional environment has specific and intricate rules and regulations, which the School of Medicine follows. Following such agreed-upon rules and regulations is necessary for the organization to maintain legitimacy and support from other like organizations.
The prestige and legitimacy of UX as an overall organization rests on the continuity of research from the faculty at the School of Medicine. UX takes extreme pride in its status as a research university within the Carnegie Classification. It is extremely important within the UX School of Medicine that the faculty maintain a reputation for innovative research and be competitive with peer institutions for the number of papers published, the number of conference presentations given, and the number of special awards or honors they receive.

It is important to the organization that UX, due to the School of Medicine, partners with the other two research universities in the state to participate in a research corridor, which has an objective of reviving the state’s economy and promoting innovation in business and industry. The research corridor was founded in 2006. Ways in which the participating universities in the research corridor benchmark their success is by the number of degrees their students earn each year in the medical and biological sciences, as well as the amount spent annually in research and design (R&D) projects. They also highlight the amount of federal funding that is secured for R&D. In addition to benchmarking the research corridor to other top universities in the United States, the group has started comparing itself to top universities worldwide. Annual reports are prepared by an outside auditing firm to lend legitimacy to the research corridor’s importance as a driving force in reviving the state’s economy. The reports are available on the state’s website. Its place as a member of the research corridor due to the UX School of Medicine’s research activities is a point of pride and prestige for the organization.

Institutional environments “are characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organizations must conform in order to receive legitimacy and support” (Scott p. 132). The rules and requirements that the School of Medicine adheres to are those of other medical schools, government health organizations, teaching hospitals, and medical research
organizations, and that institutional environment strongly influences the School of Medicine. Faculty and students must engage in medical research. Faculty need to publish in respected peer reviewed journals. The students who are recruited and accepted for admission in the UX School of Medicine are those who have been exposed to research at the undergraduate level by attending research universities and have demonstrated a willingness to engage in community service. Titles are extremely important within the UX School of Medicine. Throughout the administration building, employees’ academic credentials are included on their name placards and business cards, regardless of the degree level. It is the only school or college within UX where it is deemed important to display if an employee has earned a bachelor’s degree or a master’s degree. Employees are also addressed formally at the School of Medicine, either by their professional title or by Mr. or Ms., by people outside of the School of Medicine.

**Cultural Environment: School of Medicine**

The culture of an organization is primarily concerned with the construction of meaning. The shared expectations and values of the organization’s participants are transmitted to participants of the organization, and there is an expectation that participants adapt to the group’s shared beliefs (Morgan, 1997, pp. 145-149). A culturally constructed dialogue is created and transmitted through the behavior, language, and the symbols that surround individuals within the organizations (Spindler & Spindler, 1987).

The students who are admitted to the UX School of Medicine have excellent academic records. The average undergraduate GPA for students to be considered for admission is 3.70. However, admission to the School of Medicine is so competitive that many applicants choose to earn a master’s degree prior to submitting an application for admission to the School of Medicine. The Class of 2016 had a total of 290 students, four of whom already held doctoral
degrees and 43 of whom already held master’s degrees. The students from the Class of 2016 were from 24 different countries, and those within the United State were from 18 states, with 22.4% of the Class of 2016 being out-of-state residents. The School of Medicine publishes its class profiles on its website, and there is a consistent trend every year that the majority of students who are admitted earned their undergraduate degrees at research universities. Of the Class of 2016, 152 of the students admitted to the UX School of Medicine earned their degrees at one of the three research universities within the state.

Students who are admitted to the UX School of Medicine are mostly from affluent families. This information is discernible in two ways. First, there is a subset of students who do not apply for financial aid and choose to pay for their entire cost of their medical school education out-of-pocket. A family has to have significant financial means to afford a $200,000 medical school education. A much larger number of students apply for financial aid assistance by filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. The FAFSA, which I had access to based upon my position within the university, contains the financial information, address, and education level of the student and the student’s parents. A high number of the students who are admitted to the UX School of Medicine live in the affluent suburbs that are on the outskirts of where UX is located, and their parents work in white collar jobs, have college degrees, and earn enough that they would be considered upper middle class to upper class. They live in neighborhoods where the K-12 schools have the resources to provide an enriched educational environment. These students come from families who have been able to afford the cost of sending them to research universities or private universities for their undergraduate education. For the most part, the students who attend the UX School of Medicine are not from
low income backgrounds, and their families do not live in the urban environment where UX is located.

While the majority of the UX School of Medicine students come from affluent families, there is pressure on the School of Medicine to admit a diverse class of students, since the school is located in an urban setting in which a high percentage of the city residents are African American. From the 2013 UX Fact book, as of the Fall 2013, of the 1,611 students enrolled at the UX School of Medicine, 438 of those students are of minority ethnicities. They do not disclose the number of minority students who are African American in the Fact Book. If one were to walk around the UX School of Medicine, though, it is apparent from observing the individuals on that campus that there are not a high number of African American students or faculty at the School of Medicine. There is an Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the UX School of Medicine that is supposed to promote outreach, mentoring, and recruitment of minority students for medical school. At the undergraduate schools and colleges of UX, the School of Medicine hosts events for the Minority Associations of Pre-Medical Students (MAPS), such as MCAT preparation workshops and advising sessions, to help students become competitive applicants for medical school. Each year through a post-baccalaureate recruitment program, the School of Medicine selects 12-14 students who are first-generation college attendees and meet the GPA and MCAT score requirements for admission into medical school but were not selected for admission, and enrolls them in an intensive non-degree course designed to help them become more competitive in the medical school admissions process. The goal is identify students who are from underrepresented and disadvantage backgrounds and try to prepare them for admission to medical school the following year. The School of Medicine also does outreach in the K-12 schools by hosting medical science career days and pre-med club activities to help foster the
interest of minority students in medical education. Despite the efforts of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the UX School of Medicine is consistently criticized for its lack of enrollment of African American students. The ethnic backgrounds of the students and faculty at the School of Medicine are quite different than the urban community for which the School of Medicine provides services.

**Organizational subculture: UX School of Medicine.** The organizational subculture of the UX School of Medicine is a research culture. The grants secured by medical school faculty, as well as their research achievements, are frequently publicized to the entire campus community. The School of Medicine has its own media division and it does not miss an opportunity to get the word out about faculty and student achievements. Faculty members of the School of Medicine are frequently sought out for expert opinions for the local newspapers or news channels, and whenever this happens it is publicized widely to the campus community. Rankings in reports such as the *U.S. News and World Report* about top universities and top programs are extremely important in the academic unit of UX. Prestige and recognition as a top-tier research university is extremely important to the organization.

As has been mentioned previously, faculty at the School of Medicine must publish peer-reviewed articles on their research and secure grant funds to be competitive for tenure and promotion. Research activity is an important part of the students’ medical school education, and faculty act as mentors to students to train them to become medical researchers.

The School of Medicine also has a subculture that is caring and personal to internal and external constituents. The executive administration has adopted an agenda of community service and public health assistance through the UX School of Medicine to the underinsured community residents. The fact that the School of Medicine provides more than $60 million annually in health
care services to the underprivileged and underinsured citizens in the community is excellent media press and draws the attention and financial support of donors. It is also training for medical students who are strongly encouraged to continue to provide this type of medical service for underprivileged communities once they become practicing physicians. Internally, the relationships between faculty, students, and employees within the School of Medicine are personal and positive, in which faculty work closely with students as mentors and employees are dedicated to giving students personalized assistance.

**Core Technologies: UX Main Campus**

**Academic unit: UX Main Campus.** UX is composed of 12 schools and colleges, which offer more than 350 academic and certificate programs for undergraduate and graduate studies. On an organizational chart, the School of Medicine is included in the UX organizational structure. Through analyzing the operations of the organization, it is apparent that the School of Medicine functions independently from the rest of the university. The core technologies of the other 12 schools and colleges are different than the medical research, medical training, and medical services that the School of Medicine provides. In contrast to the School of Medicine, the UX Main Campus (which is the remaining 12 schools and colleges, excluding the School of Medicine) core technologies include teaching (primarily a liberal arts curriculum), training students to work in mid-level management roles, and training students to become practitioners in fields such as education, social work, and nursing.

**Core technology: teaching.** The first core technology of UX Main Campus is teaching. UX enrolls more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students annually, and while UX promotes itself as a research institution, the reality is that most of the schools and colleges in UX are not designed to produce researchers. Rather, the core technology of UX Main Campus is
teaching. Teaching is the “means whereby” to produce the desired outcome of student learning in specific fields, such as nursing, social work, and education.

In the 1990s, as part of UX’s strategic plan, a task force was formed to take responsibility for developing a new model to evaluate teaching performance. The goal of the task force was to bring a renewed emphasis on the importance of the teaching core. The document published by the task force states:

Teaching is central to the role of the UX faculty member and has long been recognized as one of the primary missions of the university. Examples of faculty excellence in teaching exist throughout the university at all levels of instruction. However, UX, in recent years, has gradually redefined roles and rewards for faculty toward a greater involvement in graduate education, research and service. There has been a growing recognition that even as faculty roles necessarily and appropriately expanded, the time has come to reassess, refocus, and reward faculty efforts toward teaching. The recognition of teaching as a valuable form of scholarship is necessary if we are to restructure the reward system within the university to recognize the role of teaching to the same degree as other forms of scholarship.

That task force made recommendations to place an increased emphasis on using the data from teaching evaluations for consideration of promotion and tenure, and to require each college or school to develop teaching portfolio policies for their faculty. The teaching portfolio policy proposed by that task force is still in use today at UX.

Another outcome of the task force’s work was the creation of the Office of Teaching and Learning (OLT), which opened its doors in 1996. It is recognized at UX that many faculty are hired who do not have extensive experience teaching, so the OLT is designed to support faculty in the development of their instructional skills. Within the OLT there is a development lab that is open five days a week for faculty and graduate teaching assistants to get help in the development of their teaching materials. The OLT houses its own library stocked with more than 1,000 books, journals, articles, and videos about the teaching discipline. This department also regularly publishes newsletters that focus on innovations in teaching and best practices, which are
distributed to faculty and graduate teaching assistants, and hosts workshops to help faculty and
graduate student assistants improve their teaching skills. The OLT is also committed to providing
support tailored to individual needs of any person who has teaching responsibilities at UX. The
university does invest significant resources to support the teaching core.

Core technology: training (preparing students for work). Most schools and colleges
within UX do work that is not meant to turn students into future researchers or professors.
Rather, the activities and functions in these departments prepares UX students to enter the
workforce in semi-professions such as nursing or teaching, defined as such because the
participants lack full autonomy or responsibility for their decision-making (Etzioni, 1969). The
schools and colleges of UX Main Campus prepare students to work in mid-level management in
retail or service industries within the surrounding communities. The training of practitioners in
semi-professions is predominantly carried out in the College of Education, the College of Liberal
Arts and Science, the School of Business Administration, the College of Nursing, and the
College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts.

UX is a huge university in an urban environment and enrolls a significant number of
students who will never go on to graduate studies. UX Main Campus trains far more students
who leave the undergraduate programs prepared to enter semi-professions such as teaching or
nursing, or to be employed in retail or service industries, than will ever go on to pursue advanced
degrees in rigorous, research-driven graduate programs.

The majority of the students (26,189, per the 2013 UX Fact Book) who enroll at UX are
residents of the state in which the university is located, and the majority of the students will
chose to remain in that state upon leaving UX. Unlike some other research universities that
attract large numbers of out-of-state students who will relocate all over the United States upon
graduation, UX prides itself on the fact that so many of its graduates will choose to live in the communities that are close to UX. According to the UX Alumi Profile, which is published on the university’s website, 75% of UX alumni live in the state where the university is located. The marketing materials distributed by UX highlight the fact that so many UX graduates choose to remain in the state, so an important characteristic of the training that takes place within the schools and college of UX Main Campus is the emphasis on preparing students to be active members and good citizens in the surrounding communities.

**UX Main Campus outputs.** The core technologies of UX Main Campus are teaching, training students to work in mid-level management roles, and training students to work as practitioners in semi-professions. Each college or school within UX has structures in place and does work that produces specific outputs, such as teachers, nurses, and mid-level managers in local businesses.

**Task/Resource Environment: UX Main Campus**

**Managerial activities of Student Services Offices: UX Main Campus.** The UX Main Campus student services offices provide the support services for all of the schools and colleges within UX, excluding the UX School of Medicine. UX Main Campus has offices for counseling services, academic support services, records and registration, and financial aid that must service upwards of 28,000 students annually.

**Support services inputs: UX Main Campus.** The first function of the student services unit of UX Main Campus is to bring inputs into the organization. This is done by providing support services to students (and in some instances support services for faculty), which are necessary to get students into the organization and prepared to take classes. Students need to be admitted, registered and billed for classes, and make the payment for their tuition and fees.
charges in order to be prepared to begin classes. Excluding the students who are enrolled in the School of Medicine, there are approximately 28,000 students attending all the other schools and colleges within UX for whom the student services unit provides support services.

Table 3

*Departments of UX Main Campus Student Services Unit that Bring Inputs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services Departments</th>
<th>Input Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Pathways for Excellence</td>
<td>Prepare at-risk undergraduate students to enter regular college level courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Office</td>
<td>Provide new students with sources of funding to pay for education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Student Orientation</td>
<td>Process all incoming freshmen and transfer students to introduce them to the rules and policies of UX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records and Registration</td>
<td>Register new students for classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Accounts Receivable Office</td>
<td>Bill new students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collect payment from new students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer K-12 Programs</td>
<td>Promote UX to potential students in the K-12 schools from the local school districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Admissions and Scholarships</td>
<td>Process all incoming undergraduate students into UX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Award university scholarships to freshman and transfer students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market the university to schools across the state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrollment numbers are critical to UX, because tuition and fees are a large source of revenue, and when enrollment numbers decline, it raises serious concerns with the executive administration of how to maintain the quality of academic programs and research without resorting to faculty layoffs or cutting programs. The department directors and managers of the student services unit of UX manage the activities related to bringing in the tuition and fee revenue (more than $304 million annually) into the university from the task environment.
The way in which to manage these tasks efficiently at a university as large as UX, with over 30,000 students, is to utilize technology to automate many of the functions listed above. One of the primary materials in the task environment of the student services unit at UX is technology in the form of hardware and software. Databases that allow administrators to process and store all of the information that is required to process students into the organization are used to efficiently carry out the tasks of the student services unit. Licensing fees for Windows, Microsoft Office, Creative Suite, and Banner (UX’s integrated database management system used to coordinate and manage student and employee information and business processes throughout the University), cost millions of dollars each year, which department managers have to factor into their operating budgets. This page from the UX FY 2012 Current Funds Budget publication (available online from the UX Office of Budget website), shows the overall technology budget for UX.
While the faculty of UX has access to all of these same programs, the primary users of the technology are the employees of the student services unit. Without this technology, the operations of the student services unit would likely be crippled.

**Bridging activities: UX Main Campus.** The managers of the student services unit regularly engage in bridging with outside entities with which it is necessary to form relationships in order to ensure the survival of the organization. An important component of the jobs of the managers in the student services unit is ensuring institutional compliance, meeting institutional demands, and complying with the rules of government agencies to secure resources. The U.S.
Department of Education is one of the primary outside organizations that has significant influence on UX (and most postsecondary organizations), due to the fact that more than 27,000 UX students receive financial aid, the bulk of which is through federal financial aid programs. In FY 2011-2012, the most recent statistics available from IPEDS (the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, to which school must report information to each year) and the 2013 UX Fact Book, UX students receive more than $276 million in federal financial aid funds, $72 million from institutional aid, $7 million in aid from private donors, and $1 million in aid from the state. The total amount of financial aid funds being administered annually is approximately $357 million. The bulk of the financial aid offered to students is through federal financial aid funds. This means that the U.S. Department of Education, which enforces extensive rules and regulations related to the administration of federal financial aid, exerts considerable influence over the operations of UX. The financial aid director is the primary liaison with the Department of Education. In this role, the financial aid director has to bridge not only with the Department of Education, but also with the academic unit of the university. The Department of Education has strict rules about the academic program criteria for students to be eligible to receive federal financial aid, so the financial aid director works constantly with the academic departments to disseminate this information. The goals of the faculty in terms of academic program administration are at times in conflict with federal financial aid regulations, which could put the university at risk of losing financial resources. The financial aid director is tasked with resolving those issues.

There are other outside agencies that the managers of the student services unit must work with on a regular basis. The financial aid director and the financial services director are usually the primary liaisons with the outside auditing firm. Most postsecondary organizations are
required to undergo an annual audit with an outside agency, in order to meet the requirements of federal and state agencies to maintain their accreditation and eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs. The registrar is responsible for annual reports, such as the IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) report, which is also required by federal and state agencies. In this era of accountability and transparency, the number of reports that are required by federal and state agencies is increasing, and without the bridging activities of the managers in the student services unit, the organization could quickly face serious repercussions from such agencies if reporting deadlines are not met.

**Buffering activities: UX Main Campus.** The managers of the offices that make up the student services unit are also responsible for protecting the resources of the organization. They take responsibility for monitoring their department budgets and finding ways to cut costs. They are often charged with the task of working out ways in which to utilize technology more efficiently in order to automate more processes and reduce the number of people on the payroll in their departments. They make decisions about which students to allow into the organization through the admissions process. They restrict the continued attendance of students who have become financial liabilities to the organization because they incurred bad debt by not paying their tuition and fee charges. They restrict the continued attendance of students who are not achieving academically by terminating their eligibility to receive financial aid. When budgets are tight, the student services unit is the first unit of the organization that is charged with bringing in and managing more resources (i.e., recruiting and admitting more students into the university to secure additional tuition and fee revenue), while at the same time finding ways to reduce operating costs of the unit (i.e., reducing payroll by eliminating positions). One of the directives of the student services unit is to operate as leanly as possible in order to buffer the academic unit.
from having to make budgetary cuts of their own. These are all ways in which the managers of the student services unit buffer the cores of both the academic unit and student services unit, as well as protect the resources of the organization.

**Support services maintenance activities: UX Main Campus.** The process of transforming an input to an output requires maintenance of these activities from the student services unit over the course of several years. Providing maintenance activities is the second primary function of the student services unit of UX’s Main Campus.

Table 4

*Departments of Student Services Unit that Provide Maintenance Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services Departments</th>
<th>Maintenance Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success Center</td>
<td>Help students master their study skills and time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>Do the paperwork to record students’ declaration of major and program of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assist students who want to change majors or programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assist students who want to transfer to a different school or college within UX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Services</td>
<td>Assist students with finding work study positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assist students with finding co-ops and internships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling and Psychological Services</td>
<td>Provide services for students who are experiencing mental health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Office</td>
<td>Provide continuing students with sources of funding to pay for education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administer all federal, state, private, and institutional financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Residential Life</td>
<td>Provide services to students who live on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records and Registration</td>
<td>Process all student academic records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain the course catalogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain the course schedules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coordinate the use of space for class schedules
Work closely with faculty to maintain degree audit integrity
Work closely with faculty to log degree and program changes

Student Accounts Receivable Office
Bill all students
Collect payment from all students
Work with Financial Aid Office to receive federal and state financial aid funds

Student Disability Services
Provide services to students who are registered with the office based on certified disabilities
Provide training to faculty on federal requirements for academic accommodations that must be made for disabled students

The Student Center Administration
Provide dining and recreational services to students

The Student Ombudsperson Office
Provide services to students to resolve conflict or problems that students might experience with a department or employee of UX

Transfer Credit Evaluation
Enter transfer credit on transcripts for students
Work with faculty to develop and maintain transfer credit equivalencies

The work of the student services unit is also important for ensuring that UX will retain students beyond their freshman year. UX is concerned about retention, as the statistics published in the 2013 UX Fact Book show that the retention of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students is less than 80%.
Advising services are important because academic support needs to be available to students who are in danger of failing to meet the academic standards required of their program. UX is a large organization, and undergraduate students often find themselves sitting in lecture halls that have more than 100 students. The size of the undergraduate lectures means that UX undergraduate students often do not have easy access to their professors, so those students who find they need additional help with their academic studies often rely on the services provided through the academic success center or advising office. However, the advisors do not reach out to students who need help. It is considered the student’s responsibility to contact his or her academic advisor. There are 26 advisors on staff between these two departments and approximately 20,000 undergraduates enrolled each year.

Figure 18. Retention rates for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates.
Financial aid is essential because students need to be able to continue to afford the costs of tuition and fees. As the charts below show, UX is not an inexpensive university for students, particularly for graduate and professional students. Many UX students rely on financial aid to afford the costs.

Table 5

*UX 2012-2013 Tuition and Fee Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate tuition per credit hour</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Non-resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration, lower division</td>
<td>$309.65</td>
<td>$694.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration, upper division</td>
<td>$374.15</td>
<td>$831.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine and Performing Arts, lower division</td>
<td>$309.65</td>
<td>$694.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine and Performing Arts, upper division</td>
<td>$374.15</td>
<td>$831.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing, upper division</td>
<td>$542.55</td>
<td>$999.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, lower division</td>
<td>$303.45</td>
<td>$688.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, upper division</td>
<td>$356.75</td>
<td>$813.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other lower division undergraduate students</td>
<td>$298.25</td>
<td>$683.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other upper division undergraduate students</td>
<td>$351.55</td>
<td>$808.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate tuition per credit hour</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Non-resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>$618.45</td>
<td>$1,262.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>$618.45</td>
<td>$1,262.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine and Performing Arts</td>
<td>$549.85</td>
<td>$1,193.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>$851.00</td>
<td>$935.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
<td>$618.45</td>
<td>$1,262.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>$597.10</td>
<td>$1,242.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>$969.20</td>
<td>$1,613.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy and Health Sciences</td>
<td>$606.05</td>
<td>$1,242.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other graduate programs not listed</td>
<td>$532.85</td>
<td>$1,176.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

*UX 2012-2013 Additional Fees by Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Fees</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omnibus fee (undergraduate)</td>
<td>$27.65 per credit hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnibus fee (graduate)</td>
<td>$39.75 per credit hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnibus fee (M.D. program)</td>
<td>$27.20 per credit hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration fee</td>
<td>$181.45 per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and fitness fee</td>
<td>$25.00 per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student support fee (M.D. program)</td>
<td>$550.00 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. maintenance status fee</td>
<td>$221.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support services outputs: UX Main Campus. The third function of the student services unit is to process outputs. Examples of output activities provided by the student services unit include processing diplomas, processing transcripts, holding teacher fairs, and sponsoring alumni days.

Table 7

*Departments of Student Services Unit that Provide Output Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services Departments</th>
<th>Output Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Services</td>
<td>Assist students with resume writing and entry level job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records and Registration</td>
<td>Process transcript requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process diplomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Student Center Administration</td>
<td>Hold career fairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hold alumni days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UX Main Campus: connection with students. The activities done in the departments of the student services unit are designed to bring resources into the university and to prepare students to enter and persist through the academic unit of UX. Based on limited staffing in the support services departments at the UX Main Campus, the university has invested heavily in technology to allow students to complete their paperwork through a “self-service” process. Students complete the majority of their paperwork electronically through the online portal for the Banner system (Pipeline), and the first time they contact the university they are instructed that “Pipeline is your lifeline” for services and information. The financial aid office employs only six financial aid officers to work directly with students and parents to complete the financial aid process and has ten back-office staff and managers who process paperwork. The admissions office has to hire students to work as “student ambassadors” to lead campus tours and answer the phone calls of prospective students, because the full-time employees are busy with off-site recruiting and other responsibilities. There are two cashiers who work at UX to accept and process student payments for more than 30,000 students.

The UX Main Campus copes with the volume of students by making almost all processes available online. Instead of calling an office for assistance, students are encouraged to view online “How To Videos” or use other online self-service tools. Below are some examples.

![How to Videos](Screen Cast) ![STARS for Degree Audit](Walk-Through Videos)

*Figure 19.* Registrar’s office self-service tools.
Employees of the Student Services Unit at UX Main Campus typically do not know students by name. They normally only connect with students when students have a problem that they cannot solve on their own through a self-service process and the student takes the initiative to reach out and contact the office. Students are expected to be very independent when it comes to managing their records at UX Main Campus.

Support services unit’s bureaucratic structure: UX Main Campus. The student services unit of UX Main Campus is a subsystem of the organization. This unit of the organization is designed to manage financial resources of the university and to provide maintenance activities to students who are enrolled at UX. To do this, the actions of the department that fall under the umbrella of the student services unit are intentional, purposeful, and well organized, which is characteristic of a rational system.

The departments in the student services unit operate under rules that are clearly defined, and these departments are very bureaucratic in nature. The bulk of the financial resources for UX Main Campus come from bureaucratic institutions, such as the U.S. Department of Education or other government agencies, and there are strict rules defined by these agencies that UX Main Campus must follow when administering the resources. Common functions of a bureaucracy include close supervision, personnel selection, accounting, financial management, record
keeping, and planning (Scott, 2003, p. 45), and these are all very typical activities that take place within the student services unit of UX.

