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A Case Study of Faculty Experiences in a College Union

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A Case Study of Faculty Experiences in a College Union

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Higher Education

by

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Abstract

College Unions remain an important presence on many campuses, and often have long legacies of service to students and the campus. Faculty members have largely been left out of the college union literature, despite their tenure on campuses. This study examined the experiences of faculty members with the college union at a case study institution. Interviews with faculty produced themes of participant's connection to the union, faculty convenience, and student purpose. Many faculty participants shared common traits that may have influenced their involvement in, and experiences with, the union, such as an undergraduate degree from the same institution and their proximity to the facility on campus. The findings suggest that college unions can do more to incorporate faculty into their overall programs.

Acknowledgments

It is silly that such a group effort is collectively given one page in which to shine. Nevertheless, this dissertation would not have been possible without the intense, almost furious efforts of multiple individuals and groups alike. Thank you to my family at the Arkansas Union, who have endured years of discussing this topic, answered questions far out of their expertise, and picked up slack every time I left to work on this study. Thank you in particular to my boss, Lynne Bell, for her encouragement and support in the same.

Thank you to my colleagues at the Association of College Unions International for giving me a voice early in my professional career, and for the countless friends, opportunities, and experiences this organization has provided me along the way. Thank you to my Region II friends and role models who have pushed me and kept me accountable. I intend to keep repaying these gifts as often as possible.

Thank you to my dissertation committee for taking on the task of this study. You have shown me how to shine and helped me point the light in the right directions. Thank you in particular to Dr. Mike Miller for our countless meetings, strategy sessions, and emails.

Thank you to my family and friends for always giving me the benefit of the doubt when I mentioned pursuing this career. It's okay if you still don't understand it.

Finally, thank you to my gatekeeper at Midwest U, and their dedicated team of professionals, for making this study realistically and logistically possible. Thank you too, to the person who connected us the first time. Both of you have helped me professionally, and, hopefully, advanced the cause of our field.

Dedication

For my wife, Laura, for countless nights, through innumerable moves, across changes to

family, work, and life, you have made us whole.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Problem

The college union has been described in many ways: as a "gathering space" (ACUI, 2018b, para. 3), as a "living room" or "hearthstone" (Packwood, 1977, p. 180), and quite simply, an "idea" (Butts, 1971). By any name or term, a college union represents, generally, a physical location on campus which serves the community needs of students, staff, guests, alumni, and faculty (ACUI, 2018b). In a time of intense scrutiny of higher education, tightening budgets, and calls for accountability, a college union's role in establishing community must be educationally justified and evolve accordingly (Butts, et al., 2012). But does the college union create community for all campus constituents? Contributions of faculty members to an educationally-conducive community have been documented in other locations on campus (Zhao & Kuh, 2004), and the college union must find ways to relate better to faculty (Adair, 1975) if it is to succeed in its role as a community for the entire campus.

Much has been written about the college union and its role for, and impact on, students. College unions, by whatever name, have a long tradition of being of, for, and by students (Culver, Ziadie, & Cowherd, 2013). Unions host an abundance of activities and events, helping students excel in leadership and social responsibility (ACUI, 2018b). They work to form a sense of community for students on campuses (Barrett, 2014). They provide students a wide array of groups and organizations which can contribute to a student's sense of belonging and persistence (Tinto, 2017). College unions, whatever their form, serve as the heartbeat of a campus, creating intentional spaces and opportunities for their student populations. While specific impacts and

measures may be debatable, the focus is fairly clear: students are at the center of what a college union, and perhaps by extension, an institution of higher education, purports to do.

Beyond a focused measure on students, however, little exists by way of research on the college union's purpose regarding other constituents. Despite their specific inclusion in the *Role of the College Union* document (ACUI, 2018b), there does not exist much literature regarding any other groups: staff, alumni, guests, or faculty. The final group, faculty, is the concern in this study. Why have faculty been left out of this literature? Surely, they cannot be unimportant to the college union. In a time of increased scrutiny on student learning in colleges and universities, college union practitioners should be seeking out new and inventive ways in which to involve and engage faculty in their operations and programs (Dungy, 2011). The focus on student retention and persistence is undeniable, and both the academic and cocurricular institutional areas play roles in those efforts (Tinto, 2017). Faculty, alongside staff, play critical roles in campus efforts to boost student persistence (Morrow & Ackermann, 2012); and calls for deliberate faculty involvement in cocurricular life have continued for well over a decade (Lovett, 2006). Faculty members have also been present within residence halls in varying roles, such as faculty in residence, over the last decade or more (Browne, Headworth, & Saum, 2009). With these known benefits to faculty members' presence in such spaces, why have college unions, apparently, not followed suit and sought to involve faculty members in any measurable or known way?

With very little existing research regarding faculty and college unions, practitioners are left to guess what their specific experiences, intentions, and needs might be, creating a potential knowledge and programmatic void. Such a void may negatively impact both college unions and

faculty. Prior research has declared that more study is needed of faculty agency in their decisions regarding participation in student affairs-partnered programs on campus (Guentzel, 2009).

Knowledge regarding the involvement of faculty around the college union may have many benefits. Bringing faculty members into the college union may better promote general concepts of community, both within faculty ranks and as an entire campus. If more was known about faculty needs and wants in a college union, and how those concepts are developed, practitioners and campus leaders might see potential foundations for partnerships in their own college unions. Intentional spaces and opportunities could be created to further academic connections to the wider student community. Faculty members themselves may find a new sense of community and belonging on campuses, perhaps contributing to a greater sense of satisfaction among their ranks. College unions would, in theory, be able to show how their facilities and programming specifically contribute – not only to academic retention and persistence, but also to faculty wellbeing. In short, this research might better prepare both faculty members and practitioners to help students – and therefore the entire institution – succeed.

Purpose of Study & Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of faculty members with their college union at a case study institution. No current qualitative research in this area was known to exist, as mentioned before; and as a college union director myself, I was interested in possibilities that transcend current faculty perceptions of my facility and the learning which happens within it. Continuing to link the work that I do as a union director to the greater academic mission of the institution may solidify and enhance what the college union has to offer not only students, but others in the campus community as well. As faculty play a key role in most campus educational efforts, their collective input may prove valuable in the development of these

ideas. Looking for ways to increase faculty members' presence in and sense of community around the college union may impact students academically, faculty organizationally, and college unions operationally.

Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How do faculty members at a case study institution describe their college union's role in developing community for students and faculty?

2. What interactions do these faculty members have with the college union at their current institution?

3. How do these faculty members recall their introductions to their college union?

4. What elements of their college union do these faculty members identify as contributing to, or detracting from, a sense of faculty community?

5. What other interactions or opportunities do these faculty members desire from their college union?

Definitions

In studying this issue, key terms emerged as the research progressed. Specific definitions of these terms, presented up front, assisted in the literature review, analysis, and conclusion sections of this study. The following terms and their definitions are offered here to aid the reader.

College Union: Traditionally, a physical space or facility on a college campus which is open to the entire collegiate community. College unions may house facilities for gathering, opportunities for dining, resources for meetings and activities, and spaces for campus offices and services. College unions go by varying names, (university union, campus center, student union, and others) but traditionally focus on the creation of campus community (ACUI, 2018b).

Community: Community is an abstract concept, referring to the collective sense of belonging and connection that group members have for themselves and one another, including the idea that individual and collective needs will be met (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Campus communities allow for membership in distinct institutional history, tradition, and culture (Strange & Banning, 2001).

Faculty: In this study, members of the higher education institution with primary responsibility for academic instruction. Faculty may be tenure-track, adjunct, visiting, clinical, instructors, or hold other roles. Different classifications of faculty may hold distinct institutional needs and wants that may ultimately result in categorical differentiation (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994).

Socialization: In this study, the process by which faculty members become aware of, and integrate, behaviors seen as community-appropriate (Leslie, Swiren, & Flener, 1977).

Limitations

With a wide array of available possibilities, this study chose to limit its scope in the following ways. First, this study was conducted at a single case study institution, specifically, a large, public, Midwest research institution with a large, historic college union. This selection permitted a wide array of faculty from which to draw for the study, with respect to fields of study, career paths, and personal characteristics. While none of these traits were exclusive to this institutional type, having a wide variety available may have provided a fuller array of possible research narratives. Moreover, as many large public research-intensive institutions exist across the country, this study could be conducted again at other universities without sacrificing other elements.

Second, this study focused on the self-reported experiences of faculty members. Therefore, there are implied assumptions of honesty and validity accompanying the conversations we had. While these are most likely not independently verifiable, methods will later be discussed which helped provide some checks against researcher bias and potential misinterpretation. The method of research participant selection for this study also helped in this regard.

Third, this study drew its participants from faculty with established relationships with a particular college union. The existence of these preexisting relationships may have implied a certain bias or set of beliefs on behalf of the participants. Therefore, this study did not include information from faculty who specifically avoid the college union.

Importance

This study will provide several important insights that may impact multiple campus constituents. First, a better understanding of faculty members' experiences of and socialization to the college union may help create better links between academic and cocurricular life. Learning not only what these faculty members think and know about the union, but also where these concepts come from, might assist union practitioners in designing student-faculty spaces and opportunities within their facilities. Additionally, unions might develop outreach programs to faculty in their early careers, dealing a blow to long-held notions that academic life and student affairs are competing for student interest (Miller & Prince, 1976). Helping faculty to see the college union and other cocurricular programs as educational elements in their careers may prove useful in developing and maintaining relationships crucial to these educational efforts (Wawrzynski, Jessup-Anger, & Yao, 2011). If faculty can be enlisted as key stakeholders in the college union program, practitioners may find more plentiful and longer-term opportunities for

academic collaboration over a wider array of educational areas. If college union leaders can understand faculty needs and perceptions of union spaces, we might better draw faculty members into a space often seen as exclusively "for students," which may produce new and unexpected benefits to all groups involved.

Next, an understanding of the college union's role as perceived by faculty may provide user-group clarity on a common ideal. ACUI's *Role of the College Union* statement explicitly mentions faculty and includes them among their primary audiences (ACUI, 2018b), but it is presently unknown if faculty possess any awareness of this inclusion, or if such inclusion is even desired by this group. Understanding faculty perceptions, both positive and negative, of the college union's role may provide unexpected insights (Adair, 1975). Any notable gaps between the perceptions of faculty members and the ACUI *Role* document, or the purported role of their specific college union, may highlight for practitioners a critical need for outreach and bridge-building, often referred to in the college union world as story-telling (Butts, et al., 2012). The benefit of properly-aligned roles and objectives may open up new avenues to college union-academic collaboration, or community-related benefits among faculty. If the college union were better able to identify specific faculty community needs and intentionally meet those needs, faculty might be drawn more frequently into a space often seen as "student-focused," which may have new and unexpected benefits for both students and faculty members.

Similarly, studying faculty interactions with their college union environment may help explain or dispute ideas of interactions between individuals and their built environment (Massey, 1994), which can be even more pronounced in a tertiary learning environment (Kuntz, Petrovic, & Ginocchio, 2012). A knowledge of existing faculty experiences and interactions within and around a college union may yield strong assessment data for an institution. Moreover, studies

about the built environment of the college union have predominantly focused on student-centered interactions with the space (Maxwell, 2016), leaving both a knowledge void and a point of comparison for later research. Learning about faculty members' interactions and experiences may help confirm wider notions of community and space beyond those held by students.

Finally, an understanding of faculty members' expectations of community and the college union may contribute to strategic planning and resource allocation within the college union. A college union's overall program and strategic plan should reflect the needs of its constituents (Butts, 1971); but a lack of knowledge of faculty members' needs may hinder participation in the college union's opportunities and activities. Awareness of the basic needs of this community may provide campus planners and college union practitioners the information required to better-align resources to the greater benefit of the campus community.

