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This study explores how metaphors deployed in university mission statements demonstrate the sensemaking process of organizational reality. One hundred thirty-two mission statements collected across the University of North Carolina system comprise the textual source of analysis for this study. Austin and Searle's speech act theory is employed to intertextually identify metaphors, which are then analyzed in line with Weick's framework of sensemaking.

The elements of the sensemaking process are evidenced in hierarchical metaphors: (i) environment-screening: "environment as change (organizations as positioned, time-pacer, and wind-catcher);" (ii) enactment: "enactment as changer (the university as a plate of loose sand, professional, and mission-setter);" (iii) selection: "organization as relevance-maker (the university as teacher, researcher, server, strategist, and goal-hitter);" (iv) retention: "organization as retainer (the university as value-keeper and role-player (center, community, leader, and leader-preparer);" and (v) remembering: "organization as rememberer (the university as history-defender and principle-observer)." Together, they comprise metaphors we make sense by. By vividly framing forms, such metaphors enrich our knowledge about the organizational reality, the mission statements, the association of teaching, research and service, the relationship between the sensemaking elements, and the heuristic and ongoing nature of sensemaking.

EVIDENCING SENSEMAKING: A SPEECH ACT THEORY  
STUDY OF METAPHORS IN ORGANIZATIONAL  
MISSION STATEMENTS

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem .....	1
Purpose.....	6
Significance.....	8
Research Questions.....	9
Structure of the Study.....	10
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	12
Sensemaking Studies: An Overview.....	12
Making Sense of Sensemaking.....	13
Sensemaking as Process.....	15
Sensemaking Elements as Metaphors.....	23
Approaches for Understanding Sensemaking.....	26
Metaphors for the University.....	30
Sensemaking and Mission Statements.....	34
Need for a Metaphor Understanding of Sensemaking in Mission Statements.....	38
Restatement of Research Questions.....	42
III. METHODS OF STUDY.....	45
SAT.....	45
Metaphor: An SAT-based Definition.....	49
Hypotheses.....	52
Research Setting.....	54
Data Collection.....	56
Data Analysis.....	57
Limitations and Quality Checks.....	59
Ethical Considerations.....	61

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	63
How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Environment-Screening?” Metaphors We Screen by....	63
How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Enactment?” Metaphors We Enact by.....	72
How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Selection?” Metaphors We Select by... ..	82
How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Retention?” Metaphors We Retain by.... ..	93
How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Remembering?” Metaphors We Remember by.... ..	109
Summary.....	120
V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	123
Findings.....	123
Implications.....	128
Limitations.....	133
Future Research.....	135
REFERENCES.....	139
APPENDIX A. THE UNIVERSITY SETTING: UNC AND ITS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS .....	153
APPENDIX B. MISSION STATEMENTS. ....	163
APPENDIX C. WORD FREQUENCY COUNTING TOOLS .....	175
APPENDIX D. MISSION STATEMENTS‘ WORD FREQUENCY.....	177
APPENDIX E. MISSION STATEMENTS: THEMES AND METAPHORS OF SENSEMAKING.....	186

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Keywords and Phrases in Mission Statements.....	38
Table 2. Data Treatment Protocol.....	57
Table 3. Spreadsheet of Collected Data.....	57
Table 4. Metaphors We Screen Environment by: Metaphor-comprising Words.....	71
Table 5. Metaphors We Enact by: Metaphor-comprising Words.....	81
Table 6. Metaphors We Select by: Metaphor-comprising Words.....	92
Table 7. Metaphors We Retain by: Metaphor-comprising Words.....	108
Table 8. Metaphors We Remember by: Metaphor-comprising Words.....	120
Table 9. Metaphors We Make Sense by: Metaphor-comprising Words in Organizational Mission Statements.....	121

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Sensemaking Process.....	23
Figure 2: Inter-element Semantic Relations.....	27



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

They are everywhere. They are everywhere.  
(Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p.1)

#### Problem

Mission statement, sensemaking, and metaphor all play a role in organizational behavior research. Unfortunately, they have been but separately documented in the past. With scanty attempts of interface-making analyses of the three, we are often faced with the gap in the literature and scenario of challenge in practice.

*Mission statement.* Morphew and Taylor assert that:

Ostensibly, mission statements are sacred artifacts for colleges. Virtually every higher-education institution has gone through a well-considered process to produce a mission statement describing its distinct qualities and values, with the assumption that those documents will be the official and exclusive means of communicating organizational identity. Extraordinary amounts of time and resources are expended toward the construction of these documents. Working committees are convened and reconvened, drafts are considered and reconsidered, and word choices are painstakingly debated. Hundreds of hours are put into wordsmithing these formal descriptions of organizational purpose. (Morphew & Taylor, 2009, p.2)

In the case with the University of North Carolina (UNC), the oldest public university in the United States, mission statements are identified with each of the seventeen member institutions of the university system. In addition, due to external environmental changes or internal restructuring, such mission statements also undergo a process of collective

writing and rewriting. Take its constituent institution UNC Greensboro (UNCG) for example. When the university's mission statement was created after a lengthy process, it was yet subject to three more steps of action: first it had to be "approved by Chancellor Sullivan, August 4, 2003," then it went through another "following review by the Executive Staff," and eventually it was "endorsed by the Board of Trustees, August 28, 2003." Shortly after the much labored mission statement was approved, the university instituted a newer version of its mission statement, partially due to the installment of Chancellor Linda Brady and Provost David Perrin, and partially due to its need for another five-year plan and its response to the State's shrinking budget. Before the new mission statement was "included as a part of the UNCG Strategic Plan 2009-2014" and "approved by the UNC Board of Governors on November 13, 2009," it had gone through numerous rounds of collective discussions by a Mission Statement Review Subcommittee composed of eleven members. At the core of its mission, the Subcommittee was not only "responsible for preparing a draft of revised mission statements as part of the UNCT (University of North Carolina Tomorrow, a system-wide strategic planning initiative) Phase II response," but also had to "continue to work until final versions of a vision and mission have been completed and endorsed by the UNCG community."

This reality illustrates how much attention a university pays to its mission statement, as evidenced by the extensive research in academe over the past decades. In retrospect, relevant studies have investigated the importance of mission statements (Pearce, 1982; Brown, 1984; Pearce & David, 1987; Weick, 1995; Hartley, 2002; Hartley, 2003; Morphew & Hartley, 2006), their content (Cochran & David, 1986; Pearce & David,

1987; Knauft, Berger, & Gray, 1991; Campbell & Nash, 1992; Rarick & Vitton, 1995; Ginter, Swayne, & Duncan, 1998; Bart 1999; Boone, 1992; Forehand, 2000; Cotton et al., 2001; Ayers, 2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2007), their formulation process (Peeke, 1994), their perceptions (Putnam, 1983; Weick, 1995; Contractor, Eisenberg, & Monge, 1999), and their value as research data (Ayers, 2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2007).

Scholars have noticed that mission statements are as old as human history (Abrahams, 1995), yet they are still enthusiastically embraced by organizations (Ledford, Wendenhof, & Strahley, 1995; Bart, 2000) and will likely “continue to be widely used” in the days to come (Whitbred, 2009, p.1). This, in part, provides some hints as to why 80% of American higher education institutions have published a mission statement (Morphew & Hartley, 2006) with some even publishing multiple versions of it at the same time (Morphew, 2002). It also explains why “vast resources continue to be dedicated to developing mission statements, and facilitating this process has become a recognized specialty in consulting” (Whitbred, 2009, p.2).

Additionally, scholars agree that mission statements stand for “the purpose, strategy, values, and behavioral standards of an organization” (Whitbred, 2009, p.3). The purpose of a mission statement “reveals an organization’s product or service, markets, customers, and philosophy...it is the starting point for the design of managerial jobs and structures” (Pearce & David, 1987, p.109). The strategy of a mission statement “defines the fundamental, unique purpose that sets a business apart from other firms of its type and defines the scope of the business’s operations in product and market terms” (Pearce & David, 1987, p.109). The values of a mission statement represent the aims, purpose, or

reason for being (Harrison, 1987) and answers the question “why are we here” (Fairhurst, Jordan, & Neuwirth, 1997). Finally the behavioral standards of a mission statement “coordinate activities and decision making by motivating employees to behave consistently with the directives in the statement” (Whitbred, 2009, p.1).

Nevertheless, one protruding problem behind the rich studies on mission statements is that most research has overlooked the significance of sensemaking as the framework and metaphor as the focus. This is problematic because, without the former, mission statement studies suffer from a lack of clarity, while an absence of the latter detracts from our understanding of mission statements.

*Sensemaking.* For current discussion’s sake, sensemaking is understood as a semiosis or a function of language for assigning meaning to signs, objects and events. Over the recent past, sensemaking has grown in interest in academe. While research dates to the disseminating works of Weick’s (such as Weick, 1969) in the 1960s, related studies in sensemaking have flourished in the subsequent decades with Weick leading the way. Weick expounds the concept of five fundamental elements of sensemaking: environment-screening, enactment, selection, retention, and remembering (Weick, 1969; 1979; 1995).

Nevertheless, relevant efforts have mainly explored the operation of sensemaking organizational behavior and have documented the usefulness of figures of speech in the comprehension of sensemaking (Weick, 1969; 1979; 1995), but no study has yet inquired how the sensemaking process is realized in figures of speech, a direction initiated by Weick in order to understand how figures of speech help to account for it. As a result, we know very little about the role that metaphors play in sensemaking. For the current

purpose of discussion, metaphors refer to “tropes in which one thing is spoken of as if it were some other things” (Steinhart & Kittay, 1998, p. 576). This is unfortunate, because given the complex nature of sensemaking and the process to create it, analyses of figurative language may be very promising for comprehending the theory and its application. Additionally, few studies have focused on mission statements with a thorough knowledge of sensemaking. Again, this is unfortunate, given the importance of mission statements (Morphew & Taylor, 2006).

*Metaphor.* “Metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices, and spiritual awareness” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.193). Organizations have never found themselves resorting so much to metaphors as they are doing in the New Millennium (Liu, 2005). A great deal of literature has documented the reliance by institutions of higher education on metaphors. This is seen in a recent project, which used a corpus-based approach to outline the status-quo of studies on metaphors for the university, in which 31997 links of higher educational metaphors were found with the help of the MutiSearch engine (Liu, 2007a). Whereas most studies have endeavored to showcase newly proposed metaphors in higher education (Baptiste, 2001; Newton, 2004; Sullivan, 2000; Terrill, 2000), limited attempts have been made to address metaphors in relation to sensemaking and organizing processes. In this regard, we still know very little about the explanatory power of the sensemaking process (Whitbred, 2009; Whitbred & Gumm, 2009), particularly the role of metaphors in mission statements in relation to sensemaking (Weick, 1979).

In fact, knowledge limitations regarding sensemaking and organizational processes fall roughly into two categories. One has to do with organizational behavioral study, while the other pertains to linguistics. On the one hand, ongoing endeavors of metaphorical studies are constantly reported in two parallel disciplines with each involving itself in the exploration of some relational aspects of metaphors. On the other hand, neither was aware of the other and thus has not made use of its approaches, tools, and findings. One flaw stemming from this situation is that linguists have failed in analyzing metaphors with mission statements from the point of view of sensemaking. They have also failed to inform researchers if their results about sensemaking and mission statements from a linguistic analysis of metaphors, while researchers of the latter have failed to use and thus to benefit from the framework of linguistics that could shed insights on metaphors. The potential hazard is evident: the linguistic claims about metaphors may be short-circuited if they are applied to organizational metaphors, while organizational metaphors themselves may lose basic rules of form and function.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how metaphors deployed in university mission statements demonstrate Weick's (1969; 1979; 1995) sensemaking process of organizational reality: environment-screening, enactment, selection, retention, and remembering. The objective is important because it helps us to visualize both the complex organizing process and the sensemaking process of the organizing process in vividly selected figurative terms, which, in return, facilitate our next round of sensemaking of organization.

As such, it adopts a pragmalinguistic stance of sensemaking understanding, one that was advocated and experimented in earlier sensemaking literature (Weick, 1969; 1995) and some re-surfing research in the field (Ayers, 2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2007). Pragmalinguistics generally refers to a dynamic discussion of contextual meaning in discursive texts. Accordingly, mission statements of various levels of the university administration (Weick, 1979; Bess & Dee, 2008) comprise the data for analysis. By mission statements of various levels of the university, it refers to mission statements across universities and within them. Both mission statements across and within universities are scrutinized with the intent of supplementing previous studies that merely focus on mission statements of institutional types. In other words, sensemaking is the focus of study, whereas mission statements, an artifact of organizing (Morphew & Taylor, 2006), are the object of study.

The researcher is cognizant of the fact that in practice mission statements have both internal use, such as strategic planning, and external use, such as image or identity building (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997), marketing (Pearce & David, 1987; Bess & Dee, 2008), and employee recruiting (Bryce, 2002). Furthermore, mission statements assume various versions (Morphew & Taylor, 2006) instituted either at the same time or over time. However, it is the interest of this researcher to focus on the use of mission statements across and within universities at a single time period. In other words, this is a synchronic study of mission statements and sensemaking via analyzing metaphors therein.

In all, one hundred and thirty-two mission statements have been collected across the University of North Carolina public university system and serve as the textual sources of

this study. Metaphors are intertextually (Kristeva, 1980) identified following the roadmap of Austin-Searle's (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; 1975; 1979) Speech Act Theory (SAT), and then analyzed in terms of Weick's (1995) framework of sensemaking.

### Significance

By studying the metaphorical manifestations of sensemaking, this study differs from previous efforts in that it centers on sensemaking comprehension via the analysis of metaphors in organizational mission statements. In other words, it is a single study that blends sensemaking theory with organizational mission statements, interfaced by the metaphor focal point of interest. As such, it targets three audiences: those who work with sensemaking comprehension and application will find this study useful for metaphor-illustrations of the sensemaking process and future applications in the organizing process; those who excel at mission statement study will benefit from the sensemaking perspective into mission statements for discussing the hidden aspects of sensemaking process; and those who profess a metaphorical analysis of language use will find the mission statement data a novel terrain to explore. Thus this study seeks to blend the theoretical and practical.

Theoretically, it helps assess metaphorical processes of the mission statements in terms of rubrics and the use elements of the sensemaking to assess them. It also spells out the intricate sensemaking process in neat and vivid language. Ultimately, the goal is to see how organizations make sense of their realities, and facilitate our understanding of this future sensemaking.

On the practical side, this study helps to make sense of two kinds of organizing behaviors in reality: the motivations of renewing or updating mission statements; and the



ability to discern one mission statement over the other. In other words, this study seeks to inform how organizational mission statements function toward sensemaking and why most colleges and universities adopt and renew their mission statements. Hence, exploring metaphors of sensemaking deepens our understanding about mission statements.

### Research Questions

With the understanding that sensemaking consists of several factors or elements (Weick, 1969; 1979) that operate as a process of several phases (Weick, 1995; 2001; 2009), it is of paramount interest to the researcher to probe into the extent of how the sensemaking process plays its role in mission statements, particularly how metaphors in mission statements manifest sensemaking or makes sense the organizational realities. Accordingly, this study enquires into the following five research questions which correspond with metaphorical realizations of the sensemaking process:

1) How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “environment-screening?”

2) How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “enactment?”

3) How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “selection?”

4) How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “retention?” and

5) How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “remembering?”

### Structure of the Study

The dissertation is comprised of five chapters. Chapter I, “Introduction,” serves as the prelude to the work. It introduces the research problem, describes its purpose and the significance of the study, and presents the research questions, and ends with a discussion of the structure of the study.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature. Therein, while meticulous effort is made in synthesizing the related studies on the various aspects of the sensemaking process, focus is retained for a discussion on the deficiencies of sensemaking in mission statements and the need for a metaphorical understanding of sensemaking in organizational mission statements.

Chapter III portrays the research methods utilized for the study and addresses the appropriateness of such methods in garnering data for addressing the above stated research questions. It begins with an explanation of the Speech Act Theory (SAT) (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; 1975; 1979) and proceeds to an elaboration of implications for sensemaking and metaphor comprehension, their relevancy for data collection and analysis in this sensemaking study, and how data will be collected and analyzed.

Chapter IV, “Results and Discussions,” reports the results of the study and discusses them in terms of metaphor occurrences in the studied mission statements and their relationship to sensemaking types and distributions.

Chapter V, “Findings and Conclusions,” completes the work by summarizing the

research findings and discussions pertaining to the implications of the conclusions as well as its limitations, and topics for further study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Life is neither meaningful nor meaningless. Meaning and its absence are given to life by language and imagination. We are linguistic beings who inhabit a reality in which it makes sense to make sense. (Batchelor, 1997, p.39)

#### Sensemaking Studies: An Overview

A central feature of the current organizational study is the ascendancy of sensemaking, whose origin can be traced back to the late 1960s and early 1970s in Karl Earl Weick's disseminating works on organizational behaviors. In those works, he and his associates try to make sense of organizations from the laboratory setting (Weick & Penner, 1966; Weick, 1967a; 1969a; 1969b; Weick & Gilfillan, 1971). Quoting Kaplan (1964) who argues that "the experimental situation is not to be contrasted with 'real life' but at most only with everyday life" (p.169), Weick maintains that experiments are of an artificial nature, while laboratory contexts are oversimplified (Weick, 1967a). As a result, Weick (1967a) considers "experimenters as artisans" (p.20).

Weick (1979) systematically elaborates on his sensemaking perspective of organization in *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, where he begins by considering organizing as the emergence of "majority rules" (pp.12-24) and resumes the discussion by introducing "the concept of collective structure" (pp.90-97). In addition, major concepts of sensemaking, such as "natural selection" (pp.119-146; pp.171-204),

“enactment” (pp.147-170), and “retention” (pp.205-232), are described. However, Weick’s theory of sensemaking does not culminate until 1995 when he published *Sensemaking in Organizations*, a book-length explicit treatment of sensemaking. Emphasizing the cognitive nature of sensemaking, Weick eventually published two volumes on sensemaking: *Making Sense of the Organization* (Weick, 2001a) and *Making Sense of the Organization: The Impermanent Organization* (Weick, 2009).

In the wake of Weick’s sensemaking conceptualization, numerous discussions emerge. Some important recent works on sensemaking include: Balogun and Johnson (2005), Blatt, Christianson, Sutcliffe, and Rosenthal (2006), Dervin, Foreman-Wernet, and Lauterbach (2003), Fiss and Hirsch (2005), Klein, Moon, and Hoffman (2006a, 2006b), Maitlis (2005), Mills and Weatherbee (2006), and Rouleau (2005).

The objective of this chapter is to review the relevant literature, identify the gaps, and justify this study. While meticulous effort is made in synthesizing the related studies on the concept of sensemaking and the various aspects or stages of the sensemaking process, the focus is on the application of the theory in the study of mission statements and its deficiencies as well as the need for a metaphorical understanding of sensemaking of organizational mission statements.

### Making Sense of Sensemaking

The term, sensemaking, refers to justifications we make about the improvisation of the changing reality (such as situations, conversational topics, and policy) in which organizations with loosely coupled relationships and irrevocable public choices dwell. The key words are “improvised justifications,” “changing reality,” “organizations,” and

“irrevocable public choices,” because sensemaking is about assigning meanings or values to changes and our reaction to such changes in our lives in convincing ways or terms. Again, the key phrases here are “assigning meanings and values,” and “by organizations as a whole.” The implied or hidden concept here is in the word “convincing.” But how should a mission statement be structured so as to be “convincing” then? Some general hints are given in the words “ways or terms.” Here “ways” may refer to our imagination, to echo with Batchelor (1997), or by our relevance, to concur with Weick (1967; 1979); and “terms” refer to language, because “we are linguistic beings” (Batchelor, 1997, p.39).

In essence, sensemaking is about how we make sense out of our experience about things and events or signs and symbols that stand for objects and events. While the former is usefully envisaged as socio-psychological, the latter connotes the philosophical linguistic, semantic and pragmatic, to be more exact.

Sensemaking does not make sense by itself; it is people who make sense of sensemaking. As such, Weick clearly indicates this in the modified name of his recent works such as *Making Sense of the Organization* (Weick, 2001a; 2009), instead of a something more obscure, like *Sensemaking in Organizations* (Weick, 1995). And given the definition, in Chapter I, of sensemaking as semiosis or a function of language, it is the organization’s members or constituents who make sense out of signs or assign meanings to symbols. These signs or symbols are linguistic tokens, representations of happenings, including organizational mission statements. Simply put, mission statements are texts which state the purpose and goals of organizations. As Weick (2009) succinctly argues,

“Organizational sensemaking is first and foremost about the question: How does something come to be an event for organizational members” (p.133).

Weick further characterizes sensemaking as being able to determine actions and purposes:

Second, sensemaking is about the question: What does an event mean? In the context of everyday life, when people confront something unintelligible and ask “what’s the story here?” their question has the force of bringing an event into existence. When people then ask “now what should I do?” this added question has the force of bringing meaning into existence, meaning what they hope is stable enough for them to act into the future, continue to act, and to have the sense that they remain in touch with the continuing flow of experience. (Weick, 2009, p.133)

Hence in this study, sensemaking also means how a university administration’s mission statement makes sense to its unit administrations, or conversely, how unit administrators make sense of their purpose within the organization. Ultimately, the magnitude of sensemaking is huge, for the relevance and application of sensemaking extends far beyond higher education mission statements. As Batchelor (1997) powerfully points out, “Life is neither meaningful nor meaningless” (p.39), to which Weick adds, “Whether in organizations or not, people still have to come to grips with sensemaking” (Weick, 2001a, p.1). Taken together both statements provide a theoretical grounding of sensemaking particularly in this study of sensemaking of mission statements.

#### Sensemaking as Process

Sensemaking does not occur overnight, nor does it happen once and for all. Rather it undergoes a process of serial, though not necessarily linear cognitive stages during which

several factors are in presence. In other words, sensemaking is a process, as Figure 1 below displays.

In the course of his theorization, Weick (1979; 1995) first clearly articulates the existence of such a process, then identifies and expounds the operation of the process over two decades. Useful understanding of the sensemaking process may evolve from discussions of interdependence, interlocked behaviors, natural selection, enactment, and retention in Weick's earlier works (for instance, Weick, 1979), to more salient elaborations on the kinship of such concepts with other related concepts or variables, such as enacting a sensible environment, focusing on extracted cues, social, retrospective, ongoing, driven by plausibility, or grounded in identity enhancement, as in Weick's later works (Weick, 1995). Most recently, the sensemaking process is conceived and consolidated as a cognitive effort that consists of five components: ecological change, enactment, selection, retention, and remembering (Weick, 2001a; 2009).

In spite of the fact that scholars are not in agreement as to how many stages the sensemaking process actually goes through, it seems that Weick's (2001a; 2009) five components are mentioned in most scholarly works and hence serve as a theoretical framework for this study.

*Ecological change.* Mentioned as discontinuities (Steinbeck, 1941), differences (Bateson, 1972), or variations (Slack, 1955) in Weick's earlier discussions, such as Weick (1979), ecological change refers to surprises, interruptions, and discrepancies in everyday occurrences that are "mainstays of organizational experience" (Weick, 2001a, p.97). Identifying such ecological changes "intensifies the activity of sensemaking"



(Weick, 2001a, p.99), or causes organizations to respond, or to act on. Nevertheless, sensemaking theorists, mainly Weick, cautions against conceiving such ecological changes as external stimuli, for the two words connote different things. As Weick puts:

It is misleading to call these events “external” because they are a mixture of imposed models, fixed properties, and malleable properties modified by intrusive actions. It is also misleading to call them “stimuli” because prior actions frequently shape the appearance of ecological changes which means that they are just as much responses as they are stimuli. To treat these changes instead as interruptions, surprises, or discrepancies is to encourage closer attention to ongoing activities, projects, and surprises. (Weick, 2001a, p.99)

To Weick (1979), ecological change is vital because it serves to “provide the enactable environment, the raw materials for sensemaking” (p.130). Additionally, “ecological changes normally would be said to be the source of raw materials, except that past experience in the form of previously enacted environments often provides sufficient materials by itself for sensemaking” (Weick, 1979, p.130). Unfortunately, “this portion of the organizing process is dubbed ecological change to capture the fact that people normally are not aware of things that run smoothly. It is only the occasion of change when attention becomes active” (Weick, 1979, p.130).

Recent studies have continued addressing the impact on sensemaking of ecological change, such as “disaster on collapse of sensemaking” (Weick, 2001a, p.124), “air disaster and vulnerable system” (Weick, 2001a, pp.125-147), or “sensemaking in new technologies” (Weick, 2001a, pp.148-175).

Based on the above perceptions, ecological change is treated as a catalyst in sensemaking and sensemakers always begin the sensemaking process by screening such

changes in the environment. For that matter, terms such as environment-screening or scenario-snapshot are interchangeably employed in this study to denote or capture the initial step of the sensemaking process.

*Enactment.* This concept means learning about the organization by asking questions and observing (Whitbred, 2009) or interacting with people (Putnam, 1983; Weick, 1995).

In Weick's views,

Enactment is intimately bound up with ecological change. When differences occur in the stream of experience, the actor may take some action to isolate those changes for closer attention. That action of bracketing is one form of enactment. The other form occurs when the actor does something that produces an ecological change, which change then constrains what he does next, which in turn produces a further ecological change, and so on. (Weick, 1979, p.130)

As an example, Weick describes, "I move items on my desk, which then makes it necessary for me to readjust my writing position, which further rearranges the items in my working area, which then further rearranges me" (p.130). That is why Weick says, "Whenever organizations act – the university gave tenure, the government negotiated, the bakery searched its memory, the orchestra enacted chaos – people act" (p.34).

In function, "the activity of enactment parallels variation because it produces strange displays that are often unlike anything that the individual or the organization has seen before" (Weick, 1979, p.130). Furthermore, enactment assumes various forms such as interpretation, embellishment, variation, and improvisation (Weick, 2001a), that all "vary in their reliance on scripts, and are also all activities associated with labeling retrospectively whatever actions and artifacts are noticed" (Weick, 2001a, p.237). Here mission statements are a form of artifact (Morphew & Taylor, 2006). As such,

sensemaking has a pragmatic quality since “actions tend to be embedded in projects and sense seems to follow the contours of ongoing projects” (Weick, 2001a, p.176). Seen in this respect, “sensemaking is about continuation, journeys rather than destinations, and normalizing” (Weick, 2001, p.176); it is a “boundless career” (Weick, 2001a, p.207). To Weick, crisis situations are extreme and forceful cases that display enacted sensemaking (Weick, 2001a).

*Selection.* Organizations select what to do and what not to do at a certain time and place. Nevertheless, selection is not simple. In order to determine what to do and what not to do, organizations face a series of decision makings. As Weick observes,

Selection involves the imposition of various structures on enacted equivocal displays in an attempt to reduce their equivocality. These imposed structures are often in the form of cause maps that contain interconnected variables, these maps being built up out of past experience. When these maps, which have proven sensible on previous occasions, are superimposed on current puzzling displays, they may provide a reasonable interpretation of what had occurred or they may confuse things even more. These maps are like templates that reveal configurations that may make sense or may not. (Weick, 1979, p.131)

Weick further asserts:

Rather than select individuals or behaviors, selection processes involve in organizing select schemes of interpretation and specific interpretations. They select schemes of interpretation in the sense that some cause maps repeatedly prove helpful in reducing the equivocality of displays, whereas other maps add to the equivocality. Those maps that are helpful tend to be selected, and those that are not helpful tend to be eliminated. In addition, the specific interpretations of the precise equivocal displays are also selected and are retained for possible imposition on future situations that look the same. (Weick, 1979, p.131)

That “organizations are vast, fragmented, and multidimensional” (Weick, 2001a, p.142) dictate the nature of selection in sensemaking. Accordingly, recent studies on selection stress the variable nature of sensemaking such as arguing that organizations are interpretive systems (Daft & Weick, 1984; 2001), and that there is a need for developing a “collective mind in organizations” (Weick, 2001a, p.138) and for envisaging “improvisation as a mindset” (Weick, 2001a, p.284). Likewise, it is necessary to develop a collective mind in organizations, for only “when individuals have an ongoing concern with contributing to, representing, and subordinating to an emerging social system will they produce interpretations with sufficient commonality to allow for coordinated sensemaking” ( Weick, 2001a, p.238). Weick resumes:

These interpretations are based not so much on shared mental models as they are on equivalent mental models. Even though the models differ, their focus on the common means of contributing, representing, and subordinating as the way to get work done is sufficient to grasp complex environments that none of the actors individually could comprehend. Each system member has a part of the picture. Depending on the heedfulness of their ties, these equivalent models form a whole and the system acts as if it knows more than any of its members can say. (Weick, 2001a, p.238)

In addition, it is necessary to develop an improvisational mindset because organization sensemaking is like a jazz performance, in which “from the outset of each performance, improvisers enter an artificial world of time in which reactions to the unfolding events of their tales must be immediate” (Weick, 2001a, p.285). Furthermore, the consequences of their actions are irreversible. As a result, improvisation is limited to degrees of accuracy (Weick, 2001a).