There is a specific skill set required of those individuals who work in a student services department, such as financial aid, records, or student accounting, because so much of the work done within these departments is regulated by federal rules and institutional policies. Because these departments are governed by so many institutional rules, it standardizes their activities and makes the actions of the departments highly predictable. According to Scott (2003, p. 45), in a rational system, the functions of the individuals working in that system are designed to sustain and maintain the organization, and that is an accurate description for the type of work that is done within the student services departments at UX. There is a set of standard services offered from the student services departments, and those services are carried out efficiently by employees who have been trained in the specific skill set required of the department in which the person works. For example, a financial aid officer is trained to administer financial aid funds based on federal regulations and institutional policies, and the financial aid officer’s work does not deviate from those rules. The decisions and actions of administering financial aid are standardized for the entire student body and are completely predictable.

Because one of the most important objectives in a rational, bureaucratic system is to achieve efficiency, experts are hired to run departments. In the case of UX, the student service unit departments are run by directors. The qualifications to be appointed to a director position at UX usually include a master’s degree, preferably in the fields of business, accounting, or finance, although other areas of expertise will be considered, as well as a minimum of five years of work experience that is specific to the department for which the person would be appointed director, and a minimum of five years of supervisory experience. Below is an example from the UX
Human Resources online hiring system of a typical job posting for a director level position at UX in a support services area.

Figure 21. Example of standard UX job posting for director in support services unit.

The director is responsible for ensuring that employees follow the rules of the department and engage in the bridging and buffering activities that are necessary to protect the organization from threatening forces. According to Morgan (1997, pp. 33, 39), a bureaucratic system is most successful and effective when the environment is stable, so it is important that the student services departments have a qualified administrator in the director’s role to carry out these managerial tasks.
**Institutional Environment: UX Main Campus**

For the UX Main Campus, the institutional environment is the federal and state governments. These government entities have rules and regulations that demand conformity. The federal government is one of the primary organizations through which UX receives money, due to the number of students who rely on the federal financial aid programs to afford the cost of tuition and fees. To remain compliant with the rules and regulations of the federal student aid programs, UX has numerous annual reports that must be submitted, and the university is required to have an annual audit of financial aid and business office functions to verify compliance with all of the regulations that must be followed when administering federal student aid funds.

Even though funding from the state government has been declining for years, UX remains dependent on state funds to cover a large portion of its operating expenses. The state government has its own set of annual reports that UX must submit. Recently there have been reporting changes, in that the state government now requires public colleges and universities to maintain a webpage devoted to fiscal reports that have been submitted to the state, under the premise of increasing accountability and transparency to taxpayers.

**Cultural Environment: UX Main Campus**

The cultural environment of UX Main Campus is an urban culture that is reflective of the city in which UX is located. The city in which UX is located is deteriorating. Crime rates are up, urban blight has ravaged the city, unemployment rates are in the double-digits, and the latest census figures show that the city has suffered a severe decline in population.

Despite these environmental challenges, UX continues to cope with them and persist, mainly because of the strong reputation its medical school maintains. The success the university has achieved in medical research and training has enabled the university to survive over the years
in a declining urban environment. Undergraduate and graduate students from the outlying suburbs of the city who might otherwise not consider attending a university in such a rough urban environment do choose to commute and attend UX because of the status of the organization as a research institution. They do not consider that it is only a research institution because of the School of Medicine, but rather view it as a research institution that is a more affordable option in terms of tuition costs and the flexibility to commute than the other two research universities in the state. This allows UX to keep a somewhat competitive edge for undergraduate students over the other non-research universities in the proximity.

From the UX 2013 Fact Book, the UX undergraduate student body is 38% minority, and 23% of those minority students are African American. The university does a lot of recruiting for undergraduate students from what are considered to be the top three high schools for academic performance in the city. Two of these high schools have 99% minority student enrollment and the other has 97% minority enrollment. These high schools enroll a high number of economically disadvantaged students. From the *U.S. News and World Report*, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at these three high schools ranges from 30% - 69%, their proficiency in reading scores range from 42%-90%, and their proficiency in math scores range from 11% - 72%. The scores from the overall K-12 district in the city are 29% proficiency in reading and 10% proficiency in math, with 11.6% of students in the district considered college-ready upon leaving the K-12 system.

UX has a reputation for admitting a high number of first generation college students to its undergraduate programs. It has an office for Federal TRIO programs. From the UX Office of Federal TRIO website:

The UX Upward Bound and Higher Education Opportunities Committee-Educational Talent Search Programs began educating students in 1966. They were followed by the
Student Support Services Program (also known as Project 350) in 1968. The department has experienced steady growth over the past 40 years to include the Veterans' Educational Opportunity Program (1972) Educational Opportunity Center (1982), King-Chavez-Parks College Day Program (1986), McNair Scholars Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program (2003) and the Child Care Means Parents in School Program (2005).

The TRIO programs provide support services and programs at UX for “students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education due to economic deprivation, poor academic preparation or first generation college status.”

The undergraduate programs at UX have come under intense criticism regarding the graduation rates of minority students. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education (August 9, 2010 article), it is a university with one of largest gaps in graduation rates between white and African-American students, where fewer than one in 10 African-American students graduate within six years. For white students, that graduation rate is 43.5 percent. When this article came out, the directors and vice presidents of UX came together and sent out a set of “talking points” to all employees who might be questioned by friends, family, and other community members about the academic performance of UX students. Below is the document that was disseminated to UX employees on August 25, 2010:
Talking Points on Graduation/Retention Rates and Gaps

As an urban, public university, UX provides students who have the will and the aptitude, but who perhaps have not had the benefit of an excellent preparatory education or the privilege of economic security, the opportunity to better themselves by studying at a premier research institution. We recognize that many of these students will struggle, but those who succeed will have earned a chance to become successful, productive citizens.

- Graduation rate gaps are not a racial issue; they are a byproduct of academic preparedness and financial need.
  - We draw many students from [Detroit], which is among the most economically and academically challenged urban areas in the nation. Some of our students lack the financial ability or appropriate family support to succeed in higher education.
  - Students of any ethnicity with ACT scores of 20 or below, a common profile among [Detroit] district students, have more difficulty graduating, or do so over a longer period of time. Students of any ethnicity with ACT scores above 24 show no gap in graduation rates.

- UX has a large number of working and commuting students, who traditionally take longer to graduate.
  - After six years, more than 71 percent of the 2003 UX freshman class was still in higher education. UX’s unique student body profile falls outside the scope of the six-year graduation snapshot that other universities use.

- Recognizing that these students need a higher level of support to succeed, we have implemented a number of programs to support them:
  - Learning Communities, where students meet outside the classroom with faculty and peers to discuss study topics.
  - Alternative Pathways to Excellence, a partnership program with community colleges to improve student readiness for four-year higher education institutions.
  - Emerging Scholars – a mathematics support mechanism and accelerator for new students.
  - Partnership programs with [Detroit] district, both in teacher training and student education, to help with K-12 student readiness.
  - Math Corps, a highly successful math program that integrates high expectations,
cultural support, student mentoring and excellent instruction. This program is widely hailed as an urban education success story.

- The Honors College enlists students as mentors and teachers in district schools. UX hosted First Lady Michelle Obama and 5,000 high school juniors as part of a campaign to promote mentoring.

- **Many of these programs result in improving retention, which will lead to better graduation rates.**
  - UX is increasing its retention of all students, with pronounced improvement among African Americans.
  - From 2004-2009, we increased retention of academically challenged African American freshmen by more than 25 percent.
  - Right now, on average, UX’s retention of freshman students of all ethnicities is on par with other urban universities nationally.

- **While UX offers support for academically and financially challenged students, students also bear responsibility.**
  - UX is an excellent academic institution and earning a UX degree is a challenge for any student. For students to graduate, they must avail themselves of the many opportunities offered and work hard to succeed.
  - UX will continue to do all it can to support students with the drive and aptitude to earn a degree, but it would be irresponsible of UX to lower standards for graduation.
  - For example, the Emerging Scholars Program requires that students sign a contract committing them to be punctual and submit high-quality work.

*Figure 22. UX talking points on graduation rates.*

In 2012, UX’s president unveiled a new admissions policy to be implemented for the Fall 2013 class with a goal of reducing the number of undergraduate students who are admitted to UX who are not prepared for the rigor of a college curriculum. The admissions department now works with three options in recruiting new students for enrollment in the Fall 2013 semester: accepting an applicant outright, enrolling the applicant in an eight-week preparedness course, or
advising the applicant to pursue other options like community college. There is a summer “bridge” preparedness program that includes math and English courses and success coaching, and students who are admitted to the program will receive tuition, room, and board at no cost. There is also a fall “bridge” program that covers just the cost of tuition. The controversy around the changes to the admissions policy is that UX will be restricting access to college education to working class and minority students. According to a February 2, 2012, article in the Huffington Post by David Sands, when the university did analysis on the potential outcome of the new admissions policy, it was predicted that as much as 5% of the current undergraduate student body would not have been admitted had the new admissions policy been in place when they had applied. The problem the university faces, though, is that there are rumors in the state government that state funding to the public colleges and universities could be tied to the graduation rates of schools in the coming years, and if that type of funding policy is implemented, UX could be in danger of losing significant resources from the state due to low graduation rates of its undergraduate students.

Organizational subculture: UX Main Campus. The UX Main Campus has a teaching subculture. The reason UX maintains the research university classification is due to the research activity that takes place within the medical school, not Main Campus. The university has a research classification, though, so the schools and colleges of UX Main Campus have also written into their Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Factors for Faculty that faculty on the tenure-track must build a portfolio of scholarly work. From the UX Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Factors for Faculty, page 10:

Except for faculty whose entire assignment is in the performing or creative arts or for faculty in academic units whose missions have been specifically defined by a clearly stated University policy as not including scholarship, publication of books, journal articles, Articles, creative pieces, and similar materials that contribute directly to the
advancement of knowledge is an essential part of the scholarly achievement of faculty. The scope and standing of the journals in which publication occurs, the reputation of the publishing house, the refereeing process to which submitted materials are subject, the selectivity of the journal or publisher, and similar measures of quality should be carefully considered.

Other than the School of Medicine, the colleges and schools of UX are not designed to conduct scientific research. While the research subculture has a clearly established norm of research being valued above all else, the UX Main Campus colleges and schools cannot meet this expectation. The UX Main Campus schools and colleges have responded by placing a greater emphasis on teaching for evaluating tenure and promotion.

The subculture of UX Main Campus is also bureaucratic and impersonal. The departments are often understaffed, and there are too many students for such few staff to provide personalized attention. The objective is to process a large volume of work with limited resources, as opposed to getting to know students on a one-on-one basis.

**Summary: School of Medicine vs. UX Main Campus.** The School of Medicine is a personalized normative system, while the UX Main Campus is a bureaucracy. The employees of the School of Medicine have a deep commitment to the success of their students. Faculty members invest a significant amount of time with the students, through teaching, training, and mentoring. Their relationships with the students are so important, because their recommendations and connections with medical personal throughout the nation help open career pathways for the future doctors they are training. Even the employees in the support service departments in the School of Medicine make personal connections with the students, to the extent that they make it a priority to get to know the students by name and celebrate the students’ success by attending important functions such as graduation ceremonies. There is a great deal of stability in the staffing in the support services departments at the School of Medicine. Turnover
is rare and tenure of employment tends to be long. Employees are committed to the School of Medicine and its students. Alumni of the School of Medicine are also very generous in their donor support.

In contrast, the UX Main Campus is a bureaucratic system. Staffing levels are lean, and students are served by the masses as opposed to receiving personalized attention. The focus is on being able to process a large volume of work with limited resources, as opposed to delivering personalized services. Undergraduate students are taught by professors in large lecture halls with 100 or more students and may never meet with their professors one-on-one. Support services have to be offered to students primarily through online, self-service formats. Employees in the support services departments rarely get to know students by name. The UX Main Campus is an impersonal environment. Employee turnover is expected, and offices are prepared to deal with the turnover by having highly standardized processes and procedures in place, so that people can be trained quickly when they are hired to fill a vacancy.

There is no UX culture for the organization as a whole. Rather, there is a research subculture for the School of Medicine and a teaching subculture for the UX Main Campus. The School of Medicine subculture is caring and personal, while the Main Campus subculture is bureaucratic and impersonal. The institutional environments of both units are also very different. The institutional environment of School of Medicine is medical organizations, government health organizations, and teaching hospitals, while the institutional environment of the Main Campus is the federal and state governments.

The cultural environments of the School of Medicine and UX Main Campus are not the same. Many of the students who attend the UX Main Campus come from the urban environment that people at the UX School of Medicine serve. There are a high percentage of students who
attend UX Main Campus schools and colleges who are first generate college attendees, live in the urban city, are economically disadvantaged, and attended K-12 schools that lacked the resources to prepare students for entry into college. Students who attend the School of Medicine, in contrast, primarily come from affluent families who live in suburban areas with K-12 schools that have reputations for preparing students for entry into postsecondary education. These students have proven their academic achievements by graduating from research universities at the top of the class and many have already gone on to earn graduate degrees prior to beginning their medical education. There is a disconnect with UX’s status at a research institution with a premier medical school versus the activity that takes place on the UX Main Campus, with far easier admissions standards for its undergraduate students than the other two research universities in the state and the low graduation rates of its undergraduate students, to the point that UX has been in the national news for what many would consider to be failing standards.

**Marginality vs. Centrality and the Use of Interim Administrators in the Academic Core**

UX is a large organization that is composed of 12 different schools and colleges. Not every school or college is designed (based on programs of study that are offered at each college and school and the subject expertise of the faculty who are responsible for the teaching and research related to those programs) to carry out the research core technology of the organization. At UX, there are only two colleges that couple with the School of Medicine on medical research projects. The degree to which a school or college is valued within the organization “depends on the degree of acceptance afforded a program by different groups within and outside the school system” (Clark, Zuckerman, & Merton, 1980, p. 58). At UX, it is the School of Medicine that has the most central core technologies and is the most highly valued by the most groups, within and outside of UX.
UX hiring process in the academic unit. At UX, because the organization is so large, employees are hired, resign, or are terminated on a regular basis. There are over 8,000 employees at UX, and the constant movement of employees in and out of the university is nothing unusual for an organization this size. When a vacancy occurs for an administrative level position, it is very common for a current employee to be appointed to the fill that vacancy on an interim basis.

When an administrative vacancy at the dean level in the academic division opens at UX, the hiring process is very slow, so anyone who agrees to accept an interim position should expect to fulfill the duties of an interim dean on average for one year. First, like most public postsecondary organizations that have endured significant state cuts over the years, there is a scarcity of resources at UX. There is a cost associated with posting a vacant position and forming the hiring committee, and the more important or prestigious the position, the higher those costs are for the university. Whenever positions are open for deans or higher levels, the university conducts the search on a national level. With these academic administrative positions, it is not uncommon for UX to employ the services of a consulting firm to conduct the search, which is very expensive. Within the academic division, there is a special fund set up through the Provost’s Office to accommodate the cost of the search. As Dean A explained:

...you’ve got to fly people in and put them up and have lunches and dinners and breakfasts, and have them meet alumni and have them meet faculty and have them meet with the other administrators, have them meet with the staff of the College.

In addition, the process of coordinating these activities and forming the formal search committee among university faculty and administrators is very time-consuming. It is easier for administrators to find time in their schedules, because they work on 12-month appointments, but if faculty must be included on a search committee and if the vacancy occurs during the summer months, the process will be slowed because so many faculty work on nine-month appointments.
For dean level positions that are open in the academic division, normally five to seven people are
invited for full-day on-campus interviews.

Dean A explained to me during her interview that for faculty positions and administrative
positions within the academic departments, it is the policy of UX that a national advertisement is
required for all standing appointments of executives, administrators, and tenured/tenure-track
faculty. Exceptions can be made to conduct internal searches to fill vacant assistant and associate
dean positions, but at the dean level, the search will always be national. Because a national
search must be conducted to fill a vacant dean position, anytime a dean steps down from the
position, retires, or leaves the university, the position will have to be filled by an interim
administrator while the national search is ongoing. The provost and the president do not have the
discretion to appoint their person of choice on a permanent basis without conducting the national
search, and the national search almost always takes a year or more. Dean A, who served as an
interim dean at UX twice and also served for a short period as the interim provost, explained the
process to me during her interview:

It’s always a national search. It’s spelled out in the contract. First the committee has to be
voted on by the faculty, so if the dean leaves in May, when most of the faculty is leaving
campus, you can’t have the election until September. Then people get elected in, people
get appointed, then they have to put out the ad, do the national search. They usually bring
like ten people in for airport interviews, seven to ten, then they bring five usually to
campus for full visits to meet with everybody. It’s just a long process.

All of these factors contribute to the hiring process moving very slowly, and when there are
multiple vacant positions, because resources in the form of time and money are both limited at
UX, decisions must be made as to which positions will be posted and filled first.

Central vs. marginal core technologies. UX, like many organizations, has more than
one core technology. At UX, the dominant core technology is medical research, but teaching and
training researchers and doctors, and medical services that are provided to the community, are
also important. Within an organization some core technologies are considered to be more important and are valued more than others by the organization’s participants. Those core technologies that are valued the least are considered to be marginal, because they exist in a low, peripheral status, have little prestige or power, receive low priority for funding within the organization, are potentially at risk for future organizational commitment, and have few or no assigned full-time administrators or faculty. Those core technologies that are valued the most are central to UX, and they are considered to be of high importance to the organization, have significant prestige or power, receive high priority for funding within the organization, are not at risk for future organizational commitment, and have many full-time administrators or faculty (Clark, 1968, pp. 57-66).

The indicators of marginality and centrality, as defined by Clark (1968, pp. 57-66) and expanded upon by Welmers (2002, p. xxii-xxiii) and Brandon (2004, p. 53), are useful tools for understanding the value and status of the schools and colleges within UX. The eight indicators are as follows:

1) Strength of policy, law, rules, and regulations
2) Number and type of employees dedicated to its tasks/personnel
   a. Administration
   b. Faculty
   c. Students
   d. Interim vs. Permanent
3) Kinds of dedicated facilities
4) Source and degree of funding
5) Location of program within organization
a. Time
b. Place

6) Output

7) Prestige

8) Legitimacy

Using these indicators, I was able to evaluate each school and college and thus categorize them as being central or marginal. The following chart shows my assessment for the schools and colleges as being central or marginal within UX. The amount of data available for each of these indicators is overwhelming, and it is impossible to list every piece of supporting data. In the chart I have summarized key elements of each school or college using the eight indicators listed above. For a complete list of the data that support my determination of the school or college being central or marginal, see Appendix A.
Figure 23. Central and marginal schools within UX.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UX Colleges and Schools</th>
<th>Central or Marginal</th>
<th>Supporting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Medicine</td>
<td>Most Central</td>
<td>Most competitive admission (prestige) – 290 admitted out of 3770 applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Highest tuition rates (because it is so competitive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Most research being completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Most grant funds being secured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Many endowed/named positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to fund raise enough to build new facilities without loans or main campus budget help – extremely loyal alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very high graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than 1000 students, making it one of the largest medical schools in nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Pharmacy</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Very competitive admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Health Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td>Requires interviews for admission, even for undergraduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Several endowed/named positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very high graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher tuition rates (because it is so competitive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Majority of faculty are full-time, majority of faculty are assistant professors or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on research (loosely couples with School of Medicine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students consistently selected for awards (prestige)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty have secured a lot of grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| College of Engineering | Central | Emphasis on research (loosely couples with School of Medicine)  
|                       |         | Partnering with Med School for bio-engineering research  
|                       |         | New multi-million dollar facility to support research  
|                       |         | Several endowed/named positions  
|                       |         | Majority of faculty are full-time, majority of faculty are associate professors or higher (few assistant professors)  
|                       |         | Competitive admission for graduate programs  
| School of Law         | Marginal | Classification as a “professional” school has prestige  
|                       |         | High tuition rates  
|                       |         | Somewhat competitive admission (40% of applicants are admitted)  
|                       |         | Faculty maintain a profile in the media on the local and national level  
|                       |         | Ranked in the top 100 law schools nationally  
|                       |         | Several endowed/named positions  
|                       |         | Very high graduation rates  
| College of Liberal Arts and Sciences | Marginal | Highest enrollment of any college within the university – generates massive tuition revenue  
|                       |         | Majority of undergraduate credit hours within university – tuition revenue  
|                       |         | Awards half of the Ph.D.s within the university – adds to prestige of being a research school  
|                       |         | Approximately $20 million a year in grants/external contracts  
|                       |         | Several nationally ranked departments by the National Science Foundation  
<p>|                       |         | Low on-time graduation rates |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Nursing</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Because there is a medical school and college of pharmacy, least prestigious of health professions colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Viewed as “semi-profession” compared to medical school &amp; college of pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small enrollment (fewer than 500 students enrolled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some research, but focus is more on practitioner skills and community outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A lot of instructors, based on practitioner aspect of degree (less prestigious than professors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Only one named faculty position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low enrollment in Ph.D. programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Business Administration</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Declining enrollment in recent years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Viewed as a semi-professional degree, compared to law, med, and pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Several endowed/named positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A lot of lecturers and adjunct faculty based on practitioner aspect of degree (less prestigious than professors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decent graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not extremely competitive for admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>No endowed/named positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Admission is not competitive – least competitive of all graduate programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heavy reliance on adjunct faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low graduation rates for undergraduates, but high graduation rates for graduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enrolls more than 2000 undergrad students and more than 2000 graduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Honors College                             | Marginal     | Minimal enrollment of undergraduate students  
Largely symbolic, and not representative of academic capabilities of majority of undergraduate students  
Purpose is solely to market university to prospective undergrads  
Not representative of standard undergraduate education |
| School of Social Work                      | Marginal     | Very small, only 22 faculty total  
Very small enrollment, only four programs of study offered (1 undergrad and 4 graduate)  
Emphasis is mainly on graduate studies  
Little attention paid to research  
Viewed as a practitioner degree  
Admission is not competitive |
| College of Library and Information Sciences| Marginal     | Very small, only 13 faculty total  
Significantly behind other library schools in offering courses in advanced technology related to MLIS  
Admission is not competitive  
Good graduation rates  
Graduates and students complain about program offerings being archaic and difficulty finding future employment  
Little attention paid to research |
| College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts | Marginal     | Course offerings not valued or considered important in a research university setting  
Heavy reliance on adjunct faculty  
Research is not relevant, and research is a core value of the university  
Small enrollment |
The dominant core technology of UX is medical research, which is carried out by the School of Medicine. The College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and the College of Engineering can be considered central within UX, because they loosely couple with the School of Medicine on medical research projects. All other schools and colleges with UX are marginal in comparison to the School of Medicine.

Interim academic administrator assignments by core. Academic positions in the UX School of Medicine are considered the most important positions to fill quickly whenever a vacancy occurs, because that is where the medical research is conducted at UX. The School of Medicine, which is intensely competitive with other medical schools, has much at stake in terms of being able to attract top researchers to join the faculty and recruit the brightest students to apply. Therefore, academic administrative vacancies in the School of Medicine are treated as a priority to fill, and when a dean resigns, the search process is immediately started so that the position can be filled permanently within a year. The table below shows the periods of tenure for all the deans of the UX School of Medicine, and it shows that as deans have resigned, their positions have been filled within a year. This information is available on the Dean’s page of the UX School of Medicine website and in UX School of Medicine press releases, which are available in electronic format on their website.
Table 9

*Timeline of UX School of Medicine Deans*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Tenure</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868 – 1877</td>
<td>President, UX Medical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-1913</td>
<td>President, UX College of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-1917</td>
<td>Dean, UX College of Medicine and Surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-1935</td>
<td>Dean, UX College of Medicine and Surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-1936</td>
<td>Acting Dean, UX College of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-1939</td>
<td>Dean, UX College of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-1945</td>
<td>Dean, UX College of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-1948</td>
<td>Dean, UX College of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1963</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-1970</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1980</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1988</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1999</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2004</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2009</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(appointed Nov ’05, hire date of March ’06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-Present</td>
<td>Dean, UX School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other colleges and schools that are marginal in comparison to the School of Medicine have kept interim deans in place for two or even three years. When there is an interim dean, among the challenges for the university is that it hinders the hiring of tenure-track faculty, and some people are reluctant to allow an interim dean to implement too many changes, so it is in the best interest of the organization to move through the search process to fill vacant dean positions as quickly as possible. Dean A explained that during her appointments as interim dean:
…they don’t want me to search for new faculty until they appoint the dean, because they don’t want an interim to be choosing a lot of faculty, so we had to leave a few spots vacant…. you just need to forge ahead with what you can forge ahead with. That there’s going to be people, interims in and out all the time, and I was dean at UX for twenty years, so I can’t tell you how many deans I served with, and there’s always an interim, and you’ve just got to keep the momentum going. And you’re not a caretaker. It takes at least a year to replace a dean at UX, and so that’s a whole year you don’t want to lose.

Departments compete with one another for the resources required to fill their vacant positions with permanent employees. If there are multiple vacancies at a time, priority will be given to filling the vacancies of the most central schools and colleges. The more marginal the school or college within UX, the longer it is likely that an individual will serve in an interim capacity for an extended period of time. The organization is most concerned about filling administrative vacancies for the most central schools and colleges. According to Clark (1968, p. 58), the running of the operations of the unit or organization with part-time administrators is a contributing factor to, and a symptom of, the unit’s marginal position. Welmers (2002, p. xxii-xxiii) and Brandon (2004, p. 53) both identified the use of interim versus permanent leadership as an indicator of a unit’s centrality or marginality.