Conceptual Framework of Study

Campus ecology is a conceptual framework developed by James Banning and Leland Kaiser in 1974. In campus ecology, human and developmental ecology are combined within the collegiate environment to focus on the concept of college student development (Banning & Kaiser, 1974). The framework of campus ecology has been used to study a wide variety of student-setting phenomena such as student success, campus safety, and college union design processes. Campus ecology presents as an ideal candidate for the study of individuals and environments within a college union; however, this framework has largely been applied to a student-focused context, with a basis in college student development. Six underlying theories shape campus ecology: Behavior-Setting Theory, Subculture Approach, Holland's Theory, Stern's Need x Press = Culture Theory, Moos' Social Ecological Approach, and Pervin's Transaction Approach. Each of these theories contributes to the overall framework of campus

ecology and provides guidance on potential interview questions, analytical possibilities, and coding techniques.

One of the theoretical foundations of campus ecology is *Behavior-Setting Theory* (BST), which describes the ways that individual and group behaviors and actions interact with the physical environment, and how the two concepts influence and reinforce one another (Barker, 1968). BST may be useful in helping to frame and describe perceptions and observations faculty members hold regarding college unions. The focus on interactions may prove useful in analytical stages when coding interview transcripts.

Subculture Approach uses similar environmental-individual assumptions but is more concerned with variation in behavior and attitude within a setting. Clark and Trow's (1966) model identified four distinct subcultures: Academic, Nonconformist, Collegiate, and Vocational, and mapped on the dimensions of students' identification with ideas and their identification with their college. Individuals within the same subculture are assumed to demonstrate common characteristics in their personal interactions (Clark & Trow, 1966). Gohn & Albin (2006) later updated Clark & Trow's work to include modern concepts of nontraditional students. A focus on subcultures may prove applicable in the application of interview questions, as faculty may present as a subculture in a building primarily focused on students. Clark and Trow's examples and their distinctions may share similarities with how faculty self-perceive in the space and provide guidance for implications and analysis.

Holland's Theory (1973) was developed by more than 150 studies which demonstrated that individuals tended to select environments that were consistent with specific combinations of personality types, derived from Holland's six basic personality types (Holland, 1973). Holland suggested that six model environments exist, corresponding one with each of his personality

types. For example, an investigative person would seek out a corresponding investigative school or work environment, leading to congruent personality/environmental interactions conducive to satisfaction (Holland, 1973). These personality types and environments may also be combined into more specific occurrences of each. Holland's Theory, therefore, represents another instance of behavior being a function of both the environment and the individual, with more emphasis placed on the person. This theory may help frame shared characteristics between interview participants and permit the drawing of conclusions about the environment of the college union.

Stern's *Need x Press = Culture Theory* (1970) took an operationalized approach to the concept of person-environment influence. Describing 30 different behaviors as "needs" helps frame environmental perceptions and reports ("presses") in predictable ways (Stern, 1970). Stern used multiple indices to operationally define the environments for participants, though his results were not generally found to support his theory on an individual level, but there is some better consistency across academic colleges (Stern, 1970). It is possible that examining faculty interactions from the perspective of needs in both a literal and metaphorical sense can help frame faculty perceptions in theoretically-grounded ways. Stern's theory will undoubtedly influence certain interview questions and how they are analyzed.

Another theoretical foundation of campus ecology is Pervin's *Transaction Approach* (1967). Pervin theorized that the specific interactions and transactions between individuals and their setting help create perceptions of self, both actual and idealized (Pervin, 1967). Pervin's approach may be useful in that prior studies have used it to demonstrate self-environment congruency and satisfaction. Asking questions about faculty satisfaction with services and facilities within the college union provides an opportunity to link responses to their sense of self.

The college union, for all its achievement and function, is not completely unique in its mission or history. While it may claim a unique historical context on campuses and developed alongside specific college needs, there are other spaces that may also claim a relevant context and history when it comes to the development of community. Oldenburg (1999) suggests that there exists what he calls a third place – that is, a physical space that is distinct from living quarters (first place) or areas dedicated to productivity (second place) (Oldenburg, 1999). The distinction between this third place and its first/second counterparts is that the third has indelible characteristics making it unique: it is a place set on level social ground, conversation and dialogue dominate the setting, there are known regulars who frequent the location, and it serves as a "home away from home" (Oldenburg, 1999). In his descriptors and examples, Oldenburg conjures images of a variety of spaces that fit his criteria: coffee houses, beer gardens, community centers, bookstores, playgrounds, and others. Beyond the fact that many of our campus facilities actually contain these examples within their walls, the college union, in its many different shapes and sizes, meets his described setting to an almost-perfect degree.

College unions are spaces intended for all, as indicated by the *Role* statement shared earlier. Throughout the union's history, the space has been a gathering place for groups formal and informal, for dialogue, debate, lecture, conversation, and the fulfillment of purpose. While Oldenburg tends to describe regulars in terms of frequent participants, college union personnel (both professional and student) fulfill this role well. They spend a great deal of time in the facility, interact with a variety of patrons, and willingly participate in the organic flow of dialogue (Oldenburg, 1999). Sadly, prior research on faculty in college unions (Adair, 1975) indicates that faculty members are not regulars to the space. Finally, the college union unquestionably serves as a "home away from home" on its campuses. The frequent incorporation

of imagery and wording, describing the facility as the "living room" of campus (ACUI, 2018b),

serves as a metaphorical (if not often literal) beacon of familiarity and sense of belonging for the

campus community.

Given the nature of this topic, and the wide variety of possible directions it may take with

varying influences, I proposed the use of a flexible, interactive model to guide this research.

Maxwell (2012) proposed a five-part interactive design model which helps demonstrate the

influences of each major research section on others, and to demonstrate the back-and-forth flow

that may naturally occur in qualitative research. Figure 1 shows Maxwell's design incorporated

with corresponding elements of this study.
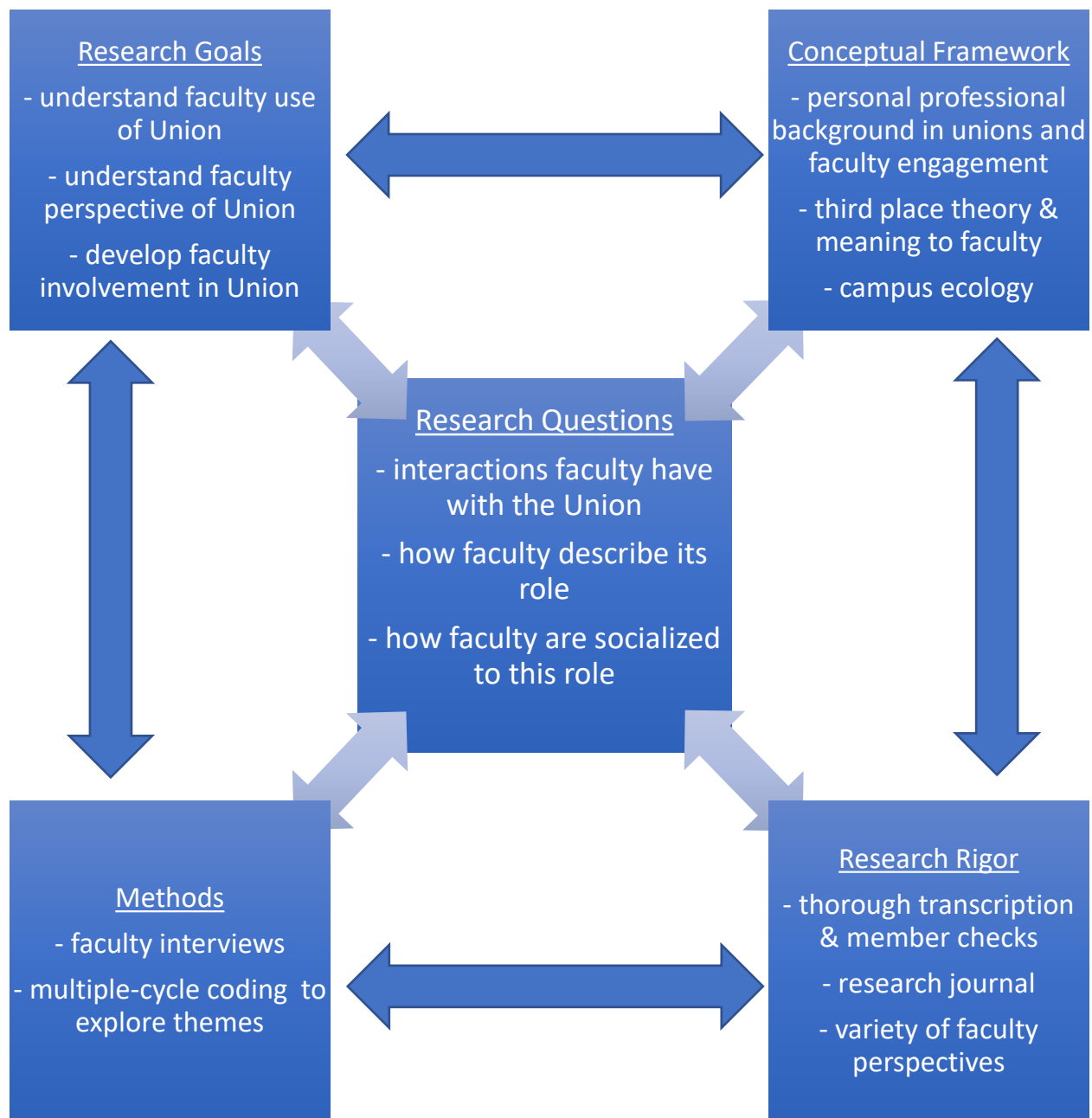
Figure 1. Maxwell's interactive design model with applied research elements.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The history of college unions provided relevant background and context to the current study, while different research topics regarding the goals of the college union and the expectations of faculty helped frame existing concepts and topical avenues for exploration. Moreover, multiple studies of faculty socialization and collaborative work in higher education provided a context for potential study.

The process of discovering and examining this literature began with a general University of Arkansas library search for the terms "college union" and "faculty." One key dissertation found from this search provided samples of other literature that would be relevant to this work. Some of these sources were not studies, but simply speeches and presentations from past Association of College Unions International (ACUI) conferences. Correspondence with current ACUI central office staff proved a quick means of obtaining copies these proceedings, as well as other related speeches and articles. Knowing that there were a few significant sources of college union history and context, some well-known ACUI literature was read in search of related writings. Reading through the literature of other ACUI and college union-related dissertations provided more sources likely to be relevant, especially in the realm of campus ecology. Other library term searches involved "student affairs" and "faculty" together, which produced a network of studies regarding faculty participation in student affairs partner programs.

The resulting literature review covered a history of college unions, and their primacy for students. Next, writings on the incorporation of faculty into the college union were reviewed, and the few studies that directly inform the current study. Then, other studies of faculty efforts in the student affairs realm, and faculty expectations regarding those partnerships were examined.

Research regarding faculty communities then informed larger literature reviews of theories involving physical space on campuses. The chapter concluded the review with a final review of the college union's role in creating campus community.

History of College Unions

The history of the college union began after-hours, outside of the classroom, in old English college literary societies. Stedman (1887) described the Oxford Union as "… a kind of large literary club, where every opportunity is afforded to those desirous of improving their minds" (p. 97). Apart from books, the Oxford Union was known for its dining facilities, newspapers, and recreational features (Crosby & Aydelotte, 1922), not unlike more modern facilities. Popularized throughout most larger American campuses by the early to mid 1900s, these organizations provided students opportunities to engage in stimulating and intellectual pursuits without the watchful eye of a formalized instructor (Westbrook, 2002). Here, students continued their learning and knowledge in informal ways: through conversation, rhetoric, independent study, and debate on contemporary social and political issues (Westbrook, 2002). The University of Pennsylvania's Houston Hall, founded in 1896, has been generally recognized as the oldest college union facility in the United States (Butts, et al., 2012). In addition to its literary and debate spaces, the facility contained more modern amenities for its time, such as a swimming pool, auditorium, and a photography studio. As college unions spread across the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s, they shifted from the sole purpose of intellectual debate toward a vision of modern student recreational activities and campus life (Butts, et al., 2012).