*Retention.* This notion refers to “a storage of the products of successful sensemaking” (Weick, 1979, p.131). The “products” refer to an enacted environment or cause map, which is “a punctuated and connected summary of a previously equivocal display” (Weick, 1979, p.131), or “a sensible version of what the equivocality was about, though other versions could have been constructed” (Weick, 1979, p.131). Though slightly different, an enacted environment refers to “a meaningful environment or output of an enactment process” (Weick, 1979, p.131) and a cause map stands for the “organized feature of the stored content” (Weick, 1979, p.132). In other words, retention stands for the “organizational memory” (Weick, 2001a, p.305) of “meanings of enactment, selected for their fit with previous interpretations” (Weick, 2001a, p.305). As a further footnote to retention, organizational culture and organizational strategies are important sources of retention (Weick, 2001a). In terms of this study, a concrete retention example is a previous version of organizational mission statements that, once modified or renewed, function or chart ways to success.

*Remembering.* Basically, this idea means both an ability to recall what has happened and to use what has occurred for making or avoiding new situations. The meaning of recalling is understood as:

I am grown old and my memory is not as active as it used to be. When I was younger I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not; but my faculties are decaying now and soon I shall be so I cannot remember any but the things that never happened. It is sad to go to pieces like this, but we all have to do it. (Mark Twain, n.d.)

The implied meaning of the term is clear in Weick’s (2001a) remark that

Retained knowledge is certainly not worthless. Events usually don't change that much, that fast. Therein lies the tension. Retained knowledge is partly a useful guide to the future and partly a misleading guide (p.356).

As such, the implication of remembering is far larger than we can realize. As Weick (2001a) puts it, "for effective sensemaking, people need to both believe and doubt what they know" (p.356). For that matter, it is vital to value remembering, for "it is not true that the past is an enemy of the future, since some guidance is necessary for a line of action to get started" (Weick, 2001a, p.357). A good example of illustration is the jazz musician's improvisation that is guided by an embellished melody (Weick, 2001a).

Nevertheless, Weick continues:

What is noteworthy in continuous sensemaking is that guidance from the past needs to be mixed with alertness to the nonroutine in the present. Flexible use of retained knowledge occurs when previous meanings are treated as binding either on selection (I use interpretations that have worked before) or enactment (I act in ways that have worked before), but not on both. (Weick, 2001a, p.357)

In this regard, wisdom, such as beliefs, values, knowledge, information, and attitude toward wisdom such as resisting them through a balance between knowing and doubt (Meacham, 1983; 1990; Weick, 2001a), and working management practices for loosely-coupled elements within organizations (Weick, 2001a) can be strong evidence of remembering.

To sum up, the relationship between the above five elements or components of the sensemaking process are illustrated as follows:

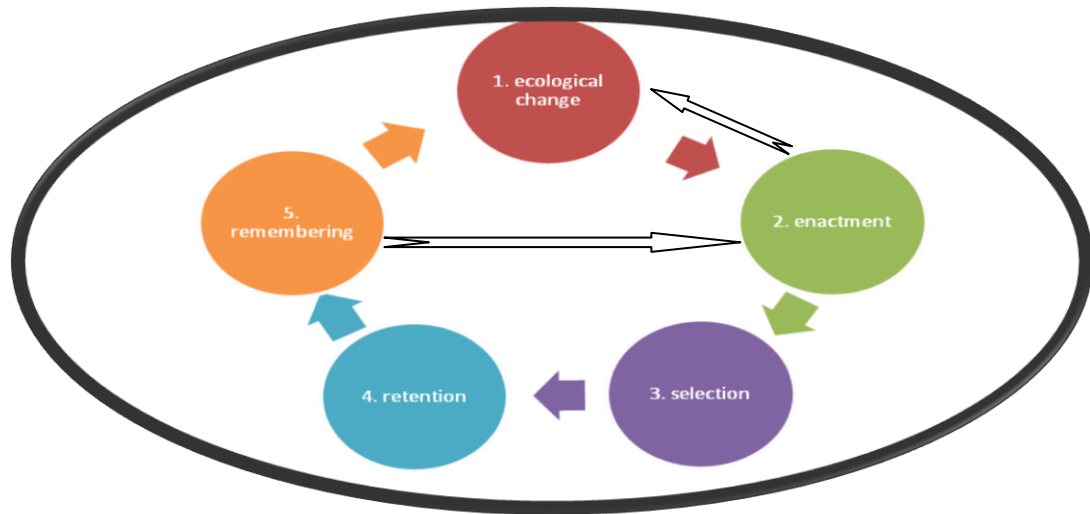


Figure 1: Sensemaking Process  
(Adapted from Figure 5.1 in Weick (1979, p.132))

Sensemaking is observed in terms of seven generic properties: enactive of sensible environments, focused on and by extracted cues, social, retrospective, driven by plausibility rather accuracy, grounded in identity construction, and ongoing (Whitbred, 2009). To Weick (1995), strategic plans, of which mission statements are an inclusive part, are typical examples illustrating the sensemaking process. According to Weick (1995),

Strategic plans are a lot like maps. They animate and orient people. Once people begin to act (enactment), they generate tangible outcomes (cues) in some context (social), and this helps them discover (retrospect) what is occurring (ongoing), what need to be explained (plausibility), and what should be done next (identity enhancement) (p.55).

#### Sensemaking Elements as Metaphors

In Weick's framework, the five sensemaking factors are essential labels of concepts

or definitions describing, or categorizing sensemaking details associated with each concrete phase of the entire sensemaking process. As such, they are metaphors.

*Environment as metaphor.* According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, originally, the word “environment” referred to a “fact or action of being set or setting” (late 14<sup>th</sup> century), “what surrounds us” or “state of being environed” (around 1600), then was used to metaphorically denote a “figurative sense of surrounding influence, mental or mental environment” (1797), “sense of ‘nature, conditions in which a person or thing lives’” (1827, used by Carlyle to render German *Umgebung*), and “background, history, environment” (1841). Its synonyms include setting, eco, and atmosphere (www.etymonline.com).

*Screen as metaphor.* The *Online Etymology Dictionary* (www.etymonline.com/) records that originally the word “screen” meant “a cover against heat” (early 14<sup>th</sup> century), then was gradually used to denote “barrier,” “protection” or “net-wire frame in windows and doors” (1895), and “flat horizontal surface for reception of projected images” (1810), first in reference to magic lantern shows and later of movies. Later, it acquired the transferred sense of “cinema world collectively” (1914) in examples such as “screenplay” (1916), “screen test” (1922), and “screenwriter” (1921). Both figurative meanings “to shield from punishment or to conceal” and “to examine systematically for suitability” were respectively recorded in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and in 1943. It is interesting to notice that in Chinese “to examine” may mean both *shencha* (审查, check) and *zhenxuan* (甄选, select). Hence in the sensemaking process, at the stage of environment-screening,



organization already involves selection, though this latter phase is often set off in analysis for focused understandings of factors relevant to it.

*Enactment as metaphor.* Again according to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, “enactment” is a morphological derivation of the early 15<sup>th</sup> century verb “to enact.” As such, the word acquired its nominal form in 1817, meaning “to make” documents, “to institute” regulations, or “to put in” new lines or “add articles” to existing stipulations, as a response to environmental changes ([www.etymonline.com/](http://www.etymonline.com/)).

*Selection as metaphor.* The *Online Etymology Dictionary* ([www.etymonline.com/](http://www.etymonline.com/)) also lists that, at first, the verb “to select” means “to choose out,” based on the Latin *se-* “apart” and *legere* “to gather” (1560s). However, the metaphorical meaning was attached to the word as a noun, meaning “selection” around 1600 to denote “a selected person or thing.” The biological sense of the word is rooted in 1937, though the meaning “applied to actions of breeders” was extended by Darwin in 1857. It was an important addition since “selection” helps us associate with its implied meaning of necessary adaptation for survival purposes. Note that the current use of the word is often related to the human resource department that is responsible for personnel recruitment on behalf of an organization. The basic idea is that, given the current conditions or environment, an organization tends to select, from among its pool of applicants, those who most qualify. Hence, selection denotes the process of selecting the most appropriate candidates and solutions (<http://dict.youdao.com/>).

*Retention as metaphor.* Around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the word was borrowed from the Latin *retinere* into English via the Old French, *retenir*, meaning “retaining, holding back”

(from re-“back,” and renere “to hold”). Around the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century (1540s onward), the word grew in popularity among lawyers to mean “keep (another) attached to one's person, keep in service.” The meaning was also recorded in its derivational form “retainer,” meaning “fee paid to an attorney to secure services” (mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), or “act of keeping for oneself” (www.etymonline.com). It merits attention to the meaning “to keep in service” or “servant” (1540). What is of relevance to our understanding of “retention” in this study is the question: “what do we ‘keep in service’” and “in what service do we keep it.” Additionally, the word carries vital implications: retention as a sensemaking phase does not only mean “keeping” and “valuing,” but also implies “blocking off that that do not go along with the currents;” organizations tend to retain those aspects of past or habitual practices that are vital and valuable to the currents.

*Remembering as metaphor.* The word “remembering” dates back to around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, to the Latin *rememorari* via the Old French *rememberer*, meaning “recall to mind, remember,” since re- means “again,” and *memorari* which means “be mindful of.” Later, the meaning was extended metaphorically to denote “acts of remembering,” “ability of remembering,” and the “habit of remembering” in the 1580s (www.etymonline.com). All such meanings suggest metaphorical uses of the words characterizing the sensemaking process.

### Approaches for Understanding Sensemaking

Central to sensemaking and its process is the question, “How do we understand that we make sense?” To use Weick’s words, “How can I know what I think until I see what I say” (Weick, 2001a, p.95)? The implication is “I’ll believe it when I see it” or “I’ll see it

when I believe it” (Weick, 1979, pp.134-135). Correspondingly, Weick’s question can be modified to indicate collective sensemaking: “How can we know what we think until we see what we say?” In either case, the semantic nexus between various elements of the question can be diagrammed as below:

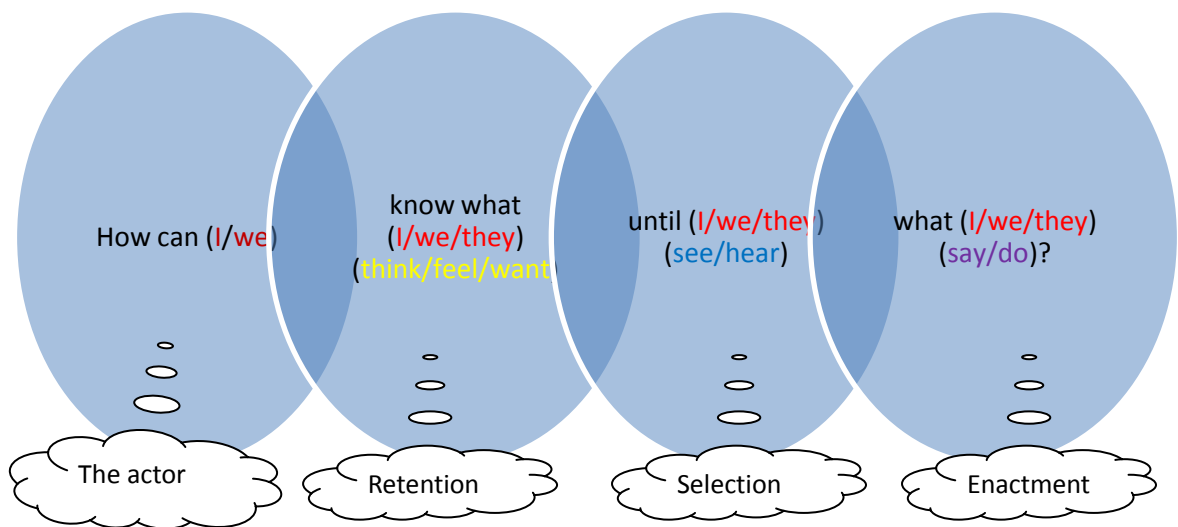


Figure 2: Inter-element Semantic Relations

(Adapted from Figure 5.4 in Weick (1979, p.134))

In *Making Sense of the Organization*, Weick explains:

“How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” That phrase has haunted me most of my professional life. This entire book could be read as a gloss on where that phrase has taken me. And the insertion of plural pronouns into that phrase shows the close ties between organizing and sensemaking: How can we know what we think (or want or feel) until we see what we say (or do). The phrase can be read as a recipe for organizing or as a recipe for sensemaking. Read as a recipe for organizing, we could say that when something unexpected occurs and there is an ecological change, people often enact something, select portions of the enactment to take seriously, and retain some meaning of what they enacted. Subsequently, they may then apply or alter what they retain in their next

enactments and selections. Read as a recipe for sensemaking, we could say that when people in an ongoing social setting experience an interruption, they often enact something, retrospectively notice meaningful cues in what they previously enacted, interpret and retain meaningful versions of what the cues mean for their individual and collective identity, and apply or alter these plausible meanings in subsequent enactment and retrospective noticing. (Weick, 2001a, p.95)

In practice, sensemakers make sense by either describing or explaining or both. And their approaches in so doing are roughly fivefold: organizational, eventual, artifactual, discursive, and linguistic.

*Organizational.* This approach makes sense of an organization by describing the nature of the organization as dissonance (Weick, 1964; 1965; 1967b; Weick, Penner, & Fitch, 1966), loosely coupling (Weick & Penner, 1966; Weick, 1976; 1982; 1986; Weick & Orton, 1990), discrepancy (Weick & Prestholdt, 1968; Weick & Penner, 1969), change (Weick & Quinn, 1999), impermanence (Weick, 2009), explaining organizing as improvisation (Weick, 1989b; 1998a), seeking relevance (Weick, 1989c; 2001b), making better decisions (Weick & Klein, 2000), and stressing the importance of being mindful (Weick, 1999; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006), resorting to the collective mind and synergy (Karlene & Weick, 1993; Weick & Roberts, 2001; Wolfe, Weick, Usher, Terborg, Poppo, Murrell, Dukerich, Core, Dickson, & Jourdan, 2005) and knowledge and wisdom (Weick, 1998b; Weick & Putnam, 2006).

*Eventual.* This approach processes raw data, such as organizational occurrences or events, in making sense of the organization. It affirms the role of social context (Weick, 1996a) as a reference point for sensemaking. Of cardinal importance are events such as the breaking out of disasters (Weick, 1993; Weick & Orton, 1990), the advent of new

technologies (Weick, 1995; 2009), et cetera, and organizational reaction such as renewal (Weick, 1996b) to such events.

*Artifactual.* Artifact, which is also spelt as artefact until 1821, refers to “anything made by human art” (www.etymonline.com) of which organizational signs, symbols, brand names and products are examples (Bess & Dee, 2008). According to this definition, mission statements are an essential form of an artifact (<http://www.advanc-ed.org>). This explains why mission statements are the object of this study. On the other hand, the artifactual approach of sensemaking values the understanding of the role and content of artifacts, and how various organizational levels or loose elements negotiate meaning that are embedded in such artifacts. This is why the present study enquires into the sensemaking of various levels of the administration in mission statements.

*Discursive.* Discursive analysts see organizational sensemaking differently. Rather than seeing sensemaking in the way an organization is structured or in the events that interact with an organization, discursive theorists envisage meanings being made in the actual discourse conducted in an organization’s everyday life, and hence they approach leadership speeches, organizational strategic plans, policies, documents, and interviews as broadly defined discursive data for approaching the patterns of meanings. Typical discursive analyses of sensemaking aim at identifying themes or content of discourse. An example is Ayer’s (2002) effort in using discursive data for understanding mission renewal in a southeastern community college.

*Linguistic.* Very close to, and perhaps a more concrete form of, the discursive approach is the linguistic approach of organizational sensemaking. By linguistic, it refers

to both a structural and functional focus in understanding the sensemaking of organizations and their organizing actions in terms of emerging patterns of forms and themes, as are laden in organizational artifacts and discourse. Initial attempts are found in Weick (1967a; 1978; 1979; 1989a), Weick and Bougon (1986), Fay (1990), and Monmonier (1991), to mention a few. The approach adopted in this study is basically pragmalinguistic, one that vastly embraces in the sensemaking of contextual speech, of which mission statements are one example, as we shall see below.

### Metaphors for the University

As a concrete linguistic approach to comprehend the organizing process of the university, metaphors are created to make sense of the organizational realities and frame perceptions about the purpose and direction that a university needs to take in order to actualize its goals and objectives. Among them are a series of large metaphors for the university that have emerged and been warmly embraced in the field over the past few years: “university as city of intellect and hinge of history” (Kerr, 2001), “university as town” (Thelin, 2004), “university as church / family / business / political community / academy” (Sullivan, 2000), “university leadership as upward bound” (Useem, Useem, & Asel, 2003), “university as mentoring” (Enerson, 2001), “university leadership as jazz improvisation” (Newton, 2004), “university as educator of lone wolves” (Baptiste, 2001), just to mention some.

For Clark Kerr, one of the greatest thinkers in the history of American higher education (Lovett, 2004; Orlans, 2002), and a master of metaphors for the university (Draper, 1965), the university, especially America’s research university, is a “city of

intellect and hinge of history.” It is a “city of intellect” (Kerr, 1963) in the sense that it is “a very busy place with a multiplicity of activities, many of them unrelated to one another” (Kerr, 2001, p.198). Looking at the loosely lumped colleges and universities, he maintains that “universities in America are at a hinge of history: while connected with their past, they are swinging in another direction” (Kerr, 2001, p.xi). He further reiterates that “now we have entered the twenty-first century, and once again I see universities in America at a hinge of history. This time, however, I see the hinge flapping in the winds blowing from many directions—no zephyrs, alas” (Kerr, 2001, p.vii), but such winds are like “some of the challenges that lie ahead, which dwarf, in their complexity, anything we faced in 1963” (Kerr, 2001, p.x). In his university as a “city of intellect” frame, the liberal arts college within the university structure, composed of friends and colleagues, serve as a “village,” while the schools of agriculture, law, and medicine are “town,” since they “stand alone or together in polytechnic with a single-minded devotion to one profession or industry” (Kerr, 2001, p.198).

As a historian of American higher education, who is well acquainted with Kerr’s metaphors, Thelin (2004) refers to the postmodern university as a town. Inspired by Kerr’s (2001, p.200) city metaphor and the “megacampus” analogy of the university, Thelin expounds the notion of an expanding campus by noting:

The prototypical American campus of the twenty-first century, whether a college or university, was a formidable organization in its local and state community. Often a college was the largest employer in what was, of course, a ‘college town’. This presence even extended to major cities: Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Brown University in Providence, Harvard in Cambridge-Boston, the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Indiana University in Bloomington, Northwestern University in Evanston, and so on. (2004, p.358)

In *Catholic Schools in Contention: Competing Metaphors and Leadership Implications*, a book-length of treatment of metaphors for the university, John Sullivan (2000) meticulously employs five metaphors that expound the value-laden images of postmodern higher education institutions, namely the university as family, business, political community, and academy, which he justifies in Chapter 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of his book. In the initiative, Sullivan tries to help leaders “to make sense of the conflicting demands upon them and to offer a resource that aids them in the task of acting wisely” (Sullivan, 2000, p.xiii). Highly praising Sullivan’s efforts, Smith (2002) says in his review article that the metaphors created in Sullivan’s book are cleverly rooted in the overall values, instead of the curriculum, pedagogy, or ideology. His focus is to assist teachers in leadership roles to envisage, with concrete examples from the campus environment, such values that are “shaping the school and the need to navigate competing values in the contemporary context” (Smith, 2002, p.80).

In their co-edited book, *Upward Bound*, Useem, Useem, and Asel (2003) created nine original metaphors in their attempt to help make sense of leadership roles in various campus settings: the university as hard rocks (Robbins, 2003), classroom as rock climbing (Collins, 2003), quest for balanced excellence as ridge walking (Asel, 2003), leadership and teamwork as mountain climbing (Birnbaum, 2003), key leadership as highest peaks performance (Jordan, 2003), to cite only a few.

Enerson (2001) relates the widely used concept of mentoring to its etymology, alluding it to the name of a friend of Odysseus. Mentor was known far and wide as a witty and resourceful person, to whom Odysseus entrusted his son Telemachus, in the



hope that Mentor would counsel and guide his son to become a successful -albeit useful- man in society. To a large degree, from Enerson's viewpoint, in today's role of the university there is the need to fulfill the same role in society by helping to enhance the growth of young minds. According to Enerson, it is exactly because of such social expectations that an augmenting interest has emerged in mentoring over the decades, as has been documented in recent publications found in the *Higher Education Abstracts*, and in two volumes of the *New Directions in Teaching and Learning* series. In addition, to reflect the width and depth of mentoring activities, the idea of the mentor has been attached to new parts of speech, to form both nouns and verbs (Enerson, 2001, p.7).

Newton (2004) first observed a vivid description of jazz improvisation in Terrill (2000) who asserts that "The idea behind jazz is to just close your eyes and have at it, play whatever comes to mind. In order to have anything worthwhile come to mind, you have to listen and listen and listen, and in order to be able to play at least some of what comes to mind, you have to practice patterns and riffs and licks over these chored changes" (Newton, 2004, p.117). On this basis, Newton observes: "The ability to improvise has often been viewed as a semi-intuitive set of skills, that result from an innate gift or talent that allows the improvisers and jazz aficionados alike" (Newton, 2004, p.83). Subsequently, he concludes that university leadership has a great association with jazz improvisation, because it can serve as a model for use in leadership development, which incorporates concepts such as leadership patterns, theory, leading by ear, and risk taking.

In an article entitled, "Educating the lone wolves: Pedagogical implications of

human capital theory,” Baptiste (2001) demonstrates the importance of a proper interpretation and contextual use of theory. He first summarizes the Human Capital Theory, then cites some of its uses in economics, and, finally, provides an interpretative use in higher education. In so doing, Baptiste metaphorizes the term, “lone wolf,” to address the student and relates the idea to its social setting that requires relevant inputs of knowledge and skills from the individual “lone wolf” in order to help him fit in well with the university; hence he helps to point out the weaknesses and issues to be considered when applying the Human Capital Theory in higher education. Such metaphors may serve as checking posts or points of comparisons for our analysis of sensemaking metaphors based on mission statements.

#### Sensemaking and Mission Statements

Sensemaking is both a promising concept “that can broaden the micro side of macro topics and offset the current dominance of macro perspectives in organizational analysis” (O’Reilly, 1991, p.449; cited in Weick, 2001a, p.8) and a perspective or “a frame of mind about frames of mind that is best treated as a set of heuristics rather than as an algorithm” (Weick, 1995, p. xii). As such, sensemaking carries four major implications for the understanding of organizational mission statement.

The sensemaking process can be a framework applied to make sense of diverse aspects of organizations and their artifacts. Here the term, artifact, refers to “anything made by human art” ([www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)), of which mission statements are essential (<http://www.advanc-ed.org>).

From a sensemaking perspective, organizational mission statements stand for a link between cognition and action (Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993; cited in Whitbred, 2009). As Thomas and Thomas' (1928) classic idea states: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." In the same vein, Whitbred (2009) asserts that, "if organizational members perceive the mission of their organization as real, the consequences for the organization and the member will be real as well" (p.3). The idea of organizational members references both individuals and various levels of organizational administration, though this study focuses on the administrative collective as a whole, rather than its individuals. Such a cognition-action link insinuates that leadership today is either defined as a process of influence (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2007; Bess & Dee, 2008), in which emphasis is attached to the social construction of meaning, or group sensemaking, and the role of leaders in the sensemaking process (Tierney, 1988; 2004; Weick, 1995; Bess & Dee, 2008) or that leadership itself is about sensemaking (Birnbaum, 1988). In other words, there is no best type of leadership, only better leadership, namely those leaderships that make more sense (Birnbaum, 1988).

Furthermore, from a sensemaking perspective of mission statements, there are three levels of sensemaking in the mission statement artifact: sensemaking by the executives, sensemaking by managers, and sensemaking by members (Whitbred, 2009; Whitbred & Gumm, 2009). It should be noticed that currently most studies on mission statements focus on the sensemaking process by either executives or managers, leaving members' sensemaking rarely touched (Whitbred, 2009; Whitbred & Gumm, 2009). Meanwhile, it should also be understood that the three levels of sensemaking in the mission statement

artifacts may coincide, because people within the same organization may perceive things differently (Whitbred, 2009). As Daft and Weick (1984) argue, executives and managers “wade into the ocean of events that surround the organization and actively try to make sense of them” (p. 286), and organizational mission statements merely reflect their sensemaking. For that matter, Whitbred (2009) doubts the non-linear communication connection between the organization’s top and its bottom and cautions us about the danger to presume the existence of such a connection. He points out that,

Consistent with the linear model of communication, much of the current research assumes a mission statement will be passively received by those working in an organization. Even if a statement is successfully ‘sold’ to members, this approach neglects the potential for these same members to develop their own perceptions of their organization’s mission over time. (Whitbred, 2009, p.3)

Accordingly, it is suggested that “researchers need to be especially mindful that they not simply assume that people internalize and adopt whatever is handed to them” (Weick, 1995, p.113). Whether such observations are also applicable to higher educational institutions is yet to be found out. In spite of the fact that this study does not address this question, it certainly helps to enrich our knowledge about the mission-sensemaking connection via inquiring into the extent that metaphors in mission statements by various levels of organizations within a system provide evidence of sensemaking.

Finally, viewed from the sensemaking perspective and corresponding to the three levels of sensemaking, there are two types of mission statement: organizational mission statements and perceived mission statements (Whitbred, 2009; Whitbred & Gumm, 2009). Organizational mission statements, which are sometimes mentioned as formal mission

statements and often simply mentioned as mission statements, are understood as “the purpose, strategy, values, and behavioral standards of an organization” (Whitbred, 2009, p.3). On the other hand, perceived organizational missions refer to “each individual organizational member’s perception of the purpose, strategy, values, and behavioral standards of his/her organization” (Whitbred, 2009, p.3). Nevertheless, literature on mission statements indicate that most studies examine the organizational mission statements, leaving the perceived mission statements of how organizational members make sense of the missions rarely discussed (Whitbred, 2009). Therefore, it is imperative to address the three questions central to understanding sensemaking of the two types of mission statements: “Do the organizational mission and the perceived mission coincide?” “How are such coincidences represented?” “How do the mission statements, as a product rather than a process, reflect Weick’s sensemaking process?” It is worth noting that, as an initial endeavor, this study intends to evidence the mission-sensemaking linkage by focusing on the sensemaking evidence in metaphors of organizational mission statements.

It must also be pointed out that, despite of the implications noted above, explicit efforts in applying the sensemaking perspective into mission statement understanding are something of a recent phenomenon and thus, fragmentary and limited. Initial findings showcase that while organizational members merely process a subset of cues, interpret their meanings, and complete actions based on their interpretations (Porac, Thomas, & Badden-Fuller, 1989), individual perceptions do influence one another (Weick, 1979; 1993; 1995). Moreover, “the perceptions developed from previous sensemaking activities become frames of reference for the continuing process” (Whitbred, 2009, p.4). To

Whitbred (2009), a sensemaking perspective is helpful for enriching our knowledge about mission statements, since previous studies on mission statements have overlooked the sensemaking aspect of mission statements, and sensemaking literature have seldom considered mission statements as its object of study. At the same time, it is necessary to make a cognitive-semantic aspect of extension to the perspective in order to make better sense of organization mission statements (Whitbred & Gumm, 2009). In addition, given the understanding that sensemaking is a process that consists of five major steps, as portrayed above, little effort is made in making the mission-as-sensemaking-process link. For this study, a sensemaking approach to mission statements, in fact, not only merits an understanding of the representation of sensemaking in metaphors, but also demonstrates the sensemaking process in metaphors.

Need for a Metaphorical Understanding of Sensemaking  
in Mission Statements

A language approach toward sensemaking of the mission statement is suggested in Handy (1996) and Abrahams (1995). According to Abrahams, who looked into 301 corporate mission statements of American’s top companies, there are fifty-two keywords frequently employed in all mission statements. Detailed information of these fifty-two words is summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Keywords and Phrases in Mission Statements

Keywords	1	2	3	Keywords	1	2	3
ability	Noun	23		leadership	Noun	63	
accomplished	Adjective	8		life	Noun	49	
accountability	Noun	22		long-term	Adjective	72	
asset	Noun	40		mission	Noun	221	✓

best	Adjective	102	✓	mutual	Adjective	34	
change	Noun	42		passion	Noun	6	
commitment	Noun	88	✓	performance	Noun	82	
communicate	Verb	10		potential	Adjective	28	
conscience	Noun	2		pride	Noun	18	
corporate citizen	Noun	40		principles	Noun	40	
customers	Noun	211	✓	productivity	Noun	26	
dedicated	Adjective	35		profit	Noun	114	✓
dedication	Noun	17		quality	Noun	194	✓
dignity	Noun	29		relationships	Noun	43	
direct	Verb	37		reliable	Adjective	19	
diversity	Noun	26		respect	Noun	98	✓
employees	Noun	157	✓	responsibility	Noun	55	
empower	Verb	34		return on equity	Noun	55	
enthusiasm	Noun	7		risk	Noun	38	
environment	Noun	117	✓	security	Noun	17	
ethics	Noun	26		serve	Verb	84	
excellence	Noun	78		service	Noun	230	✓
exciting	Adjective	3		shareholders	Noun	114	✓
fair	Adjective	67		solution	Noun	21	
fun	Noun	43		strategy	Noun	24	
future	Noun	40		strength	Noun	60	
goal	Noun	76		success	Noun	105	✓
goodwill	Noun	3		support	Verb	74	
growth	Noun	118	✓	team	Noun	91	✓
harmony	Noun	4		teamwork	Noun	5	
individual	Noun	79		trust	Verb	51	
initiative	Noun	22		unique	Adjective	6	
innovation	Noun	69		value	Noun	183	✓
joy	Noun	2		values	Noun	73	
leader	Noun	104	✓	vision	Noun	95	✓

1 = parts of speech

2 = number of times the word appears in each mission statement

3 = most often-cited words

(Adapted from Abrahams (1995, pp.49-50))

Among the fifty-two keywords, nouns are used thirty-six times, a 69.23% share of the total, while adjectives and verbs amount to ten and six, 19.23% and 11.54% respectively. Among the fifty-two keywords, Abrahams considers seventeen as the most-often cited. Unfortunately, there is no further account in his study as to why such words are used in this way, and such discovered information is not directly discussed in relation to sensemaking.