The following data were obtained from the UX Staff and Faculty Directories. From 1991 to 1997, these directories were published based on the academic year. In 1998, a full directory is not available, because the university was in the process of transitioning the publication of the directory from academic year to calendar year. Data are not available for 2003, because the 2003 directory could not be located in the university’s archival library. Note also that four of the schools and colleges listed on these charts no longer exist (College of Liberal Arts, College of Science, College of Lifelong Learning, and College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs), as they were consolidated over the years as the university restructured to conserve resources.
The interim administrative positions that were counted for inclusion in the charts below include the following: interim department chairs, interim assistant deans, interim associate deans, and interim deans. The following information documents that the use of interim administrators to fill vacancies in the academic unit has been a common practice for years (Table 10), and that the most marginal schools and colleges have endured the longest periods of time under the leadership of interim deans (Table 13). The average period of time that one serves in an interim administrative role in the academic unit at UX is one to two years (Table 12). The larger schools and colleges have had more overall interim positions over the years, but they also have much larger academic administrative staffing sizes than the smaller schools and colleges (Table 11). (Note: Many administrators in the academic unit served in more than one interim role during their period of employment at UX, which is why the total number of administrators in Table 12 does not equal the total number of administrators in Tables 10 and 11. This is also the case for the support services administrators, which is why the total number of administrators in Table 16 does not equal the total number of administrators in Tables 14 and 15.) The current administrative staffing sizes of the schools and colleges are displayed in the UX organizational charts, which are included in Appendix B.
Table 10

Overall Number of Interim Administrative Positions in Academic Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Interim Positions: Academic Departments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981-1982</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-1983</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1985</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1990</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 11**

*Number of Interim Academic Administrative Positions by School/College*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Interims: 1981-2011</th>
<th>College/School</th>
<th>Department Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>School of Medicine</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>College of Library and Information Sciences</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>College of Science</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts and Science</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>College of Nursing</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>School of Social Work</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>School of Business Administration</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Law School</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Honors College</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total = 148

---

**Table 12**

*Time of Service in an Interim Academic Administrative Role*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Serving in Interim Role</th>
<th>Academic Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year or less</td>
<td>90 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>39 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>12 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>2 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>3 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total = 148
In terms of the schools and colleges within the academic division, some of the marginal schools, such as the College of Education and the School of Social Work, have had individuals serve as interim deans for as long as three consecutive years. In comparison, the School of Medicine has limited the tenure of its interim deans to one year. The information in Table 13 regarding the time periods that interim deans served in each school or college was obtained from the UX employee directories. Personnel files at the university are confidential, so I was not able to obtain the exact interim appointment start and end dates of each interim dean, and the closest approximation I was able to derive for the length of interim service was in yearly increments. Also, as noted earlier, from 1991 to 1997, these directories were published based on the academic year, with a transition to publication by calendar year in 1998.

Table 13

*Interim Deans by College and School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalogue Year</th>
<th>School/College</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Length of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Interim Dean A</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Interim Dean B</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Interim Dean B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Interim Dean B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Interim Dean C</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Interim Dean D</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Interim Dean E</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Interim Dean E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Interim Dean F</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Interim Dean G</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Interim Dean G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean H</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean I</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean I</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean J</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>College Name</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1982</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean K</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-1983</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean K</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean L</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1985</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean M</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean N</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean O</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Interim Dean O</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean Q</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean Q</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1990</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean Q</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1985</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean R</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean S</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean B</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Interim Dean B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>College of Nursing</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>College of Nursing</td>
<td>Interim Dean U</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences</td>
<td>Interim Dean V</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences</td>
<td>Interim Dean W</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences</td>
<td>Interim Dean W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>College of Science</td>
<td>Interim Dean N</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>College of Science</td>
<td>Interim Dean N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>College of Science</td>
<td>Interim Dean P</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>College of Science</td>
<td>Interim Dean P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs</td>
<td>Interim Dean Q</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs</td>
<td>Interim Dean R</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs</td>
<td>Interim Dean I</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean S</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean U</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean U</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three of the colleges that had the greatest number of years (see Tables 17 and 18) under the leadership of interim academic administrators no longer exist. As marginal colleges, they were sometimes led by directors instead of deans, and they were eventually consolidated when UX was under extreme financial stress. These colleges were the College of Liberal Arts (which was consolidated with the College of Science in 2004 to form the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), the College of Lifelong Learning (which was consolidated with the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs in 2003), and the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs (which was consolidated with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 2005).
**Interim administrators in the support services unit.** The tasks done in the support services unit are not located in the core technologies of the university, so the departments of the support services unit are not categorized as marginal versus central. Rather, some departments are more influential than others, depending on the resources the department controls, but regardless of those resources all support services departments have a lower status and are valued less than any of the academic departments.

It is common for administrative vacancies at assistant, associate, and director level positions within the support services unit to be filled through interim appointments. Posting open positions for any director level positions within the support services unit is not expensive, because the searches will be conducted only at the state or regional level, and professional firms are not normally used to conduct the searches. When I interviewed Dean A, she shared with me that the use of a search firm to fill a vacant position at the dean level within UX is standard procedure and that there is special fund in the provost’s budget to pay for the cost of the search process when the university is trying to recruit a new dean. This is not the case for administrative vacancies in the support services unit. During my period of employment at UX, I participated on several search committees and was involved in the hiring process for several administrative openings in the support services unit. Search firms were never used and the university never purchased ad space in the more expensive postsecondary educational publications, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, to promote administrative openings for support services positions. Instead, the positions were promoted by posting them on state and regional email listservs for no cost and on the university’s website. Also, the university relied on “word-of-mouth” advertising. During my time of employment at UX, I discovered that it was very common for individuals within the support services unit to call or email colleagues working at
other colleges or universities to encourage them to apply for a job opening. For administrative openings in the support services unit on UX Main Campus, there are usually a minimum of three candidates who are chosen for on-site interviews, and the normal time for an on-site interview for a director or vice president position is two full workdays.

Despite the fact that the cost for conducting a search to hire an administrator within the support services unit is low (as it is rare to incur costs of airfare or hotel rooms for candidates, because there are so few applicants from out-of-state, and the costs of publicizing the positions are minimal), and an extensive national search is not part of the process, most people who serve in interim administrative roles within the support services unit still remain in the interim position for one to two years (as shown in Table 16). Even though the work done by directors in support services departments is so regimented by federal and state regulations and university policy that theoretically it should not take much time to identify a qualified candidate for the position, UX does not move quickly to fill the positions permanently. Using an interim as a long-term placeholder does not disrupt the operations or stall the momentum of a department, and it does not impact the research and teaching core technologies, so the hiring process moves slowly for administrative vacancies in the support services unit.

The following information, obtained from the UX employee directories, documents that the use of interim administrators to fill vacancies in the support services unit has been a common practice for years (Table 14), and that the average period of time that one serves in an interim administrative role in the support services unit at UX is one to two years (Table 16). The interim positions that were counted for inclusion in the tables below include the following: interim assistant directors, interim associate directors, and interim directors.
Table 14

*Overall Number of Interim Administrative Positions in Support Services Departments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Interim Positions: Support Services Departments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981-1982</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-1983</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1985</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1990</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

*Number of Interim Administrative Positions by Department*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Interims: 1981-2011</th>
<th>Support Services Department</th>
<th>Department Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Undergraduate Admissions</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Housing and Residential Life</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Records and Registration</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Enrollment Services</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ombudsperson</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16

*Time of Service in an Interim Administrative Role*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Serving in Interim Role</th>
<th>Support Services Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year or less</td>
<td>11 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>6 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>1 person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>1 person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>0 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total = 21</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 16, most people who serve in interim administrative roles within the support services unit remain in the position for one to two years. There are a small number of cases where the period of service is longer than two years. From 1996 to 2001, there was an individual who served as the interim director of financial aid for four years (with a one-year break in 1998), and an individual who served as the interim university registrar for three years. These are examples of how the administration at UX is apparently not concerned with quickly
filling vacancies with permanent employees within the support services unit. While the financial aid office controls significant resources and the records office has high status within the support services unit based on its task of maintaining all academic records, the work done in both offices is regulated by federal, state, or institutional policies, and it is so standardized that any manager in those departments is expected to be able to step in at any time and assume an interim role. Keeping someone in an interim position in a support services department for an extended period of time, even one with high status within the support services unit, does not disrupt the core technologies of the organization.

**Summary: interims in the academic core vs. support services.** As the division that carries out the primary core technologies of the organization, the UX School of Medicine is the most central of any division within the organization. When a vacancy occurs, particularly at the dean level, there is a sense of urgency to commence the search process as quickly as possible to minimize the amount of time that anyone spends in the role of an interim dean. As Rud (2004) stated, the disadvantages to having interim academic administrators in place are that strategic planning tends to be slowed down, and it disrupts the process of hiring tenure-track faculty members or approving tenure.

The School of Medicine has always been able to fill a vacant dean position within a year, whereas other schools or colleges at UX that are less important to the core technologies of the organization have left individuals in the role of interim dean for upwards of three years. Over time, several of those marginal schools and colleges that were led by long-term interim deans eventually were phased out or consolidated with other units due to resource scarcity and their marginal status.
In terms of the support services unit in UX Main Campus, people who accept interim administrative roles tend to remain in those interim positions for one to two years. Some of those appointments have lasted three to five years. The support services unit does not carry out the core technologies of the organization, and due to the bureaucratic and prescribed nature of the work done in that unit, it is possible to place someone in an interim administrative position for extended periods of time without disrupting the tasks of those departments or impacting the core technologies of the organization.

**Resource Dependency and the Use of Interims**

**UX budget overview.** As a public university, UX relies heavily on state appropriations as a primary source of revenue. Tuition and fees and state appropriations are the two main sources of general fund revenues for UX. When state appropriations decline, the university raises tuition and fees in those years at a higher rate to balance the budget. The following charts from the UX FY2013 Current Funds Budget document shows that state appropriations have been declining steadily since FY2012. In the FY2013 budget, state appropriates accounted for 20% of UX’s revenues.
Figure 24. UX state appropriations vs. tuition and fees.

Figure 25. Percentage of UX resources from state appropriations.
As operating costs continue to increase and state appropriations decrease, the university has experienced significant pressure in terms of trying to find areas in which costs can be cut and maintain a balanced budget, without increasing tuition and fees any more than six to seven percent per year. (Operating expenses include the costs for the following activities: instruction, research, public service, academic support, student services, scholarships and fellowships, institutional support, operations and maintenance of plant, auxiliary expenses, and depreciation expenses). A common response to resource scarcity in postsecondary organizations is to focus on increasing student enrollment, in order to increase the percentage of revenue the university brings in from tuition charges. Increasing enrollment takes time, though, and enrollment goals are often not met. In 2002, the 9th president of UX set an enrollment goal of 35,000 students. The university never made that goal under that president’s administration. When that president retired, the enrollment goal of 35,000 students was revived in 2009 by UX’s 10th president, and the slogan “35 in five” became the new catch phrase (meaning that within five years, the enrollment will be 35,000 students). Because the university has been struggling to increase enrollment over the years and state appropriations have been declining, the action that the university administration has had to take in order to compensate for the loss of funding from state appropriations has been to continually increase tuition and fees. From the series of UX Fact Books, the following chart shows the enrollment fluctuations from 2001 through 2011.
Figure 26. UX enrollment from 2001 to 2011.

As shown in Figure 24, tuition has increased every year since 1988, but the increases have been higher in the past ten years. State appropriation decreases were particularly severe in FY2004 and FY2012. The university has been widely criticized over the past decade for the sharp tuition increases that have been approved year after year. Since the 2001-02 academic year, tuition rates have more than doubled for undergraduate and graduate students.

Across the nation, state governments are beginning to propose to postsecondary institutions that they will be tying state funding appropriations directly to the percentage of tuition increases that are approved by colleges and universities. Politicians want to keep the tuition increases by postsecondary organizations down, because that platform is popular with voters. The governor of the state in which UX is located announced in April of 2011 that there will be an overall decrease of 15% in state funding to public colleges and universities, but that any public university in the state that increases tuition by more than 7.1% will receive an additional decrease in state funding. Operating costs continue to rise, enrollment growth is slow,
and postsecondary organizations now face caps on tuition increases unless they want to jeopardize their state funding.

Interim administrators as a cost-cutting measure: UX Main Campus. During times of budgetary crises, organizations have to find ways to cut costs. At UX, the School of Medicine is really self-contained. The School of Medicine has its own budget office, unlike the other schools and colleges of the organization, and controls its financial resources without much interference of administrators from Main Campus. Even though information regarding the costs of the School of Medicine’s operations may be included in documents about the organization as a whole, the School of Medicine makes independent decisions regarding the use of its resources. The School of Medicine’s FY2012 tuition increase was only 3%, compared to the UX Main Campus undergraduate tuition increase of 6.9% and the graduate tuition increase of 7.1%. Financially, the School of Medicine is sound. Discussions at UX in recent years about steep budget cuts have been primarily concerned with the operations and costs of UX Main Campus.

Another way in which UX Main Campus has been able to weather periods of budget crises has been to reduce the costs of paying salaries and fringe benefits of employees, either by choosing not to fill vacant positions or through layoffs. During the past several years, UX has offered buyouts to employees who are close to retirement, and as people have accepted the buyouts, the positions are simply eliminated from departments. Administrative positions are far easier to eliminate and are more commonly eliminated than faculty positions. Exempt administrative positions are not bargained through union contracts, and they do not have the constraints of tenure.

When high-level positions such as director, vice president, department chair, and dean positions are vacated, the university cannot leave those positions empty, because the departments
and divisions of UX Main Campus are likely to flounder without leadership. These positions are essential for maintaining the bridging and buffering that takes place in the task environment to control resources. The response of the university has been to fill these high level positions with interim administrators. A review of Tables 10 and 14 shows that the appointment of interim administrators has been common practice at UX since the 1980s. When someone steps into the interim position in the support services unit, though, the person’s old position is not filled. Rather, the person’s old position remains vacant as a cost-savings measure. This was something I witnessed during my period of employment at UX, and both Administrator A and Administrator E confirmed for me during their interviews that their old positions were not back-filled when they stepped into their interim administrative roles. As explained by Administrator E: “As an interim you’re in a position where not only do you do your own job, but you’re doing all of the work in the job you’ve been placed in.” As shared by Administrator A, who had been the associate director of graduate admissions before accepting the position as the interim director:

So, you know, I needed an associate director but she didn’t do graduate admissions, so nobody really back-filled that. So there was just me, myself, and the one other counselor, and it wasn’t enough to handle the job. And I kept asking and then the associate director left after a year, she got pregnant and took a maternity leave and then just decided not to come back, because she wanted to stay home and raise the family. So, and after that they wouldn’t fill the position. They said they didn’t have the money, so we were extremely short-staffed during that period of time. Particularly the last two years of that three-year period. It was bad.

Interim administrators frequently find that they must juggle the majority of their job duties from their previous position, in addition to the new responsibilities they have taken on by accepting the interim assignment. This strategy results in significant cost savings for UX Main Campus. For example, in 2009, while I was working at UX, the associate director of systems in the financial aid office at UX resigned. The assistant director of operations was promoted to the role of interim director of systems. Because she was only an interim associate director, her salary
was set at $10,000 a year less than the previous associate director had been making, and her old position as an assistant director was never filled. She served as an interim associate director for more than a year, managing all of her old job duties in addition to her new job duties. By paying her less than the former associate director made and not filling the assistant director position, the department saved approximately $70,000 over twelve months in salary costs, in addition to the cost of fringe benefits, during the period she served as an interim administrator. (At UX, the salary information for every full-time employee is posted on the Internet as part of a public record that anyone at the university or outside of the university may view.) When she was eventually promoted to the position of associate director on a permanent basis, the department never hired a new assistant director to replace her. Instead, they eliminated an assistant director level position in the department and then reassigned job duties to compensate for the elimination of an assistant director position in order to maintain the savings on salaries and benefits. It was a logical solution for the department, because the executive administration had issued a directive to all of the support services departments at UX Main Campus that they had to cut their operating budgets by no less than 10%, and the largest cost in each department’s budget is the salaries and fringe benefits paid to employees.

Of the seven people I interviewed for this research project, all but one of them reported working significantly more than a standard 40-hour work week while serving in interim roles, and all of them reported having to juggle the responsibilities of their previous jobs and interim positions at the same time during their tenure in the interim role. Administrator A, who served as an interim director during three different periods at UX, described his experiences:

That was also at a time when, you know, [admissions] applications were going up, the number of staff were going down, the number of applications were going up, you know we were just drowning. And literally there were days, I mean at that point, you know going into work at that period of time you knew you were going to get yelled at by
somebody for not getting something done. Each day you had to pick, you know, what it is you had the resources to do and you know, what you didn’t, you had to let go, and so somebody was always mad because you couldn’t do all the stuff you were supposed to be doing every day…. The work, the load, the constant complaining, that really wears on you. It’s one of those things you kinda hated to go into work every day because you knew, just, oh my God, I’m gonna get beat up again and there’s nothing I can do about it.

Administrator E, who served as an interim director in a support services office on two different occasions, described his experiences:

As an interim you’re in a position where not only do you do your own job, but you’re doing all of the work in the job you’ve been placed in. If the rest of your staff is not real strong you’ve got twice, it’s just nuts, as many needy people depending on you. You think about why you took it and it goes back to yes, you wanted the additional money, but I mean you’d rather be the one making the decisions than reporting to some other idiot who would have gotten the position if you didn’t take it. And there are budget cuts and interim positions came up a lot when we were told to cut out budgets and while budget cuts were always looming, chances were you didn’t have adequate support in your area and if you were conscientious and wanted to do a good job you put in the time you needed to be successful. It was 60 hours a week, some weeks more, some weeks less, but a 60-hour work week was average. If you have a family or if you want to have a personal life, how do you fit those hours in? If you wanted to have time with your family, it caused you to decide how you wanted to fit those hours in, because you couldn’t not, and sometimes it meant working at night and sometimes it was working weekends.

While it is a cost savings measure for the university, there are downsides to this strategy for the employees who accept the interim positions. It is often much more work without additional staffing resources, so interims often have to try to find a way to balance more work without adequate resources. If the work falls behind, there seems to be little sympathy from others in the organization when the reason for not keeping up with the workload is because the departments are understaffed.

**Length of interim appointments: UX Main Campus.** Resource scarcity also contributes to the duration of time an individual will serve in an interim administrative role, for two reasons. First, by not filling the position that was vacated when the person stepped into the interim role, the department saves by not paying the salary and fringe benefits of a full-time employee. Administrator E explained:
It’s a budgetary game that they play. They play it all the time because let’s face it they can, because they think we’re not important because we’re not faculty, and I knew it going into it, but still. They make you do two jobs for a tiny stipend and they save two, three years worth of the salary and benefits by not ever filling the position and dragging you along as an interim.

The longer the person remains in an interim position, the longer the department gains those cost savings. Administrator A explained, “Invariably the person they bring in, they’re paying more money than what they paid the interim.”

Second, it is expensive to conduct the searches for high-level academic administrative positions. As explained previously, in order to fill high-level positions for academic departments, such as a dean, the university will hire a search firm to conduct a national search. There is only so much money in the budget to conduct hiring searches, so when there are a lot of high-profile positions being staffed by interim administrators, there are not enough resources to concentrate on hiring searches for all positions. The administration will pick and choose which positions to focus on filling, so administrators who hold interim positions in marginal departments should expect to remain in the interim role for an extended period of time, because resources are not as likely to be devoted to a hiring search for a permanent employee for a marginal department if there are also vacancies in a central department. For example, the position of the graduate school dean had been filled by one interim administrator from 2011 to 2012. When that individual stepped down after a year, rather than beginning a search for a permanent dean, another interim dean was immediately appointed in 2012. Other marginal schools, as shown in Table 13, have had interim deans for as long as three years, and as shown in Table 15 the same is true for interim administrators in the support services unit.
Compensation for interims: support services unit at UX Main Campus. There is an interesting structure in place at UX that creates little incentive within the support services unit to decline an interim appointment to a higher-level position. The job positions of the support services administrators have been written such that the administrators are required to fulfill all other duties as assigned to meet the needs of the office. Therefore, if an administrator does not accept the interim position and nobody else in the office wants the interim position, the most senior administrator with the most seniority will by default be required to take responsibility for all of the duties that would normally be handled by the interim administrator. If the person accepts the interim appointment when it is offered, then the interim appointment comes with a stipend. By declining the interim appointment when nobody else will accept it either, the most senior administrator is still held responsible for all of those duties, but will not receive the stipend. Administrator C explained what happened to her when she tried to step down from her interim appointment after a year:

And it [the interim position] was only supposed to be temporary, so that’s what I kept telling everybody. Temporary. After the first year, second year, I did try to back out of it. I was denied and told that I would have to do the work anyway. And then it just, tension and everything, just stress, hit the head and I backed out of it and they didn’t want me anyway at that point….But I still had to do the work. So I tried to keep my stipend at that point but they wouldn’t allow it, so they put another interim director in and I still had to do it because the person that they chose didn’t know how to do it. So I still had to do her work without the stipend.

Administrator E experienced something very similar to what Administrator C described during her interview. Administrator E shared:

When they asked me to do the interim position they offered me extra compensation and told me I’d only have to do it for a short term. But it turned out to be much longer and at one point I told my boss and his boss that I don’t want to do it anymore. And they told me that’s fine, they’d take away the title and take away the compensation, but I’d still have to do the job because it was in my job duties. I told them that I thought that it was my responsibility to do the job to cover if someone was sick or on vacation and they said
no, too bad, I had to do it until the role was filled, regardless of why, so I decided to stay on and keep the stipend because what choice did I have.

When a director level position is vacated in a support services department at UX Main Campus, there is very little incentive for the person who is asked to step into the interim administrative role to decline the offer. If they decline, they have been told by the administration that they are responsible for the work regardless, so the logical action is to accept the offer of the interim position, because it will at least come with the stipend.

Another motivating factor for individuals within the support services unit to accept interim appointments has to do with the reality that pay raises are not given very frequently at UX and when they are, they tend to be minimal. The opportunity to step into an interim appointment and receive the stipend results in a temporary pay raise that is much greater than the average 1% annual raise during good budget years. As Administrator A stated:

They do give you generally more money while you’re an interim. So another thing is you hate to turn down, particularly if you have a family, you don’t want to turn down additional money that you could be bringing in. So there is that component to it, besides the ego thing, there’s also that component too, that okay, I’ll do this for a while and they can pay me extra. But along the way you think I’m going to use them, I’m going to get this money, make some extra money until they find somebody, but along the way you become emotionally invested in the job and it kind of sucks you in that way, too. You think you’re using them, but actually they really are using you. The money is an enticement and in some ways kind of makes you take the job to begin with, but once you’ve got the job you kind of forget about the money and your ego is on the line. And then you stay in it for the ego thing.

Resource scarcity not only influences the executive administration’s desire to save money by keeping administrators in interim appointments for lengthy periods, but it also motivates administrators to eagerly accept those appointments initially, even when they know the university has a history of moving extremely slow in the hiring process. This strategy on both the part of the organization and the employee has some negative implications. As Administrator A explained, it very quickly becomes apparent to administrators in the support services unit that as
an interim, he or she is earning less, even with the stipend, than the salary that is likely to be offered to someone being hired outside of the university. As a public university, all administrators’ salaries are published annually, so the information is very easy to look up. After serving a second time as an interim director, with extremely limited staffing, when Administrator A stepped back into his associate director role and the administration agreed to provide the newly hired director with additional resources to hire more associate directors, this was his experience:

That really ticked me off, because the vice president, the assistant vice president, when I had mentioned this to him when I saw the job posting I said “That’s at a higher level.” Because originally when they proposed all these new associate directors, they said, well they’ll all be the same level. When this came out and I saw that I said, “That’s not right.” And they all the sudden they’re mumbling and they’re fumbling over their words and nobody could remember saying anything like that in the past. So anyway, he said, “We’ll have to review all of the jobs” and all of this other baloney. So in any case, eventually they, the other two associate directors, were downgraded, like they should have been, to my current level. But still, that ticked me off.

People use their salary as a guide to evaluate their worth to the organization, so over time when administrators in interim roles who have put in so many extra hours to keep the office running are either passed over for the job or see that someone from the outside is hired in at a higher salary than they’ve been making, they may become bitter. They feel their hard work has been ignored and they don’t feel valued.

**Emotional impact on interims in support services unit.** Something else that emerged in my research is that administrators in the support services area at UX Main Campus have come out of the experience feeling misled by the university’s administration as to the timeframe they will be expected to serve in an interim role. They were told their appointments would last only six months, and the reality is that their appointments were drawn out for a significantly longer period of time, and often with no clear end in sight.
Administrator C: Yeah, it was only supposed to be for four to six months. That was the agreement…. It was a little bit over three years. Three and a half years, that I was interim director…. And it was only supposed to be temporary, so that’s what I kept telling everybody. Temporary.

Administrator D: And I guess too, though, since I’ve done this for several years, I thought there was going to be a decision within a year or two. Now it’s been four…..