In the early-to-mid 20th century, college unions formalized their role as the purveyors of campus community and student life. Many college unions were built from existing models at

Pennsylvania and the University of Wisconsin, and student leaders sought to establish both means for funding campus events and maintaining student control over their new facilities (Butts, et al., 2012). The Midwest was a prolific purveyor of new college unions, such as those at the Universities of Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and others. Union boards - groups of students and other campus constituents - were often formed to govern both the facilities themselves alongside the variety of programs and activities put on within (Culver, Ziadie, & Cowherd, 2013). Nearly a century later, these governing boards still showcase the opportunity students had to learn and practice skills in areas such as leadership, communication, and decision-making outside of the class setting. The college union became a physical focal point for campus life, demonstrating the best of what the collegiate community had to offer. Often containing newer features like hotels and art galleries, college unions evolved into the social hub of activity, not only for students, but also for all who would come onto the campus (Butts, et al., 2012).

The period post-World War II through the 1970s saw great change for the college unions. Citizenship, taste-making, the arts, and education of the whole student became rallying cries and focal points for college union administrators (Butts, et al., 2012). In addition to significant increases in enrollment, campuses now saw more diverse groups of students joining their ranks, including veterans and minority students (Thelin, 2011). Uniformity in the college atmosphere gave way to freedom and variety, which brought new ideas, new priorities, and new challenges. The union retained its commitment to campus life and activity but swung quickly back into providing for a for lively debate and political expression (Butts, et al., 2012). Campus leaders also simultaneously sought the college union to serve the role of "unifying force" for campuses during times of social upheaval and unrest (Butts, et al., 2012, p. 121). During the 1970s, administrators realized that college unions could become self-sustaining financial entities if they

incorporated different business elements, including serving as meeting and event space for non-university groups (Rouzer, DeSawal, & Yakaboski, 2014). Along with a focus on finances came a surge in artistic endeavors in the college union, whether simple expansion of collections or the outright creation of galleries and museums (Butts, et al., 2012). While some faculty were sometimes consulted on these artistic endeavors, the college union's focus clearly remained on changes in the student body, not the faculty.

In more recent decades, college unions have focused on areas of interest and need that are, in many cases, still pressing issues today. The high watermark of college financial support in the 1970s began to erode (Thelin, 2004), and college unions have found themselves under the same financial pressures and restraints as the rest of the campus since that time (Crouch, 1992). An emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism swept across college unions in the 1980s, during which time a number of union boards established or shored up specific programmatic efforts on cultural participation and awareness (Culver, Ziadie, & Cowherd, 2013). This emphasis, in part, was an attempt to play catch-up for the decades of White, male exclusivity in union governing boards and associated groups. An emphasis on student involvement and transferrable leadership skills dominated much of the conversation around college unions during the 1990s, and college union governing boards became a focal point for student learning outcomes (Mitchell, 1993). As campuses continued to grow and evolve, so too did college union facilities. Technology became a cornerstone of the college union, whether indicated by the prominence of computer labs, new means of computer programs for resource management, or other sustainable innovations that maximize the usability of the facility (Hatton, Farley, Cook, & Potter, 2009).

Much of the written history of college unions spoke to the experiences and needs of students. These students formed the cornerstones of college union organizations from their

Oxford roots and provided the funding and initiative to spread and grow to hundreds of campuses. While initially devoted to outside-of-class academic pursuits, today's unions support the more modern student desires for recreation and relevant resources (Culver, Ziadie, & Cowherd, 2013). While this writing provided important context on how and why college unions developed, it did not specifically speak to any faculty inclusion or role.

History of ACUI and the Role of the College Union Statement

The Association of College Unions International (ACUI) was founded in 1914, when college union personnel from a half-dozen schools in the Midwest met at Ohio State University to discuss their work, student involvement connected to college unions, and the possibility of forming an association (Berry, 1964). ACUI grew and evolved into the preeminent professional organization for college union personnel, consisting of thousands of members who represent hundreds of schools in seven different countries (ACUI, 2018a). In its formative years, the association sought to help communicate the college union's purpose and function on campuses in a generalized way; and so the collaborative purpose statement, *Role of the College Union*, was born (ACUI, 2018b). As a note, at this time, ACUI was known as the Association of College Unions – the "I" component was added in 1968 as a show of inclusion (ACUI, 2018a). The *Role*, first codified by ACUI members in the 1950s and updated at least twice since then, spoke to the facility's purpose in the development of students, and the inclusivity of the entire campus community (ACUI, 2018b). Faculty were specifically mentioned in the *Role*, but only as joined by staff, alumni, and guests; no specific faculty outreach, program, or involvement was mentioned. However, the statement did claim to serve the entire campus community by "providing gathering spaces to encourage formal and informal community interactions that build meaningful relationships" (ACUI, 2018b, para. 3). This particular combination of elements -

informal interactions and meaningful relationships - also emerged in literature on faculty-student interaction and its contribution to student success (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Without a formative program for faculty-based community and interactions within the college union, other theories were required to help frame the study.

Faculty at Public Research Institutions

The current study focused on a specific definition of faculty: namely, those persons employed at a higher education institution with primary responsibility for academic instruction. Although specific skills, characteristics, and responsibilities vary by institution, the general role of faculty can be described as a "meta-professional" (Theall & Arreola, 2018) in which individuals are called upon to exhibit a number of general competencies: teaching, research, institutional service, and administrative responsibilities (Theall & Arreola, 2018).

The earliest faculty roles were not as structured or credentialed as those found in modern academia. Often religiously-based, Colonial-era instructors were seen as tutors who maintained authority to teach a variety of subjects to small student bodies (Thelin, 2011). Although some academic rank existed, faculty had little structure outside of a singular president/headmaster authority, who was sometimes elected from his peers (Thelin, 2011). "His" is an intentional word choice here, as faculty were overwhelmingly male (in addition to White). Even as campuses grew and faculty came to find more formalized roles in the early 1800s, the male domination of the professoriate remained unchanged outside of women's normal and liberal arts schools (Thelin, 2011). Only in the late nineteenth century did female faculty members became normalized outside of these institutions, and another half-decade before the concepts of tenure and academic freedom came to universal acceptance within academia (Thelin, 2011). In the modern era, "faculty" is a broad term which represents a wider array of individuals in varying

academic-related instructional roles, a complex system of ranks and designations, and a wider array of responsibilities (Theall & Arreola, 2018).

Public research institutions represent a collection of higher education schools which make up the majority of doctoral degree-granting entities in the United States (Sciences, 2015). These institutions employ more than one million faculty and staff members nationwide (Sciences, 2015), who hold responsibilities previously mentioned here. Faculty members at these institutions are often encouraged to participate in other academic ventures such as mentorship of undergraduates through research, graduate student preparation and education, and collaborative projects across academic disciplines (Sciences, 2015).

Prior Writing and Studies of Faculty in College Unions

College unions, as purveyors of community, should seek to involve faculty in their facilities and programmatic efforts. Although there were a handful of writings of faculty interactions and experiences with student affairs, the existing research literature specific to the college union and its relationship with faculty was lacking. No significant research has been put forth on this topic, but there have been a small handful of dissertations and academic speeches on the issue.

As early as the 1930s, college union administrators were aware of faculty and their attitudes towards the college union. Citing the results of an informal campus survey, Porter Butts sought to assuage faculty who saw the union facility as a distraction from scholarship, noting that the more frequently a student engaged with the union, the higher their levels of scholarship tended to be (Butts, 1935). Although his very casual study did not delve into statistical significance, Butts did note that frequent users of the union were more likely to engage in lectures, forums, plays, and other educationally purposeful interests. The role or intentional

inclusion of faculty were not studied, however, leaving the emphasis here on student participation.

Butts later bemoaned the lack of intentionality among campus educational administrators with regard to the college union's role in learning. Speaking at the annual conference of the Association of College Unions International, Butts called out the frequent parading of the union by faculty as a "necessary complement of the classroom" but then its institutional classification "as an 'auxiliary enterprise' along with the college laundry" (Butts, 1949, n.p.). Again, faculty were involved in this critique, but there was no empirical involvement or role addressed for faculty. Most of Butts' address pushed the importance of student involvement and community for the common good (Butts, 1949). Decades later, he revived this same educational-auxiliary critique, but switched the disparity's blame to college presidents (Butts, 1964). Again, Butts emphasized the multifaceted educational mission of the college union but offers no specific invitation or role to faculty to join this community.

McCulley (1957) proposed in an address to his union governing board that the activities and purpose of the college union served the best interests of a foundational liberal education in college life. Bemoaning the already-fractured structure of larger institutions, McCulley sought to emphasize the universal and holistic education that higher education had initially sought. Emphasizing the role that the Hart House served at his home institution at the University of Toronto, McCulley highlighted the critical nature of community on campus, and the role it played in the development of well-rounded students and learners (McCulley, 1957).

That same year, the ACUI Bulletin published a list of suggestions for unions to increase faculty involvement in their facilities (ACUI, 1957). The proposals, which came from conversation at a regional ACUI conference in the northern United States, provided very basic

programmatic ideas, such as student-faculty meet and greets, a "fun night," in the union (no details provided), cooperative art exhibitions, and so forth. Many of these ideas were echoed in later talks and writings, but one suggestion, "having faculty members serve on the union board" (p. 5) stood out (ACUI, 1957). The article, being brief, did not include any potential goals or outcomes of these interactions, beyond that of students being more acquainted with their professors.

A few years later, at the 37th Annual Conference of the Association of College Unions, Robert McWhorter presented a paper, "A Study of the Cooperative Relationships of College Unions with Academic Departments" (1960). While smaller, informal articles on the topic appeared earlier, this was the first known study of the relationship between the college union and academia (Marshall, 1988). In this study, McWhorter proposed that college unions should do more collaborative relationship-building with faculty through programming and other means (McWhorter, 1960). McWhorter believed that assessing faculty-based needs and wants and making efforts to incorporate those elements into the union's programming, "would benefit both in achieving their overall objectives," (p. 62) although he did not specify what those objectives would be. McWhorter's study consisted of sending a ten-question survey to a geographically-diverse sampling of eighty of college union members of ACUI. Among McWhorter's recommendations were that college unions evaluate their programmatic efforts periodically to ascertain potential links to educational experiences, and that unions should intentionally present their capabilities and programs to academic units (McWhorter, 1960). The paper included a list of potential areas of partnership for academic programs and the college union noted many recreational programs taught as classes at the time (bowling, billiards, craft shop, etc.), but only a casual mention of more traditional lectures (p. 66). One of his more innovative suggestions for

building faculty relationships called for unions to "stimulate and encourage new faculty functions" (p. 66) to help drive new hires into the building in a formalized manner. Finally, McWhorter took an early stab at a true cocurricular educational program by recommending the union permit certain academic programs to use its spaces as experiential learning opportunities for students and faculty in areas like institutional management and campus recreation.

Noffke (1963) suggested that college unions' role in supporting education on campus was directly complimentary to that of the faculty. In his article in the ACUI Bulletin, he noted the hands-on experience that students involved in the union receive in areas such as leadership, group dynamics, the arts, and other areas. Noffke specifically wished to invite faculty in specific areas such as psychology, philosophy, and the arts, to see the union as full of "opportunities for research within subject matter areas… (such as) student habits, poise, interest, desire to get work done, and motivations" (p. 5). Joining his peers of the day, Noffke's writing also advocated for the union as a great setting for "students to engage informally in discussion with professors" (Noffke, 1963, p. 4).

The following year, Braden (1964) provided his personal insights on the development and condition of faculty in higher education. Speaking at that year's ACUI conference, Braden concluded his talk with some suggestions for how college unions might work with faculty members to help the general education of students on campus. He opined that faculty tended to see union directors as "institutionally oriented administrators who are not full members of the academic club" (p. 266-267) and urged unions to highlight their facility-based strengths to help bring more faculty into the fold (Braden, 1964). While not an actual study, Braden's ideas appeared to concur with McWhorter's (1960) conclusions. Some of Braden's specific suggestions for involvement included participation in chess competitions, quiz bowl, craft shops,

art displays, and other somewhat-informal events. His remarks ended by noting that, regardless of the topic, "faculty members will support a sound, academically oriented program" (p. 267).