Metaphorical approaches used in understanding or making sense of organizations appear in Weick's (1978; 1979) social psychological account of organizing. Weick recognizes the abundant use of metaphors in organizational theory:

Organizations have been variably portrayed as anarchies (Cohen & March, 1974), seesaws (Hedberg et al., 1976), space stations (Weick, 1977), garbage cans (Cohen et al., 1972), savage tribes (Turner, 1977), octopoid (Geertz, 1973), marketplaces (Georgiou, 1973), and data processing schedules (Borovits & Segev, 1977). (Weick, 1979, p.47)

Subsequently, Weick (1979) observed the military was used as a prevailing metaphor in the business world. Military metaphors, Weick theorized, provide insight into the way businesses leaders think about themselves and what they do (for example, Cooney, 1978; Miller, 1969).

Consider these samples of organizational talk. Organizations have a staff, line, and chain of command. They develop strategy and tactics. Organizations give people marching orders, pass muster, attack competitors, recruit MBAs, conduct basic training, confer with the brass at headquarters, wage campaigns, assess the rank and file, field well-drilled salesmen, deplore a garrison mentality, retreat, gather intelligence, do battle, fire traitors, recruit spies, consider mutiny, employ diversionary tactics, launch frontal assaults, discipline their troops, and lament that the code of conduct doesn't work. (Weick, 1979, p.49)



For Weick, metaphors proved vital, for “diverse as they are, each metaphor has articulated some property of organizations that might otherwise have gone unnoticed (Fernandez, 1972). And we judge this articulation to be crucial” (Weick, 1979, p.47).

Speaking of the usefulness of metaphors, Weick (1979) maintains that “many theorists agree with Ortony (1975) that metaphors are necessary, and not just nice” (p.47). He further elaborates Ortony’s theory of metaphor by saying that, first of all, “metaphors provide a compact version of an event without the need for the message to spell out all the details. The details are implicit in the metaphor and can be reconstructed later” (p.47). Second, “metaphors enable people to predict characteristics that are unnamable. It’s frequently impossible for people to find appropriate words; when faced with this impasse, people use metaphors to portray what they cannot portray literally” (p.50). And third, “metaphors are closer to perceived experience and therefore are more vivid emotionally, sensorially, and cognitively” (p.50).

To return to the military metaphor for describing business organizations, Weick (1979) argues that “for one thing, a military metaphor is an ideal self-fulfilling prophecy. Suppose I go into a situation assuming that the person I’m about to meet wants to fight...” (p.50). He further reiterates,

But military metaphors might persist for other reasons. People like to deal with uncertainty and disorder, so they impose military trappings like hierarchies and they impose spans of control to conceal the disorder. Military imagery probably also persists because it is tough, macho, exciting. (Weick, 1979, p.50)

Nevertheless, for Weick,

Military images save managers the trouble of inventing richer ways to understand and conduct business. And that's sad, because military images restrict flexibility, encourage narrow solutions, assert nothing very interesting about organizations, and are self-perpetuating. (Weick, 1979, p.51)

In order for business organizations to evolve, Weick recommends that “other metaphors are needed to capture different private realities that exist right alongside those military realities” (p.51), and he exemplifies himself by mounting on such efforts, some of whose results are as follows: educational organizations as loosely coupled systems (Weick, 1976); the metaphors of business (Weick, 1978); administering education in loosely coupled schools: an assessment (Weick & Swieringa, 1982); the concept of loose coupling (Weick, 1986); organizations as cause maps (Weick & Bougon, 1986); loose coupling: beyond the metaphor (Weick, 1989a); cartographic myths in organizations (Monmonier, 1991; Weick, 1990); loosely coupled systems: a reconceptualization (Weick & Orton, 1990); fighting fires in educational administration (Weick, 1996c; 1996d), and grasping the relevance bridge: fashions meet fundamentals in management (Weick, 2001b).

Doubtlessly, such a metaphorical perspective of sensemaking enriches our knowledge about organizing in general. Unfortunately, factors of the sensemaking process are not analyzed in relation to metaphors. Hence we are not sure of the extent to which metaphors may make sense of factors identified in the sensemaking process.

#### Restatement of Research Questions

Both discussions here and in Chapter I reveal that, over the past two decades, studies on organizational sensemaking and mission statements have been undertaken separately.

Whereas efforts are attached to both, neither is well informed of the findings of the other. First, in the sphere of mission research, although the majority of American universities and colleges possess more than one mission statement, a small number of them do not even have one. In either case, it speaks to a degree of the sensemaking of mission statements by the university administration, about which there exists but scanty literature either in mission or sensemaking studies, and hence about which we still know very little. Then, in the sensemaking research circle, major concerns are first attached to the sophistication of the theory construction, such as the identification of the key factors involved in the sensemaking process and a figurative approach to understanding sensemaking, and secondarily to the application of the theory in various facets of organizational behavior and understanding.

Moreover, related studies on metaphorical analysis of sensemaking are scarce and, given the usefulness of a metaphorical approach to understand sensemaking and the process of sensemaking (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), there has been no study to date that explicitly expounds the relationship of the two; namely, how the sensemaking process is realized in figures of speech, or how figures of speech facilitate in accounting for the sensemaking process. As such, two inherited questions arise: “How does the sensemaking process operate in metaphors?” Or, conversely, “how are the processes snapshot in metaphor uses?” Finally, given the assumption that metaphors help capture the processes of sensemaking, “how do we prove it?” In other words, “what is a better way to examine the metaphors of the sensemaking processes?”

As an explicit attempt at filling out this void, this study probes into the extent of how mission statements make sense via metaphors. More precisely, it explores how metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence corresponding to the five elements of sensemaking; namely, metaphors evidencing “environment-screening,” “enactment,” “selection,” “retention,” and “remembering.”

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS OF STUDY

The purpose of language is communication. The unit of human communication in language is the speech act, of the type called illocutionary act.  
(Searle, 1979, p.178)

Having presented the research topic and research problems in Chapter I, and discussed the need to look into them in Chapter II, it is now time to turn to research methods, or more precisely, methods for collecting and analyzing data for answering research questions. The methods of this study comprise three sections: (1) an explanation of the SAT (Speech Act Theory) and its relevancy to this study, especially how it informs metaphor comprehension, data collection, and analysis for this study; (2) a depiction of the research setting; and (3) a discussion of data collection and analysis processes.

#### SAT

SAT stands for the Speech Act Theory, a meaning theory first advocated by the British language philosopher John L. Austin (1962), and then echoed and supplemented by the American philosopher of language John R. Searle (1969; 1975; 1979). As such, Austin's study of speech act, or, more precisely put, direct speech act, lays the foundational frame for, or constitutes the proper part of, the SAT theory, whereas Searle's indirect speech act theory extends and supplements the SAT. Thus, SAT consists of two phases of development, the initial phase by Austin and development phase by Searle, or is comprised of two parts, direct and indirect speech acts.

SAT proponents argue that we do not say things for the sake of saying them. Rather we say things for the sake of doing things; that is, we do things by saying them. Hence speech is an act (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; 1975; 1979). As Searle (1979) maintains, “the purpose of language is for human communication. The unit of human communication in language is the speech act, of the type called illocutionary act.” (p.178) Meanwhile, our speech is social. It is thus a social act. According to face theorists, face is dignity or prestige, about which we all aspire to possess, or we all have face want (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Accordingly, if we speak properly, we save the others’ face, or we lose the others’ face, which jeopardizes interpersonal relations. In other words, what we utter and how we utter it may potentially threaten others’ face (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Additionally, a speech act is a social act in the sense that our speech is socially interpreted (Bahtkin, 1981; 1986; 1993; Allen, 2000). Thus in terms of illocutionary act, Searle reiterates:

We find there are five general ways of using language, five general categories of illocutionary acts. We tell people how things are (assertives), we try to get them to do things (directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (commissives), we express our feelings (expressives), and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (declarations). (Searle, 1979, p.viii)

Furthermore, each single act of speech that we perform can be seen as consisting of three sub-acts: the act of saying (locutionary act), the act of meaning (illocutionary act), and the act of reaching the meaning (perlocutionary act), among which the illocutionary act is the basic form, or “unit of human communication in language.” (Searle, 1979, p.178) Additionally, the locutionary act can be analyzed as containing three sub-acts in

itself: phonetic, phatic, and rhemic (Austin, 1962). In practice, a speech act can be represented by a word, a phrase, a sentence, a dialogue, a speech, or a text (Bazerman, 2003; 2004). Moreover, a speech act is a non-literal use of language beyond the surface or literal meaning of which the speaker's intent is implied. Hence a speech act meaning comprehension, such as metaphors, does not come about spontaneously; rather they demand inference, which takes time, or, to put it another way, the comprehension of the implied meaning or implicature (Grice, 1975) assumes a process in decoding the intended meaning of the speaker of an utterance, even though the process is non-demonstratable and its length varies with people (Sperber & Wilson, 1986; 1995).

Essentially, the basic tenets of the SAT are: (i) we do not say things for the sake of saying them, rather we say things in order to do things; (ii) what we said are utterances, or products that serve as the rudiments, objects, and sources for studying language use; (iii) due to the fact that our utterances are articulated in specific communicational settings or contexts, it is pivotal to process utterance meanings therein; (iv) a contextual understanding of utterances is featured by a process of relation searching, be it linguistically structural, intratextually and intertextually semantic, or userly (speaker and hearer) social (Verschueren, 1994). In other words, it is a process of relevance finding via lexical contents, logic structures, and encyclopedic knowledge (Sperber & Wilson, 1986; 1995). In this sense, understanding the meanings of speech acts, direct and indirect, literal and metaphorical, constitutes a project like this one.

In line with the SAT framework, metaphors are typical examples of speech acts in the sense that they are non-literal ways of saying things (Searle, 1979). As such, they fall

under two broad types, structurally speaking. Metaphors are micro-level non-literal expressions in units of a word or phrase and they appear as macro-level non-literal expressions in units of a paragraph or text (Bazerman, 2003; 2004). What is essential is that metaphors by default carry non-literal meaning and revoke contextual interpretations.

Furthermore, the SAT conceptualization of metaphors implies that organizational sensemaking, as it is manifested in metaphors, is another speech act in itself. Metaphors are force-bearing and require or engage their readers to understand their implications beyond the literal meanings. Metaphors compel readers to act, probe into, think, and reflect on, experience, and understand the intended meanings that are contextually appropriate.

Therefore, sensemaking as social power, force, and influence is implicitly encoded in organizational discourse and can be explicitly decoded. By extension, an SAT lens suggests that organizational mission statements are a discursive text or another speech act. In other words, mission statements exemplify Bazerman's (2003; 2004) text-as-act view in that their intended message to inform, define, market, promote, direct, guide, and unite needs to be contextually and procedurally interpreted. Thus an SAT mindset necessitates the redefinition and re-processing of mission statements as well as the metaphors that they contain.

In sum, the SAT relevancy to this study is fourfold. First, the decades-tested powerful meaning theory known as SAT demonstrates the connection between sensemaking and metaphor comprehension. As a theoretical framework for meaning analysis and overall method for this study, SAT situates this study of mission statements



under the study of meaning as well. Second, SAT lends a new perspective of understanding mission statements and metaphors therein, by considering both as speech acts. In effect, SAT helps to frame concepts about metaphor (see the immediate subheading for a discussion of the metaphor definition). Third, an SAT mindset posits that we envisage metaphors, dead or living, direct or indirect, as expressions conveying non-literal meanings in contextually articulated utterances. Understanding that metaphors convey contextual, non-literal meaning is likely to broaden the scope of data analysis from literal interpretation. Finally, in regard to the data analysis phase, SAT encourages us to focus on content themes and conceptual patterns of identified metaphors and their alignment or fitting with the discussed elements of the sensemaking process.

#### Metaphor: An SAT-based Definition

Metaphors are linguistic means of comparison which establish a direct nexus between two entities whose indirect relationship makes them seem disconnected. A few keywords are used in this definition to capture some of the basic features of metaphors. These include “linguistics means,” “comparison,” “connection,” “two things,” “seem,” and “disconnected.” First, metaphors are “linguistic means” in the sense that they are first and foremost uttered, noticeable, and analyzable. Second, metaphors are products of “comparison” in the sense that they are motivated to compare things and are ended with comparisons of these things. The word “comparison” here implies the speech act property of a metaphor and the distinction of poor and good metaphors, as well as good and better metaphors. Third, metaphors suggest “connection” in the sense that a linkage between ideas is always recognized on the part of the metaphor user, though such a

connection may seem direct or indirect, vivid or clumsy, to the audience. As such, the ability to compare and to make a “concise, vivid, and expressive” connection (Ortony, 1979) are in fact manifestations of our pragmatic competence (Liu, 2007b; 2008). Fourth, metaphors are associated with “two things” in the sense that a connection is realized between them, though it is not always necessarily true that a metaphorical connection is always about “two things;” but “two things” are minimal for making comparison and realizing connection. Fifth, the verb “to seem” suggests that a connection between “things” may not appear to some, implicit to others, transient to others still, and even robust and explicit to those who “must have stood outside the box” in order to make an assertion of connection. As such, the use of metaphors entails differences since users vary in their pragmatic competence. Finally, the verb “to disconnect” means that metaphors are always used to bridge “things” which stand apart from one another to an extent that apparently A is A and B is B, and that there is never a semantic or logical connection between the “two things” mentioned. Nevertheless, it is through an analogy realized on the part of B that such a connection or resemblance is made.

Accordingly, it is imperative to recognize the following design features that characterize metaphors: Functional, Etymological, Structural, and Semantic, or “FESS” for short.

Functionally, by asserting “A is B,” with B apparently as an irrelevant entity to A, the speaker or metaphor user has, in effect, encoded a newer meaning or information to A. Analyzed more closely, such an added meaning may be an observation, an experience, or a conviction. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) generically categorize such metaphorical use as

conceptual metaphors. Therefore, the metaphor “education is translation” (Cook-Sather, 2005, p.vii) is based on personal observation, personal experience, or both.

Etymologically, by saying “A is B,” we experience a transfer or export, or a borrowing, or import, from the producer’s side. From the audience’s perspective, such convergence can be neutrally denoted by the term “mapping.” In other words, in saying “A is B,” we map the meaning of B onto A. In effect, such “mapping” establishes a connection between A and B, which at first sight stands as two exclusively unrelated identities. Indirect connections may be more easily perceived by referring to the earliest use of the word, namely, its etymology.

Structurally, most metaphors bear the “A is B” form. Examples are: “Jack is a machine,” “the university is a vending machine,” (Monson, 1967) and “education is translation” (Cook-Sather, 2005, p.vii). To Lakoff and Johnson (1980), “A” stands for one domain, the source domain, while “B” represents another domain, the target domain. In real speech, B may assume various forms, such as a word, a phrase, or a sentence. Besides, other variant structures may also exist. For example, if someone says “I will not buy that (idea),” “buy” here is borrowed from economics to suggest a metaphorical connection between two things or behaviors, “agreeing with others” as “buying commodities.”

Semantically, “A is A,” whereas “B is B.” A and B are thus unconnected; and their division is clear. However, once they are mentioned in an “A is B” structure, such a semantic configuration by default is altered to a metaphorical use. In other words, once “A” is said to denote “B”, it becomes a metaphor. Accordingly, a semantically illogical,

but mentally feasible connection is implied. For instance, in sentence “I will not buy that (idea),” a meaning from economics is mapped onto the implied phrase “agree with,” and hence the metaphorical use of “buy” enriches the semantic meaning of “agree with.” That is why scholars tend to conceptualize metaphors as “a trope in which one thing is spoken of as if it were some other things” (Steinhart & Kittay, 1998, p.576).

Being aware of the four features of “FESS” is pivotal. First, the syntactic structure, “A is B,” enables metaphors users to construe as many “concise, vivid, and expressive” (Ortony, 1979) metaphors as they want. Second, the etymological feature, based on transfer, borrowing, or mapping, lends metaphors users a caliber to conceive indefinite newer metaphors since the etymologically retraceable metaphors tend to become more and more symbolic. Third, the semantic feature explains the generative process of how polysemic words evolve to their present reality and helps predict or project possible newer meanings of existing words due to language users’ metaphoric use of them. Fourth, the functional feature empowers language users (organizations) to metaphorize more, since metaphors are associated with conceptualization and framing. Thus knowledge of the “FESS” nature of metaphors is highly facilitative to a thorough comprehension of metaphor and for a successful identification of metaphors in organizational discourse such as mission statements.

### Hypotheses

The literature review in Chapter II grounds five general assumptions for this study. First, the sensemaking process can be fully evidenced by metaphors in mission statements. Second, the identified elements or factors of the sensemaking process may

serve as a taxonomy or framework for metaphors in organizational mission statements. Third, the study of metaphors in mission statements of an organization should provide insight into how the organization at large screens the environments, enacts, selects, retains, and remembers – or – makes sense. Fourth, there is a causal, if not sequential, relationship between the five elements of sensemaking, which can be illustrated in metaphors. Fifth, metaphors may provide hints at the sensemaking process as an ongoing process.

Corresponding to the five questions discussed in both Chapters I and II, our hypotheses are as follows:

Research question 1: How do metaphors in mission statements provide evidence of “environment-screening?”

Hypothesis 1: Given that environment-screening appears as the first element in the sensemaking scheme, metaphors of environment-screening must be able to provide some reasons for it being the first, in terms of its content, and in relation to other elements, especially enactment as the second element.

Research question 2: How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “enactment?”

Hypothesis 2: Enactment plays a cardinal role among the elements of sensemaking: it triggers the sensemaking process. Metaphors in mission statements record the actual role of enactment.

Research question 3: How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “selection?”

Hypothesis 3: Organizations make selections all the time. What causes organizations to make a selection may be complicated, but patterns of such complications can be salient in metaphors embedded in mission statements.

Research question 4: How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “retention?”

Hypothesis 4: What organizations retain in the sensemaking process often seems vague, but may be evident in metaphors analyzed in the context of mission statements.

Research question 5: How do metaphors deployed in mission statements provide evidence of “remembering?”

Hypothesis 5: Like retention, what organizations remember in the sensemaking process also tends to be unclear. A focus on the metaphor used in mission statements helps to clarify major aspects of content.

### Research Setting

*The university.* The university under study is the University of North Carolina, a southeastern American public university as well as the earliest American public university which was initially chartered in 1789, and which evolved to be a system of seventeen constituent institutions (<http://www.northcarolina.edu/>). One reason to explore the public university is because, first and foremost, it is basic in delivering higher education to the citizens. Another reason, instead of operating independently as their private counterparts, public universities are partially funded by the state government and hence are subject to the common purposes and policies of the state government, or held accountable for what they are paid for, even though state allocations to many such

universities have been drastically reduced over the years. In some cases, such allocations account for only one fifth of their total revenues. In other words, though constituent institutions under the public university system may operate in a relatively independent manner, they are part of a system as a whole. Probing into the system may yield systematic information. As such, member institutions that receive certain state appropriations of resources, share one overall mission and are subject to coordinated actions, while in pursuit of their respective purpose under the overall mission. Last but not most important, probing into the metaphors of public university mission statements may help identify the role of metaphors in organizational sensemaking, which may eventually lead to a better understanding of the role of language in organizing or organizational processes in general.

*Mission statements of two types and four levels.* Seen system-wide, mission statements of a public university are of two types: mission statements across universities and mission statements within universities. Correspondingly, such mission statements are of four levels: (i) the overall mission statement of the entire system, or Level I mission statement; (ii) mission statements of constituent universities, or Level II mission statements; (iii) mission statements of middle-level colleges and schools of the constituent universities, or Level III mission statements; and (iv) mission statements of grass-root sub-units such as departments and programs of the constituent universities, or Level IV mission statements. Nevertheless, given both the horizontal and vertical magnitude in the first three levels of mission statements, Level IV mission statements are excluded in this study. Here the horizontal (across universities) and vertical (within

universities) consideration of mission statements is pivotal. However, such an inclusion is not meant for comparison, but rather for garnering robust information to showcase evidence of the sensemaking process in various levels of an organization's use of metaphors.

*Webpage-based mission statements.* Webpage-based mission statements are frequently used in relevant studies (Ayers, 2002; 2007; Morphew & Hartley, 2006). Webpage-based mission statements are used not only because they are convenient to collect, but also because they are often the most recent versions. University administrations tend to be sensitive to their environmental changes and are often responsive to such changes. Given their limited resources, they often prioritize their plans and adjust their missions. To communicate such changes, they also timely upload their updated versions of mission statements onto the Internet. Therefore, webpage-based mission statements represent the newest moves or responses of the university administrations of all levels toward their purpose of existence, and are collected as data for this study.

#### Data Collection

*Data retrieval.* Mission statements were retrieved through the web on three occasions: October, 2009, February 2010, July 2010. The reason in so doing was to find out if there were any changes during this time and to ensure that the most updated version of the mission statements was considered in the analysis. All collected data were entered into a protocol summarized in Table 2 below:



Table 2: Data Treatment Protocol

Organization	Mission Statement				
Metaphors	Environment -screening	Enactment	Selection	Retention	Remembering
Total					

### Data Analysis

*Data descriptions.* In all, one hundred and thirty-two mission statements are collected. Among them, one belongs to Level I mission statement or the mission statement for the entire university system, seventeen stand for Level II mission statements or mission statements of the constituent institutions, and one hundred and five represent Level III mission statements or mission statements of middle-rank colleges and schools across the entire seventeen member institutions. Though mission statements are relatively short -- some are of one paragraph length while others are a few paragraphs long -- the one hundred and thirty-two collected mission statements contain 16627 words (Microsoft Word count) and four hundred and eighty clauses (researcher count). This amounts to a robust databank of its own for processing metaphors and sensemaking of mission statements through the understanding of metaphors teeming within. Table 3 below summarizes the collected data:

Table 3: Spreadsheet of Collected Data

Level	Mission statements	Sentences	Words
I	1	9	203
II	17	78	2228
III	105	393	14196
Total	132	480	16627

*Procedures.* Broadly speaking, the analytical procedure of this study consists of three steps: (i) identify metaphors in the collected mission statements; (ii) code the metaphors in terms of theme; and (iii) relate the metaphors to the elements or categories of the sensemaking process. As such, the data analyzing stage basically undergoes seven actions as are described below:

1) Identify on the observation protocol (See Table 2 above) expressions containing metaphors: Guided by the SAT-directed definition of metaphor in this study, this initial step aims at locating the discretely embedded metaphors in each mission statement as single text.

2) Examine such metaphors in terms of meaning: Once identified, metaphors are approached with a focus on their individual meanings in each single text.

3) Code or label such identified metaphors throughout the mission statements in terms of themes: Certain elements or themes are contained in mission statements (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). This step proceeds to consider individual metaphors in relation to themes salient in each single mission text.

4) Check intertextually to ensure consistency between the identified metaphors and their assigned themes: This step considers metaphors in a larger context. It uses the whole data set as texts to further process metaphor understanding so as to modify the codes or sharpen the metaphor-code match in alignment with the themes salient in the entire data texts.

5) Arrange the metaphors against the sensemaking framework, that is, categorize them in terms of the five elements of the sensemaking process: environmental screening, enacting, selecting, retaining, and remembering.

6) Check intertextually to ensure consistency in the categorization: This step ties up textual themes, metaphor meanings, and elements of sensemaking; it aims at finding fit between the metaphor themes and sensemaking types.

7) Reflect on the metaphor-sensemaking categorical matching: This study assumes that the sensemaking elements or types can characterize all metaphors. In other words, they exhaust the metaphors identified from the mission statements. This step is used in verifying the assumption.

#### Limitations and Quality Checks

Qualitative research is often associated with limitations such as researcher bias in treating the subject matter and in the way of data collecting. Such limitations are sometimes referred to as researcher subjectivity (Pinke, 1988), which is a hallmark of social and higher educational research (Pinke, 1988). As such, researcher subjectivity is celebrated for being able to help researchers generate the magnitude of focus and quality (Pinke, 1988). For instance, relying on the researcher as the sole data collection instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is a limitation, but meanwhile may help increase consistency (Pinke, 1988). The researcher of this study is not only aware of his subjectivity in his metaphorical approach to sensemaking understanding but also aware of his subjectivity in using mission statements for the analysis. Hence in line with Weick's (1979) recommendation to "acknowledge tradeoffs" (p.35), four endeavors were made to

ensure quality: (i) using official mission statements, namely mission statements on the domain name ending with “edu;” (ii) using most recent version of the mission statements, that is mission statements representing the university and its subunits’ sensemaking of purpose in response to the most proximate environmental changes viewed from the time of data collection; (iii) using three levels of mission statements: Level I mission statement or the university system’s mission statement, Level II mission statements or the constituent universities’ mission statements, Level III mission statements or mission statements of the constituent universities’ college or schools (Again it must be pointed out that the purpose to include all the mission statements across four organizational levels is not for comparison, but for assembling sufficient data for understanding metaphorical realizations of the sensemaking process); (iv) targeting an SAT-inspired definition of metaphor envisages metaphors both directly and indirectly, because it enables the researcher to comprehend and identify metaphors accurately and consistently in relation to the sensemaking process, be such metaphors direct and indirect, dead and living; and (v) conducting intertextuality checks using the intertextuality theory (Kristeva, 1980; 1986), or IT for enhancing chances of better capturing the sensemaking of metaphors. An endeavor is made to intratextually and intertextually identify and label metaphors based on the SAT re-conceptualization of metaphors. Intratextual checking relates to a consistency checking of the legitimacy of an identified metaphor within the text of a single mission statement, whereas intertextual checking denotes a consistency checking of the legitimacy of an identified metaphor and its labeling in a larger textual context, namely across the entire texts of data set.

## Ethical Considerations

A research work reflects ethics, or morality of conduct. As such, of close relation to research method is the concept of justice or fairness. In this regard, four efforts have been made. First, avoiding or lessening face-threatening. Theorists of face (Goffman, 1961; Brown & Levinson, 1978) maintain that human beings have face want or desire for dignity, and that utterances such as mission statements pose potential threats to organizational face. Furthermore, such threats may emerge in forms such as undersaying or oversaying, both resulting in implicature of meaning (Grice, 1975). Accordingly, even at the data collecting stage, the same procedures was observed, the same keywords for data search were used, and an equal chance of presence or inclusion was maintained in incorporating Level I, Level II, and Level III mission statements that appear on the respective websites. Second, avoiding incorrectly citing the websites. Though it seems easy for some readers to make associations of the mission statements used in this study with certain organizations, effort was made by the researcher to avoid misciting a website in the data source. This is also meant to assist those who wish to retrieve the electronic version of texts for similar study. Third, by using real names, quoting original names or double-checking accuracy in the real names of the quoted university and its constituent sub-units is another concrete way to maintain ethical justice. In cases that sub-unit names are related to people or places, such proper names are checked so that the units and their donors are acknowledged as an entity or player in the university. For instance, instead of being simply mentioned as “School of Business,” the full name “Alexander School of Business” is included. Similarly, proper names of a person or place appearing in texts are

also retained. Fifth, using most recent versions of mission statements. It was argued above that using the most recent versions of mission statements validate our data for analysis. Here I hold that using these most recent versions of organizational mission statements reflects ethical considerations. This is the case that the researcher displays responsibility for the organization under study by addressing meanings resonant with their most recent discourse or representing the status quo of their organizational moves in response to socio-economic changes.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sensemaking reflects how thought leaders seek to construct reality for others by drawing on metaphor ...; hence, 'making sense' often becomes the mixing bowl of metaphoric types. (Paparone, 2008, p.61)

Having described the methods of data collection and analysis in Chapter III, this chapter reports the results of analysis, and discusses the results in relation to metaphorical manifestations of the sensemaking elements. The discussion proceeds by following the sequence of sensemaking elements: environment-screening, enactment, selection, retention, and remembering, and their corresponding research questions of this study. The chapter ends with a summary.