Administrator E: Even though they told me to my face that I would only be in there as an interim for a short period of time, it surprised me the first time I did an interim role that they drug it out. It didn’t surprise me that the time period was much longer the second time I had to be an interim because by then I knew one of the things they were doing was saving money by having one person do two jobs for as long as they could possibly get away with it. Yeah, I got extra compensation to do the job both times, but it seemed like good compensation for six months, not two years.

Within the support services unit, being kept in an interim role longer than expected is a common theme at UX Main Campus. Despite what employees are told by the administration at the time of being offered the interim role, people who have worked at UX in the student services unit for a number of years eventually begin to see the pattern that interim appointments have a tendency to last longer than six months.

During that time the individuals I interviewed responded that they became emotionally invested in the jobs they had taken on as interims. Administrators A, C, and E all eventually applied for the positions they had been filling as interims, but none of them were successful in being hired into those positions full-time. Even though the executive administration had enough faith in each of their capabilities to run the operations of their offices and allowed them to serve in those leadership roles for several years, they ultimately did not receive the permanent promotion. They all reported strong feelings about being used by the organization or being burned out by the experience. As Administrator C, who averaged a 60-hour work week during her three years as an interim director and did not get the job when she applied for it, explained:

What it did though is change my mind to be a director. I’m kind of easing out of that a little bit now, but it really did burn me out from that. It was I would say a very, going through it was a very bad experience. Towards the end of that last year it was very bad.
The first two years I was all eager, the last year was very difficult and it burned me out from becoming a director, so anytime other positions came I up, I was like no, I wasn’t even going to think about it.

The individuals I interviewed who worked in the support services unit at UX Main Campus said that they each felt misled about the expectations for how long they would have to perform the additional duties of an interim director. When the outcome of interim service is something other than what the employee wants, and in these cases it was being passed over for the director level positions, it can cause resentment toward the organization. They do not understand why, if they were allowed to be in the position for years, a hiring committee determined they were not good enough to keep the job permanently. The experience of serving as an interim can end with a negative emotional impact to the employee. While much of the existing literature explained that interim roles are a good opportunity for career development (Rud, 2004; Boylston & Peters, 2004; Mlekoday, 2008) or an opportunity for a second career (Osse, 2009), this is not consistent with what UX employees experienced during their periods of service in interim roles.

At UX, based on the data of how interim administrators have been allowed to linger in their interim roles for extended periods of time, only to not be granted the permanent promotion, it is clear that within the support services unit, the organization does not have a clearly organized plan for dealing with succession when leadership roles are vacated. While researchers have made convincing arguments for why succession planning should be a high priority for organizations (Cingoranelli, 2009; Pomering & Cunningham, 2000; Malburg, 1999; Furry, 2004; Kahn, 1999; Marshall, 2007; Swan, 2004), UX has not created a succession plan for its departments. Instead of preparing a strategic method for promotion, with the understanding that employee turnover is a regular occurrence within the organization and that people need to be prepared to step into vacated leadership positions, the response of UX for years has been to cope with vacancies by
rapidly appointing someone into an interim role as a temporary fix, and then to put off making a final decision about the role for a year or more.

**Summary: interims and resource dependency.** Resource scarcity has been an issue that UX has contended with for many years, and as the trend of declining state appropriations goes on, the university’s executive administration continues to try to find ways to cut costs. Unfortunately, operating costs continue to rise. Using employees in interim positions for extensive periods of time works out to be a cost-savings measure for UX Main Campus, but there are negative aspects to this strategy. People who are working in understaffed departments begin to burn out.

When people cannot meet the processing demands of the administration, going into work becomes a frustrating experience. When people in interim positions apply for the job and are passed over for the position, it is disheartening. If it goes on long enough, people will either leave or their motivation will decline. Ultimately the organization risks losing or burning out the talented, experienced employees due to the interim experience.

**Adjusting Scale and the Use of Interim Administrators**

Resource scarcity can also lead to periods of restructuring or consolidation, as the organization needs to adjust scale to save resources. Over time, UX has undergone a lot of changes by adding and collapsing schools and colleges, as well as redesigning the staffing structures within the support services unit. During periods when the resource stream of the university has been stable, the UX administration has expanded the university by adding new schools and colleges and hiring employees to administer the new units. During periods of financial stress, the response of UX has been to merge underperforming schools and colleges in
an effort to reduce administrative redundancies and has reduced staffing sizes either through layoffs or choosing not to fill vacated positions.

**Interims in underperforming units at UX Main Campus.** When resources are scarce and the university is looking to cut costs, one of the first areas in which to find cost-savings is in decreasing salaries and fringe benefits. If there are positions that can be eliminated, it can result in a significant savings to the organization. During periods when resources are extremely tight, the academic programs that do not bring in high enrollments and cost more to administer than they bring in revenue will likely be targeted for cuts and their future becomes uncertain. In the history of UX, which is well documented in their catalogues and on the website, this has happened several times.

In the early 2000s, UX was in a financial position that forced the executive administration to scrutinize any programs that could be eliminated in order to achieve a balanced budget. They identified the College of Lifelong Learning and the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs as two units that could be targeted for restructuring to find savings. During that time it was beneficial for UX to use interim administrators in these two colleges that were failing to bring in enough resources to be self-sufficient, because decisions needed to be made about whether these units would be preserved or eliminated. Not only would it have been difficult to recruit permanent administrators for units that had no certain future, but using interims in the administrative roles while the executive administration evaluated the viability of the units also allowed the university to save money in the form of salaries and fringe benefits.

At UX Main Campus, cost-savings measures have led to the consolidation of several colleges and the elimination of academic programs that were too expensive to operate based on their low enrollment. In 2003 the College of Lifelong Learning was consolidated with the
College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs. In 2004 the College of Science and the
College of Liberal Arts merged to form the College of Liberal Arts and Science. Shortly after
that in 2005 the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs joined the College of Liberal
Arts and Sciences. The consolidation of these colleges led to cost savings because duplicated
administrative positions were eliminated, thus resulting in savings on salaries and fringe benefits.

The College of Lifelong Learning was designed to enroll non-traditional adult students
who wanted to pursue a college education but could only meet for classes in evenings and on
weekends. In the mid-1970s when the unit was founded, it was successful in enrolling a large
number of blue-collar workers from manufacturing industries, who made use of the G.I. bill
benefits to pay for the cost of education. By the 1980s, though, competition from community
colleges and a declining interest from the employees of the manufacturing industries led to a
rapid and steep decline in enrollment. At its peak, the College of Lifelong Learning had an
enrollment of 3,600 students, but that dropped to fewer than 600 students by 1982. From that
point forward, the future of the College of Lifelong Learning was uncertain, and the use of
administrators in interim roles sharply increased.
Table 17

*Interim Administrators in the College of Lifelong Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1985</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1990</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Interim Associate Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Interim Deputy Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Interim Deputy Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Interim Deputy Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Interim Deputy Dean</td>
<td>College of Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dean A provided some background about the College of Lifelong Learning:

… the dean of the College of Lifelong Learning retired and they weren’t sure if they were going to keep the College or fold it into somewhere else, so they needed somebody to be interim for two years. Well, we never thought it would be two years. They originally said six months, but it took them that long to get through the Board of Governors and decide what they were going to do, and so I stayed on that whole time doing both deanships…. There was a lot of unrest because they didn’t know what was going to happen to their College, and yet they had some very significant units that were going to stay in the university, just maybe in a different iteration or, you know, in a different configuration.

When the merger of the College of Lifelong Learning with another unit was completed in 2002, no layoffs were necessary. Several people from the Dean’s Office had retired in the process, and those positions were simply never backfilled.

The College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs was established in 1987, and its mission was to promote, stimulate, and engage in pure and applied urban-oriented research and
scholarship. The College provided instructional programs (both credit and non-credit curricula) in urban and labor affairs, which the administration stated was consistent with the overall mission of the University. It was not consistent with the university’s core technology, which has always been to promote medical research. Despite the attempts to promote the importance of urban-oriented research, this college was never able to draw enough enrollment to become self-sufficient, its future was always in question, and, as a result, administrators were used in an interim capacity from the very beginning up to the point where it was merged with the College of Liberal Arts and Science.

Table 18

*Table 18: Interim Administrators in the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Interim Assistant Dean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>Interim Associate Dean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Interim Chairperson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Interim Dean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, in 2003, when discussions began about merging the College of Liberal Arts with the College of Science when the dean from the College of Science resigned, an interim dean was appointed to the College of Science until a decision was made about the merger. With the outcome of the proposed merger uncertain, UX could not reasonably begin the search for a
permanent dean, so the appointment of an interim was appropriate. The use of interim administrators when the future of a college within UX is in jeopardy has been a strategy to ensure that there is a placeholder in a leadership role within the unit to keep operations functioning during the period of time the executive administration needs to evaluate the unit and make a determination on the unit’s future status.

**Adjusting scale: support services unit.** Support services departments will also appoint individuals to interim positions when resources are scarce and the organization has to adjust scale by restructuring or consolidating departments. The support services unit at UX Main Campus has been enduring budget cuts for years. In an effort to streamline services or in some cases cut costs, support services departments have been added or collapsed with other departments as deemed necessary. At UX, the most apparent examples of the types of shifts that have left departments in limbo in regard to their roles or reporting lines have taken place in the graduate admissions office.

The graduate admissions office has had a precarious history at UX. For years, a debate has gone on about whether the administrative activities required to admit graduate students should take place within the academic departments, or if there is a need to have a central graduate admissions office. Administrator A, who served in as interim director during periods of the transition, explained:

Yeah, well, it went back to what it used to be while I was there the first time, you know, on an interim basis. They merged it [graduate admissions] with the undergrad admissions to one university admissions office and that lasted for probably five or six years, and then they ended up switching it back to the graduate school again. And they switched it back to the graduate school in, well maybe it was like six or eight years it was combined. Probably in 2002, 2003, somewhere near, they switched it back to the graduate school again….But mostly the graduate faculty, the graduate programs, did not like the combined office. You know, they preferred having a separate office just to deal with
graduate concerns, and I think eventually that won out, so the grad school took it back again.

The academic departments want control of determining which students should be admitted to the graduate programs, but they have no interest in processing the admission paperwork or fielding the questions that students have about entering the university and the administrative tasks they need to complete to be prepared to start their studies. The reason a graduate admissions department has existed is to deal with processing the paperwork and taking charge of the administrative tasks necessary to enroll graduate students. Every time resources are scarce, though, the graduate admissions office is immediately targeted for staffing cuts, or talks resume about eliminating the office altogether. There has been a lot of uncertainty about the continuation of this office over the years, so there has been a lot of turnover in directors and long periods of interim appointments. The office has been merged with undergraduate admissions and then resurrected as an independent office multiple times over the years. In 2010, the graduate admissions office was officially eliminated. The person who served as the interim director of graduate admissions from 2009 through 2010 was actually convinced by the administration to postpone his retirement to take on the interim assignment, because they were moving toward eliminating the department and did not want to place anyone in interim role who would have an expectation of continued employment after the department was dissolved.
### Table 19

**Interim Directors in Graduate Admissions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Interim Director</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Experimentation with new departments: support services unit.** While interim directors have frequently been appointed during times when the organization has shifted reporting lines or consolidated departments within the support services unit, there is also a case where interim administrators were appointed when a decision was made to create a new department which would help consolidate services. Within the past two years the executive administration of the university decided to consolidate many of the services provided by the departments under the support services unit by creating a new enrollment services department. The concept of the new department is to allow students to go to one office to have all of their administrative needs (e.g. registering for classes, applying for financial aid, paying their bill) attended to by one employee in one central location. The new department was an experiment that had not been tried before at UX, and its success and future were uncertain for a period of time. Rather than hiring someone to fill the newly created position of director of enrollment services, the associate registrar was offered the role of interim director of enrollment services, and her associate registrar position was not backfilled when she moved over to the new department. An interim vice president whose regular position was within the business division of the university was also assigned to oversee the support services offices of financial aid, registration, and
admissions during this transition, because the implementation of the new department resulted in restructuring the staffing and tasks of those offices. The interim vice president was charged with making sure that the creation of a the new enrollment services department would be cost-neutral for the organization, so in order to achieve that, other departments had to cut staff. From the time the enrollment services department was conceived, the other support services offices were put in a position of adjusting scale of their units, not knowing which of their positions would be eliminated and when, how the division of duties would impact their tasks, or if the new enrollment services department would even be successful in providing the types of services envisioned.

If the enrollment services department had not worked it, it would likely have been dissolved and the other departments in the student services unit would have returned to performing the tasks that were shifted to the enrollment services department. It is not surprising that the administration appointed an interim director and interim vice president to lead this new department, because they initially only loosely committed to the future of keeping an enrollment services department, due to the experimental nature of the move and not knowing if this new department would truly solve the customer service issues that have plagued the university for years within the support services division.

The interim vice president of the division was only recently replaced with a permanent vice president after a two-year period. I was working at UX while this transition was going on, so I knew which departments the interim administrators had been working in prior to accepting their interim appointments. The interim vice president of the division was originally a budget analyst and had a skill set that was important for adjusting resources within the organization to support the development and operations of a new department at a net zero cost. However, he had
no background in student services or customer relation issues, so once the department was operational and the budget issues were addressed, the organization terminated his appointment and hired someone from outside the organization who had a long history of working in student services to become the permanent vice president. The interim vice president had served a purpose for the organization during the restructuring, and once the problem of securing resources for the operations was solved, he was no longer needed in that role. The organization at that point needed to address customer service issues, so they decided to hire someone with a customer service background for the job. The director of the department was finally moved into the role permanently from her interim status. I never observed that anybody in the organization groomed her to transition to become the permanent director of the unit. Rather, I found that she was strategic in her agreement with the interim vice president to support the decisions he made about restructuring resources to fund the operations, which gained her the approval of the executive administration, and she had demonstrated the skill set of managing customer relations, which was the next factor that the university wanted to address. She created her own path for succession into the role permanently by first addressing resource challenges and then shifting to improving services of the department. Part of her success in being promoted was in identifying the needs of the organization at the time, responding to those needs efficiently, and aligning herself with other people who were leading the restructuring.

**Employee reactions to interim leadership.** For the support services unit, it would seem that appointing an interim director to head a support services department would not be problematic, given the highly standardized work done in the department. As long as someone in the department has the specialized skill set required for the work that is done, it is logical to assume that appointing the person to the role of an interim director is a reasonable solution to
ensure that the department continues to have the necessary leadership to carry out its tasks.

However, when a director steps down, the natural reaction of employees is to be nervous about what the future holds, particularly when the executive administration does not react quickly to announce a plan for searching for a permanent replacement. Administrator C explained how her staff felt during her interim tenure: “It was a tense time, with the change, so I had a difficult time trying to make people feel better about the position of us moving under admissions.” Departments that are headed by interim directors are prone to unrest when an interim is left in that role for an extended period of time. Dean A explained:

Well, when I was an interim of Lifelong Learning, the uncertainty about whether it was going to continue to be a college and what that would mean for the people’s careers, and you know, how the people took that was a big, big issue. And so I wanted to make sure that their programs stayed strong….So there was a ton of work to be done there. And so a big part of it was making sure that they understood that they were still an important part of the university, they still needed to carry out what their job functions were, and improve. I wanted to encourage and get them to improve….

During periods of transition, people worry about the expectations of new leadership, if their jobs will be safe during the transition, and if the rules they are so used to following will change. One of the challenges of interim leaders when they are in charge of departments or divisions during transition periods is to make decisions that will protect the jobs of their employees as the executive administration makes decisions about how departmental structures will change. Garnering the support of their employees who are still learning to trust their leadership can be difficult, so people who take on interim appointments during uncertain times have those added stressors to the job. Consistent with the findings of Farquhar (1991), interim leadership is challenging on both the interim and the people the interim leader supervises, and if the employees develop an affection or respect for the interim leader and that person is turned
over the promotion, that decision can be as unpopular and unsettling for the employees as it is for
the person who served in the interim role.

**Summary: interims and adjusting scale.** When position vacancies need to be filled
during periods of restructuring or consolidation, whether it is due to concern about a lack of
resources that threatens the viability of the unit, or for a unit that is undergoing significant
restructuring that requires an assessment of staffing and tasks, UX has used interim
administrators to fill in while decisions are made. Putting out a job posting to fill a position on a
permanent basis when it is uncertain whether that position will continue to exist in a year or two
is something the university has avoided. It is less expensive and less controversial to assign a
current administrator to an additional administrative role and provide the person a stipend than it
would be to hire someone and within a year have to pay unemployment because the position was
eliminated and the person could not be relocated to another department. These interim
appointments during periods of restructuring or consolidation can be challenging for employees
within the departments, as well, because they worry about the future of their own positions and
the expectations of the interim leaders.

Additionally, placing people into interim leadership roles allows the organization to
experiment with the creation of new departments during periods of restructuring. By appointing
someone to lead the project on an interim basis, it removes a certain amount of risk from the
organization if the new department fails to function effectively, because the person in the interim
role can be returned to his or her former position and the department could easily be dissolved.
Were the organization to hire someone permanently into the position, if the experimental
department failed, the organization would either have to lay off the person or try to find another
position in which to relocate the individual, neither of which would be an ideal situation.
Periods of Conflict and the Use of Interim Administrators

Conflict is an organizing force within any organization. Because organizations have limited resources, there will always be a gap between what the various constituent groups of the organization want and the resources that the organization has to meet all of the demands. In order to survive, the organization is dependent on the materials and resources from the task environment. One of the functions of managers is to engage in activities to bring inputs from the task environments into the cores, which can be stressful when there are numerous demands from multiple groups and limited resources that can be secured. Social and political conflict often results from the gap between demands and resources for the organization (Easton, 1953, p. 56). UX has had intense periods of conflict over the years, in both the academic departments and support services unit of the organization, and during periods of conflict interim administrators have often been appointed to solve or manage the problems.

Interim deans: School of Medicine conflicts. The conflict that received the most media attention for the School of Medicine was a result of the breakdown of the relationship between the School of Medicine and the city’s major hospital system. The details of the conflict are chronicled in local and state newspapers. Since 1955, a major hospital system in the city where UX is located has purchased teaching, clinical care, and program services from UX doctors. The contract between that hospital system and UX provided a place for UX students and residents to train and learn, and it earned UX and its 700 physicians about $80 million from the hospital system directly and another $120 million in physician fees for services that were paid through Medicare, Medicaid, and other private insurance. In the late 1990s, a consultant to the hospital system that contracted the services of UX physicians suggested that the hospital system was grossly overpaying UX, and when it came time for UX to renew its contract with the hospital
system in 2004, negotiations began to break down. In October 2004, UX’s dean of the School of Medicine was only able to secure a tentative one-year contract with the hospital system that UX had been partnering with since 1955. The goal had been to secure a three-year contract, because the partnership with the hospital system was vital to the school’s survival. Without this partnership, the accreditation and financial resources of the school were in jeopardy. At the end of October 2004, UX’s board of trustees chose not to renew the dean’s contract.

An interim dean was appointed when the former dean’s contract expired. These were not the best circumstances under which to try to recruit a new dean for the School of Medicine. The interim dean, someone already employed at the UX School of Medicine, at least understood the history of the relationship between UX and the hospital system and was familiar with the politics of both organizations.

Contract negotiations continued throughout 2005, and the conflict between UX’s School of Medicine and the hospital system intensified throughout the year. The hospital system withheld payments to UX’s School of Medicine, and the interim dean was forced to lay off UX physicians and other staff as a result. However, the interim dean did successfully negotiate an additional year extension on the UX and hospital’s contract. The School of Medicine was not able to fill the dean’s role with a permanent replacement until March 2006.

When the newly appointed dean started work at UX in March 2006, the long-term contract renewal between UX and the hospital system remained in jeopardy. The accrediting agency of UX’s medical school threatened to revoke its approval of UX’s medical residency program. The state medical society declared a state of emergency in the state, because if UX failed to successfully negotiate a contract renewal with the hospital system, it would jeopardize the future supply of physicians in the state. (At the time, and as continues to be the case today,
UX physicians provided up to 80% of the healthcare for the state’s poorest and under- or uninsured citizens.) In November 2006, a three-year contract with the hospital system was finally signed, but it was only achieved after the governor of the state appointed someone to mediate the negotiations of the two parties.

After the 2006 contract negotiations, the School of Medicine’s newly appointed dean did not remain in the role long. After a 10-year tenure, UX’s ninth president retired in 2008. UX’s 10th president came to the university in August 2008, and he had a degree in medicine. The dean of the School of Medicine and the newly appointed UX president had serious disagreements about the future of the School of Medicine and the faculty practice plans with the hospital through which UX contracted services. At the same time, the faculty felt that the future of the School of Medicine was not clearly defined and they were losing clinical control over their departments. They signed a letter of no confidence over the dean’s leadership of the School of Medicine. In addition, the contract with UX and the hospital system was up for renewal again in 2009 and negotiations had already started and stalled, which was not a good sign. By July 2009, the dean of the School of Medicine announced his resignation and another interim dean was appointed. It was not the same person who served as the interim dean in 2005.

The new interim dean was faced with significant challenges. Faculty members were wary of the direction the administration was trying to take with the School of Medicine. The UX president was embattled with faculty and administrators throughout the university (he ultimately resigned in 2010, after serving just two years as UX’s president), but especially with the School of Medicine. The contract negotiations between UX and the hospital system that needed to be completed by 2009 had already stalled under the former dean, and there was concern about a repeat of the incident that took place in 2006 that had ultimately required a mediator appointed
by the governor’s office. Once again, the School of Medicine had entered a period of uncertainty and conflict, and an interim dean, someone who already understood the history and politics of the organization, was responsible for leading the school through it.

During the new interim dean’s tenure, the contracts were renewed in record time and without the drama of the previous negotiations. She successfully negotiated an agreement with another hospital system to build a $180 million biomedical research building, and she completed the negotiations to extend a contract UX has with a cancer medical facility for an additional five years. This interim dean was so successful in dealing with each of these challenges and moving the School of Medicine toward stability that she was appointed to the position of dean after serving as an interim dean for just one year (despite the fact that the Board of Governors had written her contract for her interim appointment for three years) with overwhelming support of the faculty.

During periods of intense conflict when a situation is so severe that the future of the organization could be in jeopardy, which would have been the case had the School of Medicine lost its partnership with the hospital system, leaders of the organization may be fired or find it necessary to resign. Appointing to an interim leadership role someone who is familiar with the organization and who also understands the politics and the history of the conflict is a way the organization is able to have someone step into the leadership role and immediately begin working on resolving the problem. If the person desires to be appointed to that position on a permanent basis, a major factor to moving from an interim to the permanent role is by managing conflict. There is no formal plan for succession of leadership at UX when someone is fired or resigned, so the interim appointment is the trial period during which the interim administrator must prove that he or she is capable of conflict management.
Interim administrators and conflict in support services: UX Main Campus. The financial aid office has high status within the support services unit, given the amount of resources it administers. The financial aid office is also a department in which activities are heavily regulated by the federal government. Its activities are closely monitored through annual audits by outside agencies, and those audit results are submitted the U.S. Department of Education each year. At any postsecondary institution that participates in and administers federal financial aid funds, if the U.S. Department of Education is notified through the annual audit process that the institution has failed to follow federal regulations in the administration of funds, the eligibility of the institution to continue to participate in federal financial aid programs is jeopardized. More than 70% of the students at UX rely on the use of federal financial aid to afford their costs, so the termination of federal financial aid eligibility would threaten the survival of the organization. There have been three periods in UX’s history during which the organization’s eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs was jeopardized, due to the inappropriate administration of federal financial aid funds. In all instances, the financial aid office was subjected to an audit with the U.S. Department of Education, and in all cases, the outcome of the audit resulted in the university repaying the federal government substantial amounts of money to correct errors that were made in administering federal financial aid. This conflict led to the organization taking swift action to remove people from the office in order to correct the problems. The directors who were in charge of the financial aid office during the periods of time that led up to the federal audits were either fired or resigned before they could be terminated, and in each instance, an interim director was appointed to see the office through the federal audit, correct the administrative processes, and bring the office back into in compliance
with the U.S. Department of Education before a search was commenced to replace the director on a permanent basis. Administrator C explained:

When the director left they merged financial aid under admissions, so there was an executive director over the director of financial aid…. The provost decided to that do because she had done that in a previous institution. There were a lot of growing pains and adjustments needed, so I think that they held off posting the director position. To be honest, I don’t know if they thought they were going to fill the director, so I think they were thinking about that, because they waited so long. So I kept being extended…. the old director left because of, there were just some problems in the office…. My role was I was just trying to stabilize the office, and learn while I was at it.

Of all of the support services departments at UX, the financial aid office is the office that has made the most interim appointments within the support services unit over the years. The financial aid department has switched reporting lines multiple times, from reporting to an associate vice provost, to the vice president of communications, to the executive director of admissions, back to the associate vice provost, and today to a vice president of enrollment services. The reporting lines have often been shifted while an interim director was heading the office. While Administrator C was successful in bringing the financial aid office back into compliance, she was not successful in making the transition from an interim director to the permanent director. There were other conflicts within the office that presented challenges for her as an interim.