In 1965, Nelson Jones from the University of Maine made a presentation entitled "Faculty-member, guest, or outsider in the college union?" at the forty-second annual ACUI conference (Jones, 1965). In his talk, Jones gave his impressions and questions for his fellow ACUI members to consider: is the college union a space for faculty? Are there specific facilities we can create for them? Can we even use the blanket-term *faculty* when we know the term *student* to be highly variable? Jones was another early adopter of the belief that faculty-student interaction served the interests of both parties:

> For each there may be annoyance at certain antics or points of view of their opposites but often enough the instructor or the student is pleased if not surprised to observe that the other person is not too bad after all and that at both student and faculty assemblies, there are responsive, dignified, interesting and enlightened people. (p. 156)

Jones, a former faculty member himself, knew that the time of professors even then was stretched thin with instruction and research, but believed that individual campuses could find ways to build relationships, especially one-on-one, with faculty willing to participate (Jones, 1965).

In 1975, a doctoral dissertation provided a quantitative examination of the attitudes and opinions that faculty had regarding their college union facilities via a mailed-out ranked-importance paper survey. Carolyn Adair conducted a sampling of institutions in all 50 states and based her instrumentation on the *Role of the College Union* statement (Adair, 1975). Adair's conclusions included a generalized lack of faculty understanding about the college union's roles, some negative attitudes about the union's programs and services, and an overall disassociation from the union's community (Adair, 1975). One possible factor Adair listed as a contributor to these results was the idea that college unions had become too student-oriented to serve the needs

of other community members. In her discussion, Adair asked the critical question: "Is the union serving the entire university community?" (Adair, 1975, p. 120). Responses to Adair's questions largely communicated a negative view. Adair's methodology was more typical of its time, cold-call mailers to faculty at institutions across the country, and her results may have been questionable due to low response results (less than 30%) and an overreliance on a singular institutional type (Adair, 1975). Her recommendations for institutional assessment to find ways to reach individual faculty members aligned closely with those later seen in research (Peltier, 2014).

In 1988, Willie Marshall took Adair's question and methodology and updated them for the context of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Focusing on the demographics of race, sex, and age among surveyed faculty members, Marshall came to several specific conclusions regarding the intersection of these variables with different aspects of the college union's role (Marshall, 1988). Among his more actionable recommendations, Marshall put forth that HBCUs should especially seek to reach out to younger faculty members to pursue partnerships and educational opportunities within the union (Marshall, 1988). Marshall also specifically recommended that college union practitioners make intentional efforts to reach out to all members of the campus community (Marshall, 1988). The study, done in a similar manner to Adair's (1975), had similar limitations regarding sample size and generalizability. Marshall also posited future research questions to break down faculty structure by degree, tenure, and faculty rank to arrive at more detailed faculty attitudes and perceptions (Marshall, 1988).

Faculty and Student Affairs

Some literature on faculty involvement in student affairs existed, primarily from studies of specific programs at institutions with structures already in place. Historically, student affairs

and academic affairs have viewed one another as unwilling partners, with each fulfilling different portions of the student's experience on campus. Miller and Prince (1976) described it as "competing for control" of the student (p. 155). This is confusing, given that the generalized goals of a liberal arts curriculum and those of student affairs have long been found to have profoundly similar goals (Kuh, Shedd, & Whitt, 1987). Looking at the wider picture within student affairs, faculty have at times found opportunities and spaces within which to engage students. In the most general sense, faculty were often considered to be the "subject-matter" experts in the institution, while student affairs practitioners were regarded as the development and human connection experts (Lovett, 2006). These labels were not mutually exclusive however, and there remain plenty of reasons to pursue these academic-student affair partnerships (Guentzel, 2009; Marshall, 1988).

One such existing partnership was found in residence life, in the form of living-learning communities. These communities are often thematic to a specific academic discipline or major, and purport to involve faculty in frequent academic interactions outside of the formal classroom setting (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1999). Literature reviews on living-learning communities tended to find that the informal interactions with faculty members and student peers have significant impacts on intellectual development, although the degrees of significance varied depending on how the analysis is conducted (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1999). The same authors reported that, even outside of living-learning communities, students with high degrees of informal interactions with faculty outside the classroom had higher rates of success, although it is not known if these elements are causal or merely correlated (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1999). These out-of-class conversations were also later found to contribute positively

to a student's sense of recognition and importance, regardless of whether the conversations consisted of course-related topics or casual conversation (Jaasma & Koper, 2001).

Zhao and Kuh (2004) took their examination of living-learning communities further and delved into the specifics of the kinds of successful experiences that contribute to student success. With respect to meaningful faculty interaction, the researchers found that many specific types of interaction (alongside their frequency) contributed positively to student engagement. Although many of Zhao and Kuh's (2004) faculty-student interactions may be more suitable to a residential situation, two factors stand out as being relevant to the college union:

- The frequency of having discussed ideas from [the student's] readings or classes with faculty members outside of class during the current school year
- The frequency of having worked with faculty members on activities other than course-work (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) during the current school year (p. 134)

Another potential area of faculty involvement in student affairs came in the context of a school's new student orientation program. Although different institutions use unique organizational models, these programs were often found housed either in student affairs or academic affairs (Greenlaw, Anliker, & Barker, 1997). The same study found that the organizational placement of the orientation program was less important than the collaborative efforts between student affairs and academic affairs in implementing it (Greenlaw, Anliker, & Barker, 1997).

Other research has examined specific student-academic affairs partnerships in case-study situations (Ott, Haertlein, & Craig, 2003; Philpott & Strange, 2003; Wawrzynski, Jessup-Anger, & Yao, 2011). These studies have generally shown that faculty and student affairs practitioners both believed that they were working toward the right institutional goals, but that they sometimes viewed their roles and experiences in different ways. Faculty, especially in living-learning settings, tended to view casual conversations with students as a significant factor in their own

sense of community, indicating that student affairs staff can use their programmatic efforts to build relationships with faculty members (Wawrzynski, Jessup-Anger, & Yao, 2011). This same concept, a faculty's sense of community within a college union setting, has not been explored in such depth.

Regardless of the context of the partnership between faculty and student affairs, common threads may link different efforts. One study of existing partnerships developed seven principles of good practice to help guide potential partnerships, among which were concepts of relationships with instructors and the awareness of institutional norms and expectations guiding work (Whitt, et al., 2008). Declaring the need for partnerships to have a "learning-oriented ethos" (Whitt, et al., 2008, p. 240), the authors advocated for seamless learning environments, focusing on student learning, and an attention to out-of-class environments. Although not specifically mentioned, college unions may be poised to provide such contexts and relationships.

Not all college unions are organized or housed in an institution's student affairs area. Sometimes, the union can be found in areas such as business affairs and auxiliary services, and such organization may impact the stated goals of that specific facility (Jacobs, 2005). However, unions and other student services housed under these organizational structures can maintain a focus on many of the same elements as those housed in campus life, provided that staff members see their work in similar ways (Jacobs, 2005). Seeing staff as educators and putting the concept of community at the forefront can allow auxiliary-housed college unions to work toward the same goals as their student affairs-centered counterparts.

Faculty Expectations of Cocurricular Work

Although the benefits of faculty interaction in cocurricular experiences were generally documented, the extent to which faculty know and embrace this phenomenon was unclear. In

Peltier's (2014) study it was specifically noted that, although faculty members believed student

affairs practitioners did their jobs well, they could neither name a large volume of student affairs-

related responsibilities, nor did they understand their (own) faculty roles in cocurricular learning.

Peltier's first recommendation was for student affairs administrators to build personalized

relationships with specific faculty members, and to begin to leverage those relationships into

professional understandings and bridges (Peltier, 2014). This recommendation echoed earlier

advice given by Sandeen (2004) who noted that faculty members' perceptions of student affairs

divisions relied heavily on their degree and frequency of interaction with student affairs staff.

Even at smaller institutions, which may have professed to have closer-knit communities (Peltier,

2014), the collaborative work bridging academic and student affairs must have been done in an

intentional manner. Boyer (1987) concluded:

> What students do in dining halls, on playing fields, and in the rathskeller late at night all
> combine to influence the outcome of higher education, and the challenge, in the building
> of community, is to extend the resources for learning on the campus and to see academic
> and nonacademic life as interlocked (p. 177).

Equally of note, the evolving role of faculty on college campuses may have proven

detrimental to their involvement, formal or otherwise, in other facets of campus life and culture.

Milem, Berger, and Day (2000) examined faculty time commitments over two decades and

categorized the results by functional purpose and responsibility. They found that faculty time

spent on research, especially at doctoral-granting institutions, had increased significantly in 20

years, leaving less time for other interactions with students, including those outside the

classroom (Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000).

Faculty Communities

Speaking of faculty as a singular collective group may be difficult, due to disagreement

in the ranks of what fully defines and constitutes the term. Although many agreed that faculty

serve as subject-matter experts within an educational setting (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994), the wide variation within and among faculty ranks made a singular concept difficult, if not indistinguishable.

The concept of community among and within faculty ranks told a story that is uniquely linked to known faculty culture. Levin noted that faculty community was heavily tied to the academic concept at a particular institution, and uniquely related to the type and effort of faculty labor at those places (Levin, 2012). Noting differences that follow institutional type, Levin indicated that faculty at large research institutions (such as the bulk of those institutions which founded ACUI) were taught to value research and productivity above interpersonal relationships with a number of students (Levin, 2012). Such values of community, which vary by institution, may have complicated a college union's mission and purpose in including faculty members. Many previous studies of faculty communities have examined or emphasized academic features, such as pedagogical shifts (Hora, Bouwma-Gearhart, & Park, 2017), demographic disparities (Levin, Haberler, Walker, & Jackson-Boothby, 2014), faculty-staff relationships (Gardner & White-Farnham, 2013), or collaboration among academic units (Elliott, et al., 2017). Even studies about personal relationships and building community among faculty often focused on the mentoring of graduate students on academic career paths (Sheridan, Murdoch, & Harder, 2015). Although valuable, these studies of community lacked more intricate examinations of the spatial element of these communities.

Moreover, the concept of faculty community may have been shifting alongside evolving roles of faculty members in general, according to Amey (1999). Specifically, she claimed that faculty members must reconceptualize "the meaning of community… and their role as community members, rather than only as instructional activities directors" (Amey, 1999, p. 65).

Focusing on methodological changes for faculty evaluation and promotion, Amey made the case for tenure track systems that might incorporate the time and energy faculty invest in spaces outside of traditional academic settings. Other writers, such as Wilson (2013) have noted generational differences among faculty that may be contributing to community shifts. Noting the evolving means of faculty communication within-and-between institutions, Wilson made a good case for a faculty community presence in a college union by noting younger faculty members' affiliation for quick encounters, coffee houses, and flexibility (Wilson, 2013).

Pribbenow (2005) examined faculty experiences and involvement in service-learning programs. He identified six themes that described the impact of service learning pedagogy on faculty themselves, noting in particular that environments that allowed for greater faculty-student interaction resulted in positive outcomes such as greater understanding of students and stronger ties to other faculty and the institution as a whole (Pribbenow, 2005). Pribbenow's six themes included: meaningful engagement in and commitment to teaching, deeper connections and relationships with student and learners and individuals, enhanced knowledge of student learning processes and outcomes, increased use of constructivist teaching and learning approaches, improved communication of theoretical concepts, and greater involvement in a community of teachers and learners (Pribbenow, 2005). Although not universal among these participants, faculty members did find deeper relationships with others to be personally and professionally fulfilling, and sometimes brought about new pedagogies and best-practices sharing (Pribbenow, 2005). Greater commitment to an institution's purpose and an overcoming of personal isolation were also seen as unexpected benefits of faculty immersion in new spaces and experiences (Pribbenow, 2005).

In a business-oriented context, Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) examined research on employee knowledge-sharing, and common management practices that contributed to its prominence within workplace settings. They noted that to form a "culture of caring" (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005, p. 728), management should attempt to bring employees together at a common location for both formal and informal interactions. This communication was tied to increased social capital, which made for the freer exchange of information related to the workplace as well as personal conversation (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005).

The College Union and Community

Whether analyzed through a lens of third space theory (Oldenburg, 1999) or campus ecology (Banning & Kaiser, 1974), the concept of community lay at the heart of a college union program. The *Role of the College Union* even began: "The college union advances a sense of community" (ACUI, 2018b, para 1) and went on to describe how its facilities, personnel, and activities make that community a reality. In such a community, members felt that they belonged, that they mattered to one another, and that they shared a commitment to each other's needs" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). As studied by Janisz (2014), one of the four core purposes of a college union was the construction and development of community on campuses.