How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Environment-Screening?”

Metaphors We Screen by

*Environment as change: The overall metaphor.* Results indicate that, first and foremost, metaphors of environment-screening are well embedded in organizational mission statements. Furthermore, such metaphors mostly appear in the beginning of the mission text while some are embedded in the middle or end of the text. In terms of content, an overall theme behind such metaphors is “change” (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Hence “environment as change” is the umbrella metaphor resulted from environment screening. In other words, “change” is forever the theme besieging the university organization. In relation to other elements in the sensemaking process, this “change” sets the context for these other elements to occur. In more concrete terms, an active reading of the “change” message or the context of “change” does not only “enact”

other chains of actions, including calling for visionary organizing activities, but also give rise to active or proactive response to the context of “change,” resulting in organizations’ preoccupation with, mission statement change or revision, to name but a few.

Moreover, against the general “environment as change” metaphor resulting in environment-screening, there are three sub-metaphors: organization as positioned, organization as time-pacer, and organization as wind-catcher. In the sections that follow, I will elaborate on each of these sub-metaphors in greater detail.

*Organization as positioned.* The above overall metaphor “environment as change” basically sets the context for organizations. Naturally, against the “environment as change” context, organizations are also changed. In this way, to say “environment as change” is the same as saying “organization as being changed or the changed.”

However, I choose to alter the expression of “organizations as positioned” to migrate, or better still, to concretize the “change” on the part of organizations, against the “change” of the environment. In fact, this demonstrates the role of environment in organizing, or the impact of environment on organizing. Additionally, this proves that it is commonsensical to say that organizations do not reside in a vacuum, and that it is vital to realize that organizations live in environments whose force is too huge to overlook; it affects organizations by challenging their being, causing them constantly to re-position themselves or re-set their directions in order to survive the environment to which they are a part.

Illustrations of “organization as positioned” are prevalent in the mission statements under study:



(1) The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people.

In this example, “the University of North Carolina” does not only clearly recognize its location or physical environment in the state of “North Carolina,” but also straightforwardly articulate its purpose: “dedicated to” serving “North Carolina” and “its people.” This positioning clearly reflects the process and result of environment screening and helps the university sharpen its focus.

(2) It leverages its location in the state’s largest city to offer internationally competitive programs of research and creative activity, exemplary undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and a focused set of community engagement initiatives.

This is from the mission statement of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The university’s awareness of its location in a booming southern metropolitan facilitates it to assemble its capital and to envision its future in line with a metropolitan, and enact missions accordingly, including adding “international” considerations into its programs.

(3) The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state's coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service.

Conspicuous enough, “the University of North Carolina at Wilmington” first and foremost positions itself at Wilmington, and reasons along this line in an effort to strengthen itself, by doing anything within its capacity, as “the state’s coastal university.”

(4) Western Carolina University is a comprehensive university within the University of North Carolina, offering a broad array of undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts, sciences and professions.

In the same vein as “the University of North Carolina at Wilmington” in (3), “Western Carolina University”, “western” as it is, positions itself as a constituent member institution of the entire “University of North Carolina” system. Such a conscious system-member sense or within-organization positioning, helps the university set the overall tone for aligning its mission with that of the system.

(5) The University serves the people of North Carolina from its residential main campus at Cullowhee, situated between the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains, and through its resident credit programs in Asheville and Cherokee.

In statement (5), “the university” refers to “Western Carolina University.” Here it further assesses its location and places itself in the university system: “Serving the people of North Carolina,” like other constituent institutions. The difference, however, is that it does so “from its residential campuses at Cullowhee, situated between the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains,” and by relying on “its resident credit programs in Asheville and Cherokee.” These geographical locations of its campus not only inform the audience where “Western Carolina University” is situated and on what its programs are based, but also associate them with historical and natural charms. As such, this reveals a pragmatic tactic or strategy with two purposes: acknowledging the university’s environmental place, and advertising it.

(6) As northeastern North Carolina's four-year institution of higher education, Elizabeth City State University has been an important academic and cultural center for the region.

Here, “organization as positioned” presents itself in three aspects of meanings: geographical positioning (in “northeastern North Carolina), level or tiered positioning (a “four-year institution”), and role-positioning (“an important academic and cultural center for the region”). None of the three meanings or positionings is self-chosen; rather they are imposed or given by the institution’s geographical location.

(7) The School serves northeastern North Carolina and reaches out to the global community, primarily through teaching, while also addressing its environmentally sensitive economic needs through service and research activities.

What makes statement (7) deviant from the one expressed in (6), or in all the other previous examples, is the fact that it stands for a middle-level mission statement. But similar to other previous examples, it also clearly denotes a sense of positioning: “The School” in the mission statement is aware of its within-organization position, considering itself as an indivisible part of “northeastern North Carolina University” and ready to play its role as positioned.

(8) In support of the mission of Fayetteville State University, the School of Education is committed to educating and preparing individuals at the undergraduate and graduate levels for professions in the fields of education, research, and service.

Similar to “the School” in (7), “the School of Education” in (8) clearly explains its constituent relationship with “Fayetteville State University.” Accordingly, the school is ready to contribute to the realization of the university’s overall mission via a commitment to “educating and preparing individuals at the undergraduate and graduate levels.”

(9) In all of these missions, we will strive to meet the needs of our local, state, national, and global communities.

Apparently, the articulator of this mission statement envisages that it is vital to consider four levels of environment: “local, state, national, and global.” Accordingly, the statement presents organization with the expectations of the four levels of surroundings in which it is positioned.

(10) The Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering (JSNN) was created by UNCG and NC A & T with the support of the University of North Carolina system, the North Carolina General Assembly, and the Greensboro/Triad community.

Since “JSNN” in (10) is a “joint school,” it is represented as being positioned by this “joint” nature or environmental fact. In accordance, the JSNN mission articulator positions JSNN as indebted to those from which it draws support: “the University of North Carolina system, the North Carolina General Assembly, and the Greensboro / Triad community.”

(11) The College supports the University’s declared aspirations through discipline- related activities that benefit the University, region, state, nation, and the international community, in the following ways.

The sense of “being positioned” is also implied in (11), where “the college” recognizes its membership relation to “the university” that surrenders itself to other environmental factors within which it operates. Thus positioned, “the college” finds its obligations to five levels of factors within the environment: “the university, region, state, nation, and the international community.”

*Organization as time-pacer.* Another force brought about by the “environment as change” metaphor is that screening the organizational environment enables the

organization to realize the temporal aspect or “when” element in the environment. In effect, such temporal-dimension of environmental awareness causes organizations to be time-aware: feel the pulse of the time, understand the theme of the time, speak the language in vogue, and respond to them all --- as a time-pacer that keeps pace with the time or keeps pace with developments of the times. As such, organizations are “future strengthener and sustainer” as in (12), and “21<sup>st</sup> century mindsetter” as in (13) and (14):

(12) Creating a strong, sustainable future for eastern North Carolina through education, research, innovation, investment, and outreach.

(13) The University of North Carolina at Greensboro will redefine the public research university for the 21st century as an inclusive, collaborative, and responsive institution making a difference in the lives of students and the communities it serves.

(14) As the largest and oldest unit on campus, the College of Arts and Sciences has always been at the academic center of “the Carolina experience.” Now our teaching and research are more essential than ever, as we prepare our students for the complexities of the 21st century.

A common implication of the above three examples is that an urgency of time should be noticed, and a proactive response be made, or organizations will fall out of place or out of date. Accordingly, time-expressions such as “future” and “21<sup>st</sup> century” become vital and are found present in the articulation of many mission statements.

*Organization as wind-catcher.* As a parallel to the “organization as time-pacer” metaphor is the “organization as wind-catcher” metaphor. Vague as it is, “wind” here refers to themes and changes of time when the mission statement was made. Realizing “environment as change,” organizations try to read the message of “change” in the

environment. The mission statements under analysis indicate that the majority of organizations reacted to the environmental changes in the form of mission revisions. The revisionary effort indicates organizational sensitivity to the themes of time. Of course, organizations vary slightly from one another in the attempt to “catch” the “wind,” which is evident in the metaphors they employ. For one thing, “what are counted as current themes” is context-dependent. Consequently, the way - not to mention the depth - of envisioning organizing varies, and this demonstrates organizing as in flux. Nevertheless, synchronically viewed, the following recurring themes are imbedded in the mission statements:

(15) Preparing our students to compete and succeed in the global economy and multicultural society.

In this example, the themes prevailing at the time when the organization institutes its mission statement are “globalization” and “multiculturalization,” to name but a few. For that matter, “global economy and multicultural society” are two events that, like a sweeping wind, are taking place in the organizing environment.

(16) At UNC Asheville, we respond to the conditions and concerns of the contemporary world both as individuals and as a university.

Then “conditions and concerns of the contemporary world” constitute another event or theme that permeates the organizing process. As “wind-catchers,” organizations are often confronted with moments to ask questions, such as “Where are we?” and “What issues confront us?” As can be seen in the forthcoming sections, this becomes all the more apparent at the enactment stage of sensemaking.

(17) The exceptional scholarship, research, outstanding teaching, and active community outreach of HES fosters the capacity to enhance the quality of life and improve the environment for individuals, families, communities, and the world at large.

Additionally, “the quality of life” and “the environment” are also seen as themes or topics of events at the top of organizing agendas. Such environment-awareness helps justify the roles that organizations play. As in (17), “HES” attempts to “enhance the quality of life” and “improve the environment (for individuals, families, communities, and the world at large).”

*Environment-screening: Raw materials.* By raw materials, I mean words used in building a metaphor. Analyses of high frequency words contributing to metaphors of environment-screening include: twelve nouns (Carolina, community, State, nation, life, health, quality, environment, region, technology, world, UNC), two verbs (serve, support), and nine adjectives (North, social, public, diverse, cultural, economic, global, human, international.) Details of the role and frequency of these raw words in mission statements are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Metaphors We Screen Environment by: Metaphor-comprising Words

Ranking	Frequency	Word	Variations
11	105	North	northeastern, northwestern
12	103	Carolina	Carolina’s
19	83	state	states, state’s, statewide
20	82	social	society, association, socially, societal, socioeconomic, associated, sociology, society’s, associations, associate
24	75	nation	national, nationally, nationwide, nations, nation’s, international, internationally
31	61	public	publics
35	53	environment	environments, environmental, environmentally
41	48	region	regional, regionally
45	41	economic	economy, economics, socioeconomic, economically

51	36	global	globally
64	26	world	world's
69	24	challenges	challenge, challenging
71	23	international	internationally

As a whole, such words all help to ostensibly articulate the theme of the “environment as change” metaphor, which, in effect, positions organizations both eternally and internally, and which causes organizations to respond to or enact on the environment by enacting newer mission statements. During the process, a chain of other metaphorizing effort is triggered, as is discussed in the subsequent section.

#### How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Enactment?”

##### Metaphors We Enact by

*Enactment as changer: The overall metaphor.* Results of mission statement analysis indicate that, though environment-screening and enactment are closely related, their distinction is almost readily tellable in utterances. In the sequence of occurrence, generally environment-screening comes in the wake of an organization’s awareness of certain changes around it; sensemaking is triggered by change in the environment. Sometimes mentioned as enacting the environment, screening largely has to do with external events, with a view toward asking: “Where are we?” “When are we asking this question?” “What is happening in the world of which we are part?” In contrast, enactment has more to do with internal introspections and enacting strategic plans, organizational missions, and making decisions (Orton, 2000). It aims at asking: “Who are we as an organization?” “For whom do we exist?” Hence essentially, enactment targets a response and reaction toward change in the screened environment. More precisely, enactment is about attitude toward change; it is a changer. As such, it poses questions, such as “What’s the result of enactment?” “How



is such a process depicted in language?” “What metaphors are used in the process?” Being aware of themselves as “positioned” by this environment, organizations grow to be proactive at the enactment phase of the sensemaking process; enactment emancipates organizations from the passive situation and repositions them as changers. Hence the overall metaphor of enactment: “enactment as changer,” and with respect to introspection, organizations find themselves as a plate of loose sand, professionals, and mission-setters.

*Organizations as a plate of loose sand.* With an attempt to characterize organization, Weick (1976) created the metaphor “organization as loosely coupled.” A decade later, Birnbaum (1988; 2000) imported the metaphor to capture the specific scenario of colleges and universities. However, results of analysis in this study indicate that, while the metaphor is depictive of the structures and routine behaviors of colleges and universities, the metaphor “a plate of loose sand” is more proper for a snapshot of higher educational practices in chaotic times like now. The newly coined metaphor seems to be grounded as in the following:

(18) The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people.

(19) It encompasses the 16 diverse constituent institutions and other educational, research, and public service organizations.

(20) The College of Education and Allied Professions is one of five colleges at Western Carolina University.

(21) Five academic departments and thirteen service centers, programs and offices comprise the college.

The “multi-campus” in (18), “16 diverse constituent institutions and other educational, research, and public service organizations” in (19), “five colleges” in (20), and “five academic departments and thirteen services centers, programs and offices” in (21), all illustrate size and largeness.

In close relation to their physical presence, the following examples depict the magnitude of its programs or “comprehensiveness” of the university’s intention, which imply their loosely coupling relationship. In other words, the pursuit of multiple purposes adds to diversity and further loose relationship in between organizational units and in organizing:

(22) Fayetteville State University (FSU) is a public comprehensive regional university that promotes the educational, social, cultural, and economic transformation of southeastern North Carolina and beyond.

(23) North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is a public, comprehensive, land-grant university committed to fulfilling its fundamental purposes through exemplary undergraduate and graduate instruction, scholarly and creative research, and effective public service.

(24) The College of Arts and Sciences operates under the Office of Academic Affairs at Western Carolina University. Its constituent members include the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology; Biology; Chemistry and Physics; Communication; English; Geosciences and Natural Resources; History; Mathematics and Computer Science; Modern Foreign Languages; and Political Science and Public Affairs. The college also houses the Associated Area of Philosophy and Religion, and the following programs: Arts and Sciences Interdisciplinary, and Social Sciences.

Due to the “loose-ness” nature, organizations values organizing, including the need to institute mission statements, as (25) below indicates:

(25) Each shares in the overall mission of the University.

*Organization as professional.* Enactment helps organizations identify “who they are,” and this identifying effort justifies their qualifications or possession of capital, which in return, boost organizational courage and morale. That is why it is mentioned sometimes that enactment leads to identity enhancement (Bird, 2007; Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2002; Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997; Gioia, Price, Hamilton, & Thomas, 2010). Metaphorically, results of analysis in this study indicate the recurring metaphor “organization as professional.” Below are some examples to illustrate the metaphor:

(26) Appalachian State University is a public comprehensive university, offering a wide variety of degree programs at the baccalaureate, master's, and intermediate levels as well as the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.

(27) Elizabeth City State University, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, offers baccalaureate, graduate, and professional programs for a diverse student body.

(28) North Carolina Central University is a comprehensive university offering programs at the baccalaureate, master's, and selected professional levels. It is the nation's first public liberal arts institution founded for African-Americans.

(29) UNC Asheville is distinctive in the UNC system as its designated liberal arts university.

(30) Kimmel School offers B.S. degree programs in construction management, electrical and computer engineering technology, electrical engineering, engineering technology, the Master of Science in Technology, and the online Master of Construction Management.

(31) As one of North Carolina's three engineering colleges, the University offers Ph.D. programs in engineering. Basic and applied research are conducted by faculty in university centers of excellence, in interinstitutional relationships, and through significant involvement with several public and private agencies. The university also conducts major research through engineering, transportation, and its extension programs in agriculture.

(32) Western Carolina University is a comprehensive university within the University of North Carolina, offering a broad array of undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts, sciences and professions.

(33) Preparing diverse students for success in the 21st Century, Winston-Salem State University offers quality educational programs at the baccalaureate and graduate levels.

(34) The College of Arts and Sciences connects Appalachian State University to the tradition of the liberal arts. Faculty and staff in sixteen academic departments spanning the Humanities, and Mathematical, Natural and Social Sciences, and in two units dedicated to learning about the Appalachian region, provide instruction and research essential to the University's mission.

(35) University College supports Appalachian's goal of providing students with a rigorous liberal education that prepares them for the social, economic, and personal opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century.

The above examples show that the “organization as professional” metaphor is generally introduced by “is,” and the following verbs are used to define organizational scope of business: “offer,” “support,” “provide,” “prepare,” and “conduct (research).”

*Organization as mission-setter.* A mission-setter is one that accomplishes two functions: it aspires and sets missions. Organizations aspire in the sense that they possess hope, and know what such hope entails. Subsequently, they act to turn the hope into truth, including a series of actions such as envisioning organizational roles, defining, and articulating newer missions. Both these aspiring and goal-setting processes define organizations as the “mission-setter,” as the following illustrate:

(36) The Graduate School's role is to foster excellence in all dimensions of post baccalaureate studies and is the primary advocate for graduate education and for graduate students at the University.

(37) Appalachian takes as its mission the practice and propagation of scholarship.

As a “mission-setter,” organizations also endeavor to build up their social image or enhance their identity. They wish to be remembered by individuals and society with particular images and identities. For example:

(38) UNC Charlotte is North Carolina’s urban research university.

(39) The College of Fine and Performing Arts is the creative showcase for the University.

(40) A University of North Carolina campus, Western Carolina University’s College of Business is a leader among schools of business in graduating baccalaureate and masters degree students primarily from the lower Appalachians and the Carolina Piedmont who are *Business Ready* to meet the needs of industries, markets and institutions.

(41) The School of Education is a learning centered organization that prepares a variety of educators and human services professionals and supports their continuing professional development.

(42) The College of Education is a voice of innovation for learning across the life span.

(43) As the largest and oldest unit on campus, the College of Arts and Sciences has always been at the academic center of “the Carolina experience.”

(44) The William States Lee College of Engineering is the first choice for students, faculty, staff and industry partners discovering, integrating, applying and disseminating knowledge.

In the process, metaphors such as “urban research university” (38), “the creative showcase” (39), “a leader” (40), “a learning centered organization” (41), “a voice of innovation” (42), “the academic center” (43), and “the first choice” (44) are explicitly

employed with a view to indicate organizational dreams or aspirations of image and identity, or more precisely put, identity enhancement (Bird, 2007).

In an effort to turn their hope into reality, organizations further engage themselves in a wide range of endeavors, such as “redefining” or to “redefine” their mission, as in (45-46); or to “restate” their purpose, as in (47-48):

(45) The University of North Carolina at Greensboro will redefine the public research university for the 21st century as an inclusive, collaborative, and responsive institution making a difference in the lives of students and the communities it serves.

(46). The College of Arts + Architecture was established in response to the rapid changes in the education of creative leaders. Founded on the collaborative capabilities of the arts and design disciplines, the College defines our work as a critical form of inquiry and problem solving as much as a skill-driven product.

(47) The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state's coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service.

(48) In support of the mission of Fayetteville State University, the School of education is committed to educating and preparing individuals at the undergraduate and graduate levels for professions in the fields of education, research, and service.

It is clearly indicated in the overall mission statement of the entire University of North Carolina that individual member institutions may vary their focus. Nevertheless, the word “system” implies that a certain level of division of work is made with each member institution or member units within the member institution. Such relations are well displayed in (49) and (50) below:

(49) The University of North Carolina School of the Arts is the state’s unique professional school for the performing, visual, and moving image arts, training

students at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels for professional careers in the arts.

(50) The Reich College of Education is the designated professional education unit at Appalachian State University.

For some member institutions or their units, their missions are restated in order to re-focus themselves or to align them with how they are remembered as habitually doing or have been known to do, as in examples (51) to (53):

(51) Committed to diverse and democratic communities, the School of Education of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the first state university in the nation, recognizes and respects the promise of every child.

(52) Firmly grounded in a tradition of rigorous disciplinary inquiry, the College also recognizes the value of connections made across disciplinary boundaries and so supports and encourages interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship and teaching.

(53) Founded in 1887 as a school for the education of American Indians, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke now serves a distinctly diverse student body and encourages inclusion and appreciation for the values of all people.

Finally, most institutions simply dictate their mission, which implies that they are built in or default tasks. Examples of this type abound in the studied mission statements. Below are some illustrations in which words, mainly verbs, indicating the scope of efforts are underlined:

(54) The mission of the John A. Walker College of Business is to offer high quality educational experiences preparing our students for life-long learning and leadership responsibilities in a dynamic, global environment.

(55) Appalachian State University, a member institution of the University of North Carolina, has offered academic Honors programs to its most

academically successful students for more than 35 years. The Honors College offers stimulating Honors classes, a living and social community of like-minded learners, and an environment that values global understanding and service.

(56) The mission of the College of Liberal Arts of North Carolina Central University is to prepare its students to succeed in the fields of English, History, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, Mass Communications, Modern Foreign Languages, Military Science, and Aerospace studies, by offering them rich theoretical knowledge and relevant practical skills to help them excel intellectually, artistically, and professionally.

*Metaphor of enactment: Mission trigger, mission proper, and mission strategy.*

Results of analysis indicate that mission statements are typically made up of three parts: mission trigger, mission proper, and mission strategy. Often the mission trigger is introduced by the structure “the mission / purpose / role ... of the university is ...” or “the university does ....” The mission proper falls in the predicative part of the expression or sentence introduced by the mission trigger; structurally, it takes the form “to do ...” or simply “name of organization + bare verbs.” As its term suggests, a mission strategy explains the strategy most properly identified by the organization for fulfilling the mission proper. “Through v-ing / nominal phrase” and “by v-ing” are frequently used structures indicating the mission strategy. While a mission trigger largely has to do with enactment, mission proper and strategy have to do with the sensemaking process of selection. For that matter, mission proper and mission strategy are discussed under the subsequent subheading on selection. For the sake of current discussion, I am citing here an example illustrating the three parts of a typical mission statement:

(57) A constituent institution of the University of North Carolina system, ECSU is committed to fulfilling our mission of serving as a valuable resource



for building the state's intellectual capital through teaching, research and community outreach.

This example, which varies a bit from most mission statement, is still complete and logical: the predicative fragment “is committed to fulfilling our mission” is the mission trigger, while “serving as a valuable resource for building the state’s intellectual capital” is the mission proper, and “through teaching, research and community outreach” is the mission strategy.

*Metaphor of enactment: Raw materials.* Table 5 below showcases high frequency words making up the “enactment as changer” metaphor and its sub-metaphors. Notice that as in Table 4, the high frequency counts include both the key words and their variational forms in the mission statements under study.

Table 5 Metaphors We Enact by: Metaphor-comprising Words

Ranking	Frequency	Word	Variations
1	204	education	educational, educate, educating, educators, educated, educator’s
4	152	university	university’s
5	145	college	colleges
7	128	school	schools, school’s, schooling
8	118	profession	professions, professional, professionals, professionally, professoriate
10	107	program	programs, programming
15	96	mission	missions
22	79	faculty	faculties
23	78	art	arts, artistic, artists, artistically, artifacts
25	71	science	sciences, nanoscience, geosciences
28	66	activity	act, active, action, activities, interact, contact, actively
32	59	scholars	scholarly, scholarship, scholarships
37	52	academic	academically, academy, academics, academicians, academia
39	50	knowledge	knowledgeable
48	38	discipline	disciplines, disciplinary, interdisciplinary
50	37	technology	technical, technological, technologies, techniques, technically

54	33	business	businesses
55	32	intellectual	intellectually
57	32	work	works, working, workplace, workforce, worker, teamwork, network
58	31	skills	skill, skilled
62	28	information	inform, informs, informing, informational, informal
65	26	institution	institution's, institutions, institutional, interinstitutional
66	25	level	levels
67	25	degree	degrees
68	24	liberal	liberty, liberates
79	21	management	managers
81	20	UNC	UNCG, UNCW, UNCSA, UNCP, ...

### How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Selection?”

#### Metaphors We Select by

*Organization as relevance-maker: The overall metaphor.* Results from my analysis reveal that organizational mission statements typically contain five themes: “Where are we?” “Who are we?” “What do we want to do?” “Strategically, how do we do it?” “What are our purposes and values?” And “what principles do we abide by?” Roughly, in relation to the elements of sensemaking, these five themes respectively correspond with environment-screening (where), enactment (who), selection (what-how), and retention (value-purpose), remembering (principle). When I make this analysis, I am making relevance. The same thing is true about organizational sensemaking: How do we relate ourselves to the five themes is largely pre-determined by what an organization is. Hence it legitimates the overall metaphor, “organization as relevance-maker,” which dictates the entailment that we make sense by making relevance. Put another way, we make sense out of organizational realities by utilizing and communicating information of relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986; 1995).

My results also indicate that some mission statements are longer than others, with the shortest just a sentence long. Interestingly, while the shortest mission statement may delete the other factors of sensemaking, selection always remains. This may imply that, all things being equal, selection is the minimum element in the sensemaking of mission statements. Meanwhile, this indicates a concrete example of the working of the “organization as relevance-maker” metaphor: We aim at achieving the largest optimal effect by using the least means of relevance.

Evolutionists have a message for us: survival of the fittest. When this applies to sensemaking, it becomes “survival of the most relevant.” For instance, in sensemaking, the stages of environment-screening and enactment all suggest indirect or partial efforts of natural adaptation. But when it comes to the selection phase, organizations become clearer or develop a more assured vision and position to survive change. As the above discussion indicates, screening the environment helps organizations become aware of their place or given position in the whole system. Nevertheless, instead of giving in or surrendering to their given status - even though they are not always adversary conditions - organizations choose to respond actively by asking questions “Who are we?” and “What do we want to accomplish?” This elevates organizations to a more proactive position, and helps them to consider themselves as a major role-player in front of the challenges due to environmental changes. As such, they are more mission-sensitive and define their role as follows: server, teacher, researcher, strategist, and goal-hitter.

*Organization as server.* A server, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is “one who serves,” especially “food or drink.” Both “food and drink” are essential, for “food” are “material consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrate, and fat used in

the body of an organism to sustain growth, repair, and vital processes and to furnish energy; *also*: such food together with supplementary substances (as minerals, vitamins, and condiments),” and “dink,” such as “coffee and tea” which are “a liquid suitable for swallowing.”

As a server, the university performs a series of tasks that selectively define the routines of a server: It serves, reaches out, engages, offers help, supports people, addresses needs, and so on. The following are some illustrations:

(58) The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people.

(59) The University serves the people of North Carolina from its residential main campus at Cullowhee, situated between the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains, and through its resident credit programs in Asheville and Cherokee.

(60) The College of Arts and Sciences serves all undergraduate students through general education courses; it also offers disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, combining liberal arts and professional education, with a special commitment to teacher education.

(61) Linking curricular and co-curricular programs, University College engages students, staff, and faculty in (1) active, collaborative teaching, learning, and scholarship, including the investigation of major questions across departmental, divisional, and disciplinary boundaries through interdisciplinary degree programs and general education; and (2) campus, local, and global communities through service, research, leadership development and other forms of learning.

(62) The School serves northeastern North Carolina and reaches out to the global community, primarily through teaching, while also addressing its environmentally sensitive economic needs through service and research activities.

*Organization as teacher.* Han Yu (768-824), a Chinese poet in the Tang dynasty (618-907), once defined the role of a teacher as: “Shi zhe, chuan dao, shou ye, jie huo ye.” That is, a teacher primarily does three things: “chuan dao” (impart knowledge), “shou ye” (train skills), and “jie huo” (mentor and consult). Coincident enough, mission statements abound with similar descriptors of a teacher: “educate citizens and health professional,” “educate teachers, administrators and other education professionals,” “prepare professionals who educate and lead,” “transfer to them (professionals) an uncompromising advocacy for knowledge,” “teaches students in disciplines related to agriculture and life sciences,” to cite only a few.

*Organization as researcher.* Mission statements also numerate a plethora of activities the university as researcher undertakes: “generate new knowledge that seeks improvement of education in the state of North Carolina and across the nation,” “conduct basic and applied research in university centers of excellence, in interinstitutional relationships, and through significant involvement with several public and private agencies,” “conduct major research through engineering, transportation, and its extension programs in agriculture,” “translate research into effective practices and sound policies,” “create new knowledge through innovative research,” “create knowledge, advance science, and inform practice in the health and human services professions,” among these tasks.

*Organization as strategist.* The university not only articulates what it selects to do, but also identifies ways or strategies about how to accomplish them. Moreover, such strategies reflect what these organizations do best, and their unique strengths and expertise, such as teaching and research. More pragmatic strategies in mission statements clearly indicate the means for realizing the stated missions or goals are of

three basic structures: “through...,” “by...,” and “to...” As the result of my analysis displays, mission statements reflect these structures in unprecedented numbers: “Through innovative instruction, creative and collaborative scholarship, and engagement in professional activities,” “by faculty in university centers of excellence, in interinstitutional relationships,” “characterized by high quality faculty-student interaction,” “partner with industry by providing highly-qualified students and graduates, and access to the expertise of the faculty,” and “by preparing undergraduate and graduate students through engaging course work, experiential learning, and intensive training in basic, applied, or pedagogical research; fostering computational and technological literacy, critical analysis and analytical thinking; developing hands-on and literature based research skills for independent learning and effective communication of scientific ideas through writing and presentation; encouraging students, faculty and staff to interact in a motivating and evolving research and learning community, developing essential skills for productive careers as scientists, academicians and professional leaders.”