The conflict within the support services unit of UX primarily had to do with disagreements between management and union employees. Labor relations between these two groups have been tense for years, and this tension between management and union employees has been highlighted in the union newsletters (these newsletters are available in print to the employees and posted in electronic format on the university’s website). There have been periods during which directors of those departments have either resigned or been terminated, because they have not been able to successfully manage conflict, and in those cases interim directors have
been appointed. While working at UX, I personally witnessed the turnover of several directors and associate directors within the support services departments, and it was well publicized that these individuals were embattled with the unions. There were many grievances filed and publicized in the union newsletters and on their websites. There have been interim directors who have stepped down due to an inability to manage the conflict. As explained by Administrator C, who eventually tried to resign from her appointment as an interim director:

I was written up three times in the AAUP newsletter, they named me by name, I had grievance after grievance, recycled grievance….so I was fighting three to four grievances at one time, and that took, I think I spent 80% of my time with AAUP [union] issues, my second year as interim director, going into my, towards the end of my first year, going into my second year, as interim director.

Within the support services unit, conflict is something that directors of the departments manage regularly. The unions have been an important part of the history of the university, and they remain a strong presence on campus to this day. The research library on the campus of UX holds the largest labor archive in the nation, which provides a comprehensive documentary of the history of labor movement. There are multiple bargaining units at UX and they all have a history of being strong bargaining units. As is the case with many organizations that have unions, there are tensions between the managers of the student services unit of UX who do not belong to the union and the represented employees they supervise.

Language helps shape culture, and at UX, the fact that the language of the union contracts dominates the dialogue in any major decision-making process is a very strong indicator of the importance of the unions to many employees and how strongly the unions influence the support services unit of UX Main Campus. Not surprisingly, being held to the language of the union contracts creates tension and conflict between management and represented employees, because managers feel constrained in their ability to make decisions they believe to be in the best interest
of the university, while represented employees use the language of the contract to ensure that processes are carried out and decisions are made that will fairly represent their interests. Neither party is right or wrong, as it is extremely subjective, but emotions tend to run high and people have strong affect at UX Main Campus for either being pro or against the unions. This is something I experienced on a daily basis during my period of employment at UX.

The norm in the student services unit of UX Main Campus is that the non-represented and represented employees will not get along. The management versus the union mentality has existed for so long that it is one of the defining characteristics that the student services unit of UX Main Campus is known for among employees of other postsecondary organizations in the state. New managers at UX are required to take a one-day class with the Human Resources department on the topic of how to manage employees in their bargaining unit, even if they have previously worked in other union organizations. New managers at UX Main Campus are often skittish with their decision-making when they are not familiar with the union contracts, because they do not want to do anything that will result in having a grievance filed by any of the bargaining unit. As time passes, though, those managers who remain employed with the university for an extensive period time learn that it is simply one of the norms at UX Main Campus for the employees to file grievances on a regular basis and managers cannot avoid it, no matter how carefully they consider their decisions and actions. Represented employees exercise their right to file grievances on a regular basis. Some grievances are easily resolved and others drag out for extensive periods of time. It is a dominant part of the culture in the student services unit at UX Main Campus and an accepted shared norm among long-time employees throughout the organization.
The grievances are often written up in press releases. When the releases are through the university’s press, the writers strive to keep the language neutral and try to represent the concerns of both sides, because the general public will have access to such press releases. The executive administrators at UX Main Campus do not want to socialize the conflict between management and the unions any more than is necessary, because they are fearful it could harm the image of the university. Negative publicity has the potential for steering potential students and donors away from the organization. In contrast, when the grievances are written up in the union newsletters, the tone is set by the use of phrases such as “domineering management who have taken mean-spirited action” and is overall much more negative. When the management speaks about the grievances amongst other managers in closed meetings, the words “crazy union employees” are often thrown into the conversation. The language used when one side speaks about the other demonstrates the intense conflict between the represented and non-represented employees. While managers try not to take it personally, the reality is that many managers react emotionally when a grievance is filed, because they feel as though it is an attack against them. Union members, though, take it personally when they believe that management makes decisions unilaterally that they feel are unfair. Neither side is right or wrong. Each person’s reality is his or her own, and nobody can fully understand another person’s reality. It is virtually impossible to remove affect from one’s job, and as long as the management versus union fight continues to be the norm of UX Main Campus, there will continue to be resentment and conflict between management and represented employees.

In terms of the departments that make up the student services unit at UX Main Campus, an interesting factor that makes the management versus union conflict more intense than at its peer institutions is that certain job classifications within the student services unit are represented
by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which is the faculty union. For anyone who works in a higher education organization, it is well understood that the roles of faculty are very different from the roles of administrators who work in student services departments. There is a tenure track at UX for faculty, and in consideration for tenure, faculty members are evaluated on the number of journal publications, scholarly research, and excellence in teaching. Administrators in student services unit of UX Main Campus do not teach and they typically do not publish. The AAUP contract and annual evaluation criteria is written to address the needs and concerns of faculty, not administrators in the student services unit, so using the same contract to represent faculty and administrators is complicated. It is rare in higher education that administrators can earn tenure, but at UX, those administrators who are represented by the AAUP are on an employment security track, which is equivalent to tenure. Once hired, an administrator who is represented by the AAUP has five years to earn employment security. At the end of five years, if the administrator is denied employment security, then the administrator is terminated from the university.

It is extremely difficult for administrators to earn employment security at UX. They are required to compile an extensive portfolio to detail what is considered to be scholarly contributions in their respective fields, and because administrators in the student services unit are not normally concerned with scholarship, presentations, or publications based on the nature of their jobs, as they approach the five-year mark, many administrators realize that they have very little material with which to compile a portfolio. They also know that they need to the support of both the management team and AAUP administrators who have received employment security in order to be granted employment security themselves. Because of the conflict that exists between the management and AAUP administrators, over the five-year period, the AAUP administrators
who have not yet earned employment security are in constant conflict with the both sides: if the new AAUP administrator tries to please management, the person loses the support of the AAUP administrators with employment security, but if the new AAUP administrator tries to please the administrators with employment security, it results in displeasing the managers. It is a no-win situation. As a result, the student services unit at UX Main Campus has earned a reputation of being a great training organization for administrators who are newly employed in student service fields of higher education, but administrators who work at UX in student services see themselves as “short-timers” with the organization. They understand their period of employment will be limited to just a few years because employment security is so hard to earn, and usually after two or three years they begin to look for employment with other organizations. The outcome is very high turnover of administrators within the student services unit at UX Main Campus. As for managers at UX Main Campus, they either learn to live with the constant turnover and the intense conflict between management and the unions and they remain at the university for a very long time, or they quickly realize that they will never adapt to the culture of the organization and they leave within just a few short years. One example is in the financial aid office at UX Main Campus, in which there have been a total of ten directors over a 17-year period, several of whom have been interim directors.

At UX Main Campus, the culture of the student services unit is dominated by the management versus union conflict. It is an intense environment for both managers and staff to work in, and both sides experience high turnover and a lot of instability in the offices. The norms and shared expectations of the student services unit revolve around the management versus union conflict. Managers who side with or show what is perceived to be sympathy toward represented employees are ostracized by their fellow managers and assumed to be weak leaders. Represented
administrators who strive to please the management team often fall out of favor with the union and, for those who are on an employment security track with the AAUP, jeopardize their support from fellow union members. It is a tough culture for most employees to navigate and makes keeping talented employees in the student services unit at UX, both managers and represented administrators, a challenge for the organization. As such, employee turnover is expected and the bureaucratic structure of the offices works so that people can be trained quickly when they are hired to fill a vacancy.

Given the type of work that is done by employees within the support services division, which is repetitive, administrative tasks that are often regulated by institutional, state, or federal policies, the objective in the unit is to be able to process a high volume of work in the most efficient manner possible. When relations between the management and union employees break down within a department, the result is that the workflow slows down or stalls, which results in delays for students and complaints that the directors of the departments must manage. Directors who have been successful within the support services unit at UX and have long tenures are those who have learned to manage conflict between the exempt and union employees. For example, the financial aid office has many documented grievances and one lawsuit that was filed over the years, and it is an office that has seen significant turnover in directors and had long periods of interim appointments. In contrast, the Registrar at UX Main Campus has had a very long tenure. That office has had a lot of stability with staffing and less union versus management complaints than the financial aid office. Many managers have come and gone through the support services unit, having been driven out or choosing to leave based on not being successful in managing union conflicts. Those vacancies have commonly been filled by people appointed to interim director positions.
Many of the employees in the support services union are represented by the AAUP union, and that union has a history at UX of being embattled with the administration. Contract negotiations are currently ongoing in 2013. Some of the titles of the briefs that they have posted on their website include “Administration takes a Union-Busting Hardline,” “Belated and Dawdling Bargaining,” and “Union Authorized to Call for Withholding Services.” The spotlight statements on their website regarding bargaining are “We have begun bargaining and as you can see from the Bargaining Briefs, this is not a time for optimism,” and “The semester is underway and we are under attack.”

The unions have specific contracts that detail the nature of the work that employees represented under those contracts will perform, and when the union employees feel the contracts are being violated by the management, they have the right to initiate the grievance process. The grievance process can be very time-consuming and costly to the organization in terms of lost production hours. The executive administration expects the directors of the departments to manage relationships between exempt and union employees in such a way that grievances are avoided and work is not slowed down. When directors of the support services unit have not been successful in doing so, they have often been organized out of the university and then replaced with interim directors. Interim directors who are not perceived as successful have been replaced by other interim directors. The interim directors are individuals, as current employees of the organization, who are expected to understand the union history and departmental politics that often lead to conflicts, and they are expected to stabilize the office and work to minimize the conflicts that caused disruption. When I asked Administrator C about challenges she faced as an interim director, she responded:

And another obstacle was our union, AAUP was problematic, fighting any changes….I wouldn’t allow them to get away with things. We’ve had other directors that would allow
them to get away with things, so I had the provost tell me not to be as strong and let things slide, and I couldn’t do that. So I probably caused some of the problems because I was not willing to, well, I compromised a lot but I wasn’t willing to compromise on everything and they wanted 100% compromising… It just depends. You have some that want to deal with the situation by giving them what they want so they’ll be quiet. I wasn’t that type, so that was a big obstacle…

Administrator C was passed over for the director position of her department when she formally applied for it while serving as an interim. She was eventually told to step down as interim director and was replaced by another interim director. The executive administration was concerned about correcting the compliance issues in the financial aid office and maintaining the organization’s legitimacy with the Department of Education. Administrator C incorrectly identified the conflict with the union as her primary concern, which was not the foremost concern of the executive administration. By not identifying which conflict was dominant (the compliance conflict with the Department of Education versus the union conflict), Administrator C missed an opportunity to turn her interim appointment into a promotion.

Administrator F, who also served as an interim director for a department within the support services unit in which the management was embattled with the union, explained:

Well, being interim, it gives me a chance to prove myself, definitely. I think people might have hesitated to take me from the role I was in straight to the director position without seeing what I could do, and this does give the chance to prove that I can do this and do it well…. People [interims] have to be able to work with staff that are looking at you sideways because they don’t know you and they don’t know what to expect. So you have to be able to walk into a situation and take it over and own it and make the people happy. Well, not happy, but be willing to work with you.

Administrator F served in her interim role for two years, and when she applied for the position once it was formally posted, she was selected by the hiring committee for the permanent position. The ability to manage the relationships between exempt and union employees and direct the employees to maintain their tasks at a rate that keeps student complaints down is important to the executive administration. Again, with no formal succession procedures in place
at UX, the way in which individuals successfully turn their interim appointments into permanent positions is through demonstrating to the executive administration that they can manage conflict.

Summary. It is common for someone to step down from a high-ranking position during a period of intense conflict, such as happened with the School of Medicine when the contract negotiations broke down. At UX, it is unheard of to appoint a new dean immediately, so it is inevitable that an interim dean will be appointed. It is also very rare that a permanent director or vice president would be appointed immediately, either. When a position will be permanently appointed, though, is more uncertain during periods of conflict. The executive administration of the organization has choices: keep someone in an interim role until the conflict is resolved, if the interim administrator proves he or she is managing the conflict to the satisfaction of the executive administration, or take the risk of hiring the permanent replacement while the conflict is ongoing if the hiring committee is confident the person can immediately begin to manage the conflict. More often than not, the UX administration has chosen to leave people in interim positions until the conflict is resolved. The individuals who have typically been chosen to serve to an interim role during periods of conflict are people who have been employed at UX for a period of time, so they have a familiarity and understanding of the organization and its politics.

There is no formal plan for succession at UX in either the academic unit or the support services unit to fill leadership roles that have been vacated. Despite the fact that research has shown there may be benefits to strategically preparing individuals to step into senior leadership roles (Bigley & Wiersema, 2002), there is no mentoring program or formal procedure in place to groom individuals to step into leadership roles at UX when the need arises. The strategy of UX for years has been to deal with vacated leadership positions by appointing someone to the role on an interim basis to fill the gap. The interim administrators keep the operations of the departments...
going and do what is necessary to bridge and buffer the core, and that seems to satisfy the executive administration for a period of time.

Without a formal mechanism or strategy for succession to fill vacant leadership positions at UX, succession from the interim appointment into the permanent position occurs when the individuals in the interim administrative roles demonstrate to the executive administration that they are capable of managing conflict. When an administrative leader is flailing and the conflict is not being managed, one can predict that it is only a matter of time until that person steps down or is removed from the position, and based on UX’s patterns, someone will need to be prepared to step into that leadership role on an interim basis. If the person desires to take on that leadership role on a permanent basis, the path to successful succession is through the management of conflict. If the person is capable of managing the conflict to the satisfaction of the administration, it increases the likelihood of the person being offered that role on a permanent basis.
Chapter Five: Findings and Conclusions

Conclusions

The origins of this research study stemmed from a personal question regarding my spouse’s employment history. After three long interim appointments, I wanted to understand why my spouse was never successful in moving from the interim role into the higher-level position on a permanent basis. There was very limited empirical literature on interim roles, and the few articles that had been written were not particularly helpful in understanding the interim phenomenon. The articles I found that had been written on the topic of interim leadership were primarily anecdotal in nature. The authors suggested that interim appointments were opportunities for career advancement, job flexibility, or second career options, which is not what I had witnessed during my period of employment at University X (UX). Rather, I witnessed people who experienced extreme burnout at the end of interim appointments. I sought to gain knowledge in understanding how the appointment of administrators into interim roles impacted organizations, the meaning of the interim role to those individuals who agreed to step into those positions, and how it impacted the employees who worked under interim leadership. By answering these questions I was able to fill a gap in the existing literature. The personal aspect of this problem was important, because it was the energy that inspired my research.

The second purpose of the study was that the research process was a means through which I learned more about leadership roles in educational organizations. Conducting this study was particularly beneficial to me, since the timing of my research aligned with a period of professional advancement in my work life. The final purpose of this study was to use the opportunity of this research study for my own personal growth. The process has benefited me, because I have clarified my own professional goals and have a better understanding of the future opportunities for me as leader in the field of education.
**Research questions.** This research study was an interpretive study designed to understand the meanings of the experiences of individuals who have served as interim administrators in postsecondary organizations. There were three research questions that framed this study were:

1. What were the experiences and perspectives of individuals who worked in interim administrative roles?
2. What were the organizational rationalities that led to the appointment of people to interim administrative roles?
3. What were the experiences and perspectives of individuals who worked under the leadership of interim administrators?

As an interpretive study, it was my task to make sense of the meaning of interim appointments at UX by generating explanations for what was going on in that social setting.

**Significance of the study.** Previous research has shown that organizations have a long history of appointing individuals to interim positions, and there are no signs that organizations intend to discontinue this practice anytime soon (Alley, 2005; Beem, 2003; Santora & Sarros, 2008). My experience working under the leadership of individuals who have accepted interim appointments was that their expectations for what they might gain from stepping into the interim roles were often not met, which has led to disappointment, and in some cases disenchantment, with the organization. People who are burned out are likely to lack motivation for their work or may be eager to leave the organization for a fresh start elsewhere, which can be damaging for the organization.

This research study provides individuals who are contemplating accepting an interim assignment with information about why the organization utilizes people in an interim capacity
and what one might expect in terms of length of time and potential outcomes of serving in an interim role. If one has access to this information, it may help one determine whether or not accepting an interim appointment is a wise career move. Additionally, for people who are in leadership positions who will be responsible for making decisions about whether or not to fill vacancies by appointing interim administrators, this study provides insight into the positive and negative aspects of interim assignments. Educational leaders should carefully evaluate the pros and cons of interim leadership to the organization and employees when making these decisions.

**Research tradition and theoretical framework.** This research was framed through the constructivist paradigm (Hatch, 2002, pp. 11-13, 15-16; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 35). Through this paradigm it is understood that the nature of reality is subjective, knowledge is symbolically constructed, and it is the researcher’s job to make sense of and assign meaning to people’s realities. I acknowledged that I as the researcher brought certain assumptions into the research, including the assumption that there are no absolute realities.

I used the theoretical frameworks of Parsons’ (1956) and Thompson’s (2006) concepts of organizational rationality to frame this study. The core technology is the work done by an organization to produce an outcome. The desired outcome is specifically defined, and there are organizational structures and processes in place in order to produce the desired outcome (Thompson, 2006, pp. 45-46). The level of managerial activities of the organizational structure carries out tasks through the processes of planning, establishing goals, and determining rewards. The managerial activities also mediate between the technical core and the environment. The institutional activities of the organization act as a mechanism to mediate between the organization and the institutional environment. The social, political, and cultural make-up of the
organization are defined at the institutional level and help shape the technical and managerial levels of the organization (pp. 10-13).

Figure 27. Muwonge’s (2012) and Schinn’s (2013) model of organizational rationality.

Additionally, I used three other theoretical frameworks to frame this study. Clark’s (1968) indicators of marginality and centrality provided a means to determine the degree to which a school or college is valued within the organization. Emerson’s (1962) and Pfeffer and Salancik’s (2003) resource dependency theory explained that an organization’s dependence on the environment is directly proportional to its needs and inversely proportional to supply. An organization’s power over another entity depends on the resources that are controlled by that entity, how important those resources are to the organization, and how many other entities there may be to act as potential suppliers to the organization. Schattschneider’s (1975) conflict theory explained that conflict has two central parts: the individuals who are directly involved in the conflict and the spectators who watch the conflict unfold. Conflict is contagious. The extent to which the spectators eventually become involved in the conflict can greatly impact the end
result. Individuals who are centrally involved at the center of the conflict must make a choice as to whether they wish to attempt to keep the conflict privatized or if they will benefit from socializing the conflict. By privatizing the conflict, the people who are centrally involved with the conflict can settle the conflict without the intervention or influence of the public. By socializing the conflict and involving more people, the balance of conflict can be drastically changed.

**Checking my subjectivity and the researcher as instrument.** As qualitative researchers describe, analyze, and interpret the data they collect, it is inevitable that they will make subjective judgments as they move from description to interpretation. In doing so, qualitative researchers must reflect upon their own subjectivity, as it is impossible for them to be completely objective when they are engaged in the research process (Hatch, 2002, p. 9; Janesick, 2003, p. 56).

As qualitative researchers are known to do, I selected a research topic I was passionate about (Glesne, 2006, pp. 119-121). A challenge for me, particularly during the early stages of the research, was to check my subjectivity. I had certain biases on the interim phenomenon when I began this study, which I had to work to overcome.

Additionally, as a qualitative researcher, I was the instrument in the research process (Janesick, 2003, p. 57). As an employee of UX when I started this research project, I was a participant in the research setting. In the later stages of the study, after I had exited from employment with UX, I remained an active observer of the organization. I conducted interviews with research participants. At times I found myself overwhelmed with the volume of unobtrusive data measures from the social setting that I collected and needed to analyze over time, and I had
to learn and accept that organizing and making sense of the data was going to be a time-consuming process.

As a qualitative researcher, I had to make choices in my data collection and in doing so, I understood that the interpretation of the data was influenced by my own values and beliefs. I came to understand that much of the data that I initially thought was important and collected early on in the research process that came from government reports that I was very familiar with, given my work in the student services unit, in fact did not provide much insight into the organizational structure. I had to step away from the areas of the organization in which I was used to working in on a day-to-day basis in order to gain perspective. It was my responsibility in this research process to understand and account for the extent to which personal qualities influenced my research, and this was a learning process through which I relied on the expertise of my dissertation chair to guide and teach me.

**Summary of research design.** For this study, the unit of analysis was the organizational set. The boundary defines the employees and the university as the context of the study. More specifically, the organization was so large, with more than 8,000 employees and numerous divisions, that I addressed the issue of keeping the study to a manageable scope by choosing to study the experiences of interim administrators who worked in the student support services departments or academic departments of the organization.

I conceptualized UX as being made up of three units: the School of Medicine, all other schools and colleges within the university, and the student support services unit. Faculty who worked in the academic departments had very different tasks and roles than the employees who worked in the student support services departments. The faculty is primarily responsible for the
core technologies of the organization, while the student support services employees are primarily responsible for the activities of the task environment.

Within the academic unit, I studied the roles of interim academic administrators in the UX schools and colleges, which included deans, associate deans, and assistant deans. Within the student support services unit, I studied the roles of interim directors, associate directors, and assistant directors. Prior to starting this study, the only published literature on interim administrators within the education profession that I found focused on interim roles for superintendents and principals within the K-12 system and interim department chairs or deans at the postsecondary level. For this study, the inclusion of interim administrators within the support services division of a postsecondary organization provided insight into the interim experience for an employee classification that had not previously been considered.

**Sampling: purposeful and intensity.** To address the issue of making the scope of the research project manageable and realistic (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27), I chose to study a single research university. Limiting my study to a single organization allowed me to study the interim phenomenon in a rich context. I specifically chose UX as the organization for my study, because I had access to the organization based on my status of employment there. In order for the study to be feasible, the organization had to be accessible. I also knew prior to beginning this study that UX had an extensive history of appointing people to interim positions, so I did not anticipate problems finding participants to interview as part of the data collection process.

I chose to use two sampling techniques in my data collect. First, I used purposeful sampling. This was a logical choice for this study, because I needed to locate an organization in which administrators were assigned to interim roles, so that I would have potential participants for the study. I also needed the organization to be accessible for an extended period of time, as
my dissertation chair advised me from the onset that the data collection process would take time. I intentionally selected UX as an organization that represented the type of population that I intended to study and for its accessibility (Singleton & Straits, 1999, pp. 158-159).

The second sampling technique I chose was intensity sampling. Intensity sampling allowed me to find information-rich cases that manifested the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely (Hatch, 2002, p. 50). The administrators I approached and asked to participate in the study included individuals who had served in interim roles for at least a year. In several cases, they had served in interim roles for periods longer than a year or had more than one period of interim service.

Data collection and analysis. As stated previously, for this study, I as the researcher was also the instrument for data collection. I collected data by adopting the role of an observer, as well as by being a participant in the research setting. I conducted interviews with seven research participants (one dean and six student services directors). The interviews were informal. Prior to the interviews, the participants each signed a release form that gave me permission to tape the interviews. The release form explained that I would not refer to them or the organization by name in the research. However, descriptions that would be included in the written document could allow the organization to be identified by someone who read the work, and that was made clear to the participants on the release form. The release form also had the contact information for my dissertation chair, in case any participant had concerns that he or she wished to address with my chair. Each interview session was scheduled for one hour in a setting of the participant’s choice, and participants were given the option to stop the interview at any time. After the interviews, I completed the verbatim transcriptions of those interview sessions. Every participant was provided with a copy of his or her interview transcript to review, and if any participant
decided that there was a portion of his or her interview that the participant did not want used for this study, I had an obligation to respect any such requests.

In addition to interviews, unobtrusive data measures provided me with a wealth of information about the organization. The buildings, the construction of space, office location, where administrators spent their time and whom they spent it with, were all measures that gave me insight into the organization. There were also volumes of documents that I reviewed over time, in the form of pictures, memos, meeting minutes, catalogs, staff and faculty directories, marketing materials, newspaper articles, website postings, and annual reports, that provided a significant amount of information about the operations and culture of the organization.

**Summary of study.** UX is public university that is classified as a research university with very high research activity by the Carnegie Classification. It was founded in 1868 originally as a medical college, but has evolved and expanded greatly since it was founded. Today, UX is complex organization that has numerous doctoral programs and two professional schools: a medical school and a law school. The annual enrollment is just under 30,000 students; there are more than 350 programs of study, and more than 8,000 employees work at UX. The organization is located in the center of an urban city but also has six extension centers in nearby cities.

It is clear from this study that while it is a single organization on paper, the operations and culture of UX are really divided into two distinct entities. There is the School of Medicine and then there is the rest of UX, which I have referred to throughout this study as UX Main Campus.

**Understanding UX School of Medicine: core technologies.** The dominant academic unit of UX is the School of Medicine. The School of Medicine carries out the organization’s
dominant core technologies, which include producing medical research, teaching and training researchers and doctors, and providing medical services to the community.

Within UX, the faculty members in the School of Medicine produce the most research and secure the most external grant funding for research projects compared to any other school or college within the organization. The medical school faculty brings in 65% of the overall research dollars for the organization, which amounts to approximately $119 million annually in research grants and contracts that they are responsible for administering.

Teaching and training doctors is the second core technology of the School of Medicine. The qualifications of the School of Medicine’s graduates and their reputations as physicians who serve the community are important for the reputation of the university.

Providing health care services to the community is the third core technology, and UX has a long history of providing these services to underinsured individuals. There are numerous UX publications that document the fact that UX physicians provide more than $60 million in uncompensated health care services annually to the community.