While little was formally researched about college unions and community, much was written and said about it by ACUI leadership. As early as 1930, Porter Butts noted in his annual report that the ultimate foundation of their efforts at the Wisconsin Union was "through a union of students, in a building devoted to recreation and an informal cultural and social life" (Butts, et al., 2012, p. 40). Decades later, Director of the Indiana Memorial Union Winston Shindell drew from the 1990 Report of the Carnegie Foundation *Campus Life: In Search of Community* to emphasize the college union's central role in this purpose. Noting the emphasis on communities

that are purposeful in their education, Shindell called for communities extending beyond classrooms that demonstrate openness, justice, care, and celebration (Shindell, 1991). Shindell even turned back to Porter Butts and cited the original *College Union Idea*: the college union's primary role should be to serve the campus as a center of community (Butts, 1971).

Strange and Banning (2001), as part of their examinations of theories of campus ecology, noted the inherent contradiction in the effort to build communities on campus. They described a conflict between a majority-type community and distinct campus subcommunities, a conflict which was unavoidable and perhaps a healthy sign of campus life (Strange & Banning, 2001). The inherent needs of subcommunities were at odds with those of the majority community, yet both were crucial end goals to campus leadership: "… that which contributes to strong subcommunities usually detracts from the community of the whole, and that which sustains the whole community often does so at the expense of various subcommunities" (Strange & Banning, 2001, p. 169). While they described this challenge further in the specific context of residential learning communities, the challenge itself paralleled nicely with the research questions of this study.

The major empirical study of college unions and the formation of a sense of community came from Barrett (2014). Barrett's analysis of 15,000 student survey responses pulled from the MAUS Student Opinion Survey found that of all facilities included in the formation of a student's sense of community, the college union stood as the strongest positive predictor (Barrett, 2014). The college union was the most significant purveyor of campus social networks, college activities, and an overall sense of belonging; these combined factors played the largest role in students' self-reported sense of community (Barrett, 2014). However, Barrett's work, like others cited here, dealt specifically, if not exclusively, with a concept of community that was

framed on students. Regardless of this framing, faculty had roles to play in the creation and development of these communities (Zhao & Kuh, 2004); but a lack of conclusive faculty studies in this area left a clear knowledge void.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of faculty members with their

college union at a case study institution. Although there had been prior research regarding

faculty and the college union, it was outdated and quantitative in nature, limiting the potential

areas the study might explore (Adair, 1975; Marshall, 1988). A qualitative study may permit a

wider array of conversations, topics, and investigative pathways, potentially allowing for a

broader-spectrum research process that allows unknown themes and findings to surface naturally.

Other studies have focused on the faculty experience, involvement, and community in other

student affairs contexts (Ott, Haertlein, & Craig, 2003; Peltier, 2014; Zhao & Kuh, 2004), but the

college union's potential roles and specific faculty experiences had yet to be explored.

Research Design

Qualitative research is, in a broad sense, the pursuit of understanding the way people

view, approach, and interact with the world around them, as well as how they interpret and

understand this world and its details (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative inquiry is constructivist

in nature, meaning that it is ontologically relativist, and does not accept one reality – but rather

seeks the formed realities of research participants from their lived experiences, and seeks ways

of unifying and understanding those realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Qualitative research is not

limited to a specific philosophy or methodology; it tends to focus on "what particular people do

in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them" (Erickson, 2011, p. 43). Qualitative

research is a broad field encompassing many different methods and approaches to research

(Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Sometimes, research designs and methods seem similar and may blend

into one another (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Constructivist methodologies tend to be hermeneutic, involving a "continuing dialectic of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis, and so on, leading to the emergence of a joint … construction of a case" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 84). With that in mind, this study will focus on one design, a case study, incorporating a specific method, interviews.

Case study inquiries can be defined by two different lenses: scope and features. According to Yin (2014), the scope of a case study should investigate a real-world phenomenon in its actual context and can be done so when the phenomenon-context barriers are not well-known (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Case studies are unique from other methodologies in that they seek to continue the apparent link between context and phenomenon – unlike experimental designs, which may seek to control such contexts in their explorations (Yin, 2014). The second component of the case study's definition is its features: it deals with complex, highly variable situations; it seeks to converge multiple sources of data for triangulation; and its specific data collection procedures are guided by prior theoretical propositions (Yin, 2014). In other words, a case study is a flexible design, allowing for a variety of specific methods and data collection procedures that fit the unique nature of the case presented.

Case studies should consider five primary elements of design, according to Yin (2014). Those are: its questions, its propositions, its unit(s) of analysis, its logic linking data to the propositions, and its interpretive criteria (Yin, 2014, p. 29). Each of these elements was considered here, except for the first – questions – since the research questions previously proposed for this study serve that purpose.

Propositions are statements that serve as sort of quasi-hypotheses that help guide the research questions into more specific pieces of inquiry. Yin (2014) says that propositions may

both provide reflection on appropriate theoretical issues and "(begin) to tell you where to look for evidence" (p. 30). Specific propositions may not be necessary if the case study's purpose is primarily exploratory, but even then, exploratory case studies should still state as such and offer appropriate justifications for the research (Yin, 2014). In this research, I proposed that the case study here was primarily exploratory in nature, given the lack of comparable qualitative research on the topic. Some basic direction was drawn from prior quantitative studies of faculty in college unions by examining those surveys (see Adair, 1975 and Marshall, 1988), distilling patterns of questions into larger lines of inquiry, and incorporating those into our interview protocol.

Determining the unit of analysis in a case study can be difficult, both due the nebulous distinction between phenomenon and context as well as the emergent nature of case study inquiry (Yin, 2014). In general, case studies should seek to define the case – whether an individual person, a group, a site, or other scenario – and then bound the case, namely through further specificity and delineation of the proposed phenomenon (Yin, 2014). In this case study, the defined case at hand (faculty and college union interaction) was further bound by seeking an appropriate and ideal context for inquiry. The "Site Selection" section of this chapter further details the criteria and characteristics used to bound this case.

The element of linking data to propositions is related to the actual analysis step in the research process but should be considered on the front end for likely avenues of interpretation and exploration (Yin, 2014). As a less-experienced researcher, I was likely unaware of all the possible avenues that my data may eventually lead me down during the analysis phase of this study. It is possible, for example, that faculty involved in college unions may have each experienced some sort of union-oriented intervention that got them participating in the union, or that they benefitted from preexisting social norms within specific faculty subcultures. I was

prepared to explore all these interpretive and analytical avenues as the data begin to unfold in later research steps.

The final element of a case study involves the criteria the researcher will use to interpret the study's findings. Yin (2014) highlights that statistical analyses, such as a p level conventions of .05 or less, are common among quantitative case studies, demonstrating the highly flexible nature of this research design. In more qualitative inquiries, Yin recommends that researchers identify and address rival explanations for findings as a means of strengthening your own interpretations (Yin, 2014). This concept, also known as negative-case analysis, is a common qualitative technique for enhancing research credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This study sought to do just that in the Data Analysis chapter.

A case study was an appropriate design for this research due to its focus on a specific, if not nebulous, issue or problem. I believed the question of faculty-college union interaction presented as a confluence of both faculty perspectives and attitudes, as well as the college union's current services and programs stemming from its historical role on campus. Human behavior within a physical environment and social context has been studied before using case study inquiry (See Maxwell, 2016), and I believed this study also benefitted from its scope and flexibility. Case studies have previously been used to study other interactions and conceptualizations between college campus individual and their environments (Strange & Banning, 2001), and have used a variety of specific methods in doing so.

The prevalent form that this case study inquiry took was that of the 1-on-1 interview. Interviews are among the most prevalent method of case study inquiry, due to their ability to provide information that is detailed, specific to the participant, and bounded by context (Ravitch

& Carl, 2016). Specifically, I selected an interview method for the case study due to significant characteristics described by Ravitch and Carl (2016):

- Relational: the value of the participant is made evident through the shared bond of the interview

- Contextual: the multiple, intersecting contexts of the interview will impact its results

- Nonevaluative: interviews are designed to understand without force of judgment

- Person centered: the participant's self and experience lie at the heart of the matter

- Temporal: the particular moment of the interview can impact what is shared

- Partial: the interview itself represents only a small piece of both participant and researcher

- Subjective: interpretations of the participants' experiences can come from them directly

- Nonneutral: layers of bias and assumption create context to help frame the interview

Each of these characteristics played a direct role in the study, due to its nature of seeking the experiences of a specific campus subculture (faculty members).

Utilizing the 1-on-1, face-to-face interview method, I made use of a flexible, semi-structured protocol that allows for structure but did not artificially limit organic conversation. Semi-structured interviews contain a framework of common questions, but the specific order, follow-ups, and unique probing questions may all be tailored to the unique interview to allow for flow and feel (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The interview's flexibility fits well with the case study's unique distinction (or rather, lack thereof) between phenomenon and context (Yin, 2014). For example, specific probing questions permitted by a semi-structured interview protocol may better help determine which data points are unique to the faculty member being interviewed, and which data are instead embedded in the context of the college union. For this particular study, the

interviews took place on-site, in a private room in the case-study college union, to help immerse the participants in the setting. This was to assist the participants in their recollections, as is often the case with another research method, the intercept survey, which asks users of a space or service to fill out brief evaluative surveys (Research, 2019).

Site Selection

For the study, I conducted all interviews at one location: the college union of a large, public institution in the midwestern United States. This university, which I will call by the pseudonym Midwest U, has had a college union on campus for over a century. The institution is one of the founding members of the Association of College Unions International and has been a presence in the organization throughout its century of activity. Midwest U is a large public institution with a campus population of more than forty thousand students, both undergraduate and graduate. Graduate students make up a bit more than 20% of this population. The student population at Midwest U is predominantly White, with approximately two-thirds of its student population representing racially minoritized groups. Midwest U students are fairly even-split in gender, with a slight balance towards identifying as male (51%). The campus does not provide enrollment information on gender identities outside of the male-female binary. Just over half its students hold in-state residency for enrollment purposes (52%). Approximately 20% of Midwest U students are over the age of 25, and a very small percentage (less than 2%) identify as veterans. Its campus also employs more than two thousand faculty members, the majority of which are present on campus. Faculty at Midwest U present as less racially diverse than the student population, with only 25% identifying as a race or ethnicity other than White; however, the last decade has seen those minoritized faculty groups grow by more than 50% in tenured faculty ranks, contrasted with no major percentage change among White-identifying faculty

members. Of these racially-minoritized faculty members, Asian Americans make up the largest portion (10% of total), followed by Hispanic/Latino and African American. There are more than two thousand instructional faculty members at Midwest U, approximately half of which are tenured or tenure track. 98% of faculty members at Midwest U hold terminal degrees, whether a doctoral degree or a professional degree. Approximately 60% of these faculty members identify as male, although Midwest U does not report gender or sex outside the male-female binary. In terms of age, different faculty ranks have different average ages: almost 60 for professor, 49 for associate, and 38 for assistant; the average age for all full-time faculty is just above 50.

Midwest U is in a college town in the midwestern United States, with a population between 75,000 and 100,000 residents. It is the only major college or university in the town and is part of a university system within its home state. Serving as the flagship campus, Midwest U exhibits many facets expected of a large, research-heavy institution: a major athletics program, more than a dozen academic colleges, a large on-campus residential population, and hundreds of student clubs, teams, and organizations that help form a sense of campus life. Midwest U grants thousands of undergraduate and graduate degrees annually and spends millions on research every year. The campus contains a wide array of academic buildings, residence halls, green spaces, athletic facilities, recreation and leisure facilities, and its large college union building. Having a large campus makes Midwest U an ideal source for finding a wide variety of faculty from which to select a participant group.

The college union at Midwest U is one of the largest in the country, at over 400,000 square feet. It is more than a century old, and prominently located near the center of campus. It features a wide array of services, amenities, and facilities that are common among college unions: lounges and common areas, meeting rooms and large banquet halls, spaces for student

leisure and recreation, dining areas, offices and resource space for clubs and organizations, a campus bookstore, and all necessary offices for management and oversight of such a facility. For decades, Midwest U's college union has been overseen by a governing board, consisting of students, union personnel, and at least one faculty member. The inclusion of faculty in direct consultation of the union's programming was a key factor in the selection of Midwest U as the case study institution, and I intended to make use of that faculty component in the selection of participants.