*Organization as goal-hitter.* The university not only articulates its purpose, and states its mission, but also is aware of the importance of making such purposes and missions measureable. As a result, more concrete goals are set so that it is easy to see and assess them, as are illustrated by the underlined parts below:

(63) In our research-based programs, we educate teachers, administrators and other education professionals to become leaders at all levels of education. We work with our students and with our colleagues in the schools to build learning communities where knowledge and skills, respect, hope and justice can be claimed by children and by the adults who teach and care for them.”

(64) The William States Lee College of Engineering provides quality educational experiences, and discovers and disseminates knowledge that

serves the citizens and industries of local, national and international communities.

Goals

Goal I: Sustain a safe, supportive and inclusive community that prepares our students for life-long learning and success upon graduation.

Goal II: Attract and retain a diverse community of scholars to educate students; generate, apply and disseminate knowledge; and contribute to economic development.

Goal III: Recruit, develop and retain a professional staff to serve and support the expanding mission of the college.

Goal IV: Partner with industry by providing highly-qualified students and graduates, and access to the expertise of the faculty.

Goal V: Enhance the visibility of The William States Lee College of Engineering.

A forceful example to demonstrate the above roles of the university in the sensemaking process of selection is as follows:

(65) We bring about sustainable, positive changes in health by providing an outstanding program of research, teaching and service to:

Educate the next generation of public health leaders;

Discover, test and disseminate solutions to health threats and problems;

Translate research into effective practices and sound policies; and

Serve North Carolina and beyond through outreach, engagement, education of citizens and health professionals, and application of solutions to health threats and problems.

In example (65), the multiple roles of the university are spread crystal-clear:

Server: “translate research into effective practices and sound policies; serve North Carolina and beyond through outreach, engagement, education of citizens and health professionals, and application of solutions to health threats and problems.”

Teacher: “educate the next generation of public health leaders.”

Researcher: “discover, test and disseminate solutions to health threats and problems.”

Strategist: “by providing an outstanding program of research, teaching and service.”

Goal-hitter: “bring about sustainable, positive changes in health.”

Meanwhile, three principles, or binding features, are salient in the selection of what the university aspires to do as a server. First, it selects to do things it is good at, in line with its expertise or professionalism. Second it selects to do things unique, or things people refer to them as brand products by the university. Third, it selects to do things defined or framed by the system’s mission statement.

*Tripartite relationship between teaching, research, and service.* Results display that teaching, research, and service are three missions simultaneously mentioned in all mission statements. This justifies the fact that teaching, research, and service are core functions of the university as a social organization. As such, the university resembles a tripod, in which one leg represents teaching, another research, and the third service. Together, the three legs enable the university to stand firm.

Results also display that the majority of organizational mission statements list the missions in sequence of teaching, research, and service, that a few alter the order by mentioning research before service, and that none mentions service before teaching and research. This indicates a path of organizational building and development in the sense that, in order to establish itself, the university needs to operate and sustain via the delivery of instruction before it engages itself, in part or whole, in research, and before it can talk about service. Additionally, this also indicates a sense of social purpose of the university. By this, it means that the university is aware of its social responsibility and aspires to give back in ways it can to the society.

Given the sequence of the mission of the university, results exhibit the respective importance of teaching, research, and service. If read in decreasing order of importance, teaching is most important of the three, whereas service is least important.



Interestingly, in either case, the role of research seems vital: it is like a bridge linking up the two. As such, research can be a forceful addition to teaching and service. It is a robust addition to teaching in the sense that through faculty's independent research on theory-related issues, or basic research, it deepens the understanding about the content taught, and it broadens the horizon by introducing new knowledge found in faculty research about the content taught. It is a strong addition to service in the sense that through research on reality-related issues or applied research, the university renders a more direct contribution to the community. In fact, this leads to the subsequent point, or one of the most surprising results of the analysis: the service role of the university as absolute and ultimate.

Finally, results display that, at least in mission statements or in rhetoric, the mission of service has been absolute and ultimate. This is so not because service is included in all the analyzed mission statements, but because many mission statements actually begin with "the university serves / or is dedicated to the service of the people of North Carolina," and because dominated by the service mindset, the university strives for more resources to boost its teaching and research in order to ultimately serve the community, and the society. Here "ultimate" and "ultimately" imply the indirectness of university service to the community and society, though the university's indirect service is enhanced by frequent assessments and rankings with terms and rubrics to make such indirect service more transparent and visible.

Hence together, teaching, research, and service define the mission of the university, and their mutual relationships are illustrated in one way or another in the following examples:

(66) That mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society.

This statement incorporates multiple missions the university aspires to accomplish: teaching, research, and service. In this example, research (referred to as “discover, create”) comes before teaching (synonymous of “transmit”) and community service (mentioned as (“apply knowledge”), because the university (University of North Carolina) is categorized as a research university.

Often, the tripartite mission elements are further described or explained in terms of their role and content, as in the following mission statement of the University of Western North Carolina:

Teaching and learning: Its real meaning is “having the primary focus on teaching and learning that advances professional knowledge and creative skills through the application of construction management, engineering, technology, math, science, and business / management by providing on-campus, distance and life-long education.”

The purpose or ultimate goal of the teaching priority is, among other things, “Educating minds, developing creators and problem-solvers, promoting management/leadership skills, critical thinking, life-long learning, and promoting innovation to provide fundamentals with a high quality education.”

Scholarship and discovery: “Developing scholarly and creative endeavors which are recognized as critical components in faculty development and in the maintenance of management and technological literacy and life-long learning.” Correspondingly, the task and goal are: “Engaging in scholarly activities appropriate to construction management, engineering and technology applications.”

Service and engagement: Meaning “supporting engagement through professional, industry-related, and community service activities for faculty and students.” The task or method includes “utilizing the school’s faculty and staff expertise for the benefit of students, industry, government, and society throughout Western North Carolina.”

Sometimes the mission focus varies slightly from one institution to the next, due to their respective value in the Carnegie classification system and their results from other ranking systems. In this regard, some institutions straightforwardly articulate this distinctive focus, while others choose to mention it in an indirect way, as is evident in (67) below:

(67) With a distinctively residential campus and a faculty and staff characterized by high quality and broad diversity of professional skills, Appalachian takes as its mission the practice and propagation of scholarship.

Here “the practice and propagation of scholarship” may certainly cover teaching, research, and service, within the scope of the university’s routine work and targeted plan. In (68) below, the “diversity” lens prompts Elizabeth City University to proclaim its mission statement in even more indirect terms:

(68) Elizabeth City State University, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, offers baccalaureate, graduate, and professional programs for a diverse student body.

In the statement, “teaching, research, and service” are paraphrased by the provision of “baccalaureate, graduate, and professional” programs in the interest of its diverse population.

Viewed as a whole, the tripartite roles of the university are easier to draw: teaching is a default mission, research an added mission to those that are thus

positioned, and service is a fundamental or absolute mission that is expected of all institutions. As such, the university competes hard in both teaching and research to garner more resources with the intent to best serve the socio-economic advancements of the community in which it is located.

*Metaphors of selection: Raw materials.* The results of this analysis reveal that, similar to metaphors of environment-screening and enactment, metaphors of selection are also built up by raw materials such as words. Table 6 below summarizes high frequency words and their variations making up the “organization as server” metaphor and its sub-metaphors:

Table 6: Metaphors We Select by: Metaphor-comprising Words

Ranking	Frequency	Word	Variations
3	161	serve	service, serves, serving, underserved, served
6	136	research	researchers
13	102	provide	provides, providing, provided, provision, provisions
16	90	teach	teaching, teacher, teachers, teaches
21	82	develop	develops, developed, development, developing
29	65	create	creates, creative, creativity, creation, creating, recreation, recreational, creators, created
30	65	prepare	prepares, prepared, preparing, preparation
38	51	engagement	engaged, engage, engaging, engages
40	49	excel	excellence, excellent
42	45	support	supports, supportive, supporting, supported
46	39	offer	offers, offered, offering, offerings
53	34	enhance	enhances, enhanced, enhancement
56	32	innovative	innovates, innovativeness, innovation
60	30	promote	promotes, promoting, promotions
70	24	continuing	continue, continued, continuously, continuous, continual
75	22	meet	meeting
77	22	advance	advances, advancing, advancement

## How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Retention?”

### Metaphors We Retain by

In Weick’s framework, retention is next to selection. The question is: “How does such a phase fit in well with the sensemaking process?” To address this issue, it is fundamental to ask another question: “What do we retain?” Fortunately, the metaphor-focused results of analysis provide some hints. To begin with, “organization is the retainer.” And this umbrella metaphor is further supported by two sub-metaphors: “organization as value-keeper” and “organization as role-player.”

*Organization as retainer.* Having included the mission trigger, mission proper, and mission strategy, it seems that an organization’s mission statements are complete. Nevertheless, sensemakers insist that there is a subsequent phase called “retention.” My analysis so far supports the idea: change in the environment enacts the initial phase of sensemaking process, environment-screening. Environment-screening urges organizations to react to change; it helps them to realize the importance of becoming an active player in the change; in fact, they become the changer. As such, they adjust their missions: articulating them, selecting the foci, identifying the strategies relevant for the realization of the chosen foci, and setting the goals. The human sensemaking brain, however, does not stop here, because it goes on to incorporate a summary stage, asking the question: “What have we learned from the previous steps of the sensemaking process?” This then prompts a further question: “What messages can the learning or knowledge gained in the previous phases inform the next round or newer round of sensemaking?” This is where the retention phase becomes an important part of the sensemaking process.

The above analysis indicates that mission statements reflect the process of the

reflection outcomes. Often successful outcomes range from elements of value to aspects of belief and roles relevant to the organization. This is the essence of retention, as well as of the essence of the “organization as retainer” metaphor. Logically, it follows that such retained elements generally appear after the selection phase.

Again the question is: “What do we, as an organization, retain?” Stated differently, “what are the contents of organization as retainer?” In terms of grammar, the verb “to retain” is transitive and can only be followed by certain direct objects that dictate expressions like “retain position,” “retain beliefs,” “retain values,” and “retain certain features.” In fact, organizational mission statements under this analysis demonstrate a similar semantic magnitude. We will first briefly illustrate “organization as retainer of beliefs” and “organization as retainer of uniqueness,” and reserve “organization as value-keeper” and “organization as role-player,” the other two salient manifestations of the “organization as retainer” metaphor we will reserve, for separate discussions that follow.

Retainer of uniqueness. The university is aware of competitions better than anyone else. For that matter, uniqueness or efforts to cultivate their unique character is often written in their mission statements. While uniqueness may denote default program features, ethnic-regional features may also play a large part in the process.

(69) As such, UNCSCA provides gifted developing artists with the experience, knowledge, and skills needed to excel in their disciplines and in their lives; and serves and enriches the cultural and economic prosperity of the people of North Carolina, the south, and the United States.

Apparently in statement (69), UNCSCA specializes in training gifted students in the arts. While this is already unique, at least among its peers within the UNC system, it aspires to forge its unique character and competitiveness by positioning itself in

“serving and enriching the cultural and economic prosperity of the people of North Carolina, the south, and the United States.”

(70) Substantial research activity, combined with our hallmark teaching excellence and moderate size, advances distinctive student involvement in faculty scholarship.

Different from the statement explained in (69), the university states its uniqueness in example (70) by mentioning it in a summative and vague language with words like “hallmark,” “moderate,” and “distinctive.”

Retainer of beliefs. The university lives by beliefs. Moreover, it retains beliefs that were proved working in the past, and beliefs that it deems to prove effective in the future. The following are some examples showcasing this point from analyzed mission statements:

(71) The breadth and depth of learning provided by the College are necessary for productive citizenship in a free society.

In this example, the college believes that what it possesses, in terms of expertise, programs, vision, philosophy, and pedagogy, are basic qualifications which should be associated with “productive citizens in a free society.” Accordingly, it implies the use of a corresponding pedagogy for training the students.

(72) Today’s students are incredibly skilled, passionate, curious, and realistic, but they confront global challenges we’re just beginning to understand. The College is committed to preparing students for a lifetime of sustained art-making. Though the forms of art-making and design practice will change over time and according to new contexts, the core belief in the power of the arts to enhance people’s lives forms the bedrock of the CoA+A.

In the case of statement (72), the college of arts and architecture (CoA +A) places at

its “core belief” the idea that “arts is powerful” and that “the power of arts” is so tremendous as to “enhance people’s lives.” Metaphorically speaking, it “forms the bedrock of the CoA+A.” This is not simply a belief; it is an assertion of faith.

*Organization as value-keeper.* Merriam-Webster defines “value” as “relative worth, utility, or importance.” When this is translated into sensemaking terms, value connotes several notions, as the following illustrates:

(73) Committed to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and service, the university extends its services and programs to the community, including the military, and other educational institutions throughout North Carolina, the nation, and the world.

In this example, “value” stands for “commitment to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and service.” It becomes a guiding framework for university activities. Additionally, this also encourages the university to extend its scope of business by offering “service and programs to the community, including the military, and other educational institutions,” and to sharpen its positioning: “throughout North Carolina, the nation, and the world.”

(74) Through teaching, research, and community engagement, Elizabeth City State University provides a student-centered environment, delivered in a manner that enhances student learning.

In the case of example (74), the university places the students at the central position of all university work at Elizabeth City State. Accordingly, it implies the need to align all campus activities in the service of students, and assessment of all work with a student-centered view.

Often the university explicitly informs the audience what it values in the mission



statement. As example (75) below portrays, “the total person” is the ultimate goal of student achievement. For that matter, core values are placed on the same level as “diversity, creativity, and balance.” Additionally, a “life-long development” mindset is emphasized in making “the total person.”

(75) The School of Health & Human Performance (HHP) values diversity, creativity and balance in the life-long development of the total person.

As a value-keeper, the university clearly indicates in its mission statements what it encourages, expects, and emphasizes. Alternatively, it indirectly implies what it does not encourage and auspice. Four examples suffice:

(76) It seeks to encourage intellectual productivity and to increase the academic and professional skills of its students and faculty.

(77) North Carolina Central University, therefore, encourages and expects faculty and students to engage in scholarly, creative, and service activities, which benefit the community.

(78) Our liberal arts educational approach emphasizes life skills including critical thinking, clear and thoughtful expression, and honest open inquiry. Students undertake concentrated study in one area while simultaneously developing an understanding of the connections among disciplines. We encourage students to clarify, develop and live their own values while respecting the views and beliefs of others. In addition, we cultivate an understanding of the dimensions of human diversity while recognizing the common humanity of all. We believe a quality liberal arts education enables our graduates to be lifelong learners and to lead successful, flourishing lives as leaders and contributors to their communities.

(79) The College encourages study in diverse local, regional, national, and international communities, and seeks to cultivate the habits of inquiry, learning, and service among all of its constituents.

After all, what does the university value? The many attributes include but are not

limited to: scholarship, life-long learning, being responsive, equal and fair access, affordability, gender-racial-cultural diversity, caring, integrity, collaboration, efficiency, innovation, inclusiveness, team-work, collegiality, and mutual respect. As examples (80)-(83) below illustrate:

(80) Creating vibrant and supportive life-long learning environments to ensure a cadre of nurses who value and participate in scholarship and life-long learning, and who are able quickly to respond to and effectively address the changing health needs and problems of the state and nation.

(81) Ensuring equal and fair access to its programs to guarantee that a gender-, racially/ethnically-, and culturally-diverse professional group will be ready to serve a similarly diverse population.

(82) Fulfilling its covenant of care with the publics it serves.

(83) In accomplishing this mission, the Graduate School values integrity, collaboration, efficiency, innovation, and inclusiveness in all that it does.

Basically, two pragmatic strategies are employed for denoting organizational values: One, directly express it with the verb “to value,” adopting the phrase “we value ...,” as in example (84):

(84) In fulfilling this mission, we value:

Accessible and affordable quality education that equips students with intellectual and professional skills, ethical principles, and an international perspective.

A strong foundation in liberal arts and opportunities for experiential education to enhance students’ personal and professional growth.

A robust intellectual environment that values social and cultural diversity, free expression, collegiality, integrity, and mutual respect.

A safe, diverse, team-oriented, ethically responsible, and respectful workplace environment that develops the professional capacities of our faculty and staff. Experiences and perspectives into learning, discovery, and service.

A second strategy indirectly expresses the organizational values with other value-laden concepts, such as “action,” “collaboration,” “personal and community values,” “social and environmental sustainability,” “public responsibility,” “social and professional recognition.” This pragmatic strategy and its realizational linguistic patterns are underlined in examples (85)-(91):

(85) Guided by an ethic of caring and interdisciplinary collaboration, HES addresses the needs of people from diverse cultures across the entire lifespan.

(86) The faculty of the Watson School of Education strives to demonstrate: excellence in teaching; engagement in the generation and dissemination of knowledge; infusion of technology as an instructional tool; development of new roles and relationships in the institution of education; and inquiry, continuous learning, creativity, and the valuing of diversity.

(87) This role challenges the College to reveal and explore avenues of human expression in forms unique to the arts, and to seek innovative and integrated means for faculty and students to discover and create art which expresses both personal and community values.

(88) The college will be recognized for graduates who are ethical, adaptive, technically capable and innovative professionals.

(89) Achieving recognition of NC State as a model for leadership and innovation in graduate education in North America.

(90) The success of SBE students is, in part, the result of varied scholarly pursuits of faculty, which emphasize pedagogical and applied research.

(91) We incorporate economic, social and environmental sustainability into our institutional practices and curriculum. With a range of associated centers, partnerships, and initiatives, we fulfill our public responsibility to address the needs of our community through a continuum of learning.

A more complex example is found in (92):

(92) The campus is where we push beyond what anyone might expect. Action is at the heart of any arts practice. The arts and architecture disciplines are the engine for creative education, creative programming, creative leadership development, and creative community engagement by the University. The College promotes a dynamic arts program in which a diverse group of students are encouraged as artists and designers to become self-reflective, intellectually curious and politically engaged.

Today's students are incredibly skilled, passionate, curious, and realistic, but they confront global challenges we're just beginning to understand. The College is committed to preparing students for a lifetime of sustained art-making. Though the forms of art-making and design practice will change over time and according to new contexts, the core belief in the power of the arts to enhance people's lives forms the bedrock of the CoA+A.

Five themes bring measure to these efforts, draw experts from around the world to the CoA+A, define our faculty and students, and cut across all disciplines within the College:

Arts Education and research in how arts education inspires, innovates, and stimulates learning;

Sustainability as a cultural imperative through integrative design solutions and socially responsible community engagement;

Performance not only as it pertains to dance, theater, and music, but to the College's vision of full collaboration across and cooperation between all disciplines;

Global Education & Practices as both the stimulus and context for most artistic and architectural work today;

Communications Design as the conjoining of traditional medias of graphic design, illustration, and modeling with new practices of digital media, film, video, and performance to extend our potential to tell stories and record human experience.

Take a closer look at our Schools and Departments or contact us directly to find out how you can be a part of what we're doing at the College of Arts + Architecture.

In this example, the value-loaded ideas of "campus" and "expect" are employed at the outset of the statement. The central noun of "action" is introduced and compared to or metaphorized as the "engine." Next the "core belief" that "the arts has the power to enhance people's lives" is further compared to or metaphorized as the "the bedrock of the CoA+A." Finally "sustainability" is understood as "a cultural imperative."

*Organization as role-player.* In terms of retention, the university plays several major roles, which it believes is important for success or based on past successes.

These include: The university as center, community, leader, and leader-preparer. I will elaborate on each of these roles in the following.

**Center.** A crucial role that the university has played and aspires to continue is as the “center” of activities and events relevant to its expertise, changes and contributions that it can produce. The following statements (93)-(99) exemplify this fundamental role:

(93) Our mission is to serve as a center for research, scholarship, and creativity and to teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to become the next generation of leaders.

(94) The mission of the UNCG School of Music is: to provide a rich, stimulating environment in which students can develop as music professionals through a comprehensive curriculum enhanced by the liberal arts for undergraduate students, and through study, training, and experiences for graduate students (through the doctoral level) that will enable them to become specialists and leaders in their fields to offer a variety of opportunities for musical growth and creative achievement for all University students; and to function as a center of intellectual, educational, and cultural excellence on campus, regionally, nationally, and globally.

(95) The mission of the UNCG School of Nursing is to make a difference in the lives of nursing students and the communities it serves by being inclusive, collaborative, and responsive. The School of Nursing is a:  
Learner-centered community preparing nursing generalists, specialists, and researchers.  
Scholarly community advancing knowledge through collaborative research that will enhance the discipline of nursing and health of persons across the lifespan.  
Source of leadership to meet regional and global nursing and healthcare challenges.  
Diverse school integrating intercultural and international perspectives into learning, inquiry, and service.

(96) The School of Education is a learning centered organization that prepares a variety of educators and human services professionals and supports their continuing professional development.

(97) Through teaching, research, and community engagement, Elizabeth City State University provides a student-centered environment, delivered in a manner that enhances student learning, while preparing its graduates for leadership roles and lifelong learning.

(98) Appalachian is committed to excellence in its undergraduate and graduate educational programs, while continuing to serve as a center of cultural and professional activity within its state and region.

(99) The Hayes School of Music serves as the center for music creativity, performance and instruction on campus and within the region.

Basically, examples (93)-(98) outline the various meanings of a “center.” Thanks to its commitment to excellence, the university operates like a center of its own internal programs, and draws broader interest and participation from programs and individuals outside of itself; indeed, a center is by its very nature of cultural and professional activity as exhibited by (98). In a similar vein, the organization of example (99) positions itself as “center for music creativity, performance and instruction on campus and within the region.”

A slightly different example from those mentioned above is the notion of what role the university has played and continues to aspire to play as a center of intellectual life. That is the role of “resource (of expertise).” While this explains why the university is the center of knowledge and service, the role that the university plays in (93)-(98), distinguishes it from other social organizations and thus carves out a unique set of characteristics as seen in (100).

(100) a source of innovation and leadership, meeting social, economic, and environmental challenges in the Piedmont Triad, North Carolina, and beyond; and a global university integrating intercultural and international experiences and perspectives into learning, discovery, and service.

Originally, the university meant a place where important learning occurred. For that matter, it has often been likened to a think tank. For UNC Greensboro, it hopes to play the same role as that expressed by (100). Worded slightly different in its mission statement, UNC Greensboro wishes to become a “source of innovation and leadership” as well as a “global university.” It is interesting to note that “source of innovation and leadership” can also mean a “source of innovation” that highlights research and scholarship, and a “source of leadership,” that is “leadership of leadership.”

**Community.** There are two kinds of value in the organizational use of the noun “community:” The “community” outside the university, of which the university tends to consider itself as a part, or, the “community” inside the university, which the university aspires to build. Since the former use has more to do with the “service” part of the university, which I discussed in the previous section under the heading “organization as server,” I will focus the discussion on the latter use of the idea here. The following are some examples (101-106) that portray the “university as community:”

(101) The William States Lee College of Engineering provides quality educational experiences, and discovers and disseminates knowledge that serves the citizens and industries of local, national and international communities.

Goals

Goal I: Sustain a safe, supportive and inclusive community that prepares our students for life-long learning and success upon graduation.

Goal II: Attract and retain a diverse community of scholars to educate students; generate, apply and disseminate knowledge; and contribute to economic development.

(102) To meet its mission the Reich College of Education commits to the following:

Providing programs of excellence that challenge and support faculty and candidates;

....

Promoting a community of practice that values collaboration as well as respect for the contribution of each candidate, faculty, and staff member;  
Maintaining meaningful contact and support with alumni and employers.

(103) Through its culturally diverse faculty, staff, students, and alumni, the CST cultivates an interdisciplinary and comprehensive learning environment for our science community by:  
Preparing undergraduate and graduate students through engaging course work, experiential learning, and intensive training in basic, applied, or pedagogical research;  
Fostering computational and technological literacy, critical analysis and analytical thinking;  
Developing hands-on and literature based research skills for independent learning and effective communication of scientific ideas through writing and presentation;  
Encouraging students, faculty and staff to interact in a motivating and involving research and learning community, developing essential skills for productive careers as scientists, academicians and professional leaders.

(104) The College fulfills its mission by developing and maintaining a community of scholars that promotes and recognizes good teaching, service, and research. Of these three scholarly activities, providing optimal learning environments for students is most important, followed by service and research.

(105) The College fulfills its mission by creating and nourishing a community of learners guided by knowledge, values, and experiences. The guiding principles of the community of learners include: (1) the belief that the best educational decisions are made after adequate reflection and with careful consideration of the interests, experiences and welfare of the persons affected by those decisions; (2) an appreciation of and respect for diversity; and (3) a commitment to fostering the responsible use of technology.

(106) This is accomplished particularly through instruction, but also through the research, creative, and service activities of the university community.

Indeed, multiple forms of community are performed, and will still be performed, by the university: while some simply espouse to build “the university as a community as a whole,” as in (106), others assume scalar levels of the community, such as “local, national and international communities” as in (101), and still others indicate



properties of the community, such as “a safe, supportive and inclusive community” in (101). In addition, some stress community as one that is “a community of practice” as in (102), some have in mind the activity of the community, such as formulating “a learning community” as in (103). Finally, some intend to formulate “a community of scholars,” as in (104), “a diverse community of scholars,” as in (101), or “a community of learners,” as in (105).

**Leader.** Results of analysis show that the university aspires to lead or provide leadership. If its leadership role has been played in the past, the university presumes to value it in its mission articulation, as examples (107)-(112) below illustrate:

(107) We are committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service and to preparing our graduates to lead meaningful and productive lives as agents of change in shaping the future of America and the world.

(108) Our graduates are catalysts for learning and leading in diverse contexts who engage in collaborative practice with key stakeholders from local to global communities.

(109) Enhancing its historic strengths in agriculture, science, and engineering with a commitment to excellence in a comprehensive range of academic disciplines, North Carolina State University provides leadership for intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and technological development within the state, the nation, and the world.

(110) The school is further committed to providing leadership in teacher education throughout the region, state, and nation.

(111) The College strives to provide leadership and technical assistance for the improvement of teacher preparation and elementary and secondary schooling in North Carolina, the nation, and developing countries.

(112) In adjusting to a changing educational environment, the Graduate School promotes communication and cooperation among faculty and students

across traditional academic boundaries, promotes development of innovative and interdisciplinary programs, seeks funding to support these programs, helps create an environment that will allow research and creative activity to flourish, and provides leadership in achieving diversity in all aspects of graduate education.

These five examples (107)-(112) reveal that the university aspires to be a leader and to provide leadership. It aspires to lead either in a general or in a specific area of expertise. For example, in (110), “the school... is committed to providing leadership in teacher education throughout the region, state, and nation.” North Carolina State University aspires to provide “leadership for intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and technological development within the state, the nation, and the world,” as in (109).

**Leader-preparer.** Still another cardinal function that the university has played and aspires to play is of a “leader-preparer.” Here the noun “leader” may either mean a catalyst of change, or a trained professional leading the role to shape environments. This identified role of the university is pivotal in the sense that the university is an ever growing leader. As such, it endeavors to upgrade its expertise and skills so that it leads their counterparts in teaching, research, and service. For that matter, the examples (113)-(121) below display the university’s leader-preparing role in multiple ways:

(113) We bring about sustainable, positive changes in health by providing an outstanding program of research, teaching and service to:  
Educate the next generation of public health leaders;  
Discover, test and disseminate solutions to health threats and problems;  
Translate research into effective practices and sound policies; and  
Serve North Carolina and beyond through outreach, engagement, education of citizens and health professionals, and application of solutions to health threats and problems.

(114) In our research-based programs, we educate teachers, administrators and other education professionals to become leaders at all levels of education.

We work with our students and with our colleagues in the schools to build learning communities where knowledge and skills, respect, hope and justice can be claimed by children and by the adults who teach and care for them.

(115) We prepare professionals who educate and lead. Our inquiry and practice reflect integrity, a commitment to social justice, and the value of diversity in a global community.

(116) Now our teaching and research are more essential than ever, as we prepare our students for the complexities of the 21st century.

(117) Linking curricular and co-curricular programs, University College engages students, staff, and faculty in (1) active, collaborative teaching, learning, and scholarship, including the investigation of major questions across departmental, divisional, and disciplinary boundaries through interdisciplinary degree programs and general education; and (2) campus, local, and global communities through service, research, leadership development and other forms of learning.

(118) Awarding degrees at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and the doctorate in educational leadership, FSU offers programs in teacher education, the arts and sciences, health professions, business and economics, and unique and emerging fields. FSU is an institution of opportunity and diversity.

(119) The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University teaches students in disciplines related to agriculture and life sciences, creates new knowledge through innovative research, provides solutions for the public with community-based extension programs, and develops leaders to guide society – all in an effort to improve the economic, environmental and social well-being of our state and the world.