The School of Medicine outputs include medical research, researchers and doctors (who primarily remain in the state to practice medicine), and medical services.

**Understanding UX School of Medicine: task/resource environment.** The School of Medicine controls its own resources and makes decisions independently of the rest of organization. Some examples of the extensive resources that must be managed by the School of Medicine include the following: (a) the Office of Research manages $119 annually in research funding, (b) the Business Division oversees a $58 million general fund budget, which is the highest general fund budget of any school or college within UX, (c) the Office of Development manages aggressive fundraising campaigns (one of the major successes in fundraising in recent
years was successfully raising $35 million to fully fund the cost of a new medical school building), and (d) the student support services offices oversee student payments, with annual tuition rates of $32,000 for in-state students and $65,000 for out-of-state students.

Throughout the School of Medicine, it is understood that the needs of the medical students are an important priority for the organization. School of Medicine faculty members are extremely committed to the success of their students, and faculty members are invested in teaching, training, and mentoring their students. Faculty and student relationships are important at the School of Medicine, because faculty recommendations and their connections with medical personal have an impact on the career paths of future doctors.

Support services employees of the School of Medicine also develop relationships with students and get to know them by name. The support services personnel who are responsible for the managerial activities of the School of Medicine are personable and caring. They are deeply committed to the success of the students and take a personal, “hands-on” approach when interacting with the students to meet their needs. Support services employees tend to have long periods of employment there, because of the positive working environment. School of Medicine alumni are generous donors once they have established their careers.

Understanding UX School of Medicine: institutional environment. The institutional environment of the School of Medicine includes medical organizations, government health organizations, teaching hospitals, and professional medical associations. These like organizations have an extensive set of rules and regulations that they hold one another accountable for in order to maintain legitimacy. If the UX School of Medicine is to remain relevant and competitive with their peer organizations, they must engage in innovative research, publish regularly in respected academic journals, and attend and present at medical conferences.
Understanding UX School of Medicine: cultural environment. The UX School of Medicine admits only students who have excellent academic records. To be considered for admission, a student typically must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.70, in addition to an extensive record of involvement in community service activities. In recent years, the School of Medicine has seen an increase in the number of students who choose to earn a graduate degree prior to applying to medical school, as a means to gain a competitive edge in the admissions process.

Students who are admitted to the UX School of Medicine are mostly from affluent families. Many of the students who attend the UX School of Medicine live in the affluent suburbs that are on the outskirts of where UX is located. Their parents are college-educated, tend to work in the white collar sector, and have incomes that place them in the upper middle class to upper class ranks.

The UX School of Medicine does not admit a diverse student body. There is also a lack of diversity among the faculty. It has responded to concerns regarding the lack of diversity by creating an Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the UX School of Medicine that is supposed to promote outreach, mentoring, and recruitment of minority students for medical school. Despite the efforts of this office, the UX School of Medicine has not succeeded with increasing the enrollment of African-American students in significant numbers. It is apparent that the ethnic and financial backgrounds of the students and faculty at the School of Medicine are very different from the urban community for which the School of Medicine provides services.

Understanding UX Main Campus: core technologies. The core technologies of UX Main Campus are teaching (primarily a liberal arts curriculum) and training students to enter the
workforce. The UX Main Campus trains students for working in mid-level management roles or to become practitioners in semi-professions, such as teaching, nursing, and social work.

While UX is classified as a research institution, very few of the academic departments are designed to carry out or teach students rigorous research practices. While students attending the schools and colleges of UX Main Campus will be exposed to research throughout their studies, they are primarily being trained to enter the workforce upon exiting from UX.

**Understanding UX Main Campus: task/resource environment.** The UX Main Campus support services offices manage the resources for all schools and colleges, other than the School of Medicine. Some examples of the extensive resources that must be managed by UX Main Campus include (a) the Office of Research manages $65 million annually in research funding, (b) the Business Division oversees a $155 million general fund budget for all schools and colleges, excluding the School of Medicine, (c) the Business Division oversees $181 million in state appropriates (which is approximately 20% of revenues), and (d) the student support services offices oversee student payments, with annual tuition rates of $8,200 per student, for approximately 28,000 students (37% of revenues).

Unlike the School of Medicine, the UX Main Campus is a bureaucratic system. Many departments are minimally staffed, which results in students being served by the masses and leaves the staff in a position such that giving personalized attention to students is not feasible. The staff has to be able to process a large volume of work with limited resources. Undergraduate classes are taught by professors in large lecture halls with 100 or more students, so there is minimal one-to-one contact between professors and undergraduate students. Students are expected to research questions independently through online, self-service formats. The UX Main Campus is an impersonal environment in which employee turnover occurs regularly. Offices
have highly standardized processes and procedures in place so that vacancies will not halt the tasks that the offices have to complete.

**Understanding UX Main Campus: institutional environment.** For the UX Main Campus, the institutional environment is the federal government and the state government. Each of these government entities has rules and regulations that demand conformity and extensive reporting. Due to the number of students who rely on the federal financial aid programs to afford the cost of tuition and fees, the federal government is one of the primary organizations through which UX receives money. In order to remain compliant with the rules and regulations of the federal student aid programs, UX has numerous annual reports that must be submitted in cycles throughout the year. The university is also required to have an annual audit of financial aid and business office functions to verify compliance with all of the regulations that must be followed when administering federal student aid funds. Compliance is so important that the university also has an internal audit team to check on operations throughout the year, so that deficiencies in processes can be found and addressed before the external auditors conduct their annual review.

Even though funding from the state government has been declining for years, UX remains dependent on state funds to cover a large portion of its operating expenses. The state government has its own set of annual reports that UX must submit, many of which are redundant with the federal reports that the university already prepares. Recent reporting changes with the state government now require that public colleges and universities maintain a webpage accessible to the public to post the fiscal reports that are submitted to the state, under the premise of increasing accountability and transparency to taxpayers.

**Understanding UX Main Campus: cultural environment.** The cultural environment of UX Main Campus is the urban community where UX is located and the K-12 schools in that
community. The cultural environment of UX Main Campus is an urban culture that is reflective of the deteriorating city, in which crime rates are escalating, urban blight is ubiquitous, and unemployment is a constant challenge. The K-12 schools are underfunded and lack adequate resources to provide students with the services they need for their education. K-12 schools in recent years have been closed or consolidated due to lack of enrollment, as families have left the city.

The UX undergraduate student body is fairly diverse and is somewhat representative of the racial profile of the city in which the university is located. A challenge for UX Main Campus is that its undergraduate student body is composed of students who range from “college ready” to “at-risk,” and as a research university the organization does not invest much in services to help students who need academic remediation. Common characteristics of UX Main Campus students include a high percentage of the students being first-generation college attendees, living in urban areas, their families being economically disadvantaged, and many having attended financially disadvantaged K-12 schools.

UX Main Campus is known for admitting a high number of first-generation college students to its undergraduate programs. While this practice in and of itself is not negative, the organization does a disservice to students whose families have no experience navigating the postsecondary educational environment through its lack of outreach or support services for these students.

UX Main Campus is challenged by the low graduation rates of its undergraduate students. This hurts the reputation of the organization. For undergraduate students, UX Main Campus has far easier admissions standards and lower graduation rates than the other research universities in the state.
Findings

By understanding the core technologies, task/resource environments, institutional environments, and cultural environments of the School of Medicine and UX Main Campus, I was able to analyze the reasons why the organization uses individuals in interim roles at UX, as well as to learn how the experience of an interim administrative appointment impacted those individuals, in terms of their career goals and personal emotions. I concluded that there are five main factors that influence an organization’s use of individuals in interim administrative appointments: (a) the marginal or central status of the unit, (b) discontinuing a program, (c) experimenting with program or department creation, (d) resource dependency and periods of resource scarcity, which require adjustment of scale, and (e) periods of conflict that require the realignment of personnel.

Marginal or central status: interim academic administrator assignments by core.

Not all units of an organization are valued equally. For any organization that is made up of multiple units, utilizing the eight indicators of marginality or centrality is a useful method for measuring a unit’s marginal or central status.

UX as a university is made up of 12 schools and colleges, but the dominant core technologies of the organization are carried out by the School of Medicine. Sometimes other schools such as the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and the College of Engineering couple with the School of Medicine on medical research projects, which increases their stature within the organization, but it is clear from all of the data listed in Appendix A that the most central unit of the organization is the School of Medicine. As a central unit of the organization, the School of Medicine does not operate understaffed. People do not linger in interim positions indefinitely.
A common pattern that emerged in my research of UX is that schools and colleges that were more central based on their ability to loosely couple with the School of Medicine benefited from their more central status. Over the years these schools and colleges had fewer interim deans or their interim deans served for shorter periods of time than the more marginal schools or colleges. Another pattern that emerged was that schools or colleges that were so marginal that their future existence was at stake were most likely to have long-serving interim deans appointed to keep their operations running while decisions were made about their future.

**Interim Academic Administrator Assignments by Core (from 1986–2013)**

- **School of Medicine**
  - Most central status; most valued core technologies
  - Academic interim dean assignments
    - Duration: 1 year or less
    - Number: 3

- **Pharmacy and Engineering Schools**
  - Central status, because they loosely couple with School of Medicine
  - Academic interim dean assignments
    - Duration: 1-2 years
    - Number: 2 for Pharmacy, 4 for Engineering

- **All Other Schools/Colleges**
  - Marginal Status: core technologies valued less than School of Medicine cores
  - Academic interim dean assignments
    - Duration: 1-3 years (longest for College of Education and College of Lifelong Learning)
    - Highest Number: 5 for School of Business, 6 for College of Liberal Arts

*Figure 28. Summary of interim academic administrator assignments by core.*

The finding is that if an academic unit is marginal, the more likely it is that a person put into an interim academic appointment will linger in that role for more than a year. The organization is the least concerned about dealing with vacancies in marginal academic units, because these are the units that fail to bring significant resources into the organization and they do not contribute much to the overall reputation or legitimacy of the organization.
There are several findings that emerged when analyzing the marginal versus central status of the academic units. The first finding is that context matters. The organization attempts to be technically rational and protect the most valued core technologies. This makes a difference in how long people are used in interim academic roles. Interim appointments are shorter in the most central schools, in order to protect the most valued core technologies. The second finding is that the number of interims in an academic unit is an indicator of marginality. The marginal academic units have more turnover and use more interims. The third finding is that the length of time for an interim appointment is an indicator of marginality. The interim academic assignments for the marginal units are longer.

From the perspective of the organization, the organization needs to protect its most valued core technologies. Therefore, the organization prioritizes hiring to fill vacancies in the central schools and colleges first. From the perspective of the interim administrator, understanding where one works in relation to the core enables a person to predict whether the interim appointment will be short or long. The length of time of the interim appointment impacts the experience, as people become frustrated or overwhelmed when the interim assignment goes on for an extended period of time. From the perspective of an employee working under interim leadership, having an interim leading an academic department may slow down strategic planning and departmental progress. It often makes departments hesitate to hire new tenure-track faculty members, because people are uncomfortable with interim leaders making those decisions. It also has the potential to impede decisions on awarding tenure, because people are often not comfortable with interim leaders making decisions that will have a long-lasting impact.

**Interim support services administrators: managerial activities.** Individuals who work in the support services unit have positions that are valued less than academic positions, because
the support services unit does not carry out the core technologies of the organization. Some departments are more influential than others depending on the resources the department controls, but they are valued less than the academic departments.

The institutional, task/resource, and cultural environments are important factors in understanding interim appointments in the support services unit. At UX, these environments are distinctly different between UX Main Campus and the School of Medicine. Figure 29 shows a comparison of these units.

Figure 29. Comparison of institutional, task, and cultural environments of UX Main Campus vs School of Medicine.

The finding that emerged from this research is that working in the support services unit of the School of Medicine is a more positive experience than working in the support services unit of
UX Main Campus. Again, context matters. The more personal the environment, such as in the School of Medicine, the less turnover, so interim appointments are fewer and shorter. In a bureaucratic environment, such as in UX Main Campus, turnover is more frequent, so interim appointments are common and last longer.

From the perspective of the organization, the bureaucratic and prescribed nature of work in the support services unit makes it possible to place and keep people in interim administrative positions for long periods of time without disrupting the tasks of the department. From the perspective of the interim administrator, the more bureaucratic the environment, the more likely it is that an interim appointment will be forced. When the individual has little choice with accepting an interim appointment, and the interim appointment is long, the more likely it is to be a negative experience for the person. From the perspective of the employee working under interim leadership, it causes stress as employees try to adapt to rapid or unexpected leadership change, as they must try to quickly figure out the expectations of the interim leader. They worry about whether their jobs will be safe under interim leadership. Finally, if an interim leader is in the position for a long time and employees become comfortable working under that person’s leadership, the disappointment of employees can be intense when an interim leader they have grown to respect is passed over for the permanent promotion.

**Discontinuing an academic program.** When an academic program is no longer profitable to the organization, a decision must be made as to whether the program should continue to operate at a loss, or if the program should be phased out. At UX, this was the case with the programs offered through the College of Lifelong Learning and the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs. These colleges and the programs they offered were not profitable for the organization. Enrollment was low and market studies did not show that the
organization could expect a drastic increase in enrollment even if it were to change its marketing strategies.

The finding that emerged from this research is that when the organization must consider discontinuing an academic program, the process of doing so takes time, and the use of interim leaders is a logical way to fill vacancies as people exit from obsolete programs. There are negotiations that must be conducted with the faculty. In many cases, due to obligations the organization has to tenured faculty, successfully dissolving a program requires a combination of waiting for tenured faculty members to retire, or successfully negotiating to have them move to another department, so the process takes time. In order to work through this process, as people vacate positions while the program is still operating, the organization is likely to fill those vacancies with interim academic leaders.

From the perspective of the organization, the organization attempts to be rational by avoiding any additional permanent hires into a program that is being phased out, because that would simply extend the period of time required to eliminate the program. From the perspective of the interim leader, the uncertainty of not knowing how long it will take to phase the program out creates frustration, as it becomes extremely difficult to project how long the interim appointment will last. The interim leader is caught in a period of limbo. Additionally, the interim leader is likely to experience a lot of stress as he or she attempts to assuage the fears of employees who find their jobs at risk, and to keep them motivated during such an emotional period. Employees working under interim leadership when a program is being dissolved are likely to experience a significant amount of stress, because interim leaders are perceived as having less power and influence than permanent leaders, so they worry about their future opportunities with the organization.
Experimenting with department creation. Within the student support services division of an academic organization, it is common for leaders of those departments to continually scan the environment and look at peer organizations to keep track of staffing trends. The student services division of UX constantly looks for ways to cut costs while improving efficiencies. After more than a decade of working in the support services division of postsecondary educational organizations, I have enough experience with these activities to confirm that it is not uncommon for the support services division of an academic organization to copy staffing models of similar schools. Experimenting with changes to the staffing structure through the creation of new departments can be risky, though, because there are so many unknown factors.

The finding from this research study is that when the organization experiments with creating a new department, it mitigates the risk involved by appointing interim leaders to oversee the project. By appointing interim leaders to implement the new department, if the end result is a massive failure that would require disbanding the project, the organization is simply able to move the interim leader back to his or her former role in the organization. Using interim leaders on experiments removes the risk of hiring people only to have their position eliminated if the experiment fails.

From an organization perspective, the organization attempts to be rational by reducing the risk of the experiment as much as possible by appointing someone who already has a working knowledge of the organization to lead the project and already has a place in the organization to revert to should the new department fail. From the perspective of interim administrator, being asked to lead the implementation of an experimental project is a rare opportunity to create one’s own path for a promotion in an organization that has no formal plan for grooming people to step into higher level leadership roles. From the perspective of
employees who work under interim leadership, there is often a high level of fear about the
unknown outcome of the experimental department and what changes it could bring to their jobs.
The anxiety caused by this uncertainty becomes an additional challenge for the interim
administrator to manage during the project implementation. If managed well and the interim
administrator achieves employee buy-in, this has the potential to be a power influence to the
executive administration who will be deciding whether the interim administrator will be given a
permanent promotion. Failure to earn employee buy-in is likely to damage the chances of the
experimental department succeeding.

**Resource dependency and interim appointments.** UX is dependent upon resources
from the environment in order to survive. Sources such as state funding have steadily declined
over the years, and as resources have become leaner, the organization has had to find ways to cut
costs without disrupting operations that support the dominant core technologies.

The first finding from analyzing interims in relation to the resource dependency of UX is
that the organization is rational. There is a cost savings by not filling vacant positions and work
is standardized, such as in the support services unit, so placing people into interim positions to
fill vacancies is an easy and logical solution. This organization reacts based on what is best for
organizational survival. The second finding from analyzing interims in relation to the resource
dependency of UX is that people are self-referential. Instead of seeing extended interim
appointments as a cost-savings measure, they feel underappreciated and ignored. People are
motivated by an increase in status and title. They think in terms of “what is best for me” and
often fail to understand that in bureaucratic units the organization views them as
“interchangeable parts.”
From the perspective of the organization, when resources are scarce the organization will do what it needs to do for survival. From the perspective of the interim, it is difficult for people in the interim position to take a neutral view of the needs of the organization to find cost savings and to remove their emotions from the interim experience. Interims who think of their role in the context of “fairness” and “what is good for me” are likely to be disappointed in the experience and outcomes. They experience strong emotions of abuse and mistrust of the organization when the interim appointments are lengthy, the length of their work week significantly increases while in the role, and their expectations for promotions are not met. From the perspective of employees working under interim leaders, without permanent leadership they experience feelings of lack of stability within the department. They often do not feel secure in their positions, as they wonder what plans the executive administration has for the department.

**Resource scarcity, adjusting scale, and interim appointments.** When resources are scarce, the organization needs to cut costs and “get more.” In order to do that, the organization has to adjust scale, and it does so by consolidating or eliminating underperforming departments, restructuring staffing assignments to consolidate positions, and strategically placing people who are good at securing critical resources into interim roles.

There have been instances when a lack of resources has threatened the viability of the unit, or times when a unit has gone through significant restructuring, and UX has used interim administrators to fill vacant positions while the administration decides whether or not to keep the unit intact. The finding from this research is that it is common to appoint interim administrators when resources are scarce, because it is less expensive and less controversial to assign an interim than it would be to hire someone and within a year eliminate the position.
From the perspective of the organization, using interims is organizationally rational, because it “cheaply buys” the organization time to figure out what it will do to restructure or reorganize underfunded departments and units. From the perspective of the interim, understanding the scope of the resource scarcity helps people make decisions on how much effort they want to expend in an interim role (e.g. fighting what could be a “losing battle” vs. being content to do just enough to be a competent placeholder). While the individuals who accept the interim appointments often perceive the opportunity to serve as an interim as a great career opportunity that could lead to professional promotions, that is not the intent of the interim appointment by the organization, and this disconnect in understanding the needs of the organization versus the wants of the individual often leads to a person’s dissatisfaction with the interim experience. Again, from the perspective of employees working under interim leaders, without permanent leadership they experience feelings of lack of stability within the department.

**Periods of conflict: high level interim administrators.** The fifth reason the organization will use individuals in the capacity of interim appointments is to deal with conflict, which is an organizing force within any organization. With limited resources, there will always be a gap in the organization between what people want and the resources that the organization has to meet all of the demands. Intense conflict is a threat to the organization. When things go wrong, someone will take the blame and positions will be vacated either because a person resigns, is fired, or retires. The person who is appointed as the interim to fill the vacated position must manage the conflict and solve the problem, in the interest of organizational survival.

During periods of intense conflict at UX, the organization has appointed high-level administrators to interims roles. These interims had a great deal of power and authority to make decisions and change. The expectation was that these interims were in a position of power to
manage and solve the problem. At UX, the administration often chooses to leave people in interim positions until the conflict is resolved, and they select people who have been employed at UX for a period of time, because they have a familiarity and understanding of the organization and its politics. It is a way in which the organization is able to have someone assume the leadership role and immediately start working on resolving the problem. The findings that emerged from this research include: (a) interims who correctly identify the conflict and successfully manage the conflict are more likely to gain a promotion from interim to permanent, (b) interims who correctly identify the conflict and fail to manage the conflict are more likely to be demoted from interim to their old job, and (c) interims who incorrectly identify the conflict and fail to manage the conflict are more likely to be demoted from interim to their old job.

From the perspective of the organization, the organization is able to take swift action to move people out of positions when there is conflict, because there will always be someone to step in as an interim. From the perspective of the interim, anyone in an interim role who is politically savvy and effectively manages conflict can leverage the interim role for a future promotion when the stakes are high for organizational survival. From the perspective of the employees working under interim leadership, it becomes an opportunity to have a greater amount of influence in the decision-making process of selecting a permanent leader than they may ordinarily have. If employees are not satisfied with the work of the interim leader, it is an opportunity for employees to socialize their conflicts, which can be damaging for the interim leader’s chances of being selected for a permanent promotion to the role. Conversely, if the employees are pleased with the work of the interim leader, the lack of conflict is an important consideration for the executive administration as they evaluate the effectiveness of the interim leader.
Summary. In summary, there are multiple meanings for the use of interims for the organization and the person, and those meanings vary depending on context. Through this research, I identified three categories of interim administrators: interim academic administrators, interim support services administrators, and high-level interim administrators. The marginality or centrality of the core technologies significantly impacts the interim academic administrators, because the organization protects the cores first. The task environment, institutional environment, and cultural environment impact interim administrators in the support services unit. The organization is most concerned with survival, while people are self-referential and think about what is in their best interests. This disconnect in understanding often leads to frustration on the part of interim administrators. High-level interim administrators have great opportunities to leverage promotions from interim roles during periods of intense conflict if they are politically savvy, but they can easily be demoted if they are not. Figure 30 summarizes the perspectives of the organization and person in each of these interim categories.
**Category 1: Interim Academic Administrators**

- **Core Technologies: Marginal vs. Central Status**
  - Organization protects the cores.
  - People in marginal positions are more likely to have longer, less positive interim experiences.
  - For employees it potentially slows down department planning, hiring, and promotions.

- **Discontinuing Academic Programs**
  - Organization attempts to be rational.
  - Interims are left in limbo with no clear end in sight.
  - Employees worry about job stability.

**Category 2: Interim Support Services Administrators**

- **Task Environment: Resource Dependency and Adjusting Scale**
  - Organization is rational and makes decisions for survival.
  - Interims are self-referential and think in terms of “what’s best for me”.
  - Employees fear the lack of stability signified by interim leadership.

- **Experimenting with Department Creation**
  - Organization is able to minimize risk by appointing interims.
  - Interims have an opportunity to create their own path for promotion.
  - Employees are reluctant to buy-in to experiments they perceive as risky for their job security and are not likely to trust interim leadership.

**Category 3: High Level Interim Administrators**

- **Cultural Environment: Conflict**
  - Organization removes people who don’t manage conflict well.
  - People in interim roles can leverage promotions by managing conflict, but it requires political savvy in addition to being able to do the job.
  - Employees have an opportunity to influence hiring process by socializing conflict.

---

*Figure 30. Summary of interim administrator categories.*

While there are certainly benefits to the organization in placing people into interim positions in terms of conserving resources, minimizing risks of experimenting with new department structures by using interim administrators, and resolving intense conflicts, there are also significant costs associated with interim appointments. For the academic unit, keeping interim deans in place for extended periods of time threatens to slow down the strategic planning process, the hiring of tenure-track faculty, and the promotion of tenure-track faculty. The level of unease that employees working under interim leadership experience can be damaging for the
organization, in that productivity goes down because employees are not focused on their regular
tasks, and morale declines as employees fear for their jobs. A finding from this study was that it
was not uncommon for interim administrators who served as interims for long periods to burn
out from the experience. As a result they either lost motivation for their work or looked to leave
the organization. When keeping employees in interim roles for extended periods of time, the
organization risks losing the knowledge of highly qualified employees.

Through this research, I gained considerable knowledge and answered the questions of
what the role of the interim administrator means to the organization, the person, and employees
working under interim leadership. This study helps fill a gap in the literature. The research
process also led to me developing leadership skills. I have gained the ability to teach people
about the disconnect that exists between the organization’s and person’s perspectives on the role
of interims. The ability to help people understand the expectations and probable outcomes of the
interim appointment is meaningful to me, based on my personal experiences with a spouse and
friends who have had such negative experiences while serving in interim roles. Finally, this
research project contributed significantly to my personal growth. While part of the dissertation
process is about mastering research skills, it also taught me humility, how to build better
relationships with people, and how to find the strength to persevere through challenging times.
The dissertation process was long and challenging, but the overall outcome is quite satisfying.

**Practical Applications**

As UX and other postsecondary organizations have been using individuals in interim
roles for more than two decades, it appears unlikely that this trend will be discontinued anytime
soon. Knowing that there is a high likelihood that organizations will continue to appoint people
to interim administrative roles, it is logical to suggest some practical applications for changes to the interim process that could improve the experience of the individuals who serve in those roles.

One of the patterns that emerged in this research is that the individuals who were asked to serve in interim positions were initially told that they would serve in the interim role for only a few months. In reviewing the interview transcripts, the participants’ responses to an interim cycle that would only be a few months in length were generally positive. A period of a few months with an additional stipend for the work was perceived as a reasonable request from the organization and an opportunity to experience some new management skills that would help them professionally for future promotional opportunities. It was when the interim period extended more than a year or had no certain end date that they began to experience burnout.