Selection of Participants

Participants for the study were sought through a purposeful selection process to maximize value to the study. Purposeful sampling, as described by Ravitch and Carl (2016), is a strategy often used in qualitative research, because the participants have some notable characteristic or desirable trait which researchers are attempting to study. In the case of this study, specific faculty members were being sought: namely, those with experiences in and around the college union at Midwest U. Patton (2015) described this type of group as "utilization-focused sampling," in which participants are selected because sufficient detail and depth of knowledge are required to draw out valuable conclusions and inform future decision making. Utilization-focused sampling was developed to maximize utility to those who would be most likely to use the research: in this case, other college unions and their directors seeking to maximize faculty involvement and community within their facilities. Due to the involvement of human participants in the study, I consulted with the appropriate Institutional Review Boards at the University of Arkansas and at Midwest U so that all appropriate procedures were in place to protect participants, and to ensure compliance with campus policies on research (approval located in Appendix C).

In order to identify these faculty members, I first spoke with a gatekeeper who is familiar with the union at Midwest U. In social science research, a gatekeeper is an individual with special access to a group or population by nature of their work; gatekeepers may serve as conduits or barriers between researchers and potential respondents (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Futing, 2004). In this research, the gatekeeper had already agreed to assist in the project and seek out appropriate potential participants. I explained the study, its purpose and goals, and what sort of assistance I was requesting. The gatekeeper best knew the faculty members who might make suitable participants for the study. The gatekeeper drew from both formal and informal faculty relationships with the Midwest U union, including faculty who have served in official capacities and those who were simply well-known users of the facility. The goal was to find a suitably-sized pool, 10-12 potential participants, with whom the gatekeeper could make contact about the study. This participant quantity is linked to the concept of data saturation, the anticipated point at which enough interviews have been conducted, and no new data is coming forth (Fusch & Ness, 2015). It was also my intention to have a well-rounded group of participants, including different levels of faculty and fields of study, and mixes of traditional demographics such as age, race, nation of origin, backgrounds, sexual orientation, and gender identities. Having an interview pool that has broad characteristics may later help eliminate biases and provide a richer set of conclusions from which to draw. However, I was ultimately at the mercy, so to speak, of the gatekeeper and the pool of faculty members available for this study.

Once these faculty members were identified, the gatekeeper contacted them via email, inviting the potential participants into the study, and providing my name and contact information. They received basic information about the study, including why they were selected, the study's anticipated timeframe of late January 2019, the intended location of interviews in the

Midwest U union, information about the 1-on-1 recorded interview format, and an open

invitation to ask other preliminary questions. Potential participants were asked to contact me

directly if they intend to participate, and the gatekeeper worked to help provide any other go-

between contact as required. Appendix D shows a template for my initial Email communication

with each participant. Upon preliminary acceptance by the participants, I sent them all required

documentation and paperwork securing their participation, including required statements of

participants' rights and notices of confidentiality. I also formally scheduled each date and time

for our interviews at this time.

If any potential participant wanted to contribute but as unable to make the timeframe

work with their schedule, I gave them a choice of either a phone or Skype interview instead. I

attempted to schedule these interviews as close to the on-site timeframe as possible. While not as

ideal as an on-site interview, the video element of Skype may still permit an open line of

communication between researcher and participant.

Instrumentation

The chosen method for data collection was a 1-on-1, in-person, semi structured interview.

The purpose of this method was to provide consistency in questions and conversations while

allowing the natural flow, order, and specific responses to help form the bulk of the conversation.

The nature of the study required the development of an interview protocol that provides both

structure and flexibility. As recommended by Ravitch and Carl (2016), the protocol should

contain enough detail to help guide the interview, including potential probing and follow-up

questions, but maintain enough adaptability to respond well to participants' individual responses.

The most similar studies to date on this topic were those by Adair (1974) and Marshall

(1988), whose studies were quantitative, and relied on mailed-out surveys. Both protocols were

seven pages and just under three dozen questions but differed in the specific survey methodology used: Adair utilized ranked-importance questions (1975), while Marshall used a Likert-scale agree-disagree style (1988). Both protocols were relevant to this study, in that they asked detailed questions regarding faculty experiences and interactions with their college union. To that end, I obtained copies of both protocols and read through them, looking for general themes and how they developed their instruments. Adair indicated that her questions came from themes identified in the Association of College Union International's *Role of the College Union* statement, which has been updated in recent years (ACUI, 2018b). Therefore, I also examined the current *Role* statement to provide the same direction and inspiration for my interview protocol. Finally, my research questions provided guidance in the overall tone and direction the questions should take.

As previously described in my conceptual framework section, campus ecology theories can provide guidance on what a relevant instrument might aspire to ask about, and how certain questions might be frames. For example, Pervin's (1967) Transaction Approach focuses on interactions that individuals have with their environment, so having at least one question about the type and frequency of faculty interactions with and inside the college union might result in data that is readily analyzed from this theory. Moreover, Barker's (1968) Behavior Setting Theory helped frame specific interactions as interdependent with the environment, and so the ability to ask good follow-up questions to interview responses was a crucial task.

Additional influences for instrument development came from readings of campus ecology and community, such as Strange & Banning (2001). In their analyses of different ecological theories and notations on specific instruments, the authors proposed that any study seeking

information on campus environments and the development of community should include the

following four questions (Strange & Banning, 2001):

- Do students, faculty, and staff have opportunities and spaces to connect with others on campus around their common interests, values, and experiences?
- Are differences of interests, values, and experiences accommodated in caring and supportive ways?
- Are decision-making structures and practices facilitative of participation?
- Do symbols, traditions, and other cultural artifacts reflect and celebrate the community of the whole as well as the community of the various parts? (p. 75)

As previously mentioned, these questions have traditionally been used by campus ecologist

frameworks to study students, but clearly the inclusion of faculty implied a suitability as well.

The first and last questions were of interest to my study, as the also served as road markers for

portions of the *Role of the College Union* document (ACUI, 2018b) that helped inform this

study's overall purpose.

Based on these examples and principles, I developed a prototype interview protocol,

which were tested with two faculty participants from Midwest U over the phone the week before

my visit. From those prototype interviews, the instrument was adjusted for clarity and updated

before the in-person interviews. If the instrument does not require significant revision after

prototyping, I will attempt to incorporate the data from those two interviews into the final

analysis. If, however, the instrument requires notable changes, the first two interviews will be

excluded from the overall analysis. See Appendix A for the complete interview protocol that will

be used.

Data Collection

Data collection took place at the college union on the Midwest U campus, in a private

space such as a meeting room or conference room, in late January 2019. This provided both ease

of access to the participants, as well as relative privacy during the interview itself. Interviews

were slated for a one-hour block, but additional times to talk could be scheduled as needed or desired by the participants and myself. If time on-site permitted, these additional times would be scheduled within the same visit; if not, they would be slated as follow-up phone calls within a week of our initial conversation.

Once on-site with participants, each was given a statement of participant rights, as well as a summary sheet of information about the study. Their consent was requested again, and we discussed the use of pseudonyms and their preferences for identification in the research. Participants were asked to fill out a basic demographic form developed for this research (Appendix B). Once all pertinent details were covered, we begun audio recording and followed the interview protocol (Appendix A). As a semi-structured interview, the questions may not have followed the exact order, and follow-up questions were asked for clarity and detail as required. I took handwritten notes throughout all interviews for on-the-spot conversation and follow-up and to serve as a check later for the accuracy of transcriptions and coding.

The anticipated timeline for all of these interviews was a two-to-three day period in late January, 2019. This timeline was vetted with the gatekeeper for suitability to the Midwest U union's operations and general academic calendar, so as to avoid the first week of classes or a major testing period. As previously mentioned, 10-12 interviews consisting of one hour each should have allowed for ample time for me to process, reflect, and write down thoughts between each interview, or at the conclusion of each evening. If additional time was needed with a given participant, the timeframe allowed for some flexibility and additional scheduling while on-site. If time did not permit additional conversation, I would reach out and schedule a phone call with any desiring participants within one week of my initial visit. These follow-ups were not required of any participant but were available to help gather the full extent of their thoughts on the topic.

During these interviews, I would follow my protocol as outlined elsewhere in this document, but other elements of the conversation would also be important. When interviewing, it is often helpful for the researcher to attempt to build rapport with the participants, and even build a relationship, however brief, with them (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Being honest with my participants about who I was, what my stated goals were, and how their participation benefitted this study might help give them better insights into my motivations and purpose in interviewing them. I might also discuss my professional background and speak briefly with them about why this topic interested me. Doing so could help open up dialogue between participants and researcher, build further trust, and contribute to a sense of rigor in the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Once all interviews were complete, I transcribed all recordings myself. This is a technique used by researchers to become personally familiar with the data, and it can provide opportunities for on-the-spot analysis and direct triangulation with interview notes. The transcription were "cleaned" with pseudonyms and appropriate redactions to ensure the confidentiality of all participants. Once all transcriptions were complete, I securely stored the audio files in a password-protected folder on my personal laptop for further analysis in this research process. Upon completion of this research, the audio files were destroyed.

Throughout the interviews, I made use of an interview journal to gather thoughts, observe trends, and reflect on my experiences and impressions on a periodic basis. An interview journal, as described by Ravitch and Carl (2016) provides the researcher an opportunity to track long-term thoughts and reflections throughout an interview process. This periodic reflection may have benefits such as resolving framework questions, providing new insight into interview responses, linking concepts to one another, and other benefits. Research journals are commonly used as a

form of check and triangulation of data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) to assist with concerns of data validity and researcher authenticity. In this case, I performed journaling at periodic times before and after the larger interview process, but I would also conclude each interview with a short journal entry as well. In this way, my journaling may provide immediate thoughts on each interview, but also point to larger issues, opportunities, and thematic possibilities. These journals, though related to the interviews, were kept separately from the interview transcripts so that one did not simply become an extension of the other.

Positionality and Reflexivity

The subject of positionality is of relevance in qualitative research, especially in this study. Positionality refers to the background and social position (perceived or constructed) of the researcher (Thompson, 2019). Positionality requires the researcher to reflect on their situation relative to the topic, setting, methods, participants, and other elements of the study to help prevent and compensate for undue or undesired influence on the study's results (Thompson, 2019). Positionality also requires reflection on the research's status as a potential "insider," that is, a member or proximate member to a community or group being studied (Thompson, 2019).

For my part, considerations of positionality revolved around my employment as a college union director, studying a college union and faculty within it. There was a risk that my position may influence the participants – they might have assumed I desired faculty to think highly of the college union, or desired better cooperative relationships, or any other outcomes that might paint the college union in a good light. I am undoubtedly an "insider" to the college union field, but I am not a member of this (or any) faculty community. I believe that this study had safeguards in place to prevent such a self-serving position, however. I conducted this study at the college union at Midwest U, where I have never worked, and do not anticipate working. As I relied on a

gatekeeper to identify faculty members with whom to speak, I was unable to hand-pick participants to steer the results in any direction. On-site, I made sure that the participants know that my loyalty in this research is to their experiences and stories, and that the only "good" result will be an accurate reflection of what they have to say. I also engaged in member checks during the analysis phase of the study to help ensure that my own positionality does not produce undue influence on findings.

In qualitative research, an investigator's own biases, opinions, and tendencies have the potential to impact the research. The act of critical self-reflection on these biases and understanding the researcher's own positionality in the field is known as reflexivity (Schwandt, 1997). This reflection may be an act deliberately undertaken ahead of time, or it may be a practice that emerges from the act of research itself (Kleinsasser, 2000). Reflexivity is not something that can be taught, but it can be learned through deliberately-planned exercises that give learners opportunities to discover suppositions and unknown pieces of themselves (Letiche, 2017). A lack of reflexivity in qualitative research may lead to inaccurate work, missed details, or a lack of a built relationship with research participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Engaging in pre-interview reflection of my own position and biases was a helpful and necessary step in providing unbiased, accurate research results. For my part, I have earlier discussed potential for my career to drive positive results related to the college union. To avoid as such, I periodically reminded myself that the purpose of this process is not pleasantry or a feel-good story, but rather an honest, useful assessment of a college union and its faculty members. I also reflected on any opinions I have of faculty members in general. Did I have prior experiences, positive or negative, that might have inclined me to predicate my interactions with them in this study? Did I have any history of interactions or relationships with Midwest U, or its

college union, that would give me cause to desire specific outcomes? It was, hopefully, enough to say that I have spent notable hours considering these questions and searching for others that might also have proven relevant.