(120) Through its culturally diverse faculty, staff, students, and alumni, the CST cultivates an interdisciplinary and comprehensive learning environment for our science community by:  
Preparing undergraduate and graduate students through engaging course work, experiential learning, and intensive training in basic, applied, or pedagogical research;  
Fostering computational and technological literacy, critical analysis and analytical thinking;

Developing hands-on and literature based research skills for independent learning and effective communication of scientific ideas through writing and presentation;

Encouraging students, faculty and staff to interact in a motivating and evolving research and learning community, developing essential skills for productive careers as scientists, academicians and professional leaders.

(121) Our liberal arts educational approach emphasizes life skills including critical thinking, clear and thoughtful expression, and honest open inquiry. ... We believe a quality liberal arts education enables our graduates to be lifelong learners and to lead successful, flourishing lives as leaders and contributors to their communities.

*Metaphors of retention: Raw materials.* Corresponding to the sections above on the raw materials for metaphors of sensemaking elements, Table 7 below highlights high frequency words that compose the “organization as retainer” metaphor and its sub-metaphors. In alignment with similar previous efforts, frequency is counted with an inclusion of the variational forms of words.

Table 7: Metaphors We Retain by: Metaphor-comprising Words

Num.	Frequency	Word	Variations
2	179	student	students, student's
9	108	graduate	graduates, graduation, graduating, undergraduate, postgraduate
14	101	community	communities
17	89	leadership	lead, leads, leading, leader, leaders
18	86	learn	learning, learner, learners
26	70	life	live, lifespan, lifelong, lives, living
27	69	health	healthy, healthcare
33	58	diverse	diversity
34	57	quality	qualities, qualified
36	53	cultural	culture, culturally, multicultural, intercultural, cultures, cultured, acculturating, acculturates, agriculture, agricultural
44	42	practice	practices, practical, practitioners
49	37	needs	need, needed
52	36	human	humanity, humanities
59	30	honors	honor

61	28	care	careful, healthcare
72	23	opportunities	opportunity
73	23	value	values
74	23	personal	person, personally, personalized, personally, persons
76	22	citizens	citizenry, citizenship
78	22	responsible	responsibility
80	21	individuals	individual, individually
82	20	communication	communicate, communicates, communicator, communications

### How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence “Remembering?”

#### Metaphors We Remember by

*Organization as rememberer: The overall metaphor.* Organizations remember.

And so does organizing. Organizations remember because they comprise sensemaking human beings who remember what happened, when it happened, where and how it happened, and perhaps most importantly why it happened. Organizing involves remembering because what is counted as success or lessons in past experiences may be transferred to guide upcoming organizational actions and practices.

Results of analysis indicate that among the one hundred and thirty-two mission statements under study, sixty-seven (50.76%) are void of metaphors of remembering, and that fifty-five (41.67%) mission statements are present with forty-five metaphors of remembering, both explicit and implicit. Viewed more closely, of the forty-five metaphors of remembering, sixteen (35.56%) belong to metaphors of history, while the rest twenty-nine (64.44%) comprise metaphors of principle. I will discuss the two subtypes of metaphor below.

*The rememberer: organization as history-defender.* According to Weick, “retrospect” is a basic property of sensemaking. But he does not go on to identify or to depict, the details that resulted in the “retrospecting” act. Fortunately, our analysis

of mission statements helps to fill the gap of information. To begin with, organizations tend to recall their history. This history-awareness and history-defender role is exemplified in several ways: displaying pride, reaffirming focus, and marketing or promoting programs.

(122) The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the nation's first public university, serves North Carolina, the United States, and the world through teaching, research, and public service.

For "the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill," there is a great pride in mentioning and remembering the fact that it was established in 1789 and hence is America's oldest public university. This pride may imply a call for loyalty to this public university, which is witnessed in every year's March madness during which, UNC basketball fans cheer with their utmost enthusiasm. In addition, it may also assemble trust in this public university in terms of its competence and experience in serving the public.

(123) It is the nation's first public liberal arts institution founded for African-Americans.

The same can be said of North Carolina Central University's deliberate mentioning of it as America's "first public liberal arts institution arts institution founded for African-Americans." The appeal here is not only when it was founded, but also for whom. This means a lot to an institution as higher education finds itself in competition for student resources. Hence such a history-defender retrospection functions as a pragmatic as well as marketing strategy. Similar uses are found in (124) below:

(124) Appalachian State University, a member institution of the University of North Carolina, has offered academic Honors programs to its most academically successful students for more than 35 years.

(125) North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is a public, comprehensive, land-grant university committed to fulfilling its fundamental purposes through exemplary undergraduate and graduate instruction, scholarly and creative research, and effective public service.

A land-grant university is a higher educational institution designated by each state in America to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. With a view to support and promote higher education, the Acts grant to each state certain federally controlled land for it to develop or sell to raise funds to found and endow “land grant” colleges and universities that set their missions to teach agriculture, science, and engineer. For “North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University,” remembering itself as a “land-grant university” helps re-sharpen its mission, reaffirm its service, and enhance its unique identity and character in a time of change.

As with example (125), “North Carolina State University” also feels proud of its historical identity, focus, and strength in “agriculture, science, and engineering.” In stating its newer mission, remembering this history-linkage enables the university to boost its confidence and sharpen its focus in (126):

(126) Enhancing its historic strengths in agriculture, science, and engineering with a commitment to excellence in a comprehensive range of academic disciplines, North Carolina State University provides leadership for intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and technological development within the state, the nation, and the world.

(127) Founded in 1887 as a school for the education of American Indians, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke now serves a distinctly diverse student body and encourages inclusion and appreciation for the values of all people.

Example (127) differs from the above examples where history-awareness is attached with other intents. Here, by remembering the fact that it was “founded in 1887 as a school for the education of American Indians,” the University of North Carolina at Pembroke best interprets its original vision to deliver higher education to a diverse student body rather than merely the dominant majority of Caucasian Americans. In so doing, it aligns well with its current mission of “inclusion and appreciation for the values of all people,” as it clearly states:

(128) We celebrate our heritage as we enhance the intellectual, cultural, economic, and social life of the region.

(129) As a comprehensive, historically Black constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, Winston-Salem State University contributes to the social, cultural, intellectual and economic growth of the region, North Carolina and beyond.

In (129), “Winston-Salem State University” remembers two concepts: it was founded as Black college, and it joined the University of North Carolina system as a “historically Black constituent institution.” By remembering this identity, the university will continue to defend that identity.

(130) Walker College was reaccredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in the spring of 2008.

For people outside Walker College of Appalachian State University, the phrases “was reaccredited” and “in the spring of 2008” do not make any sense. But to citizens of Walker College, they have special meanings. Valuing the reaccrediting process defines its determination of defending history. Another example is UNC Greensboro’s School of Music that remembers its history in (131):



(131) The School of Music has been an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Music since 1938.

(132) As northeastern North Carolina's four-year institution of higher education, Elizabeth City State University has been an important academic and cultural center for the region.

In (132), the necessity of remembering is implicitly entailed. Serving as “an important academic and cultural center” for “northern Carolina” connotes many ideas. Among them is the fact that its “four-year institution of higher education” will continue playing its due role. This seems a guarantee as well as a marketing device in the mission statement.

(133) In keeping with its historical role, an important aspect of the Law School's mission is to attract capable persons from diverse backgrounds who are committed to public service and to meeting the needs of people and communities that are underserved by or that are under-represented in the legal profession.

Again, it is about “keeping with its historical role.” North Carolina Central University’s Law School was “founded to educate African-Americans.” Now to align with that “historical role,” it is of course vital “to attract capable persons from diverse backgrounds who are committed to public service and to meeting the needs of people and communities that are underserved by or that are under-represented in the legal profession.”

(134) As the largest and oldest unit on campus, the College of Arts and Sciences has always been at the academic center of "the Carolina experience."

On the other hand, “the College of Arts and Sciences” of UNC Chapel Hill remembers its historical role in a different way; it mentions that it is “the largest and

oldest unit on campus.” Since UNC Chapel Hill remembers itself as “the nation’s first public university;” hence “the College of Arts and Sciences” is naturally the first among its peers. This mentioning of history speaks both to its role historically and to the present: “always been at the academic center of ‘the Carolina experience’.” By “the Carolina experience,” it refers to a program initiated by the Housing Department at UNC Chapel Hill with the mission “to expose students to the broad range of opportunities for involvement, pride and learning that exist at and around the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill community.”

(<http://housing.unc.edu/residence-life/living-learning-communities/carolina-experience.html>)

(135) Committed to diverse and democratic communities, the School of Education of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the first state university in the nation, recognizes and respects the promise of every child.

Since the School of Education at UNC Chapel Hill was not the first of its kind in the nation (it was founded in 1885) (<http://soe.unc.edu/about/glance/>), by mentioning in its mission statement that the university is “the first state university in the nation” adds to its strategy of marketing rather than to its pride.

*The rememberer: organization as principle-observer.* One definition that *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* includes for the noun “principle” is “a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption, or habitual right behavior.” As such, the university is seen as a principle-observer in many examples under analysis.

(136) This mission is accomplished through instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives; through research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process; and through public service, which contributes to the

solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State. In the fulfillment of this mission, the University shall seek an efficient use of available resources to ensure the highest quality in its service to the citizens of the State.

In (136), the UNC system mission statement mentions the “within-strategy principles” that have proven effective: “instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives;” “research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process;” and “public service, which contributes to the solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State.” Additionally, it also observes the principle of “efficient use of available resources.”

(137) Teaching and learning constitute the primary service that the University renders to society. Teaching, or instruction, is the primary responsibility of each of the constituent institutions. The relative importance of research and public service, which enhance teaching and learning, varies among the constituent institutions, depending on their overall missions.

Furthermore, the UNC’s system mission statement clearly expounds the tripartite relationships between teaching, research, and service. The overall concept is that teaching and learning are “the primary service that the University renders to society,” that teaching is “the primary responsibility of each of the constituent institutions,” and that the importance of “research and public service, which enhance teaching and learning, varies among the constituent institutions, depending on their overall missions.”

(138) The university is also a leader in facilitating sustainable economic growth, while safeguarding the unique culture and natural resources of the region.

When I discussed the university as role-player under the heading “metaphors we select by,” “leader” can also be a concept. Used with “in facilitating sustainable economic growth,” and “safeguarding the unique culture and national resources of the region,” it suggests much sense of a principle, namely socio-economic leadership.

(139) With lux, libertas—light and liberty—as its founding principles, the University has charted a bold course of leading change to improve society and to help solve the world’s greatest problems.

The principles at UNC Chapel Hill make one think of the tagline at UNC Greensboro: “Inspire. Change.” A similar example is (140) below:

(140) The College of Arts + Architecture was established in response to the rapid changes in the education of creative leaders.

(141) Committed to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and service, the university extends its services and programs to the community, including the military, and other educational institutions throughout North Carolina, the nation, and the world.

Once again, “committed to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and service” reveals Fayetteville State University as a principle-keeper. Similar uses are exemplified in the following (142-170), where the principle-related expressions are underlined:

(142) The university upholds a strong liberal arts tradition and a commitment to academic excellence in a diverse educational and cultural environment.

(143) We develop a commitment to continuing service characterized by an informed, responsible, and creative engagement with the Asheville area, the southern Appalachian region, the state of North Carolina, and a diverse and increasingly connected world.

(144) We (UNC Chapel Hill) embrace an unwavering commitment to excellence as one of the world's great research universities.

(145) UNC Charlotte maintains a particular commitment to addressing the cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater Charlotte region.

(146) Operate an attractive, environmentally responsible and sustainable campus integrated with the retail and residential neighborhoods that surround us.

(147) UNCG is a: learner-centered, accessible, and inclusive community fostering intellectual inquiry to prepare students for meaningful lives and engaged citizenship.

(148) Students are encouraged to participate in activities that develop their intellectual curiosity and mold them into responsible stewards of the world.

(149) We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education, the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

(150) Through this unique blend of disciplines, the College integrates health, wellness, and education to position Appalachian State as the premier University for the outstanding academic preparation of health and human sciences professionals in western North Carolina.

(151) Appalachian is committed to excellence in its undergraduate and graduate educational programs, while continuing to serve as a center of culture and professional activity within its state and region.

(152) The Office of Graduate Education at Elizabeth City State University is committed to the mission of the university by providing graduate-level programs to meet the diverse needs of the citizenry of northeastern North Carolina.

(153) The central focus of our mission is the development of leaders who promote social justice and dedicate themselves to the well-being of a global community.

(154) These same provisions to the extent feasible are offered to the School's alumni and other area information professionals.

(155) We are committed to giving Carolina students an exceptional liberal arts education with all of the benefits of a major research university.

(156) Committed to diverse and democratic communities, the School of Education of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the first state university in the nation, recognizes and respects the promise of every child.

(157) We are harnessing technology to enhance our mission of teaching, research and service.

(158) We are committed to creating an inclusive culture that inspires a passion for knowledge and intellectual growth as well as a dedication to service.

(159) Our work represents the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's commitment to the arts and culture on campus and in the larger community.

(160) Firmly grounded in a tradition of rigorous disciplinary inquiry, the College also recognizes the value of connections made across disciplinary boundaries and so supports and encourages interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship and teaching.

(161) The College is dedicated to the liberal arts mission of higher education, which is to develop the knowledge and understanding needed by citizens of a free and just society.

(162) The College faculty are committed to offering courses and programs that prepare students to meet the challenges they will face throughout their lives by emphasizing skills of reasoning, writing, speaking, and independent thinking.

(163) and work with the Alumni Affairs Office to foster LIHC alumni interest and loyalty.

(164) The Watson School is committed to achieving excellence in teacher and administrator preparation in all of its programs.

(165) As part of the commitment to excellence, the Watson School of Education engages in continuous assessment of individual, program, and institutional outcomes.

(166) The most significant activity is the learning/teaching process that takes place in classrooms, laboratories, studios, field locations, and offices, which engages students, staff, and faculty in a common effort to provide an environment where intellectual challenge, the free exchange of ideas, and high standards of scholarship and creativity prevail.

(167) The College is strongly committed to partnering with the public schools in order to educate pre-service teachers to teach all children to high standards, to assist beginning professional educators to be successful and remain in the profession, and to provide quality staff development for career professional educators.

(168) The Kimmel School is committed to its statewide mission for education and its regional mission for engagement.

(169) In keeping with its historical role, an important aspect of the Law School's mission is to attract capable persons from diverse backgrounds who are committed to public service and to meeting the needs of people and communities that are underserved by or that are under-represented in the legal profession.

(170) Committed to diverse and democratic communities, the School of Education of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the first state university in the nation, recognizes and respects the promise of every child.

*Metaphor of remembering: Raw materials.* Corresponding to the above

discussions on other sensemaking metaphors, high frequency words making up the

“organization as rememberer” metaphor and its sub-metaphors are presented in Table 8 below. Like previous descriptions, these highly frequent words are counted together with their variational forms in mission statements that have been analyzed.

Table 8: Metaphors We Remember by: Metaphor-comprising Words

Ranking	Frequency	Word	Variations
43	45	committed	commits, commitment
47	38	experience	experiences
63	28	collaborative	collaborating, collaborate, collaboration, collaborations

### Summary

To sum up, the results of analysis display that organizational mission statements contain a galaxy of metaphors, explicit or implicit, ranging from environment-screening (such as “environment as change”), enactment (such as “enactment as changer”), selection (such as “organization as relevance-maker”), retention (such as “organization as retainer”), to remembering (such as “organization as rememberer”). Together, they comprise metaphors we make sense by.

Furthermore, such sensemaking metaphors and their sub-metaphors constitute a conceptual hierarchical relation, namely the sub-metaphors or subordinate metaphors operate as supports to the upper or overall metaphors of sensemaking. For instance, “environment as change” has three supporting subordinate metaphors: organization as positioned, organization as time-pacer, and organization as wind-catcher. Hence, “enactment as changer” (organization as a plate of loose sand, organization as professional, and organization as mission-setter); “organization as relevance-maker” (organization as server, teacher, researcher, strategist, and goal-hitter); “organization as retainer” (organization as value-keeper, and organization as role-player);



“organization as rememberer” (organization as history-defender, and principle-observer).

Finally, sensemaking metaphors are drawn from raw materials, which are concrete words we make sense by. Table 9 below summarizes words with over 20 occurrences in the entire dataset of mission statements:

Table 9 Metaphors We Make Sense by:  
Metaphor-comprising Words in Organizational Mission Statements

Serial number	Frequency (from high to low)	Word	Serial number	Frequency (from high to low)	Word
1	204	Education	42	45	support
2	179	Student	43	45	committed
3	161	Serve	44	42	practice
4	152	university	45	41	economic
5	145	college	46	39	offer
6	136	research	47	38	experience
7	128	school	48	38	discipline
8	118	profession	49	37	needs
9	108	graduate	50	37	technology
10	107	program	51	36	global
11	105	North	52	36	human
12	103	Carolina	53	34	enhance
13	102	provide	54	33	business
14	101	community	55	32	intellectual
15	96	mission	56	32	innovative
16	90	teach	57	32	work
17	89	leadership	58	31	skills
18	86	learn	59	30	honors
19	83	state	60	30	promote
20	82	social	61	28	care
21	82	develop	62	28	information
22	79	faculty	63	28	collaborative
23	78	art	64	26	world
24	75	nation	65	26	institution
25	71	science	66	25	level
26	70	life	67	25	degree
27	69	health	68	24	liberal
28	66	activity	69	24	challenges
29	65	create	70	24	continuing

30	65	prepare	71	23	international
31	61	public	72	23	opportunities
32	59	scholars	73	23	value
33	58	diverse	74	23	personal
34	57	quality	75	22	meet
35	53	environment	76	22	citizens
36	53	cultural	77	22	advance
37	52	academic	78	22	responsible
38	51	engagement	79	21	management
39	50	knowledge	80	21	individuals
40	49	excel	81	20	UNC
41	48	region	82	20	communication
Total high frequency words: 82 Percentage among word total: $82/16627=0.5\%$			Total frequency of the 82 words: 4894 Percentage among occurrence total: $4898/16627=29.43\%$		

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The sensemaking perspective is a frame of mind about frames of mind that is best treated as a set of heuristics rather than as an algorithm. (Weick, 1995, p. xii)

The purpose of this study is to explore the evidence of sensemaking in metaphors embedded in organizational mission statements. The study began with the assumption that the sensemaking process can be fully demonstrated by metaphors in mission statements, that Weick's elements of the sensemaking process may serve as a taxonomy for all identified metaphors, that such identified metaphors from mission statements may provide insight into organizational sensemaking, that they illustrate causal relationships between the sensemaking elements, and that they help explain the sensemaking process as heuristic and ongoing. This final chapter summarizes the findings, discusses their implications, addresses limitations of the study, and proposes topics for future research.

#### Findings

*“How Do Metaphors in Mission Statements Evidence Sensemaking?”*

The analysis has revealed that the organizational mission statements contain a cluster of metaphors, and that such metaphors fully portray the sensemaking process: Environment-screening, enactment, selection, retention, and remembering.

*How do metaphors evidence environment-screening?* Metaphors in mission statements are found to denote “organizational environment as change.” Situated in such an environment, organizations are reported as positioned, a time-pacer, and wind-catcher.

*How do metaphors evidence enactment?* Metaphors in mission statements are also found to display “enactment as changer.” Furthermore, a cluster of metaphors illustrate the university as a plate of loose sand, professional, and mission-setter.

*How do metaphors evidence selection?* Meanwhile, the identified metaphors indicate that from among a list of possible roles, organizations choose to do at what they excel. Accordingly, a plethora of metaphors demonstrated “the university as relevance-maker.” More specifically, they exemplify the university as server, teacher, researcher, strategist, and goal-hitter.

*How do metaphors evidence retention?* Metaphors then reveal that sensemaking largely depends on retention. Put another way, organizing retains; it retains uniqueness and beliefs. Hence the umbrella metaphor: “organization as retainer.” As such, plural metaphors indicate “the university as value-keeper, and role-player (such as center; community; leader, and leader-preparer).”

*How do metaphors evidence remembering?* Finally, metaphors indicate that organizing makes much use of remembering, hence the metaphor “organization as rememberer.” As such, “organization as rememberer” primarily performs two tasks: defending the past (hence the sub-metaphor “the university as history-defender”), and following the principles (hence the sub-metaphor “the university as principle-observer”).

It is also found that, diverse as they are, metaphors in mission statements can all be readily described with Weick's five elements of sensemaking. In other words, the sensemaking elements that are meant to be examined meanwhile become descriptors or labels for neatly categorizing metaphorical expressions of organizational sensemaking. Hence metaphors replete in organizational mission statements fall under five types: Metaphors of environment-screening, metaphors of enactment, metaphors of selection, metaphors of retention, and metaphors of remembering. Moreover, the five metaphor types are conceptual (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) that operate in hierarchical relations in that each conceptual metaphor stands like an umbrella (upper metaphor), under which there lie sub-level metaphors supporting the conceptual metaphor (subordinate metaphors). Together, they comprise metaphors we use to make sense by:

Metaphors of environment-screening: Upper metaphor = "Environment as change;" Subordinate metaphors = "The university as positioned," "the university as time-pacer," and "the university as wind-catcher."

Metaphors of enactment: Upper metaphor = "Enactment as changer;" subordinate metaphors = "The university as a plate of loose sand," "the university as professional," "the university as mission-setter."

Metaphors of selection: Upper metaphor = "Organization as relevance-maker;" subordinate metaphors = "The university as server," "The university as teacher," "the university as researcher," "the university as strategist," and "the university as goal-hitter."

Metaphors of retention: Upper metaphor = “Organization as retainer (of uniqueness; beliefs);” subordinate metaphors = “The university as value-keeper,” and “the university as role-player (center; community; leader, leader-preparer).”

Metaphors of remembering: Upper metaphor = “Organization as rememberer;” Subordinate metaphors = “The university as history-defender,” and “the university as principle-observer.”

One conclusion drawn from the above findings is that a metaphorical account sheds light on sensemaking comprehension in roughly three ways. First, a metaphorical focus helps reveal the content and the raw materials that we use to make sense by in general, and employ at each concrete phase of organizational sensemaking. Secondly, in the sensemaking of organizational missions, organizations proceed with three moves: signaling the mission, stating the content, and depicting the strategy. In other words, organizational mission statements are found to contain three elements: The mission trigger, the mission proper, and the mission strategy. Thirdly, metaphorical terms also help unveil the relationship of the tripartite roles of the university in amazing degree of lucidity: the sequence of importance of teaching, research, and service at the time of change is almost reversed: with service fronted as the ultimate role of the university and teaching and research as two wings to enable the university to fly higher or advance closer to expectations due to environmental changes.

Another conclusion is that metaphorical realizations of sensemaking help demonstrate certain causal relationships between the sensemaking elements. Specifically, the sensemaking process begins with or is prompted by change and human intuition of

such a change in organizational environment, external and internal. Hence environment-screening is the first element of sensemaking and marks the initial phase of the sensemaking process. In response to changes, organizations enact. Hence enactment forms the second phase of sensemaking: including a further and deliberate screening of the environment, searching, re-stating, and enhancing organizations' identification, and revising missions signaled with mission triggers. In the process, organizations select what to do, what objectives or goals they aspire to achieve, and how they believe to optimally actualize them. This chain of action constitutes the third phase of sensemaking and defines the mission proper and mission strategy. Hence a standard mission statement normally bears three elements: the mission trigger, proper, and strategy. Coming in the wake of selection are retention and remembering, which essentially and respectively explain why organizations select what to do and how they choose to accomplish them. In this way, the causal relationship of sensemaking elements revealed in metaphorical terms enable us more clearly to envisage the inter-relatedness as well as logical smoothness of the sensemaking elements that designate the ongoing nature of the sensemaking process.

Lastly, it can be concluded that metaphors of sensemaking help explain the ongoing nature of sensemaking. Sensemaking is an intellectual game: Sensemakers enter the game, play it, and exit it. Their scores toward the end of the game may vary, but they learn to improve themselves for a future game. As a game, sensemaking assumes much heuristics and plausibility (Weick, 1995), degree of relevance (Weick, 1989c; 2001b; Sperber & Wilson, 1986; 1995), and an ongoing nature (Weick, 1995). In this way, metaphors of sensemaking expound sensemaking in vivid language to help reveal organizations'

endeavor in recalling or retrospectively at each sensemaking phase to see if they best describe and explain the reality, or make the utmost sense of the reality. In effect, metaphors help inform and frame our thought for the next immediate ongoing round of sensemaking, whose embryonic period actually begins from the present.

### Implications

One major implication that the above findings carry is related to the comprehension of sensemaking itself. As Chapter II displays, in spite of the multiple efforts taken previously in demonstrating how much sense Weick's sensemaking theory makes, least effort was attempted in making sense of the theory in clear language. In this regard, a metaphorical approach to sensemaking comprehension helps to concretize or visualize the sensemaking elements on the one hand, and clearly spell out their mutual relationships in the sensemaking process on the other hand. For instance, Weick (1969, 1979; 1995) identifies five elements of the sensemaking process: environment-screening, enactment, selection, retention, and remembering, and this study evidenced them in language. This advancement in evidence is useful for sensemaking comprehension.

A second major implication can be extended to the comprehension of organizational mission statements. Specifically, such connections may be of two prongs: elements of mission statements, and words basic for building up the missions. Previous research such as that conducted by Morphey and Hartley (2006) identified themes that compose mission statements, whereas this study interprets the mission elements in terms of mission trigger, mission proper, and mission strategy. This helps to add to our knowledge about mission statement analysis. Additionally, Fairhurst, Jordan, and Neuwirth (1997)



maintain that mission statements articulate the purpose of “why we are here,” while metaphors of environment-screening, enactment, and selection recurrently evidence their claims. Previous studies such as Abrahams’ (1995) identified the raw materials or words comprising mission statements by counting on their frequency in the entire mission statement data set. Metaphors of sensemaking in this study advance the knowledge by reporting on the raw materials, such as nouns and verbs, and their frequency in relation to the elements of sensemaking. Similar to Abrahams (1995), this study also relies on the entire data set, but differs from his work by basing the calculation on sophisticated word frequency counting tool used by professionals in corpus analysis. In so doing, this study identifies metaphor-comprising words organizations employ to make sense by; this both illuminates mission statement comprehension and adds depth to metaphors of sensemaking exploration.

A third major implication lies in the surprising finding of the relationship between the tripartite roles of the university: teaching, research, and service. Currently, for some universities, the respective role of and mutual relationship between teaching, research, and service remain neither clear nor consistent with the current social expectations of the university, as in this example:

Teaching, supported by research, is the primary focus of the university. As a part of that focus, the university encourages its faculty to pursue intellectual development and rewards effective teaching and research. The university recognizes, however, the mutually reinforcing impact of scholarship and service on effective teaching and learning. North Carolina Central University, therefore, encourages and expects faculty and students to engage in scholarly, creative, and service activities, which benefit the community.

In the statement, “teaching is the primary focus of the university,” research is conceived to support teaching, and together with service, it informs “effective teaching and learning.” Throughout the statement, it brings forth the impression that this university is teaching-centered. Then there rises the so-what question: “What on earth are the purposes of teaching or research or both?”

While many universities’ positioning in the environment still seems ambivalent as to which to prioritize, teaching, research, or service, findings in this study help make it clear that the three aspects that define university life actually follows an increasing order instead of the other way around. It is true that despite of changes, teaching remains central to the university, and that research and service inform, support, and strengthen teaching. It is also true that despite of changes, research remains central to some universities that are categorized as research intensive. Nevertheless, service is absolute for the university; it defines the value and purpose of the university’s existence. The absolute or ultimate service role of the university is straightforwardly conveyed by this example:

As northeastern North Carolina's four-year institution of higher education, Elizabeth City State University has been an important academic and cultural center for the region. A constituent institution of the University of North Carolina system, ECSU is committed to fulfilling our mission of serving as a valuable resource for building the state's intellectual capital through teaching, research and community outreach.

The example illustrates that regardless of change of in the environment, the university never loses a firm footing of service, which is directly made by outreach to the community and addressing community needs, and indirectly made by building full-

fledged excellence in their two wings: teaching and research. In this way, the mutual relationship between teaching, research, and service is best captured and expressed in the overall mission statement of the University of North Carolina system:

Teaching and learning constitute the primary service that the University renders to society. Teaching, or instruction, is the primary responsibility of each of the constituent institutions. The relative importance of research and public service, which enhance teaching and learning, varies among the constituent institutions, depending on their overall missions.

A fourth major implication has to do with evaluations of previous metaphors for the university. Some of the important metaphors for the university were discussed in Chapter II, such as “university as city of intellect and hinge of history” (Kerr, 2001), “university as town” (Thelin, 2004), “university as church / family / business / political community / academy” (Sullivan, 2000), “university as mentoring” (Enerson, 2001), “university as educator of lone wolves” (Baptiste, 2001), “university leadership as upward bound” (Useem, Useem & Asel, 2003), and “university leadership as jazz improvisation” (Newton, 2004). Additionally, earlier metaphors such as “university as dispensing machine / zoo / mammoth cave” (Monson, 1967) were improvised to capture the various aspects of teaching, research, and service.