Having worked in the support services unit of postsecondary organizations for more than a decade, my own experiences have shown that administrators in the support services unit are conscientious about adhering to written policies and procedures of the organization. From my experience, a characteristic that makes a person successful in an administrative role in the support services unit is the willingness to respect the rules of the organization and meet deadlines in bureaucratic environments that do not often allow for much flexibility. One suggestion for improving the interim experience for employees would be to develop an organization policy for the support services unit that would limit the interim period to no more than six months. Developing a policy to limit the time of an interim appointment would allow for a compromise between the needs of the organization and the expectations of the employee, and I would expect that having a written policy in place would increase the likelihood that the administration would respect the time limit that is established in the policy for an interim appointment. Having a written policy to limit the term of an interim appointment would also give the interim employee a
means to legitimately challenge a violation of that policy, if the administration attempted to extend the interim appointment indefinitely.

The organization would still be able to gain a cost savings by not paying the salary or fringe benefits of the vacant position for up to six months. For example, if the person who left the position had been earning an annual salary of $80,000, plus $10,000 in fringe benefits (e.g. health care and retirement savings plan), the organization still stands to gain a $45,000 annual savings by keeping the position open for six months and having an interim administrator serve in the role. Additionally, for the employee, a six-month interim appointment is not so long that the employee would automatically feel entitled to a promotion. A common industry standard for a probation period for newly hired employees in the student services division to assess their work is one year. Setting a maximum six-month interim appointment, which is less than the organization’s normal probation period for a person who enters a new position, is a factor that could help ease the disappointment of someone who does not move from that interim role into the position permanently, with the argument to be made that six months is not a long enough period to fully evaluate the person’s performance in that role. Additionally, each person who moves into an interim position would have a clear end date for the role. Removing the uncertainty of the interim position could also relieve some of the stress that other department employees experience when there is a change in leadership, because they would know that the organization is committed to a timely hiring process to fill the position on a permanent basis.

In the academic unit, writing a policy to limit interim appointments to no more than six months is likely not plausible, given the constraints of the academic calendar and the fact that a national search process must be undertaken in an organization such as UX to fill higher level positions. A concern in the academic unit is that keeping people in interim positions for too long
may slow down progress with strategic planning and the promotion and hiring of tenure-track faculty members, so these concerns should be addressed. In situations where the vacancies occur in marginal units, or if the organization is looking to phase out a program, there is a higher probability that the length of the interim appointment of the academic administrator will be longer than six months. When I interviewed Dean A, the advice she gave for situations when one knows the interim academic appointment will be long (perhaps more than six months), is to have a frank conversation with the provost or vice president about not using the interim title with colleagues, particularly in cases where an interim is being asked to solve controversial issues in the organization that are not likely to be popular with other employees. People are motivated by titles, and Dean A felt that the interim title reduced her credibility with the faculty, which was why she felt that interim deans often had difficulty with convincing the faculty that strategic planning and tenure decisions should not come to a halt when interim deans were in place. Dean A was in a position where she was an interim dean in a college that was being phased out, and she had a tremendous amount of responsibility to keep faculty who would remain with the organization but would be relocated to other departments motivated. In her view, she could not afford to have people perceive her as less authoritative or powerful because she was an interim dean. She needed them to have the same confidence in her that they would have if she were the permanent dean. In her day-to-day work, she did not use the word *interim* in her title. As the person who was responsible for that dean position for several years, she felt that she had the same responsibility as a permanent dean, and by removing *interim* from her working title, she believed that it helped her achieve the objectives of the executive administration. This same sentiment was expressed by two of the interim administrators I interviewed who worked in the support services unit, both of whom had endured multi-year interim appointments. Both of them
disclosed to me that they came to a point where they stopped signing their emails or documents with *interim* as part of their title, which they believed helped to create the perception with their employees that they had the same authority as any other permanent director. A note of caution, though, that if an agreement is made to allow the person to not use *interim* as part of their working title, it must be made clear that it does not guarantee any type of promotion if the executive administration does not intend to make that commitment. I would anticipate that this would be more accepted by academic interim administrators in situations where they have been asked to step into an interim role for the purpose of discontinuing a program, when they know that it is only a matter of time before the position will cease to exist altogether and that they are not going to be passed over for any type of promotion. The types of practical strategies that could be implemented to improve the interim experience by finding a balance between the needs of the organization and the expectations of the person are context dependent.

**Implications for Future Research**

For this research project, the focus was on a single organization, which was a research university located in the Midwestern region of the United States. Patterns emerged for situations in which the organization used individuals in interim administrative roles. Common themes emerged among those individuals whom I interviewed for this research project regarding their experiences serving in an interim capacity. These common themes and patterns suggest that they may not be unique to this particular organization.

While the data that were collected for the first research question regarding the experiences and perspectives of those individuals who have worked in interim positions are interesting and revealed common experiences for the interim administrators, the small sample size and limited amount of interview time (each interview was only one hour in length) with each participant was a limitation of this study. A suggestion for the next step in future research on
interim appointments would be to more fully explore how interim appointments may support and strengthen a unit, or how interim periods may be costly to the unit. If the authority of the interim administrator is undermined, how does this impact the person serving in the interim position, and what are the potential costs to the organization? In contrast, under what circumstances have people had a positive and productive experience in an interim role? Additionally, it would be interesting to more fully explore whether people who are promoted to interim positions are more or less likely to attempt to initiate major change within the organization, and what factors would hinder or support their abilities to do so. While it seems that the organization is able to gain a budgetary savings through the use of extended interim appointments, what are the non-monetary costs that may result from keeping people in interim positions so long?

The third research question regarding the experiences and perspectives of employees who work under interim leadership emerged based on the interviews with those who had served in interim positions. Several of the participants I interviewed spoke of the challenges and stresses that they saw their employees go through while working under interim leadership for an extended period of time. This research question deserves more attention in future studies. The nature of qualitative research is such that the researcher discovers additional questions along the way, and it is important that the researcher does not ignore or lose those questions in the process, as there is much to be gained from revisiting these questions and exploring them further in future studies. A recommendation for future studies is to include interviews with employees who have worked under interim leadership to gain a more thorough understanding of their experiences and their expectations of interim leadership.

Another area for future studies is to look at the potential lost opportunities to the organization and the person during interim appointments. Data from this study suggest that the
organization stands to lose opportunities with hiring tenure-track faculty and in the strategic
planning process when relying on interim leadership for an extended period of time, but there are
not enough data to show the extent of how detrimental this could be to the organization.
Additionally, future research would clarify if there are also lost opportunities in the student
services unit by keeping people in extended interim roles and the potential costs to the
organization by doing so.

Finally, future research with a broader scope of organizational type (e.g. private
universities, community colleges, technical schools, with variation in location and size) is
suggested, to add to the knowledge base of how organizations use individuals in an interim
capacity and to gain a better understanding of the potential emotional fallout of interim
experiences. Future research will clarify whether these themes about the interim experience are
applicable to other educational organizations.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to the research study. First, the study is focused on one
organization. While common themes and patterns suggest that these findings have analytical
generalizability to other postsecondary educational organizations that use individuals in interim
administrative roles, additional research must be completed in order to make that conclusion.

Second, I was successful in getting only one person who served as an interim
administrator within the academic unit of the organization to agree to meet with me for an
interview. While there were many individuals who had served as interim administrators within
the support services unit who were eager to speak with me, I found that interim deans (former or
current) were reluctant to participate. It could have been because I was not a doctoral candidate
through UX, or it could have been time constraints with their schedules. Additional interviews
with people from the academic unit could have provided me with additional data about the operations with the academic unit.

Third, serving as the primary research instrument was a possible limitation of my study. I had to check my subjectivity and at times that was a struggle. Due to my role of working at UX for an extended period of time, it was initially challenging to identify my biases about the organization. It was a process to learn to step back and explore what was so familiar through a new framework.

Despite these limitations, this study yielded useful data that provide awareness and an understanding of why postsecondary organizations are likely to appoint individuals to interim positions, and why the expectations of interim administrators are often not met, due to the fact that those expectations do not align with the needs of the organization. This study provides information that may be beneficial to those individuals who are considering accepting an interim appointment.

Conclusion

I foresee the continued use of interim appointments in educational organizations in years to come. This research provides individuals with a method for breaking down organizations at the levels of their cores, task environments, institutional environments, and cultural environments, in order to gain a better understanding of the reasons why an organization may offer an interim appointment. I believe this can be beneficial for individuals in terms of shaping their expectations for what they can accomplish in the interim role and understanding how interim appointments can affect their careers paths.
References


Appendixes
Appendix A: Indicators of Centrality and Marginality

Indicators of Marginality

“It is difficult to assess organizational marginality precisely, since it depends on the degree of acceptance afforded a program by different groups within and outside the school system” (Clark, Zuckerman, & Merton, 1980 p. 58).

Robledo (1978), who drew upon the work of Clark (1968) and Thompson (1967), defined a series of indicators that are useful for evaluating a program or department’s importance within the organization. The indicators are as follows:

1) **Constitutional Status:** A unit’s constitutional status (i.e. how it is established and operates) is strong if the unit’s existence is based upon legislation that makes it mandatory. Its constitutional status is weak when it is based upon “permissive legislation” (Robledo, p. 25) that makes its establishment and operations optional. An example from Clark (1968) to illustrate constitutional status is his explanation of the marginality of adult education organizations in comparison to K-12 schools, because K-12 education is mandated in government legislation, but adult education is voluntary.

2) **Unit Administration:** The number of part-time versus full-time administrators is the second indicator of centrality versus marginality. The more marginal the unit, the more likely it is that the unit will be staffed by part-time employees who have other commitments. The more central the unit, the more likely it is that the unit will be staffed by full-time employees whose primary responsibilities are devoted to that unit.

3) **Facilities and Fixed Capital:** Units that are marginal are less likely to have their own facilities and equipment, and will typically have to rely on borrowing space and
equipment from other units. Units that are central are more likely to have their own dedicated facilities and equipment.

4) *Economy Pressure Group:* Units that are marginal are more likely to experience pressure from groups that seek to take resources away and potentially restrict the functions of the unit. Units that are central are less likely to experience the threat of loss of resources or control from such groups.

5) *Justifying Program:* The extent to which a unit has to justify its right to exist is an indicator of marginality versus centrality. Marginal units are those which are more insecure, are not seen as being necessary, and they have to put in a great deal of effort to justify their existence. Central units are not under constant pressure to justify their existence and they do not experience the fear of being eliminated.

6) *Less/More State Aid:* Financial resources are limited and decisions have to be made at the state level in terms of how to allocate resources. Marginal units, because they are considered to be less important, typically receive less state aid than do central units.

7) *Program Housing:* Program housing has to do with decisions that are made about which units in an organization will oversee innovative programs. Units that are marginal typically will not have the financial or staffing resources to administer highly innovative programs. Units that are central, which tend to be sufficiently staffed and well funded will have the resources to administer highly innovative programs.

8) *Location of New Activities:* The location of activities has to do with “where new activities of a unit would be located in reference to the task environment, total organization, and the core technology of the organization” (Robledo, p. 27). Most of the new activities of marginal units are located between the task environment and the total organization, while
most of the new activities of the central units are located in the core technology of the organization.

9) *Changing Core Technology*: This indicator has to do with “whether or not the unit and its new activities changed or significantly affected the core technology of the organization (Robledo, p. 280). The activities of units that are marginal typically would not have enough of an impact on an organization to change the core technology. The activities taking place in a central unit, in contrast, could have enough of an impact on the organization to begin to change some aspects of the core technology.

10) *Impact on Other Units*: Those units that are marginal do not tend to house innovative programs and thus do not tend to have a significant impact on other units that reside in the core of the organization. Those units which are central and thus more likely to house innovative programs are more likely to have an impact on other units, or possibly the organization as a whole.

The eight indicators of marginality and centrality, as defined by Welmers (2002, p. xxii-xxiii) and Brandon (2004, p. 53), are useful tools for understanding the value and status of the schools and colleges within UX. The eight indicators are as follows:

9) Strength of policy, law, rules and regulations

10) Number and type of employees dedicated to its tasks/personnel

   a. Administration

   b. Faculty

   c. Students

   d. Interim vs. Permanent

11) Kinds of dedicated facilities
12) Source and degree of funding

13) Location of program within organization
   a. Time
   b. Place

14) Output

15) Prestige

16) Legitimacy

The following information was obtained from the 2013 UX Fact Book, UX staff and faculty directories, university catalogs, student handbooks, faculty and staff handbooks, various documents that are archived in the university library, newspaper articles, pictures, department memos, promotional and marketing materials distributed by UX, and information that UX publishes on its website.

School of Medicine

Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations: The School of Medicine has the strictest policies and regulations for its students among any of the 12 schools and colleges within UX. It has the strictest admission criteria of any of the academic units. Fewer than 8% of applicants are admitted each year to the School of Medicine. Students are required to document that they own a car prior to admission, due to the necessity of driving to offsite locations for clinical rotations, and while the policy has been protested repeatedly, it remains in effect with no exceptions. It is the only school or college within the academic unit of UX that tracks the attendance of students and requires that they document absences with a physician’s note. The curriculum is strictly
defined and students may not deviate from course plan designed by the faculty. Extremely strict policies have been set in place for students and faculty regarding confidentiality during student-faculty counseling sessions. The American Medical Association dictates strict rules and regulations that must be followed in order for the school to maintain its accreditation.

**Number and Type of Employees:** The School of Medicine is a very complex unit. The dean is supported by five vice deans, four associate deans, 11 assistant deans, and 28 department chairs. There are 733 full-time faculty, so with the total enrollment of 1,611 students (1,472 full-time and 139 part-time), the full-time faculty to full-time student ratio is 2 to 1. No other college or school within UX has such a low faculty to student ratio. In the history of the School of Medicine there have only been three interim deans and no interim dean served longer than a one year period. The most recent interim dean served for just under one year and was named the permanent dean in June 2010.

**Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:** In June 2009, the School of Medicine opened a new $35 million facility, which was paid for solely through funds raised from private donations. The new building is 53,000 square feet and all of the equipment is the latest state-of-the-art technology. In 2012, the School of Medicine broke ground for a $93 million biomedical research building. The new facility will have almost 200,000 square feet of space.

**Sources and Degree of Funding:** The School of Medicine has an annual operating budget of $266,000,000, which is the largest budget of any of the academic units within UX. It has secured more than $40 million in endowments and more than $119 million annually in research grants from sources such as the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation. Tuition and fees for in-state students is just over $32,000 per year. Tuition and fees for out-of-state students is just over $65,000 per year.
**Location of Program within the Organization:** In terms of time, classes take place primarily during the day, but study activities and clinical rotations may take place at any hour. Medical students are not allowed to work, other than through a work study placement on campus during which they would primarily be assisting a professor with research in the lab. In terms of place, the School of Medicine has the newest facilities of any of the academic units in UX, as well as state-of-the-art equipment. The classrooms are equipped with “Smart” boards, which look like white boards, but students are able to download the content that is written on the “Smart” board onto their laptops. No other classrooms in any of the other facilities at UX have this type of technology available to students.

**Output:** Of the students who enroll in the School of Medicine, 96% of them graduate with an MD, and 90% of graduates receive their first choice for an internship or residency. Almost half of the graduates remain in the state where UX is located, to practice medicine upon obtaining their license. Research is a primary component of the curriculum for students and many graduates go on to complete post-doctoral work in research fields.

**Prestige:** The School of Medicine is the fifth largest medical school in the country. It ranks 75th in terms of medical school research output. The UX School of Medicine ranks fourth out of all medical schools for graduating the most African-American doctors, it ranks seventh in the nation of admission of underrepresented minority students, and it ranks seventh in the nation for the most full-time African-American faculty members. UX School of Medicine faculty members are consistently recognized by their peers in polls and publications, including *The Best Doctors in America* poll. It is recognized as a center of excellence for cardiovascular research.

**Legitimacy:** Without the School of Medicine, UX would very likely be in danger of losing its ranking as a research university with very high research activity by the Carnegie...
Classification. The UX School of Medicine also provides more than $60 million annually in healthcare for the under-or-uninsured members of the surrounding community. Only graduate students are allowed to enroll at the School of Medicine, and it is graduate education and research that is valued by UX.

**College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences**

*Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:* The College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (CPHS) has very strict admission policies. It is the only school or college at UX that requires undergraduate students to interview as part of the admission application process. Based on the nature of the research that is conducted, employees and students of CPHS have to adhere to HIPPA policies and procedures, and failure to do so could lead to termination or expulsion from UX. Students are required to adhere to a dress code and standards of professional decorum, which are defined in the CPHS Student Handbook, because of their activities in laboratory and clinical settings. Policies and rules of CPHS students are not flexible and there are serious consequences when they are violated.

*Number and Types of Employees:* CPHS employees a lot of people in administrative positions. In addition to the dean, there are three associate deans, one assistant dean, five department chairs, and 11 program directors. There are 83 full-time faculty and 1,012 students (870 are full-time and 142 are part-time). In the history of CPHS, there have only been two interim deans, and neither interim dean served for a period that was more than two years.

*Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:* CPHS is housed in a 270,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art building that was opened in May 2002 and it is located on the southwest corner of the School of Medicine’s campus. The cost of building this new facility was paid for through an allocation
from the state of $48.2 million and $16.1 million that was raised by UX’s CPHS from private donors. There is another 44,000 square-foot building that is home to the applied sciences of mortuary science, clinical laboratory science, and anatomic pathologists’ assistant programs.

**Sources and Degree of Funding:** The CPHS faculty is very active in research and on average secure more than $4 million annually in grants from the National Institute of Health. CPHS alumni are very generous with their donations to the college and the new facility that was opened in 2002 is named after an alum who donated $5 million to CPHS. There is also a $1.5 million technology endowment that was established in 2004. CHPS also charges higher tuition rates than most of the other colleges and schools within UX. There is a range of tuition costs for programs offered through CPHS, but the most high profile degree program, the Doctorate in Pharmaceutical Science, costs approximately $35,000 a year for an in-state student and $70,000 a year for an out-of-state student.

**Location of Program within the Organization:** In terms of time, the undergraduate classes are held during the daytime and classes for the full-time graduate students are also held during the day. The curriculum is so rigorous in most of the health science programs that students do not work while they are enrolled. In terms of place, the main facility is only a few years old and the architectural design of the building is meant to accommodate new technology as it becomes available. It is a priority for the organization to maintain state-of-the-art equipment for CPHS.

**Output:** The graduates of CPHS primarily remain in the state and obtain jobs in health-related fields. Many of the hospitals and pharmacies in the state employee CPHS graduates. Research is a core activity within CPHS and a number of graduate students go on to become involved in post-doctoral research. Students and graduates of CPHS are also very active in promoting and participating in community health programs for the underprivileged in the state.
Prestige: Of the 807 doctoral degrees awarded by UX at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year, 131 of the doctorates were awarded to CPHS graduates. This is a very significant number given that there are over 14,000 graduates students attending UX and CPHS is one of the smaller colleges and schools within the university. It is also notable because the CPHS just recently changed the pharmacology program degree from an MS to a Ph.D. in 2002. There are several endowed chairs in CPHS and the current strategic plan calls for raising funds to support an additional four endowed chairs. The faculty of CPHS has a reputation on a national and internal level for their innovations in research. CPHS students are given access the School of Medicine’s library for their research, which is significant because the School of Medicine’s library is restrictive in access. Several alumni have received awards in the science field for their research.

Legitimacy: At CPHS, the emphasis on research is very high, and while CPHS does not secure near the funding for research in comparison to UX’s School of Medicine, CPHS does enough to be a significant contributor to UX’s classification as a research university with the Carnegie Classification. The student retention rates at CPHS are exceptionally high at 98%, and with 90% of the students graduating on-time, the core of CPHS is carried out extremely efficiently. CPHS students and graduates also maintain high levels of volunteerism with community health organizations to serve the under-or-uninsured of the community, which is one of the core missions of UX.

College of Engineering

Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations: Unlike the School of Medicine, the School of Law, and CPHS, which only admit students once a year to begin their studies in the
fall semester, the College of Engineering admits students three times a year. This includes admission of students into graduate programs. Overall, the admission policies for the College of Engineering are not as strict as the School of Medicine, the School of Law, or CPHS, in terms of GPA, test scores, and admission deadlines. There is a minimum foundation of math and science courses that students must have taken for admission in the College of Engineering, as well as a minimum GPA standard in these courses that students must have met. In terms of academic grading policies, the College of Engineering does not stray from the standards followed by most other UX schools and colleges.

**Number and Type of Employees:** The College of Engineering is mid-size in enrollment compared with the other schools and colleges of UX. There are 2,437 students (1,575 full-time and 862 part-time) and a total of 124 full-time faculty members. The administration is made up of the dean, three associate deans, seven department chairs, and three directors. In the history of the College of Engineering, there have been four interim deans, but none have ever served longer than a two year period as an interim.

**Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:** In 2009, the College of Engineering opened a new $27 million, 83,000 square-foot facility, which includes laboratories and research space for five areas of study: urban infrastructure laboratory, the advanced propulsion laboratory, the alternative technology laboratory, nanotechnology laboratory, and the smart sensors and integrated Microsystems laboratory. Such designated lab space is a highly coveted commodity by researchers at UX.

**Sources and Degree of Funding:** Research is on the core activities of the College of Engineering and faculty in this college secure more than $20 million annually for research. They secure grant funds from a number of different organizations, including NASA and the
Department of Defense. The new building that is home to the College of Engineering was paid for through $15 million in state appropriations and $12 million that was raised from private donors. The building is named after a College of Engineering alum who donated $3 million to the fund raising campaign. Tuition costs for the College of Engineering are the same as the majority of the other undergraduate and graduate programs.

**Location of Program within the Organization:** In terms of time, most of the undergraduate classes are held during the day. Graduate classes are offered in the day and the evening, but full-time graduate students are typically employed as teaching assistants and do not work outside of campus. The laboratories are available to researchers throughout the day and evening, but access is restricted and one must have a key or electronic code to enter lab space. In terms of space, the facilities are new and the laboratories are now equipped with state-of-the-art technology since the new facility was opened in 2009.

**Output:** More than 75% of the graduates from the College of Engineering remain in the state to work. Traditionally students who left with a bachelors degree had gone on to work for the automotive industries, but in recent years as those types of jobs have been eliminated, the College of Engineering has diversified its curriculum and focused on preparing students to enter the fields of computer technology and bioengineering. As research is a primary focus of the graduate programs in the College of Engineering, several of the graduate students over the years have transitioned from teaching assistant positions into research jobs with other postsecondary organizations or into research jobs for government organizations.

**Prestige:** At the end of the last academic year, of the 807 doctorates awarded by UX, 50 of those doctorates were awarded to graduates from the College of Engineering. The faculty members have won many awards, including some from the National Science Foundation.
College of Engineering students have a long history of participating in national competitions and performing well. Because of the ongoing research projects in this college, the UX College of Engineering has established many global connections with international universities, and the graduate program attracts a lot of international students.

Legitimacy: Even after the automotive industry sharply declined and threatened the viability of the College of Engineering, because the administration effectively adapted and developed biomedical and bioengineering programs that closely partner with the School of Medicine, the College of Engineering averted a crisis and made a strong case to maintain its legitimacy. The entry into the biomedical, bioengineering, and alternative energy fields has revitalized the research efforts of the faculty and research is at its highest level in the history of the college. Recently several faculty secured grants to work on military funding projects for the army and the navy, so the involvement with federal government agencies firmly roots the legitimacy of the college.

**College of Education**

Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations: The College of Education has lax admissions standards for undergraduate graduate students in comparison to the other schools and colleges within UX. For its graduate programs, there is only a requirement of an undergraduate GPA of 2.5. Most graduate programs throughout UX require an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 for admission into a graduate program. The College of Education also has lax standards regarding continued academic progress to maintain enrollment. Students who are not performing well academically in this college normally leave the university because their financial aid funding has been terminated, not because they were academically dismissed.
Number and Type of Employees: There are 90 full-time faculty and 3,279 students (1,547 full-time and 1,732 part-time) in the College of Education. The class sizes are large, even at the graduate level. Despite the large student enrollment, the administration is very lean. The administration is made up of the dean, one associate dean, four assistant deans, one director, and one associate director. Over the years, the College of Education has gone through many interim deans, some of whom have served in an interim capacity for as long as three years.

Kinds of Dedicated Facilities: The College of Education building was built in 1961 and there are currently no plans to renovate the facility. Interestingly, it was designed by the same architect who designed the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

Sources and Degree of Funding: The primary source of funding is due to tuition revenue, although there are a few faculty members who are dedicated to research and have secured several grants and sponsorships. While many of the grants are for small amounts of less than $50,000, they did receive a $3 million grant from the National Science Foundation that extends through 2012.

Location of Program within the Organization: With more part-time students than full-time students, the College of Education offers evening, weekend, and online courses for both undergraduates and graduates. The Ph.D. and Ed.D. program are designed to cater to students who work full-time in the K-12 school system, so the classes are held during evenings and offered online. In terms of place, the Education building is older and in need of renovations.

Output: Students who graduate from the College of Education tend to remain in the state to work in the K-12 school systems. A greater percentage of students are going on to work in the charter schools as opposed to the public schools in the state today, because there are more job
openings in the charter schools. Students who graduate with a Ph.D. or Ed.D. mostly remain the state and take positions as administrators in the K-12 schools.