Establishing Research Rigor

Establishing rigor in qualitative research is critical in ensuring accurate representation of research participants' experiences or words (El Hussein, Jakubec, & Osuji, 2015). Rigor in qualitative research is not something that can be calculated, as with quantitative studies (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Meaningful assessment of rigor in such work comes through the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Credibility refers to an accuracy or consistency between the constructed realities of research participants and the reality demonstrated or indicated by the researcher in their findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). There are no fewer than a half-dozen common techniques to help strengthen the likelihood that these realties are congruent, but this study chose to focus on the concepts of prolonged engagement, progressive subjectivity, and member checks. Prolonged engagement is the act of a researcher's intense involvement with the subject, spending both adequate time and attention to ensure credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Here, I intentionally traveled to the study site itself, instead of performing interviews over Skype. I offered the participants significant time to discuss the college union and our interview questions, so that we could both feel assured that their words have been heard. I also intended to spend a notable amount of time immersed in the data post-collection, to help ensure that my understanding of both specific details and larger emergent themes was well-grounded.

Progressive subjectivity is the technique of periodic checks of the researcher's own evolving constructs relevant to the topic (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Here, I made use of an

ongoing research journal as a means of evaluating progressive subjectivity. Before interviews, and during analysis periods, I recorded my evolving senses of expected findings, evolving themes and ideas, and surprises. This journal could then be consulted during later phases of my analysis and conclusion sections. If I, or any of my committee members, found that I was overly reliant on my own constructs, then it becomes more likely that my findings were not sufficiently grounded in my participants' experiences.

Member checks constitute a testing of conclusions, findings, themes, and other emergent data with relevant stakeholder groups (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), which in this case refers to the interview participants. Once I had spent adequate time with my findings and felt that I was headed "in the right direction," I took a sampling of my emergent ideas and tested them with my original participants. Calling them back up, I had a follow-up conversation with them to determine if they felt what I was writing about felt like an accurate conclusion from their thoughts, and a fair representation of their specific ideas. While it may not happen that every interviewee agrees with every conclusion, a high level of agreement helped me conclude that my constructions were fair and credible representations of the data.

Beyond credibility, a qualitative study must possess transferability, which is the constructivist parallel to the concept of generalizability in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In general, transferability refers to the bounds the researcher puts on a study – such as time, place, conditions, salient group features, and other characteristics – and the ability of other researchers to potentially seek out similar contexts for the purpose at arriving at comparable outcomes (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Certainly, this is not as precise as quantitative generalizability, but my analysis and subsequent conclusions should have been sufficiently detailed to provide a road map to transferability.

In the case of this study, I sought out a very specific context in Midwest U and found a college union I believed ideally suited for the study at hand. I described all general features of the faculty at Midwest U to the extent possible before studying a particular group; once I was on-site and could speak with my specific participants, I would be better suited to drawing out richer, more specific, and potentially more intimate details that helped establish a well-documented context for transferability purposes. While transferability may not be possible in some case study research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), it is still an important up-front consideration.

Dependability, according to Guba and Lincoln, is the concept concerned with the idea that data is stable over time (1989). While positivist research would be concerned with the accuracy of a research instrument over time, constructivist studies such as this one would be found dependable if my time with participants is even-keeled and thought-out. In other words, the way I interviewed each participant might have shifted slightly, but those shifts must have been deliberate research-based decisions – not the result of boredom, fatigue, or other detrimental factors (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). For example – if I believed that one of my participants was hinting at something, I might have been inclined to either ask them directly about it, or skirt around the issue – all depending on the relationship, setting, and moment (El Hussein, Jakubec, & Osuji, 2015). An evolving research construction is suitable to dependability, so long as I was consistent in documenting my decisions and actions – so that others can judge my research choices themselves.

Confirmability in qualitative research focuses on the integrity of the data – that is, the ability to trace specific data points, trends, and analytical decisions back to their original sources (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This confirmability audit, as it is called, can allow other researchers to have a holistic view of the information and make their own determinations about research

outcomes. At the conclusion of my research, the entire narrative should have readily stemmed from a well-documented path of evidence that could be traced from its origins to my conclusions. This was achieved through the procedures I have already described: a loosely-structured interview, complete transcription of all interviews, a journal updated regularly with my evolving thoughts and constructs, and a well-documented coding scheme for my data. These combined procedures should have given adequate confirmability to any conclusions and constructs I reached in this study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research can begin as soon as it is collected, in that I was present and hearing the responses of the interview participants. I immediately began to look for common themes and major trends and ensure that those preliminary ideas were reflected in my interview notes. The act of transcribing the data itself is sometimes considered an analytical method in qualitative research, in that the researcher is immersed within the data, paying careful attention to word choice, tone, and overall responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Once all the data were transcribed, I began the coding process. Codes in qualitative research are words or phrases that assign summative or evaluative attributes to language-based or visual data (Saldaña, 2009). In this research, the transcribed interviews of my participants served as a large piece of language-based data to which codes were applied. These codes, in turn, were analyzed, organized, summarized, and configured themselves to determine emergent themes, formulate summative answers to research questions, and indicate prospects for research (Saldaña, 2009). There are many ways in which data may be coded; in this study, I intended to focus on three first-cycle coding processes: descriptive coding, process coding, and *in vivo* coding (Saldaña, 2009). As I worked my way through the analysis stage, I might have discovered

that a new or different method of coding was called for, in which case I may have chosen to replace a previous coding with that one, or simply add it to the list. A brief description of the three predetermined coding processes follows here.

Descriptive coding is a first-cycle coding technique that is common among newer users of coding as an evaluative method (Saldaña, 2009). In descriptive coding, a researcher simply uses words or phrases to provide summative or topical descriptions of each paragraph or segment of text, in order to provide simple summative and topical data. Descriptive coding helps the researcher make a first attempt at getting a "big picture" look at research data and can help form early impressions of themes and overarching concepts (Saldaña, 2009). In this study, an early round of descriptive coding provided summaries of a large amount of data, supplied quick summative counts of common conversational topics, and opened ideas for other emergent methods of coding that should follow.

Next, I utilized process coding as a means of better understanding research participant actions within the context of the college union setting. Process coding is a technique which uses gerunds (words ending in "-ing") to assign summative labels to action within the data (Saldaña, 2009). Process coding is often appropriate for case studies and campus ecological research due to its focus on activity and interaction taken within a setting and context (Saldaña, 2009). In this research study, process coding helped link specific instrument questions to larger research questions asking about interactions and community and led to richer, thicker descriptions of the roles the union serves for faculty members. In particular, Barker's (1968) Behavior-Setting Theory provided guidance in understanding these interactions.

Finally, I engaged in a round of *in vivo* coding. *In vivo* coding is characterized by its exclusive use of research participants' words and phrases as the codes themselves and is a

common coding method in case study research due to its direct evocation of participant experiences and expressions (Saldaña, 2009). Since the experiences and opinions of faculty members should take a prominent position in this study, *in vivo* coding allowed for the participants' own words to become codes and categories themselves. Focusing on critical, evocative, or insightful language from research participants led to richer, thicker descriptions of responses and themes (Saldaña, 2009).

These first-cycle rounds of coding were recorded separately and iteratively and served as the guideposts for my interpretations and higher-level data analysis. Once my first-cycle cording was complete, I selected an appropriate method for second-cycle coding. Second-cycle coding is, in short, coding the codes themselves in the search for organization, themes, meaning, and structure within the codes (Saldaña, 2009). The specific type of second-cycle coding to be used emerged from my first-cycle coding results, and took the form of pattern coding, which helps organize coding data into larger arcs (Saldaña, 2009). From my second-cycle coding method, larger thematic trends should have begun to emerge that would guide my analytical writing and conclusions for the remainder of my research. Throughout this process, I both wrote in my research journal and reflected on prior writings, both to assist with recollections and to provide "validity guideposts" in my analysis process.

Summary

Methodologically, the study made use of a semi-structured interview protocol, conducted 1-on-1, in person, and on-site at the Midwest U college union. Immersing faculty in this setting, I used an interview protocol based on research questions and prior relevant studies to inquire about these faculty members' connections to, and sense of community within, the Midwest U college union. Ample consideration was given to confidentiality and providing a protocol flexible

enough to ascertain the participants' full meaning in their responses. Upon completion of data collection and transcription, I used a multiple-cycle coding system to analyze the results, look for major and minor patterns, and uncover notable thematic elements. Throughout the process, a research journal provided reflections, guidance, and details to help with validity and researcher authenticity.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Interviews were largely conducted on-site and proved useful in obtaining answers to the

research questions. The participant pool was informative and eager to respond to questions but

lacked some desired elements of diversity. Three overarching themes were found in participant

responses, and these themes helped give richer descriptions to research question answers and

contexts. Some of the questions saw overlap, given the nature of each research question; but all

questions were answered to sufficient degree.

Summary of Process

The majority of research took place the last week in January 2019, on-site at Midwest

University. In total, twelve faculty members agreed to be interviewed for the study. Two of the

faculty members were unable to meet on-site due to previous out-of-town obligations, so their

interviews were conducted via Skype the week prior. Initially, I had intended to use these two

interviews as my trial runs for the research instrument; however, the instrument was found to

give an adequate amount of data, and so their interviews were factored into the final results.

The remaining ten faculty members met on-site at the Midwest University Union for their

interviews. Five were scheduled for the first day, and the other five were scheduled for the

second. While on-site, a large cold storm (known in popular culture as "the 2019 Polar Vortex")

impacted campus classes and activities. This storm resulted in one Day One interview being

moved to Day Two, and four of the Day Two interviews to be switched from in-person to Skype.

All scheduled interviews were still conducted, and faculty members kept all their scheduled

times in one form or another. All participants willingly signed consent forms and filled out the

demographic information, with no commentary on either part. A brief demographic summary of the faculty participants follows here.

The twelve faculty members interviewed held a wide array of personal and professional characteristics, but the group was not overly diverse. Nine of the faculty members identified as male, and three identified as female. None of the participants identified as transgender, and three identified as Gay or Lesbian; all others identified as Straight/Heterosexual. All but two of the participants identified as Caucasian, while the remainder identified as Black/African. The average age range indicated on the form was 55-64 years but was evenly spread among the top three groupings, and the most common range selected for both years in higher education and years at Midwest University was 20 years or more. Most of the participants (8) had acquired a doctoral or terminal degree, while three held master's degrees and one held a professional degree. Three of the participants were retired, with an average time span of five years in retirement. Half of the participants were undergraduate alumni of Midwest U, and three participants held advanced degrees (Master's, Doctoral, or Professional) from the institution. See Appendix F for a complete breakdown of faculty participant characteristics.

Before and after each interview, I created a research journal entry that discussed progress thus far, any themes that appeared to be emerging from my conversations, and any notes and seemed pertinent to each interview participant. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed afterwards. Four of the interviews were transcribed by hand by the researcher, and the remaining eight were transcribed with the assistance of transcription software. Those eight transcriptions were then corrected by the researcher by hand, to ensure adequate immersion in the data. All transcriptions were cleaned using pseudonyms for participants, the institution,

names of notable campus spaces and landmarks, and other local names and notable geographic features.

I then went through each interview and performed multiple rounds of coding and analysis, as described in the Methods Chapter of this study. The round of Descriptive Coding produced several emergent themes, which will be discussed in the next section. Process Coding and In Vivo Coding helped confirm themes and provide notable quotations and descriptive words that helped give richness and greater detail to emergent themes.

Summary of Results

During each interview, notes were kept on any significant points that appeared to stand out as potentially meaningful within participant responses. Early on, I noticed a recurrence of three major ideas, which I will refer to as themes, that permeated different participant responses and appeared meaningful in their experiences. These three themes were: Participant's Connection to the Union, Faculty Convenience, and Student Purpose. A summary of each theme follows here.