Behind these and many other educational metaphors, a list of nine roles has been identified (Saban, Kocbeker, & Saban, 2006; 2007; Botha, 2009): (i) Metaphors can be constitutive to the educational policies we devise, such as the “market” metaphor or school choice (goods, services, consumers); (ii) they can also be constitutive of the teaching process (for example, teaching as orchestrating, conditioning, guiding or

training); (iii) they can function heuristically as a tool for discovery (for example, spiral staircase or ladder); (iv) they often function didactically as approaches to teaching (for example, dramatization and role playing); (v) they sometimes qualify the teaching actions of the teacher (for example, pottery, gardening, artistry, policeman, entertainer, sermonizer, scholar, a guide, a coach, a researcher, a sculptor, conductor, gardener, and mid-wife); (vi) at times they determine the way the learner or learning process is seen (for example, sponge, filter, funnel, and strainer); (vii) they are characteristic of the content of the subject matter that is being taught and this in turn is often determined by the curricular metaphors (for example, system, mechanism, organism) within which the subject matter is taught; (viii) metaphors can function as tools for communication; and (ix) metaphors mediate the understanding of the nature of the school as educational institution (for example, family, factory).

In previous studies, continuous inventions of new language of organizing were addressed (for instance Handy, 1996) and metaphorization, a particular form of such invention effort, was compared to a game as well as competition (Liu, 2006; Botha, 2009). Benefiting from the sensemaking perspective, this study envisages metaphorization as a cognitive process: any newly posed metaphor represents an attempt in probing into the unknown and a version of cognitive effort in capturing the organizing reality. In this way, metaphors of sensemaking evidence the plausibility property of Weick's sensemaking process, and support Cook-Sather's (2003) "education as translation" metaphor.

Compared with Weick's effort of metaphorical comprehension of sensemaking, the sensemaking metaphors organized in conceptual hierarchies in this study help supplement Weick's sporadic study in much intense and fuller ways. And focusing on the university mission statements, this study is able to enrich previous studies by more contextually and concretely used metaphors. As such, metaphors reveal not only the various university organizing realities in visible and tangible sensemaking terms, but also add to the comprehension of metaphorical discussion of sensemaking in general and of the university organization with unprecedented concrete illustrations.

#### Limitations

*System-wide data.* One limitation has been that this study solely relies on system-wide mission statements. While this singular focus is a strength, useful for locating more systematic sensemaking metaphors in vertical-relationship data, it is also a drawback, because it deliberately opts out of discussions on other sensemaking metaphors in other relational data. Additionally, it excludes Level IV mission statements, simply because the data under study is already big enough. For that matter, finding claims here may not be over-generalized to mission statements across other systems such as private universities.

*Synchronic perspective.* A second limitation is that the researcher has confined this study to synchronic analysis or mission statements of the same time period, rather than to missions over time or in a diachronic analysis. Diachronic effort was not made to compare how missions vary or diverge, instead of converge within various organizational levels. The synchronic focus also confines this study to examining the embedded metaphors and their total appearance in the entire data set. In this way, attention has not

been given to comparisons of metaphors of sensemaking appearance, for instance, in various levels of organizational mission statements.

*Monolingual data.* Due to the limitation of time, the researcher has purposefully kept the data to English, while leaving out some collected Chinese data for future comparative use. Consequently, one must be cautious when interpreting the findings in this study in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural settings.

*Metaphor focus.* This study entirely focuses on metaphorical illustrations of the elements of sensemaking. While general efforts are invested to locating metaphor exemplifications of the elements, it does not attach attention to distinguish within- or between-metaphorical discrepancies. For instance, the metaphor “the university is a laboratory” is found in the mission statement of a constituent institution whose focal point is engineering and intensive relevant research. How far does the “laboratory” metaphor make sense to other institutions? Or in that regard, how do differences in division of work among constituent institutions with their unique programs of expertise impact metaphor’s use in mission statements? How do expertise- or profession-based metaphors divide institutions? How do metaphors reveal where institutions converge or diverge? As an initial stage to look into the sensemaking-metaphor connection, there are many other aspects or directions to pursue. In other words, the metaphor evidencing effort may be extended to other explanations.

*Sensemaking elements as descriptors.* A final limitation may be said of the dependence of sensemaking elements as descriptors. As was acknowledged above, the sensemaking elements were identified as both metaphors themselves and as labels for

categorizing the metaphors replete in mission statements. While good things may be enumerated by identifying sensemaking elements as both metaphors and categorical labels, making such elements serve as framework may have framed or limited vision and thought. Put another way, using sensemaking elements as descriptors may have refrained the researcher from exploring alternative possibilities in sorting out the metaphors of sensemaking.

#### Future Research

Corresponding to the above mentioned limitations, the following recommendations are made for future research:

*Metaphors of sensemaking with broader data.* Given the current limitation in the use of data, future research may, in a vertical way, extend the research by analyzing Level IV mission statements. Meanwhile, a horizontal focus may allow analysis to be used in examining mission statements of cross-institutional types, such as community colleges in the region, state, and nation. In this way, it is possible to accumulate knowledge about sensemaking in metaphorical terms across disciplines and institutional types.

In terms of the raw materials making up the metaphors of sensemaking, forty-nine nouns, fifteen verbs, and eighteen adjectives are used highly frequent in this study. It will be interesting to compare with the keywords identified by Abrahams (1995) in Table 1 to find out how many the two tables are similar, and how many are discrepant. Table 9 in Chapter IV summarizes the frequency of unique words and total words in the analyzed mission statements. Given the rationality that the total words increase along with the increased inclusion of mission statements for analysis, why is it the case that Level II

mission statements use more than twice the number of unique words than Level I mission statements, whereas Level III mission statements tend to use slightly more unique words than Level I mission statements but much fewer than Level II mission statements? Are these tendencies and differences also apparent in metaphors of sensemaking? These are other questions to that need to be examined.

*Metaphors of sensemaking in both synchronic and diachronic perspective.* While it is useful to continue using a synchronic lens for collecting and analyzing mission statements, it may be informative to compare changes and developments of organizational mission statements of various periods of time. In this way, it is hoped that a fuller comprehension of metaphors of sensemaking in terms of their status quo and evolution over times of change will be determined. For instance, a focus on change in metaphors denoting the role of service will help build an understanding of the overall roles and purposes of organizations in both static and dynamic dimensions. In addition, mission alignment and degree of mission alignment between subordinate-superior organizational relations may be another topic to probe into. Specifically, what subordinate organizations tend to align their missions with the upper-level organization? What effects result in such alignments? Additionally, are metaphors of sensemaking discovered in various levels of organizational mission statements different in terms of metaphor number, distribution, and raw materials? Again, such questions may shed light on other aspects of knowledge about the subject matter, and are of tremendous interest.

*Metaphors of sensemaking in multilingual data.* When conditions permit, projects involving researchers of two or more languages are desirable. With a multilingual team, it



is possible to reach multilingual data for comparison as well as deeper and more consistent knowledge of metaphors of sensemaking in organizational mission statements. In the following example, words such as “exemplary” and “models” presuppose certain conditions or qualifications on the implied speaker or organization (here “the school of education” at UNC Greensboro). Is this also true in other languages?

To provide exemplary pre-service teacher education programs that can serve as teaching/learning models for the state and nation. (School of Education, UNC Greensboro)

In Chinese literature, the university is often referred to as “zhi nang tuan” (think tank) and “zhi shi ku” (knowledge bank), which services the community and society by “zao xue” (generate newer blood) and “shu xue” (transfuse blood). It will be interesting to probe into similar metaphors of sensemaking in other languages.

*Metaphor of sensemaking in terms of discipline and content differences.* Apparently this is another line to explore. Do metaphors of sensemaking denote disciplinary differences? How do metaphors in NC A&T’s mission statement converge with metaphors of sensemaking in NC State University’s mission statement? And how do metaphors of sensemaking in NC A&T’s mission statement diverge from metaphors of sensemaking of the rest constituent institutions of the UNC system? Do colleges of sciences and arts employ the same metaphors of sensemaking as those professional schools? Such between-discipline comparisons may add yet deeper understanding about organizational sensemaking via metaphors and is hence another interesting area to go into.

*Sensemaking elements as descriptors for metaphors of sensemaking.* Are there metaphor exceptions, if not counterexamples, that are not accountable with the sensemaking elements? This was not the focal point of this study, but may be considered in future research. For instance, the following example shows that more than one metaphor may co-exist in one single mission example: “governing metaphor (leader)” and “military metaphor (safeguard).”

The university is also a leader in facilitating sustainable economic growth, while safeguarding the unique culture and natural resources of the region. (Elizabeth City State University)

In the final analysis, the most compelling charge for future researchers may be to consider why metaphors of sensemaking are disproportionately distributed among the five types. In other words, why do organizations depend on more metaphors in selection than in enactment? Moreover, why are there more history-defending metaphors than principle-observing metaphors? Lastly, what are the implications of disproportionate metaphors of sensemaking for institutions of higher education at large? These are additional concrete questions for future studies in sensemaking.

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*Word counter and frequency tool*

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APPENDIX A. THE UNIVERSITY SETTING: UNC AND  
ITS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Retrieved 10/08/2010 at: <http://www.northcarolina.edu/>

<p>The University of North Carolina (UNC) has a rich heritage of academic excellence. Chartered in 1789, UNC was the first public university in the United States and the only one to graduate students in the eighteenth century. Today, UNC is a multi-campus university composed of all 16 of North Carolina's public institutions that grant baccalaureate degrees, as well as the NC School of Science and Mathematics, the nation's first public residential high school for gifted students.</p>	
<p>1. Appalachian State University Academy Drive, Boone, NC 28608 Phone: (828) 262-2000; <a href="http://www.appstate.edu">http://www.appstate.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of northwestern North Carolina, Appalachian State University has built a national reputation for providing outstanding academics and co-curricular opportunities in a unique learning environment. With a student/faculty ratio of 17:1, faculty members are able to take a personal interest in student progress, often becoming mentors, advisers, and friends. The university is located in Boone, NC (year-round pop. 15,000), a small town which thrives as one of the Southeast's premier tourism and outdoor recreation destinations. The nearby Blue Ridge Parkway and Pisgah National Forest provide a beautiful setting with unlimited possibilities for outdoor adventure.</p>	
<p>Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics</p>	
Basic Type	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Size and Setting	Large four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Very high undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, more selective, higher transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Professions plus arts & sciences, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Single doctoral (education)
<p>2. East Carolina University East Fifth Street, Greenville, NC 27858 Phone: (252) 328-6131; <a href="http://www.ecu.edu">http://www.ecu.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description East Carolina University. Tomorrow starts here. For more than a century, East Carolina University has served the people of North Carolina and the nation. From modest</p>	

beginnings as a school for training teachers, ECU has become an emerging national research university with an enrollment of nearly 28,000 students. East Carolina offers 103 bachelor's degree programs, one educational specialist degree program, one certificate of advanced study program, 72 master's degree programs, 18 doctoral degree programs, 71 departmental certificates, and first-professional degree programs in medicine and dentistry. With a mission of teaching, research, and service, East Carolina University is a dynamic institution connecting people and ideas, finding solutions to problems, and seeking the challenges of the future.

Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Doctoral/Research Universities
Size and Setting	Large four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	High undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Professions plus arts and sciences, high graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Doctoral, professional dominant

3. Elizabeth City State University  
 1704 Weeksville Road, Elizabeth City, NC 27909  
 Phone: (252) 335-3400; <http://www.ecsu.edu>

**Description**  
 ECSU is one of 16 public institutions within The University of North Carolina system. Located in the Albemarle region of northeastern North Carolina, ECSU offers students the opportunity to receive an outstanding liberal arts education while enjoying a variety of exciting recreational and cultural events. Favored by a mild climate, ECSU is in close proximity to the world renowned Outer Banks famous for the Wright brothers' first flight and its beautiful beaches. ECSU is known for its small class sizes, personalized attention, and its caring faculty and staff. Students have many opportunities for leadership development and participation in internships, research, and international study abroad.

Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields
Size and Setting	Small four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Very high undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, inclusive
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Single postbaccalaureate (education)

4. Fayetteville State University  
 1200 Murchison Road, Fayetteville, NC 28301  
 Phone: (910) 672-1111; <http://www.uncfsu.edu>

**Description**  
 Fayetteville State University is a constituent institution of the University of North

<p>Carolina and the second-oldest public institution of higher education in the state. Founded in 1867 as the Howard School for the education of African Americans, today FSU serves a growing student body of over 6,600 and ranks among the nation's most diverse campus communities.</p>	
<p>Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics</p>	
Basic Type	Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)
Size and Setting	Medium four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	High undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, inclusive
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Single doctoral (education)
<p>5. NC Agricultural and Technical State University  1601 East Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27411  Phone: (336) 334-7500; <a href="http://www.ncat.edu">http://www.ncat.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description  North Carolina Agricultural &amp; Technical State University is a public, comprehensive, land-grant and "high research activity" university committed to fulfilling its fundamental purposes through exemplary undergraduate and graduate instruction, scholarly and creative research, and effective public service. The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. Since its inception as a land-grant university in 1891, North Carolina A&amp;T has had a rich tradition of leadership and achievement. Those qualities are still evident today.</p>	
<p>Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics</p>	
Basic Type	Research Universities (high research activity)
Size and Setting	Medium four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Very high undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, inclusive
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Professions plus arts & sciences, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Single doctoral (other field)
<p>6. North Carolina Central University  1801 Fayetteville Road, Durham, NC 27707  Phone: (919) 560-6100; <a href="http://www.nccu.edu">http://www.nccu.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description  North Carolina Central University is a comprehensive university offering programs at the baccalaureate, master's, and professional levels. It is the nation's first public liberal arts institution founded for African-Americans. The university upholds a strong liberal arts tradition and a commitment to academic excellence in a diverse educational and cultural</p>	

environment. It seeks to encourage intellectual productivity and to increase the academic and professional skills of its students and faculty. The mission of the university is to prepare students academically and professionally to become leaders prepared to advance the consciousness of social responsibility in a diverse, global society. The university will serve its traditional clientele of African-American students; it will also expand its commitment to meet the educational needs of a student body that is diverse in race and other socioeconomic qualities. Teaching, supported by research, is the primary focus of the university. As a part of that focus, the university encourages its faculty to pursue intellectual development and rewards effective teaching and research. The university recognizes, however, the mutually reinforcing impact of scholarship and service on effective teaching and learning. North Carolina Central University, therefore, encourages and expects faculty and students to engage in scholarly, creative, and service activities, which benefit the community.

Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Size and Setting	Medium four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	High undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Geographic Distribution (Degree-Seeking)
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Age (Degree-Seeking)

7. NC State University  
 Raleigh, NC 27695  
 Phone: (919) 515-2011; <http://www.ncsu.edu>

**Description**  
 Before we give you all the details about NC State, we'd like to talk about the University as a whole. Since its founding in 1887, NC State has established itself as a dynamic academic community. If you choose to enter NC State this year, you will be part of an academic community of twenty-nine thousand students from fifty states and one hundred different countries who have chosen to study at one of the nation's outstanding universities. Our beautiful campus hosts a great diversity of people, programs, and excitement. But don't let our size worry you. We're sure you will feel right at home and welcome here. Students select NC State as their home for four years for a variety of reasons: its strong academics, excellent reputation, low cost, career advantages, prospering Raleigh/Triangle location, and social opportunities.

Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Research Universities (very high research activity)
Size and Setting	Large four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	High undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, more selective, higher transfer-in

Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, high graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Doctoral, STEM dominant
<p>8. UNC Asheville  1 University Heights, Asheville, NC 28804  Phone: (828) 251-6600; <a href="http://www.unca.edu">http://www.unca.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description</p> <p>The University of North Carolina at Asheville is the designated undergraduate liberal arts university in the 16-campus University of North Carolina system. An outstanding learning community, UNC Asheville is committed to providing an excellent liberal arts experience for its 3,500 undergraduate students through challenging academic programs, exemplary teaching, and meaningful and diverse co-curricular activities. The scenic 265-acre mountain campus is located one mile north of downtown Asheville, the cultural, economic and population (75,000) center of the region. Known for outdoor opportunities in the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains and a cosmopolitan downtown featuring coffee houses, restaurants, theaters, museums, galleries and craft shops, Asheville is rated one of the country's most livable cities. The university's Outdoor Program offers students hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, rock climbing and other outdoor adventures in the nearby Pisgah and Nantahala national forests, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Canoeing, kayaking and whitewater rafting trips on the French Broad and other nearby rivers are among the many outdoor activities UNC Asheville students enjoy.</p>	
Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences
Size and Setting	Medium four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Very high undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, more selective, higher transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Arts & sciences focus, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Single postbaccalaureate (other field)
<p>9. UNC-Chapel Hill  Chapel Hill, NC 27599  Phone: (919) 962-2211; <a href="http://www.unc.edu">http://www.unc.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description</p> <p>The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the nation's first public university, was chartered in 1789 and opened to students in 1795. Today, UNC-Chapel Hill ranks among the great institutions of higher education in the nation, with offerings in 76 bachelor's, 108 master's, 74 doctorate and four professional degree programs. The University enrolls more than 28,000 students who are taught by a 3,100-member faculty. Carolina's nationally acclaimed academics offer opportunities for public service, leadership, global</p>	

study and research. UNC-Chapel Hill has a steadfast commitment to access and affordability with programs like the Carolina Covenant, which provides a debt-free education to low-income students from North Carolina and beyond.	
Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Research Universities (very high research activity)
Size and Setting	Large four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Majority undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, more selective, lower transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Arts & sciences plus professions, high graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Comprehensive doctoral with medical/veterinary
<p>10. UNC Charlotte  9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223  Phone: (704) 687-2000; <a href="http://www.uncc.edu">http://www.uncc.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description  UNC Charlotte serves as the only doctoral research university in the dynamic Charlotte area of more than 2 million people. Seven academic colleges (Arts and Architecture, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, Computing and Informatics, Education, Engineering, and Health and Human Services) and the Graduate School offer 90 bachelor's, 62 master's, and 18 doctoral programs. The University offers a multidisciplinary Honors College and wide range of disciplinary honors programs. The 950-acre campus includes seven new academic buildings completed within the last six years, a state-of-the-art library, and a new student union opening in 2009. The University is committed to equality of opportunity and a diverse student body.</p>	
Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Doctoral/Research Universities
Size and Setting	Large four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	High undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, high graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Doctoral, professional dominant
<p>11. UNC Greensboro  Post Office Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402  Phone: (336) 334-5000; <a href="http://www.uncg.edu">http://www.uncg.edu</a></p>	
<p>Description  For more than a century, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro has been educating students from North Carolina, the nation, and the world. Our nationally recognized programs and faculty, combined with a diverse range of opportunities for the development of a student's interests and leadership skills, make the UNCG experience a</p>	

uniquely enriching and challenging one. The success of our graduates serves as testimony to the effectiveness of a UNCG education. They are widely respected by potential employers as well as graduate and professional schools. UNCG alumni are noted for their life-long contributions to their professions and service to their communities. Daily they act to fulfill UNCG's motto of "service."

Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Research Universities (high research activity)
Size and Setting	Large four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Majority undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Arts & sciences focus, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Comprehensive doctoral (no medical/veterinary)

12. UNC Pembroke  
 1 University Drive, Pembroke, NC 28372  
 Phone: (910) 521-6000; <http://www.uncp.edu>

**Description**  
 The University of North Carolina at Pembroke is a master's level degree-granting university and one of 16 schools that comprise the University of North Carolina system. With a total enrollment of 6,303, the university offers 45 bachelor's and 17 master's degrees. UNCP has distinguished itself as a school where students excel because of the tremendous care Pembroke faculty take to ensure their success and growth. With a student-faculty ratio of 14:1 and an average class size hovering at 30 students, Pembroke occupies the enviable position of being able to treat each student as an individual. Because of the rigors of the curriculum and the personal attention students receive, graduates go on to create vibrant, interesting lives for themselves. Located in a small community, Pembroke is the safest campus among UNC schools, and, according to U.S. News and World Report, it is among the nation's most diverse.

Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)
Size and Setting	Medium four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Very high undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, inclusive
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Postbaccalaureate professional (education dominant)

13. UNC Wilmington  
 601 South College Road, Wilmington, NC 28403  
 Phone: (910) 962-3000; <http://www.uncw.edu>

Description	
The University of North Carolina Wilmington is a mid-sized institution with a small university look and feel and a one-of-a-kind culture that combines top academics in a unique coastal setting. We offer a unique blend of teaching, research experiences and service learning opportunities that attracts high-quality students and gives graduates a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Students consistently praise the quality of their interactions with faculty who emphasize teaching and mentoring while incorporating research in the undergraduate learning experience.	
Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Size and Setting	Large four-year, primarily nonresidential
Enrollment Profile	Very high undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, more selective, higher transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Postbaccalaureate comprehensive
14. UNC School of the Arts 1533 South Main St. Winston-Salem, NC 27127 Phone: (336) 770-3399; <a href="http://www.uncsa.edu">http://www.uncsa.edu</a>	
Description	
The University of North Carolina School of the Arts is the University of North Carolina system's conservatory for the arts, dedicated entirely to the professional training of students possessing exceptional talents in the performing, visual and moving image arts. Students enter UNCSA when they are ready for focused, intense professional development at the baccalaureate level and in select programs at the master's and high school levels in its schools of Dance, Design and Production, Drama, Filmmaking, and Music.	
Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Special Focus Institutions--Schools of art, music, and design
Size and Setting	Very small four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	High undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, selective, lower transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Not Applicable
Graduate Instructional Program	Not Applicable
15. Western Carolina University Cullowhee, NC 28723 Phone: (828) 227-7211; <a href="http://www.wcu.edu">http://www.wcu.edu</a>	



Description	
Western Carolina University provides outstanding opportunities for students in a dynamic living-learning environment that encourages interaction with faculty, participation in organized community service activities, and preparation for future careers. WCU's quality enhancement plan is designed to link various elements of students' entire university experience, in- and out-of-class, so that academic and co-curricular activities are woven together into a fabric of intentional learning.	
Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Size and Setting	Medium four-year, highly residential
Enrollment Profile	High undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Arts & sciences plus professions, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Single doctoral (education)
16. Winston-Salem State University 601 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27110 Phone: (336) 750-2000; <a href="http://www.wssu.edu">http://www.wssu.edu</a>	
Description	
Winston-Salem State University is a premier, master's level public institution that develops the skills and values students need to contribute and succeed in the changing economy of the 21st Century. Its world-class degree programs in growing fields such as health sciences, information technology, financial services and teacher education, offer the flexibility to accommodate diverse life situations of both traditional and non-traditional students ranging from recent high-school graduates to working adults. The university's curriculum also prepares all students to use the latest technologies as powerful tools for continuous learning, career advancement and personal enrichment. Beyond technical skills, the WSSU educational experience inspires individual commitment to community service through class-room and field experiences that develop civic leadership and prepare students to make lifetime contributions to society.	
Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics	
Basic Type	Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields
Size and Setting	Medium four-year, primarily residential
Enrollment Profile	Very high undergraduate
Undergraduate Profile	Full-time four-year, inclusive
Undergraduate Instructional Program	Balanced arts & sciences/professions, some graduate coexistence
Graduate Instructional Program	Postbaccalaureate professional (other dominant fields)

17. North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics  
 1219 Broad Street, Durham, NC 27705  
 Phone: (919) 416-2600; <http://www.ncssm.edu>

**Description**

The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) is the nation's premier public boarding school to offer a specialized curriculum in science and mathematics. The first school of its kind, NCSSM educates academically and intellectually gifted 11th and 12th grade students from every corner of North Carolina, and hundreds more through distance education and online learning. The school, which opened its doors in 1980, was founded by former Governor James B. Hunt Jr., and incorporated the vision of former Governor, Senator and Duke University President Terry Sanford, and academician and author John Ehle, among others. The pioneering venture has since matured into an institution that models and advocates excellence in elementary and secondary education for all North Carolinians.

**Carnegie Classification of Institutional Characteristics**

Basic Type	NA
Size and Setting	NA
Enrollment Profile	NA
Undergraduate Profile	NA
Undergraduate Instructional Program	NA
Graduate Instructional Program	NA

## APPENDIX B. MISSION STATEMENTS

### 1. Level I Mission Statements: Mission Statement of the University of North Carolina (UNC) System (<http://www.northcarolina.edu/about/mission.htm>)

The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people. It encompasses the 16 diverse constituent institutions and other educational, research, and public service organizations. Each shares in the overall mission of the University. That mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. This mission is accomplished through instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives; through research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process; and through public service, which contributes to the solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State. In the fulfillment of this mission, the University shall seek an efficient use of available resources to ensure the highest quality in its service to the citizens of the State.

Teaching and learning constitute the primary service that the University renders to society. Teaching, or instruction, is the primary responsibility of each of the constituent institutions. The relative importance of research and public service, which enhance teaching and learning, varies among the constituent institutions, depending on their overall missions.

### 2. Level II Mission Statements: Mission Statements of UNC Constituent Institutions

#### 1) Appalachian State University (App State U)

[www1.appstate.edu/dept/irp/planning/MissionStatement.pdf](http://www1.appstate.edu/dept/irp/planning/MissionStatement.pdf)

<http://www.campuscorner.com/north-carolina-colleges/appalachian-state-university.htm>

Appalachian State University is a public comprehensive university, offering a wide variety of degree programs at the baccalaureate, master's, and intermediate levels as well as the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. With a distinctively residential campus and a faculty and staff characterized by high quality and broad diversity of professional skills, Appalachian takes as its mission the practice and propagation of scholarship. This is accomplished particularly through instruction, but also through the research, creative, and service activities of the university community. Appalachian is committed to excellence in its undergraduate and graduate educational programs, while continuing to serve as a center of cultural and professional activity within its state and region.

2) East Carolina University (ECU)  
<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/mission.cfm>

To serve as a national model for public service and regional transformation by:  
Preparing our students to compete and succeed in the global economy and multicultural society,  
Distinguishing ourselves by the ability to train and prepare leaders,  
Creating a strong, sustainable future for eastern North Carolina through education, research, innovation, investment, and outreach,  
Saving lives, curing diseases, and positively transforming health and health care, and  
Providing cultural enrichment and powerful inspiration as we work to sustain and improve quality of life.

3) Elizabeth City State University (ECSU)  
<http://www.ecsu.edu/about/index.cfm>

Elizabeth City State University, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, offers baccalaureate, graduate, and professional programs for a diverse student body. The institution's rich heritage provides a firm foundation for its educational endeavors, as well as its role in serving the needs and aspirations of individuals and society. Through teaching, research, and community engagement, Elizabeth City State University provides a student-centered environment, delivered in a manner that enhances student learning, while preparing its graduates for leadership roles and lifelong learning. The university is also a leader in facilitating sustainable economic growth, while safeguarding the unique culture and natural resources of the region.

4) Fayetteville State University (FSU)  
<http://www.uncfsu.edu/mission.htm>

Fayetteville State University (FSU) is a public comprehensive regional university that promotes the educational, social, cultural, and economic transformation of southeastern North Carolina and beyond. The primary mission of FSU is to provide students with the highest quality learning experiences that will produce global citizens and leaders as change agents for shaping the future of the State. Awarding degrees at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and the doctorate in educational leadership, FSU offers programs in teacher education, the arts and sciences, health professions, business and economics, and unique and emerging fields. FSU is an institution of opportunity and diversity. Committed to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and service, the university extends its services and programs to the community, including the military, and other educational institutions throughout North Carolina, the nation, and the world.

5) North Carolina Agriculture & Technology State University (NC A&T)  
[http://fac.ncat.edu/dist/eArmyu/about\\_us.html](http://fac.ncat.edu/dist/eArmyu/about_us.html)

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is a public, comprehensive, land-grant university committed to fulfilling its fundamental purposes through exemplary undergraduate and graduate instruction, scholarly and creative research, and effective public service. The university offers programs at the baccalaureate, masters and doctoral levels with emphasis on engineering, science, technology, literature and other academic areas. As one of North Carolina's three engineering colleges, the University offers Ph.D. programs in engineering. Basic and applied research are conducted by faculty in university centers of excellence, in interinstitutional relationships, and through significant involvement with several public and private agencies. The university also conducts major research through engineering, transportation, and its extension programs in agriculture. The purpose of the University is to provide an intellectual setting where students in higher education may find a sense of identification, belonging, responsibility, and achievement that will prepare them for roles of leadership and service in the communities where they will live and work. In this sense, the University serves as a laboratory for the development of excellence in teaching, research and public service.

6) North Carolina Central University (NCCU)  
<http://www.nccu.edu>  
<http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/north-carolina-central-univerisity.htm>

North Carolina Central University is a comprehensive university offering programs at the baccalaureate, master's, and selected professional levels. It is the nation's first public liberal arts institution founded for African-Americans. The university upholds a strong liberal arts tradition and a commitment to academic excellence in a diverse educational and cultural environment. It seeks to encourage intellectual productivity and to increase the academic and professional skills of its students and faculty.

The mission of the university is to prepare students academically and professionally to become leaders prepared to advance the consciousness of social responsibility in a diverse, global society. The university will serve its traditional clientele of African-American students; it will also expand its commitment to meet the educational needs of a student body that is diverse in race and other socioeconomic qualities.