**Prestige:** The College of Education awarded 46 doctoral degrees in 2011-2012, which is more than the School of Nursing or the School of Business. Admission is not very competitive, though, so this lower its prestige in comparison to the other schools and colleges within UX. Teaching is also viewed as a semi-profession around the university, and is not deemed as prestigious as being a doctor or a researcher.

**Legitimacy:** Because the university values graduate education, the College of Education remains legitimate because it awards twice as many graduate degrees and certificates every year as it does undergraduate and does emphasis the advanced degree. In addition, in 2010, 20 faculty from the College of Education published articles and 11 faculty presented at professional conferences. There is also some research being done in the College of Education.

**College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts**

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:** The College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts (CFPCA) has the least strict academic requirements for admission of any of the colleges and schools in UX. Rather, admission is granted primarily on talent in an area of the arts, and the evaluation of talent is extremely subjective. In terms of scholarships that are awarded to students, CFPCA has its own set of rules of determining which students will keep a scholarship if their grades plummet, and again the decisions are made on a subjective evaluation of talent.

**Number and Type of Employees:** There are 101 full-time faculty and 2,454 students (1523 full-time and 931 part-time). Underclassmen do not receive a lot of individualized
attention even in the classes that are dedicated to developing their artistic skill. Because the
departments within CFPCA are so specialized, there are a lot of administrators. In addition to the
dean, there are two associate deans, an assistant dean, five department chairs, one director and
one manager. There have been three interim deans over the years, serving for one year periods.

Kinds of Dedicated Facilities: The buildings where the classes take place are older and
could use renovating, but no funds have been allocated to do so. There are two theatres for the
theatre students, and the graduate theatre is nicer than the undergraduate theatre. Like all the
schools and colleges within UX, it is the graduate studies that are valued.

Sources and Degree of Funding: The source of funding is primarily from tuition, although
CFPCA has received some very generous donations over the years. There are several endowed
professorships and chairs within CFPCA. They do fund raising campaigns, but recently these
have been overshadowed by the larger university-wide campaigns.

Location of Program within the Organization: With so many part-time students, classes
are offered in both day and evening. In terms of place, the classes take place in older buildings
on campus.

Output: Graduation rates from CFPCA are mediocre. The job openings in the art fields
are extremely limited, so very few graduates go on to work in a field that is related directly to
their major. They will take retail, office, and customer service jobs that require a bachelor’s
degree. A lot of the graduates will join their community theatre programs, but will never work
professionally in the arts.

Prestige: CFPCA has several notable alumni which include a Pulitzer prizewinning
journalist, recipients and nominees for the Grammy, Emmy, Tony, Golden Globe, Obie, Screen
Actors Guild, and Caldescott awards.
**Legitimacy:** The main factor in CFPCA maintaining its legitimacy is that it perceived to contribute to the cultural activities of the urban community in which UX is located. It is considered to play a vital role in enlivening the city and bringing a spotlight to the social activities that are available in the community.

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is a relatively new college within UX. Up until 2004, the College of Science and the College of Liberal Arts existed as two separate colleges in UX. In 2004, they merged into one college.

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:** CLAS is the largest of any of the school and colleges in UX. There are a clear set of by-laws that govern the actions of the administration and faculty of CLAS in matters of promotion, tenure, assembly, merit pay, the structure of the faculty council, and the administrative make-up and reporting lines of departments. The faculty of CLAS has no control over the admission selection of undergraduate students, since that function is handled by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. The admission standards for undergraduates into CLAS are not nearly as strict as they are for the College of Pharmacy or even for the College of Engineering.

**Number and Type of Employees:** There are 415 full-time faculty in CLAS and a total of 12,298 students (8,225 full-time and 4,073 part-time). There are more adjunct faculty employed in CLAS than in any other college or school within UX. There is a large administration, which consists of one dean, four associate deans, 19 department chairs, and one director. In the history of CLAS, there have been no interim deans. However, in the history of the College of Science there were two interim deans and in the history of the College of Liberal Arts there were six
interim deans. In both cases, while no interim served more than a two year period, the College of Liberal Arts had various interim deans for a five year period (1981 – 1986).

**Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:** Because there are so many academic departments within CLAS, it has more dedicated facility space than any other college of school within UX. Many of the buildings are older and in need of renovation, but because resources are limited, priority is being given to renovation the science facilities first. Currently there is a $43 million renovation and expansion project underway on the chemistry building that will include adding an additional 9,500 square feet to the building and involves the reconstruction of 96,000 square feet of laboratory space.

**Sources and Degree of Funding:** Almost half of the students who attend UX are enrolled in CLAS, so this college generates significant resources from tuition. On average, a full-time undergraduate student in CLAS pays $8,200 a year in tuition. With just over 8,000 full-time students, this results in more than $65 million a year in tuition from just the full-time students. There are another 4,000 part-time students in CLAS, which amounts to additional tuition revenue. In addition, the faculty secure on average just over $20 million in external grants and contracts for research.

**Location of the Program within the Organization:** There are 20 academic departments in CLAS. In terms of time, there are day and evening classes, so there is a lot of flexibility afforded to the students, which is necessary because almost one-third of the students in CLAS attend on a part-time basis. Many of the part-time students work either part-time or full-time and need flexibility in course offerings. This puts many of the full-time faculty in the position of teaching evening classes, during time periods that are not always preferred. In terms of place, the science departments have the best facilities, because this is where the funding has been allocated for
renovations. In comparison to the College of Engineering or the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, overall the facilities of CLAS are not nearly as nice.

Output: The majority of undergraduate students who graduate from CLAS with a bachelor’s degree will not enter into high profile, high paying jobs. The bachelor’s degree from a liberal arts college just does not carry the weight to propel a student into those types of fields. Rather, students leave and are prepared to take jobs in retail or service industries throughout the state. A fair number of these students will be on track to reenter postsecondary education as graduate students at some point, and by continuing their graduate education will earn the credential that will help them secure a job in middle-management someday. A very small percentage of them will finish graduate school, usually in a physical or life science field, and become faculty members or researchers at postsecondary organizations.

Prestige: Within CLAS, there are several nationally ranked departments by the National Science Foundation and National Research Council. Nearly half of the Ph.D.s awarded at UX are awarded to students who graduate from CLAS. There are nine distinguished professors who are employed in CLAS.

Legitimacy: The fact that the enrollment of undergraduate students in CLAS brings in more than $81 million in tuition revenue legitimizes the existence of this college. Because the graduate programs in the physical and life sciences are so strong, they help secure UX’s stature as a research university under the Carnegie classification. Even though undergraduate education is not highly valued at UX, and the administration would prefer to sink all of its resources into graduate and professional education, the widely accepted concept of a research university’s structure includes undergraduate education, so to be considered a legitimate university UX maintains its undergraduate programs.
College of Library and Information Sciences

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:** The College of Library and Information Sciences (CLIS) restricts admission to graduate students, and no exceptions are made to this rule. That being said, the admission criteria for graduate students are not strict and most people who apply will be accepted. To remain in good academic standing in the program, though, students must demonstrate a technical proficiency, and if they cannot keep up with the technological demands, then the faculty will dismiss them.

**Number and Type of Employees:** There are only 13 full-time faculty, so it is the smallest number of faculty employed by any college or school within UX. There are 541 students (140 full-time and 401 part-time). There have been one different interim deans over a two year period, so for the most part there has been stable leadership.

**Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:** There are seven university libraries. Four of the libraries are designated as professional/graduate libraries (for medicine, law, science and engineering, and urban affairs). There are two general libraries and one extension center library. Overall, the libraries take up 8% of the space on campus. The undergraduate library was just built in 1997 and it was extremely controversial. The eighth president of UX felt that an undergraduate library would be an important addition to the university facilities, but a significant portion of the university community disagreed and did not want to allocate the funding, because undergraduate education is not valued.

**Sources and Degree of Funding:** The source of funding for CLIS is mainly from tuition. There is not research taking place through CLIS and faculty are not bringing in grant funds.

**Location of Program within the Organization:** There are far more part-time students in CLIS than there are full-time students, so classes take place during the evening and are also
offered online. The majority of the classes take place the rooms of one of the general libraries, which is an older facility and does not have the best lighting. It does, however, have adequate computer equipment which is essential for the program.

**Output:** Library jobs are becoming extremely scarce. Many students graduate with the CLIS degree but will never work in the field of library science, because in the age of the internet, the field is becoming obsolete. They will gain employment in other fields that are not related to their degree in any way.

**Prestige:** CLIS is only one of 14 schools in the country to offer a masters degree in library and information science fully online, so it is a testament to the fact that the faculty have embraced the use of technology. Surprisingly, because of the limited job opportunities in the field, it is still one of the largest graduate programs at UX. It is ranked as a top 20 program by the U.S. World and News Report.

**Legitimacy:** The library system consists of an undergraduate library, professional libraries, and has a library on its extension campus, so the library system is extensive. The makeup of the system also mimics that of UX’s peer research institutions in the state. Legitimacy is measured by the number of books (3,665,628), graphics (2,217,384), audiovisual (136,579), and microforms (3,898,391) in the library. The holdings are extensive, which makes the system legitimate.

**College of Nursing**

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:** Nursing students have clinical coursework in a hospital setting, for which they must interact with patients under the supervision of their instructors. Because they course of study involves direct contact with patients, admission
into the program is contingent upon the students passing a background check. There are also long wait-lists for the program, so this has allowed the faculty to strengthen the admission requirements for students. While admission is not as competitive as it is for the School of Medicine or the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, the standards are higher regular admission into the College of Liberal Arts. The College of Nursing also does not admit freshmen. Students are not admitted to this college until they have completed all of their general education requirements with satisfactory grades, and the faculty does not make exceptions.

**Number and Type of Employees:** There are 68 full-time faculty in the College of Nursing and a total of 658 students (339 full-time and 319 part-time). The administration is lean, with just two associate deans, three assistant deans, and one director to provide support for the dean. Only about half of the full-time faculty members are on the tenure track. Within the School of Nursing, practical work experience is valued over research, which is contradictory to the values of the university.

**Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:** The building in which the classes take place for the College of Nursing is quite old. It was built in 1958-1959, and at this time, there are no funds allocated for renovations.

**Sources and Degree of Funding:** The main source of revenue for the College of Nursing is from the tuition of its students. The College of Nursing faculty is not involved in a lot of research. They were recently awarded a two-year, $900,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to be used to create a state-wide area health education center program that will improve access to and quality of health care for the state’s residences. It is currently the only major research initiative taking place.
Location of Program within the Organization: In terms of time, almost half of the students enrolled in the College of Nursing attend on a part-time basis, so there are a significant number of classes that are offered in the evening hours. In terms of place, the students in the nursing program have their classes scheduled in older facilities. The program has established strong times with prominent area hospitals, though, through which the student complete their clinical rotations.

Output: The College of Nursing graduates students who remain in the state to work in hospitals. It is common for students who graduate form the College of Nursing to return to UX or go to another college or university in the state to teach part-time as clinical nursing instructors, once they have achieved enough years of experience working in the field.

Prestige: Even though the College of Nursing offers a Ph.D. program, only seven students were granted doctoral degrees last year. This is a very low number in comparison to the other college and schools within UX. The recruiters for the university do promote the program as being internationally recognized and has recently increased efforts to recruit international students to raise its profile. It is ranked in the top 10% of nursing programs in the nation and 96% of the nursing students who graduate pass the NCLEX_RN exam on the first try.

Legitimacy: Due to the nursing shortage in the nation, the College of Nursing serves a need in the state by graduating students who will remain in the state and work in the local hospitals. The nursing school faculty head up a community health services program to provide services to the underprivileged, and their involvement with the community is valued by UX, because it supports the overall urban mission of the university, and it is valued by the community, as well. Even though enrollment is minimal, the College of Nursing does offer a doctoral program, so it maintains its right to exist within a research university.
**Honors College**

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:** The rules of entry into the Honors College state that a student must be invited to join, and to be invited an incoming student must apply for admission to UX by a certain date, have a minimum GPA of 3.5, and have a minimum ACT score of 21. These criteria are loose, though, because incoming students who were not invited to join the Honors College frequently petition for exceptions and the dean is liberal in granting their appeals. In addition, the Honors College used to be restricted to incoming freshmen. This year, the dean agreed to open the Honors College to incoming transfer students, as well, to increase enrollment, so the policies have been relaxed. Students who are enrolled in the Honors College also receive a scholarship from UX and to maintain the scholarship, they must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.3, complete 24 credit hours each academic year, and participate in community service. The Honors College has been extremely liberal in allowing students who do not meet these criteria to keep their scholarships and nobody monitors their community service activity, so the rules are not enforced.

**Number and Type of Employees:** The Honors College is small with only 352 students enrolled. There are 32 full-time faculty members who teach honors courses. Most honors courses have no more than 12 students in a section, although a lecture may have up to as many as 25. These are significantly smaller course sizes than other undergraduate classes. In order to teach at the honors college, the faculty member must be a full-time employee with the university who is appointed to teach an honors course. The administration of the Honors College is very small. There is a dean, but no associate or assistant deans. Instead, there is a director, an associate director, two coordinators, a senior communications officer, a program manager, and a project
assistant. As the Honors College is still new (it was founded in 2008), there have been no interim deans to date.

**Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:** The Honors College classes take place in the same buildings across campus as the other undergraduate classes. The office space for the administrators is located in the undergraduate library, so there is no designated building just for the Honors College. It has to share space with other entities throughout campus.

**Sources and Degree of Funding:** The source of funding for the Honors College is in the form of tuition revenue. With just undergraduate students, there are no major research projects taking place.

**Location of Program within the Organization:** In terms of time, because the Honors College only enrolls undergraduate students and the Honors students are supposed to enroll on a full-time basis, the classes take place during the daytime. There are no evening or weekend courses. In terms of place, the Honors College “borrows” space in buildings that belong to the other schools and colleges within UX to hold classes, since it does not have a building of its own.

**Output:** The students who are moved through the Honors College are expected to go on to graduate studies once they finish their undergraduate degree. The goal of the Honors College is direct students into one of four fields: medicine, science, business, and engineering. They have four programs that students can follow while in the Honors College that will prime them for admission to graduate school in one of those four fields.

**Prestige:** The Honors College enrolls the most academically talented undergraduate students in the university and has high graduation rates. That is important because the overall undergraduate graduation rates for UX are low in comparison to its peer institutions. The Honors students are required to complete a research project and an undergraduate thesis as part of their
curriculum, and the Honors College has even designated up to $2300 in funding for each student to carry out his or her research. Since students must be invited to join, the Honors College is considered selective and elite, and most of the classes students take are restricted to Honors students so it segregates students from the general undergraduate population.

**Legitimacy:** The Honors College is largely symbolic because it is such a small percentage of the student population and the rules of admission and maintaining scholarship are monitored loosely. However, it has good graduation rates and is successful in moving students onto graduate studies, which is the goal of a research university with its undergraduate population. The Honors College is a marketing tool for the university that draws a lot of attention and attracts undergraduates to apply for admission, and because the peer research universities in the state have honors colleges, it puts UX in line with its peer institutions.

**School of Business Administration**

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:** The admission requirements are flexible in that if a student has a very high GPA, but lower standardized test scores, or vice versa, the student may still be granted admission. Potential graduate students are required to take the GMAT, though, which strengths the admission criteria. In terms of the requirements for faculty to enter the tenure track, there is an expectation that a faculty member will write articles for journals or chapters for books, but there school is more lax on requiring pure research in comparison to other schools or colleges within UX.

**Number and Type of Employees:** There are 61 full-time faculty in the School of Business and 3,234 students (1,505 full-time and 1,729 part-time). There are a lot of large lecture halls used to accommodate the number of students enrolled. It is a larger administration, with the
Kinds of Dedicated Facilities: Since the facilities are older, the School of Business has started a long-term $500 million building campaign fund in order to renovate its facilities. At this time, neither UX nor the state have come forward with any contribution of funds for this campaign. The School of Business is reaching out to its alumni and has started a public relations campaign to promote this cause.

Sources and Degree of Funding: While the primary source of funding for the School of Business comes from the tuition revenue, the school has been very successful in fund-raising campaigns over the years. It also has several endowments which are significant enough to have allowed the School of Business to name several endowed positions.

Location of Program with the Organization: In terms of time, the graduate classes are offered in the evening. The School of Business caters to the working student for its master degree programs. Undergraduate classes are held during day and evening, because there is a significant number of undergraduate students who attend on a part-time basis, as well. The School of Business relies heavily on the use of adjunct faculty, many of whom are still working professionals, who teach the evening classes. In terms of place, while the building is older, it is located in a prime spot on UX’s main campus, which is easy to locate and is not far from a parking structure, which is important for students who attend classes during the evening hours.

Output: Since 1946, there have been more than 30,000 students who have graduated from the School of Business. Upwards of 90% of those students remain in the state to work after graduating. For students who leave UX with an undergraduate degree in business, they have been
positions to start entry level management jobs in retail and service organizations, or to take entry level positions as accountants with organizations. For students who earn a graduate degree, they are prepared for upper level management positions. A far number who have specialized in accounting or finance go on to take the CPA exam and either open their own firms, or join a respectable firm upon earning the credential.

**Prestige:** There are four endowed positions for professors and department chairs within the School of Business, which is very prestigious. The minimum endowment for a named professorship at UX is $750,000 and for a named chair, is $1.5 million. One of the associate professors is also the editor of a respected business journal.

**Legitimacy:** The School of Business just started its first doctoral program a few years ago. The program is still so new that it has not yet had its first graduating class. The School of Business has primarily been dedicated to training students to become practitioners in the business field, and is well respected by the community because of its core. However, at a research university, lacking a doctoral program jeopardized the school’s legitimacy, so it was pressured to develop a Ph.D. program. To recruit full-time students, the school offers fellowships and teaching assistantships so that students will be able to afford to dedicate themselves full-time to their studies and not work while they are enrolled.

**School of Law**

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules and Regulations:** The School of Law has somewhat strict admission criteria. Approximately 40% of applications are admitted each year, so it is competitive, but not nearly as competitive as the School of Medicine. After the first year of study, students must obtain an upperclass writing certification before the administration will allow the student to progress too upper level classes. It is the only school or college at UX that
enforces such a requirement. In addition, students are required to pass a Professional Skills Requirement curriculum, which provides substantial instruction on professional skills beyond legal reading, writing, and analysis. It’s the only school or college within UX that has implemented such a policy. Students who are not able to pass the writing certification or the Professional Skills Requirement curriculum are dismissed from the school. The American Bar Association dictates strict rules and regulations for the school to maintain accreditation.

**Number and Type of Employees:** While the School of Law is one of the smaller schools and colleges at UX in terms of enrollment, with only 555 students (473 full-time and 89 part-time), there are a lot of administrative positions in the school. The dean is supported by one associate dean, three assistant deans, nine directors, and one manager. There are 49 full-time faculty. There are also 46 part-time faculty who are practicing lawyers, judges, and retired lawyers. In its history, the School of Law has had four interim deans, and no interim dean has ever served longer than a one year period.

**Kinds of Dedicated Facilities:** On UX’s main campus, the School of Law is one of the prettiest and best maintained facilities. The conference rooms are furnished with high quality furniture, because the School of Law has so many high profile visitors. The conference room areas also have restricted access and are not available to the wider campus community. The School of Law has a mock courtroom, which is a prized facility among law students and faculty. The School of Law is nearing the end of a $5.7 million funding raising campaign to complete construction on a center for civil rights. The building for the center of civil rights will be 10,000 square feet and will feature exhibit space, conference space, meeting space, and a 60 person lecture hall.
Sources and Degree of Funding: The School of Law has received more than $2.5 million in endowments for the center of civil rights that is under construction. The School of Law recently had a donor step forward and offer a $200,000 matching contribution to any person or organization that donates funds to the center of civil rights project. In addition, the School of Law has had some generous donors over the years, some of whom have donated as much as $3 million lump sums to the school. Tuition and fees for in-state students is just over $29,000 per year. Tuition and fees for out-of-state students is just over $31,000 per year.

Location of Program within the Organization: In terms of time, the majority of the students attending the School of Law are full-time students and they are not permitted to work while they are enrolled. All full-time students attend classes during the day. There is part-time enrollment track for students, and all part-time students must take classes during the evening hours. In terms of place, the law school facilities are well-maintained, well furnished, and significant resources have been allocated over the years to preserve the quality of the facilities.

Output: The School of Law has very high graduation rates and excellent passage rates for graduates on the bar exam. This past year, UX School of Law graduates had a 91% first-time passage rate on the bar exam, which is 9% higher than the statewide average of 82%. UX School of Law graduates primary remain in the state after graduation to practice. Many go on to become elected judges in the state. In 2011, there were 27 elected judges in the state who are UX School of Law graduates.

Prestige: The School of Law has its own magazine, which is a publication that provides an avenue for highlighting the career attainments of alumni who have become judges or have taken positions with high profile law firms. The School of Law also has a very strong alumni association. The alumni association is very active and has its own board. Law school students at
UX are very active in participating in national competitions and they consistently rank high in their performance. The School of Law is ranked as a top 100 law school in the nation. Faculty members are consistently quoted in the paper or appear on the news to provide expert opinion on breaking stories. The School of Law is successful in recruiting faculty members who have earned degrees from top-tier law schools, such as Harvard, Yale, and Duke.

**Legitimacy:** The School of Law is a professional school within UX, which contributes to UX’s right to maintain its standing as a top-tier research university. The School of Law sponsors several clinics that are run by faculty and for which students volunteer their time, and these law clinics provide free legal aid to low-income clients in the community who would otherwise not be able to afford legal help. This is directly in line with UX’s mission to support the urban community. While the field of law is incredibly competitive, because UX is located so close to many major law firms and government agencies, UX students have ample opportunities for internships and to remain in-state for employment opportunities after graduation. UX also has a strong reputation for its graduates securing salaries that justify the cost of law school in the long term.

**School of Social Work**

**Strength of Policy, Law, Rules, and Regulations:** The admission policies for the School of Social Work are not strict for undergraduate or graduate students. The majority of students who apply for admission are accepted. They can have low GPAs and test scores and still be admitted, because this program is not viewed as research intensive. There is one accelerated master degree program that does not allow students to work, but if a student finds he or she is
unable to meet the demands of that intensive curriculum, the student may easily switch to the part-time program the next semester without completing any paperwork. In terms of maintaining good academic standing, there is less emphasis on the grades earned in the classroom as there is on the student’s field work performance.

Number and Type of Employees: The faculty in the School of Social Work is very small. There are only 22 full-time faculty for 829 students (618 full-time and 211 part-time). In addition to the dean, there is one associate dean, five directors, and two associate directors. The School of Social Work had a three year period with an interim dean, and the person who served as an interim was later appointed as the permanent dean.

Kinds of Dedicated Facilities: The School of Social Work building is actually an old house that was built in the late 1800’s and renovated by UX in the 1980’s. It represents an historic piece of architecture in the city and is very unique in comparison to the dedicated facilities for the other schools and colleges within UX.

Sources and Degree of Funding: The majority of the funding for the School of Social Work comes from tuition and fee revenue. There is not a lot of research that takes place in the School of Social Work. Most recently they received a $475,000 grant from the National Institute of Justice, but grant funds like this are not secured very often.

Location of Program within the Organization: Many of the graduate students enroll on a part-time basis, so there are many evening classes to accommodate their schedules. In terms of place, the building is an historic building that was renovated twenty years ago. The classrooms are small, but nice. The fieldwork requirements of the program take place throughout the city in which UX is located, and students are exposed to some extremely depressed areas of the city.
Output: The School of Social Work is dedicated to producing graduates who will stay in the state and become licensed social workers. These individuals will go on to work for state agencies, the public school system, and hospitals throughout the state.

Prestige: The School of Social Work has been rated as the number one undergraduate social work program in the nation for the past eight years by some of the polls that rank college and university programs. In comparison to other colleges and schools within UX, though, it does not rank as high in prestige because social work is viewed as a semi-profession in comparison to medicine and law, and the faculty in the School of Social Work produces very little research.

Legitimacy: The students who graduate from the School of Social Work do not have difficulty finding jobs, so the need for the output that is produced is legitimate. Because the School of Social Work is part of a research university, it does offer a Ph.D. program. However, only one student earned a Ph.D. in 2011-2012, so the fact that it is offered is really based on the fact that it is pressured to offer this program to be accepted as a legitimate school within the research university, rather than the program being needed.
Appendix B: UX Organizational Charts

(Organizational charts available from the UX Human Resources division)

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
December 2012
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH SCIENCES

December 2012

Dean

Associate Dean
Health Sciences

Interim Chair
Health Care Sciences

Chair
Fundamental and Applied Sciences
and
Director of Anatomic Pathologists' Assistant

Director
Nurse Anesthesia

Director
Occupational Therapy

Chair
Clinical Lab Science

Chair
Radiation Therapy Technology

Director
Radiologic Technology

Assistant to the Dean

Co-Chair
Board of Visitors

Chair
Board of Visitors

Associate Dean
Pharmacy Practice

Chair
Pharmacy Research

Chair
Pharmaceutical Sciences

Associate Dean
Pharmacy

Assistant Dean
Student and Alumni Affairs

Director
Information Office

Director
Development Office