Teaching, supported by research, is the primary focus of the university. As a part of that focus, the university encourages its faculty to pursue intellectual development and rewards effective teaching and research. The university recognizes, however, the mutually reinforcing impact of scholarship and service on effective teaching and learning. North Carolina Central University, therefore, encourages and expects faculty and students to engage in scholarly, creative, and service activities, which benefit the community."

7) North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM)  
<http://www.ncssm.edu/drupal/?q=about-ncssm/history-and-mission>

To meet North Carolina's need for responsible leadership in the development and application of science, mathematics and technology;  
To act as a catalyst for educational improvement throughout North Carolina and the nation.

8) North Carolina State University (NCSU)  
<http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/strategicplan/mission.htm>

The mission of North Carolina State University is to serve its students and the people of North Carolina as a doctoral/research-extensive, land-grant university. Through the active integration of teaching, research, extension, and engagement, North Carolina State University creates an innovative learning environment that stresses mastery of fundamentals, intellectual discipline, creativity, problem solving, and responsibility. Enhancing its historic strengths in agriculture, science, and engineering with a commitment to excellence in a comprehensive range of academic disciplines, North Carolina State University provides leadership for intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and technological development within the state, the nation, and the world.

9) University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNC-Asheville)  
<http://catalog.unca.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=101>

UNC Asheville is distinctive in the UNC system as its designated liberal arts university. Our practice of the liberal arts emphasizes the centrality of learning and discovery through exemplary teaching, innovative scholarship, creative expression, co-curricular activities, undergraduate research, engaged service, and practical experience. Primarily undergraduate, UNC Asheville offers a liberal arts education characterized by high quality faculty-student interaction. We offer this challenging educational experience to all promising students who are committed to liberal learning and personal growth.

Our liberal arts educational approach emphasizes life skills including critical thinking, clear and thoughtful expression, and honest open inquiry. Students undertake concentrated study in one area while simultaneously developing an understanding of the connections among disciplines. We encourage students to clarify, develop and live their own values while respecting the views and beliefs of others. In addition, we cultivate an understanding of the dimensions of human diversity while recognizing the common humanity of all. We believe a quality liberal arts education enables our graduates to be lifelong learners and to lead successful, flourishing lives as leaders and contributors to their communities.

At UNC Asheville, we respond to the conditions and concerns of the contemporary world both as individuals and as a university. We incorporate economic, social and environmental sustainability into our institutional practices and curriculum. With a range of associated centers, partnerships, and initiatives, we fulfill our public responsibility to address the needs of our community through a continuum of learning. We develop a commitment to continuing service characterized by an informed, responsible, and creative engagement with the Asheville area, the southern Appalachian region, the state of North Carolina, and a diverse and increasingly connected world.

10) University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill)  
<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/mission.html>

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the nation's first public university, serves North Carolina, the United States, and the world through teaching, research, and public service. We embrace an unwavering commitment to excellence as one of the world's great research universities.

Our mission is to serve as a center for research, scholarship, and creativity and to teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to become the next generation of leaders. Through the efforts of our exceptional faculty and staff, and with generous support from North Carolina's citizens, we invest our knowledge and resources to enhance access to learning and to foster the success and prosperity of each rising generation. We also extend knowledge-based services and other resources of the University to the citizens of North Carolina and their institutions to enhance the quality of life for all people in the State.

With *lux, libertas*—light and liberty—as its founding principles, the University has charted a bold course of leading change to improve society and to help solve the world's greatest problems.

11) University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC)  
<http://provost.uncc.edu/catalogs/2010-2011/university.htm>

UNC Charlotte is North Carolina's urban research university. It leverages its location in the state's largest city to offer internationally competitive programs of research and creative activity, exemplary undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and a focused set of community engagement initiatives. UNC Charlotte maintains a particular commitment to addressing the cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater Charlotte region.

In fulfilling this mission, we value:

- Accessible and affordable quality education that equips students with intellectual and professional skills, ethical principles, and an international perspective.
- A strong foundation in liberal arts and opportunities for experiential education to enhance students' personal and professional growth.

- A robust intellectual environment that values social and cultural diversity, free expression, collegiality, integrity, and mutual respect.
- A safe, diverse, team-oriented, ethically responsible, and respectful workplace environment that develops the professional capacities of our faculty and staff.

To achieve a leadership position in higher education, we will:

- Implement our Academic Plan and related administrative plans.
- Rigorously assess our progress using benchmarks appropriate to the goals articulated by our programs and in our plans.
- Serve as faithful stewards of the public and private resources entrusted to us and provide effective and efficient administrative services that exceed the expectations of our diverse constituencies.
- Create meaningful collaborations among university, business, and community leaders to address issues and opportunities of the region.
- Develop an infrastructure that makes learning accessible to those on campus and in our community and supports the scholarly activities of the faculty.
- Pursue opportunities to enhance personal wellness through artistic, athletic, or recreational activities.
- Operate an attractive, environmentally responsible and sustainable campus integrated with the retail and residential neighborhoods that surround us.

#### 12) University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG)

<http://uncgtomorrow.uncg.edu/mission/>

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro will redefine the public research university for the 21st century as an inclusive, collaborative, and responsive institution making a difference in the lives of students and the communities it serves.

UNCG is a:

- learner-centered, accessible, and inclusive community fostering intellectual inquiry to prepare students for meaningful lives and engaged citizenship;
- research university where collaborative scholarship and creative activity enhance quality of life across the life span;
- source of innovation and leadership meeting social, economic, and environmental challenges in the Piedmont Triad, North Carolina, and beyond; and
- global university integrating intercultural and international experiences and perspectives into learning, discovery, and service.

#### 13) University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP)

<http://www.uncp.edu/uncp/about/mission.htm>

Founded in 1887 as a school for the education of American Indians, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke now serves a distinctly diverse student body and encourages



inclusion and appreciation for the values of all people. UNC Pembroke exists to promote excellence in teaching and learning, at the graduate and undergraduate levels, in an environment of free inquiry, interdisciplinary collaboration, and rigorous intellectual standards.

Our diversity and our commitment to personalized teaching uniquely prepare our students for rewarding careers, postgraduate education, leadership roles, and fulfilling lives. We cultivate an international perspective, rooted in our service to and appreciation of our multi-ethnic regional society, which prepares citizens for engagement in global society. Students are encouraged to participate in activities that develop their intellectual curiosity and mold them into responsible stewards of the world.

UNCP faculty and staff are dedicated to active student learning, engaged scholarship, high academic standards, creative activity, and public service. We celebrate our heritage as we enhance the intellectual, cultural, economic, and social life of the region.

14) University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW)  
<http://uncw.edu/catalogue/graduate/addendum.html>

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state's coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service. Our powerful academic experience stimulates creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship in an array of high-quality programs at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and in our doctoral programs in marine biology and educational leadership. Substantial research activity, combined with our hallmark teaching excellence and moderate size, advances distinctive student involvement in faculty scholarship. We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education, the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

15) University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA)  
[http://www.uncsa.edu/visitorscenter/mission\\_statement.htm](http://www.uncsa.edu/visitorscenter/mission_statement.htm)

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts is the state's unique professional school for the performing, visual, and moving image arts, training students at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels for professional careers in the arts. As such, UNCSA provides gifted developing artists with the experience, knowledge, and skills needed to excel in their disciplines and in their lives; and serves and enriches the cultural and economic prosperity of the people of North Carolina, the South and the United States.

16) Western Carolina University (WCU)

<http://www.wcu.edu/3053.asp>

Western Carolina University is a comprehensive university within the University of North Carolina, offering a broad array of undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts, sciences and professions.

The University serves the people of North Carolina from its residential main campus at Cullowhee, situated between the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains, and through its resident credit programs in Asheville and Cherokee.

17) Winston-Salem State University (WSSU)

<http://www.wssu.edu/WSSU/About/Administration/Policy+and+Procedures/Governance+and+Administration/University+Mission.htm>

<http://catalog.wssu.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=67>

Preparing diverse students for success in the 21st Century, Winston-Salem State University offers quality educational programs at the baccalaureate and graduate levels. Students are engaged in active and experiential learning and have access to education through flexible delivery modes. The university is dedicated to the development of students through excellence in teaching, scholarship and service. As a comprehensive, historically Black constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, Winston-Salem State University contributes to the social, cultural, intellectual and economic growth of the region, North Carolina and beyond.

### 3. Internet Links to Level III Mission Statements

1) Appalachian State University (App State U) colleges and schools

<http://www.appstate.edu/academics/colleges.php>

The College of Arts and Sciences

University College

The College of Fine and Applied Arts

The John A. Walker College of Business

College of Health Sciences

The Honors College

The Reich College of Education

Graduate School

2) East Carolina University (ECU) colleges and schools  
[http://www.ecu.edu/csecu/colleges\\_schools.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/csecu/colleges_schools.cfm)

Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences  
Brody School of Medicine  
College of Allied Health Sciences  
College of Business  
College of Education  
College of Fine Arts & Communication  
College of Health and Human Performance  
College of Human Ecology  
College of Nursing  
College of Technology and Computer Science  
Honors College  
School of Dental Medicine  
Graduate School

3) Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) colleges and schools  
<http://www.ecsu.edu/academics/schools.cfm>

The Walter R. Davis School of Business & Economics  
The ECSU School of Education & Psychology  
The Office of Graduate Education

4) Fayetteville State University (FSU) colleges and schools  
<http://www.unctfsu.edu/schools.htm>

The College of Arts and Sciences  
The School of Business and Economics  
The School of Education  
The University College  
The Graduate School

5) North Carolina Agriculture & Technology State University (NC A&T) colleges and schools  
<http://www.ncat.edu/academics/>

The School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences  
The College of Arts and Sciences  
The School of Business and Economics  
The School of Education

The College of Engineering (COE)  
The School of Technology

6) North Carolina Central University (NCCU) colleges and schools  
<http://www.nccu.edu/academics/index.cfm>

The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences  
The College of Liberal Arts  
The College of Science and Technology (CST)  
The Department of Nursing  
The School of Business  
The School of Law  
The School of Education  
THE SLIS Library

7) North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) colleges and schools  
<http://www.ncssm.edu/drupal/?q=academics/academic-departments>

Called departments instead of colleges and schools  
Mission statements not available

8) North Carolina State University (NCSU) colleges and schools  
<http://www.ncsu.edu/academics/colleges/index.php>

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
The College of Design  
The College of Education  
The College of Engineering  
The College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
College of Management  
The College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences Alumni and Friends Society  
The College of Textiles  
The College of Veterinary Medicine  
The Graduate School

9) University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNC-Asheville) colleges and schools  
<http://www.unca.edu/academics>

Called departments instead of colleges and schools  
Mission statements not available

10) University of North Carolina at chapel-Hill (UNC-Chapel-Hill) colleges and schools  
<http://www.unc.edu/academics/index.htm>

- The College of Arts and Sciences
- The School of Dentistry
- The School of Education
- The School of Information and Library Science
- The UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- The School of Law
- The School of Medicine
- The School of Nursing
- The School of Social Work
- The School of Government

11) University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) colleges and schools  
<http://home.uncc.edu/landing/academics>

- The College of Arts + Architecture
- The College of Computing and Informatics
- The College of Education
- The CHHS (College of Health and Human Services)
- The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- The William States Lee College of Engineering
- The Graduate School

12) University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) colleges and schools  
[http://www.uncg.edu/campus\\_links/academics/](http://www.uncg.edu/campus_links/academics/)

- The College of Arts and Sciences
- The Lloyd International Honors College (LIHC)
- The Bryan School
- The School of Education (SOE)
- The School of Health & Human Performance (HHP)
- The School of Music
- The Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering (JSNN)
- The School of Nursing

13) University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP) colleges and schools  
<http://www.uncp.edu/academics/default.asp>

Called departments instead of colleges and schools  
Mission statements not available

14) University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) colleges and schools  
<http://www.uncw.edu/www/acad.html>

The College of Arts and Sciences  
The College of Health and Human Services  
The Cameron School of Business  
The Donald R. Watson School of Education  
The Graduate School

15) University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) colleges and schools  
<http://www.uncsa.edu/academicprograms/>

Called departments instead of colleges and schools  
Mission statements not available

16) Western Carolina University (WCU) colleges and schools  
<http://www.wcu.edu/42.asp>

The College of Arts and Sciences  
The College of Business  
The College of Education and Allied Professions  
The College of Fine and Performing Arts  
The College of Health and Human Sciences  
The Kimmel School

17) Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) colleges and schools  
<http://www.wssu.edu/WSSU/UndergraduateStudies/>

The School of Business and Economics (SBE)  
The School of Health Sciences

## APPENDIX C. WORD FREQUENCY COUNTING TOOLS

### 1. Word Count Tool: A Description

Word Count is a useful tool for counting word frequency in a text. It is free tool run and owned as a Partnership by: David Bruce, webmaster and site designer, Anna Reynolds, award-winning playwright and screenwriter, and Richard Brown, biographer and non-fiction author.

Here is the website of Word Count: [http://www.writewords.org.uk/word\\_count.asp](http://www.writewords.org.uk/word_count.asp)

It is simple to use: Just enter or paste the text into the provide frame, submit, and you get the results.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [http://www.writewords.org.uk/word\\_count.asp](http://www.writewords.org.uk/word_count.asp). The page features the WriteWords logo and navigation links: Home, Community, Jobs & Opps, Directory, Courses, and Search. A central heading reads "Word Frequency Counter". Below this, a text box is labeled "Paste your text" and a "Submit" button is positioned below it. To the left, there are advertisements for "Free Microsoft Word" and "Learn French in 10 Days".

## 2. Word Counter and Frequency Tool: A Description

Like the Word Count Tool, Word Counter and Frequency Tool is also a free tool intended to be shared to benefit more people. It is at this website:  
[http://rainbow.arch.scriptmania.com/tools/word\\_counter.html](http://rainbow.arch.scriptmania.com/tools/word_counter.html)

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the "Word Counter and Frequency Data Entry Form". The page has a blue header with the title "Word Counter and Frequency Tool" and a sub-header "What is the importance of word frequency to the internet?". Below this, there is a paragraph explaining that search engines use artificial intelligence to analyze the web, and knowing word frequency can help web designers. A "Note" advises users to use Control V or the Edit Menu to paste text, and an "Attention" note asks users to read technical notes before using the tool.

The main section is titled "Click **Count Words** First". It features two radio buttons: "Count pure words" (selected) and "Count everything as words". There are two buttons for "Word Sort": "Word Sort: Freque" and "Word Sort: Alphab". A "COUNT WORDS" button is prominently displayed. Below these are two text input boxes: "WORD COUNT INPUT BOX" and "WORD COUNT OUTPUT BOX". The input box contains instructions on how to use the tool, including highlighting text, pasting, and copying. Below the input boxes are two radio buttons: "Letters Only" (selected) and "All symbols". There are also buttons for "Character Cou" and "Character Freque". At the bottom of the form, there are two input fields for "Total letters in all words:" and "Average letters per word:", along with a "Reset" button.

The "Technical Notes" section at the bottom lists several important points:

- Uses your computers processing power.
- Browser window may fade while word count is processing; be patient.
- After 40K or about 5000 words (6 typed pages) you may receive warning: "Script on this page is causing Internet Explorer to run slow ... Do you want to abort script?". The abort option is **not** a fatal error. You can continue to process, depending on your system resources.
- Text heavy with symbols like HTML code and mathematical equations may also produce this warning.
- "Runtime Error" on Line 175 means you did not push the "COUNT WORDS" button first. You must push it first so all variables are assigned values. This is not a fatal error. You can continue to process by pushing "COUNT WORDS".
- Test the amount of text your system can process by starting with a single page of text and then increasing in increments.



APPENDIX D. MISSION STATEMENTS' WORD FREQUENCY

1. Count Result by Word Counter and Frequency Tool  
(Unique words: 452; Total words: 14291)

freq.	word	freq.	word	freq.	word
210	a	25	engagement	7	part
2	ability	16	engineering	3	particularly
44	academic	26	enhance	8	partnerships
4	academically	3	enhances	17	people
8	accomplished	3	enhancing	12	personal
4	achievement	2	enriches	1	personally
3	act	4	enrichment	2	PH
10	active	6	ensure	1	positively
33	activities	38	environment	2	powerful
12	activity	7	environmental	7	practical
2	addition	45	excellence	23	practice
10	address	7	exemplary	8	practices
15	advance	5	expand	33	prepare
4	African	1	expects	2	prepared
7	agencies	19	experience	12	preparing
2	agents	19	experiences	7	primarily
3	agricultural	7	expression	13	primary
5	agriculture	1	extends	7	private
35	all	4	extension	3	problem
15	also	1	extensive	8	problems
6	American	1	facilitating	2	process
2	Americans	78	faculty	3	produce
12	among	2	Fayetteville	7	productive
60	an	10	fields	5	productivity
1199	and	2	find	69	professional
17	Appalachian	1	firm	3	professionally
5	application	10	first	10	professions
10	applied	1	flourishing	95	programs
8	apply	7	focus	1	promising
1	approach	163	for	8	promotes
57	are	5	foundation	2	propagation
6	area	5	founded	52	provide
6	areas	4	FSU	23	provides
62	arts	2	fulfill	22	providing
106	as	7	fulfilling	59	public
5	Asheville	2	fulfillment	3	purpose
3	aspirations	5	fundamental	1	purposes

2	associated	2	fundamentals	2	pursue
58	at	8	future	2	qualities
2	available	31	globe	49	quality
1	awarding	54	graduate	2	race
15	baccalaureate	14	graduates	6	range
8	basic	2	grant	6	recognizes
27	be	7	growth	2	recognizing
8	become	65	health	34	region
1	beliefs	1	heir	12	regional
1	believe	2	heritage	1	reinforcing
1	belonging	23	high	3	relationships
5	benefit	5	higher	1	relative
16	beyond	10	highest	1	renders
5	body	1	historic	132	research
8	both	1	honest	4	residential
6	broad	1	however	84	S
30	business	28	human	1	safeguarding
7	but	1	humanity	1	satisfying
74	by	2	identification	1	saving
19	campus	3	impact	19	scholarly
22	care	1	imparts	35	scholarship
103	Carolina	1	importance	22	science
2	catalyst	15	improve	47	sciences
9	center	4	improvement	3	seek
6	centered	315	in	14	seeks
4	centers	8	including	4	selected
8	central	1	incorporate	4	sense
1	centrality	5	increase	29	serve
6	challenging	14	individuals	14	serves
5	change	5	initiatives	85	service
4	characterized	8	innovation	27	services
17	citizens	22	innovative	3	serving
5	city	14	inquiry	2	setting
1	clarify	1	inspiration	2	several
1	clear	12	institution	4	shall
1	cliente	4	institutional	2	shaping
2	CO	9	institutions	1	shares
12	colleges	13	instruction	5	significant
20	commitment	6	integration	1	simultaneously
23	committed	28	intellectual	28	skills
2	common	3	interaction	38	social
1	communicates	1	interinstitutional	3	societal
20	communities	3	intermediate	22	society
81	community	8	into	2	socioeconomic

3	compete	1	investment	2	solution
11	comprehensive	5	involvement	2	solving
2	concentrated	136	is	4	southeastern
2	concerns	16	it	28	staff
2	conditions	70	its	75	state
2	conducted	49	knowledge	1	strengthens
1	conducts	2	laboratory	1	stresses
4	connections	2	land	7	strong
1	consciousness	8	lead	21	student
7	constituent	7	leader	158	students
1	constitute	22	leaders	12	study
5	contemporary	34	leadership	2	succeed
12	continuing	6	learners	7	successful
1	continuum	75	learning	3	supported
4	contributes	21	levels	3	sustain
1	contributors	22	liberal	2	sustainability
10	create	36	life	6	sustainable
3	creates	4	lifelong	6	system
5	creating	3	literature	3	takes
36	creative	4	live	8	teacher
10	creativity	17	lives	70	teaching
13	critical	6	major	7	technical
5	cultivate	1	manner	6	technological
26	cultural	17	master	21	technology
5	culture	2	masters	89	that
1	curing	1	mastery	966	the
3	curricular	3	mathematics	46	their
12	curriculum	1	may	16	them
5	D	19	meet	2	therefore
10	dedicated	2	military	8	they
21	degree	93	mission	11	thinking
4	degrees	3	missions	28	this
1	delivered	5	model	2	thoughtful
1	depending	3	multi	3	three
2	designated	2	multicultural	107	through
26	develop	2	mutually	8	throughout
13	developing	28	nation	483	to
38	development	16	national	4	tradition
2	dimensions	8	natural	5	traditional
8	discipline	7	necessary	2	train
11	disciplines	3	need	4	transformation
4	discover	29	needs	2	transforming
8	discovery	99	North	1	transmit
2	diseases	659	of	1	transportation

3	distinctive	13	offer	16	UNC
2	distinctively	8	offering	36	undergraduate
1	distinguishing	14	offers	9	understanding
37	diverse	30	on	1	undertake
21	diversity	4	one	9	unique
10	doctoral	3	open	152	university
1	doctorate	4	opportunity	1	upholds
6	each	11	or	6	use
1	eastern	9	organizations	16	values
26	economic	29	other	1	varies
7	economics	3	others	7	variety
5	economy	99	our	1	views
2	ED	1	ourselves	59	we
125	education	14	outreach	23	well
53	educational	2	overall	8	where
13	effective	4	own	21	which
2	efficient	8	resources	10	while
4	Elizabeth	1	respecting	25	who
3	emerging	2	respond	5	wide
5	emphasis	9	responsibility	46	will
2	emphasizes	13	responsible	79	with
1	enables	2	rewards	10	within
1	encompasses	8	rich	21	work
6	encourage	7	role	26	world
6	encourages	8	roles		
3	endeavors				
8	engage				
10	engaged				

## 2. Words of Highest Frequency Count Result by Word Count Tool

100+		60~99		30~59	
Carolina	103	by	74	all	35
as	106	arts	62	activities	33
through	107	professional	69	excellence	45
education	125	community	81	are	57
research	132	mission	93	diverse	37
is	136	its	70	creative	36
university	152	service	85	graduate	51
students	158	North	99	educational	53
for	163	faculty	78	at	58

in	315	health	65	business	30
to	483	programs	95	global	31
of	659	learning	75	development	38
the	966	our	99	environment	38
and	1199	an	60	academic	44
		teaching	70	knowledge	49
		that	89	leadership	34
		with	79	life	36
				on	30
				prepare	33
				provide	52
				public	59
				quality	49
				region	34
				scholarship	35
				sciences	47
				social	38
				their	46
				undergraduate	36
				we	59
				will	46
14		17		28	

### 3. Frequency of Notional Words and their Variations Based on Word Counter and Frequency Tool

num.	Word	variations	freq.
1	student	study, students	191
2	education	educational	178
3	serve	serves, service, services, serving	158
4	community	communities	101
5	provide	provides, providing	97
6	mission	missions	96
7	professions	professional, professionally	82
8	learners	learning	81
9	teacher	teaching	78
10	develop	developing, development	77
11	lead	leader, leaders, leadership	72
12	science	sciences	69
13	graduate	graduates	68
14	social	societal, society, socioeconomic	65

15	create	creates, creating, creative, creativity	64
16	Life	lifelong, live, lives	61
17	act	active, activities, activity	60
18	diverse	diversity	58
19	scholarly	scholarship	54
20	quality	qualities	51
21	academic	academically	48
22	prepare	prepared, prepares, preparing	47
23	region	regional	46
24	environment	environmental	45
25	nation	national	44
26	commitment	committed	43
27	economic	economics, economy	38
28	high	higher, highest	38
29	initiatives	innovation, innovative	35
30	offer	offers, offering	35
31	technical	technological, technology	34
32	engage	engaged, engagement	33
33	enhance	enhances, enhancing	32
34	need	needs	32
35	culture	cultural	31
36	center	centered, centers, central, centrality	28
37	degree	degrees	25
Total	37	67	2395
<p>Highest frequency words among total unique words: <math>37/452=18.14\%</math>;  Highest frequency word variants among total unique words: <math>67/452=55.09\%</math>;  Highest frequency words and their variants among total unique words:  <math>(37+67)/452=73.23\%</math>;  Highest frequency words and their variants among total words:  <math>2395/14291=34.25\%</math></p>			

#### 4. Highest Frequency of Notional Words and their Variations Based on Word Count Tool

num.	word	variations	freq.
1	education	educational, educate, educating, educators, educated, educator's	204
2	student	students, student's	179
3	serve	service, serves, serving, underserved, served	161
4	university	university's	152
5	college	colleges	145
6	research	researchers	136
7	school	schools, school's, schooling	128

8	profession	professions, professional, professionals, professionally, professoriate	118
9	graduate	graduates, graduation, graduating, undergraduate, postgraduate	108
10	program	programs, programming	107
11	North	northeastern, northwestern	105
12	Carolina	Carolina's	103
13	provide	provides, providing, provided, provision, provisions	102
14	community	communities	101
15	mission	missions	96
16	teach	teaching, teacher, teachers, teaches	90
17	leadership	lead, leads, leading, leader, leaders	89
18	learn	learning, learner, learners	86
19	state	states, state's, statewide	83
20	social	society, association, socially, societal, socioeconomic, associated, sociology, society's, associations, associate	82
21	develop	develops, developed, development, developing	82
22	faculty	faculties	79
23	Art	arts, artistic, artists, artistically, artifacts	78
24	nation	national, nationally, nationwide, nations, nation's, international, internationally	75
25	science	sciences, nanoscience, geosciences	71
26	Life	live, lifespan, lifelong, lives, living	70
27	health	healthy, healthcare	69
28	activity	act, active, action, activities, interact, contact, actively	66
29	create	creates, creative, creativity, creation, creating, recreation, recreational, creators, created	65
30	prepare	prepares, prepared, preparing, preparation	65
31	public	publics	61
32	scholars	scholarly, scholarship, scholarships	59
33	diverse	diversity	58
34	quality	qualities, qualified	57
35	environment	environments, environmental, environmentally	53
36	cultural	culture, culturally, multicultural, intercultural, cultures, cultured, acculturating, acculturates, agriculture, agricultural	53
37	academic	academically, academy, academics, academicians, academia	52
38	engagement	engaged, engage, engaging, engages	51
39	knowledge	knowledgeable	50
40	excel	excellence, excellent	49
41	region	regional, regionally	48
42	support	supports, supportive, supporting, supported	45

43	committed	commits, commitment	45
44	practice	practices, practical, practitioners	42
45	economic	economy, economics, socioeconomic, economically	41
46	offer	offers, offered, offering, offerings	39
47	experience	experiences	38
48	discipline	disciplines, disciplinary, interdisciplinary	38
49	needs	need, needed	37
50	technology	technical, technological, technologies, techniques, technically	37
51	global	globally	36
52	human	humanity, humanities	36
53	enhance	enhances, enhanced, enhancement	34
54	business	businesses	33
55	intellectual	Intellectually	32
56	innovative	innovates, innovativeness, innovation	32
57	work	works, working, workplace, workforce, worker, teamwork, network	32
58	skills	skill, skilled	31
59	honors	honor	30
60	promote	promotes, promoting, promotions	30
61	care	careful, healthcare	28
62	information	inform, informs, informing, informational, informal	28
63	collaborative	collaborating, collaborate, collaboration, collaborations	28
64	world	world's	26
65	institution	institution's, institutions, institutional, interinstitutional	26
66	level	levels	25
67	degree	degrees	25
68	liberal	liberty, liberates	24
69	challenges	challenge, challenging	24
70	continuing	continue, continued, continuously, continuous, continual	24
71	international	internationally	23
72	opportunities	opportunity	23
73	value	values	23
74	personal	person, personally, personalized, personally, persons	23
75	meet	meeting	22
76	citizens	citizenry, citizenship	22
77	advance	advances, advancing, advancement	22
78	responsible	responsibility	22
79	management	managers	21
80	individuals	individual, individually	21
81	UNC	UNCG, UNCW, UNCOSA, UNCP	20
82	communication	communicate, communicates, communicator,	20



		communications	
total	82	249	4894
<p>Highest frequency words among total unique words: <math>82/452=18.14\%</math>;  Highest frequency word variants among total unique words: <math>249/452=55.09\%</math>;  Highest frequency words and their variants among total unique words:  <math>(82+249)/452=73.23\%</math>;  Highest frequency words and their variants among total words:  <math>4894/14291=34.25\%</math></p>			

APPENDIX E. MISSION STATEMENTS: THEMES AND METAPHORS OF SENSEMAKING

data	questions asked	themes stated	exemplary metaphors	metaphor type	cover metaphor
organizational mission statement	where	place: North Carolina time: going global events: economic shrinking	positioner / time-pacer wind-catcher	environment-screening	change
	who	who: Who are we? who: What expertise do we have? who: What is our structure?	professional loosely coupled organizer aspirer	enactment	changer
	what	what: what do we aspire to be / what strategies to use	teaching + research contributing / engaging / preparing	selection	relevance-maker
	how	how: values, roles	center, community, leader, lab	retention	retainer
how: history, and principles		history defender / principle-observer	remembering	rememberer	