The first theme, Participant's Connection to the Union, began to emerge from the very first Skype interview, even before being on-site. Every participant I spoke with thereafter maintained some manner of personalized relationship with the Union, and those relationships came primarily through three different channels:

- The faculty member held an undergraduate degree from Midwest University.

- The faculty member had an academic connection to an event or activity at the Union.

- The faculty member had served, or was asked to serve, on Union Board.

The existence of relationships is not surprising, given that these faculty members were internally-identified by a Gatekeeper associated with the Union; but the impact of these particular

experiences faculty members had with the Union appears to permeate multiple questions and give depth to some of their stories.

The second theme, Faculty Convenience, was expressed in different ways by different participants; but invariably each participant touched on this theme at some point. The concept of convenience, namely, how readily available or accessible something is, offered telling details that helped shape a faculty member's experiences. The Union at Midwest University, of course, houses multiple opportunities for guest interaction with vendors, and is prominently located on a large campus. These factors played heavily into how convenient (or not) faculty members perceived the union's offerings and services.

Finally, the theme of Student Purpose became a clear and consistent means of framing responses and conceptualizing faculty involvement in the Union. Participant conversations made clear the Union's primary mission of student-centered life and activity on campus, even as faculty were asked to consider questions and elements from the perspective of their own peers instead. While this likely spoke to the college union's primary role, it does mean that many faculty perspectives were narrated in comparative ways, attempting to contrast the faculty experience in the Union with that of the student. While the implications of this framing will be discussed later, it did help provide an underlying perspective on some of the questions from the research instrument itself.

Again, while not every participant engaged with every theme, a glance at the Descriptive Coding results speaks to a shared set of experiences and thoughts. These three themes will be apparent in responses to most of the research questions discussed below.

Research Questions and Responses

Research Question 1: How do faculty members at a case study institution describe their college union's role in developing community for students and faculty?

Faculty members in the study appeared well-versed on elements of the typical college union's role and purpose. When asked, all twelve participants gave responses that described a college union's community foundations in ways consistent with that of the *Role of the College Union* statement. Most faculty described the union's role in at least one of three ways: as a gathering place for the campus community, as a place in which students can experience events and activities, and as a foundational piece of institutional presence and culture.

Faculty had much to say about the gathering aspect of the college union's role. Many participants succinctly described the college union as a "social meeting place" for students, or one in which students can "interface with each other in a more natural setting." Participant responses in this vein focused heavily on the Student Purpose theme, communicating that the college union's foundational underpinning was that of a place for students to exist. One faculty member listed multiple gathering-related needs for students: "a bridge, a way-to, a way station, a home, a place to relax, and so on." Student lounge space was a popular topic of discussion, especially one lounge called the "Old Lounge," which one faculty-alum participant described vividly: "the fireplace, I mean the wooden floor, and the panels to the window, and the fireplace. If you could ever picture sort of an idealized room in a student union building, that one's it." The frequent mentions of students utilizing that particular lounge as a location for studying, reading, and sleeping provided vivid imagery for many of the respondents. While some faculty regarded student lounging as comical, or even uninviting, mentions of the function were universally clear in the use of the union for such activities.

The gathering function, however, did not regularly extend specifically to faculty as a primary purpose of the union. The concept of community for faculty may not allow a facility such as the college union to provide a central role, especially as the union may represent "neutral ground" unaffiliated with any specific academic concept. One participant declared "I don't believe [faculty gathering] can be satisfied by union because one, there are so many different types of faculty needs that aren't about comfort in the space of the campus." One education faculty member helped provide a brief description of faculty community as a tiered structure:

> I think that the faculty are more likely to communicate the things that they think are missing. That helps build community for their students, not necessarily for them. Because I think faculty, when you think about building community, theirs is more of a scaffolding, which is that their first level of community is their department. Their second level of community is their school. And their third level of community is the institution.

Without the union's central role as an important gathering function for faculty, it may have been difficult for them to describe it in such terms.

The second role, that of a space for events and activities, was a bit more balanced between a student experience and that of a faculty member. Most faculty participants discussed specific examples of how students utilized college union spaces for clubs, meetings, events, and activities. One faculty member recalled the event-based productivity of his time as an advisor to the Union Board, noting "they actually did things, they produced deliverables, the concerts and lectures and programming." Another participant, unsure how long this feature had been a focus of the union, responded "I like how it's available for students to use in their student clubs. I don't know if that's newer or whatnot." Faculty were much more certain of the union's role when it came to their own meetings and events. One retired faculty member recalled a specific invitation from the former union director: "anytime you want to have a department meeting using one of our nice conference rooms, it's cost-free, come over and use it." One public policy faculty member noted that she seemed to come to the Union for "gatherings of faculty and staff or an

important meeting, it seems like the important ones happen there." However, one former Union Board faculty representative believed that faculty members' sense of this space was conceptualized as entirely pragmatic, and not necessarily seen as purposefully engaged in the greater community-based mission of the Union. He observed:

> So faculty will think of the Union when they have a conference, right? You know, and where can I have a space where I can have sessions that are occurring, keep everybody in the same location, but they weren't necessarily conceptualizing the conference in the Union. They were conceptualizing it as a conference, and then they thought about, where could we have it.

The third role of the union, that of a foundational piece of institutional presence and culture, varied heavily depending on the faculty member's relationship with the union. As mentioned in the Summary of Results section, there were three basic types of relationships faculty described with the union in the Connection to Union theme: alumni status, academic connection, or union board. The first relationship, alumni status, appears to have a rather notable influence on how a participant described the union's third role. Those faculty who were alumni appeared to use much more colorful, romanticized language when describing the union's role in this regard. One alumni faculty member spoke of the union's evolving role on campus as: "There have been enhancements over the years. But you know, still they've kept the traditional things that I think give it that special, warm feel, and serves a reminder to students that they are on 'sacred ground'… when they're there, they're a part of something bigger than themselves." Another faculty member with multiple degrees from the institution declared that the union "amplifies the campus" and "symbolizes the university's strength and heritage."

Faculty who were not alumni still appeared to acknowledge the union's presence and culture but spoke much less romantically and more pragmatically. One participant, a law professor, simply described the building as "an important support service to the institution."

Another faculty member, himself also not an alum, still spoke to the union's prominence on

campus, if not dispassionately:

> If you were trying to show off the university to out of town guests and you wanted to take a tour, you would always come to the [union]. I don't think I ever took a tour here where we wouldn't come in, you know, it was always a building on the agenda.

> All of this speaks to a faculty understanding of the college union's community building

role as an expression of a culture that is primarily, but not exclusively, student-oriented. It was

the logical assumption of more than one participant that students far outnumbered faculty in the

faculty, and this assumed statistic would serve as an additional indicator of this function. Faculty

descriptors of this role varied in their emotion and pragmatism, but universally acknowledged its

importance and significance to campus culture.

Research Question 2: What interactions do these faculty members have with the college

union at their current institution?

Following the themes of Connection to the Union and Faculty Convenience, participants

responded to the second research question in a variety of pragmatic ways. These touchpoints

with the union were heavily grounded in their day-to-day experiences, and rarely ventured into

philosophical territory. In particular, faculty were apt to interact with the union in three distinct

areas: dining and hotel use, event space, and academic programming.

When asked about their uses of the Union facility, faculty were quick to mention both

dining and the hotel as frequent touchpoints with the facility. Their specific opinions about these

features, however, varied more widely. Faculty usage of dining facilities in the Union varied by

participant, but most were aware of the prominent role it played in the Union's day to day

operations. Starbucks was a double-edged sword for many participants, describing it as both a

"hub of activity" and "always packed." Another faculty member openly declared his affection for

the space: "I'm in Starbucks every day." Multiple faculty lauded recent changes to the dining

options in the Union, with one particularly focusing on the new rotating "World Foods" station: "They have a different local ethnic restaurant who comes there and serves food. and it's a limited menu, but it's just right." In particular, the Royal Room, the former faculty dining room space, attracted a fair range of comments. One participant described the space as "an experience… an amazing, majestic room." Different participants pointed out certain physical features, such as its "tapestries from Asia," its "large windows overlooking a sycamore tree," and "large flags of the various schools." One faculty member and undergraduate alum summed up the group's feelings on the space quite well: "it's a very nice kind of traditional setting, you know, the food has been up and down over the years. I don't go there. But, you know, for the food, the food is not the foremost reason, you know."

The Union Hotel was a second major faculty touchpoint and was often closely tied with dining as a mechanism for campus visits. A journalism faculty member made it clear that the hotel was the venue of choice for bringing in VIP's to campus: "you know we would put up our out-of-town guests, our visiting lecturers at the Union, you know in the overnight accommodations, hotel rooms there." Multiple faculty also lauded recent hotel upgrades, with one hospitality faculty member recalling his experience there visiting campus: "when I came for the interview, seven years ago, they put me up in the hotel, and it was so bad at that point. The rooms were horrible." Faculty seemed pleased with the hotel overall, with one declaring "to stay in a union building like this where you've got the students and everything's here and convenient" was a huge advantage for the faculty and staff. The hotel's location tied well into the theme of Faculty Convenience, with one participant noting that the hotel's information center allowed her to be more efficient and targeted with her on-campus faculty candidates:

> I could tell the candidate, don't forget to go into the Visitor Information Center and pick up things that are of interest to you. So then I don't have to, one, I don't have to go do it

myself. Two, I don't have to guess and maybe guess wrong, and three waste a whole bunch of stuff that maybe the person doesn't want because they leave it in their hotel room.

As previously mentioned, faculty conception of the union as "a space for events" extended beyond student exclusivity, and participants seemed relatively well-versed in what the Union had to offer in this regard. One frequent faculty visitor to the facility framed it as a convenient, neutral location on campus: "when somebody says we need to have a meeting that includes a number of different folks from different places on campus… then a natural space to do that would be the union." Not all faculty constructs of meetings were so formalized however, with one long-time faculty-administrator taking a more flexible approach: "So when I say I come here for meetings, often our meetings are at Starbucks, or at least that's what we start… grab a cup of coffee, and then we'll find a place to go and sit down." However, most faculty strongly identified with the meeting and event rooms in the facility as the prime locations for faculty activity. One recently-retired faculty member succinctly put it:

> When you come to a meeting here, for a like a conference that I might be participating in in some regard, we're using the conference suites, or if I'm at in the state room at a reception or whatever. They're always, I would say classy, you know, everything's always in order, they're taken care of, the food service probably going to be good.

In these statements, we see a heavy experience of the theme of Faculty Convenience. The responses and conversations were largely focused on the utility of the spaces, and the only negative comment regarding formal meeting room spaces was an offhanded remark about the difficult policies regarding their reservation process – but this was not a consistent critique across all conversations.

The third touchpoint with the union, academic programming, was relatively unexpected and not pervasive across all faculty participants. However, when a faculty member did describe an academic purpose or link to the facility, they spoke at length about planning, partnerships,

student outcomes, and other high-level relationship factors with the facility. One faculty member had engaged with Union staff to produce an employee training video, which he said contributed to his awareness and appreciation of the facility. "I had this unique opportunity and access to the building that I never had before," which led to a fuller understanding of its services. Another faculty member had worked through her academic department to get an election polling site at the Union. The partnership with the Union was a pronounced success, she observed:

> [Having the union] just made a world of difference. Actually, the turnout was so good that they kept running out of ballots all day long. And they had to do an emergency thing where they kept the polls open longer, because people were waiting at a standstill, some students had to leave and come back. It was kind of crazy and wonderful at the same time.

A third faculty member from the school of music worked collaboratively with the Union team to arrange for the installation of a large, built-in musical instrument in Grand Hall, a large event venue. She recalled multiple meetings with Union staff to discuss issues of access, climate control, ongoing funding, and other logistical items, noting "we basically had to imagine how it's going to be used … we still have moments when we step on one another's toes a little bit. But yeah, it works incredibly well." She went on to praise the partnership as "the most wonderful experience for me to be able to see how this building across campus, this iconic building … we really [became] partners in that." All faculty participants with academic partnerships in this study reported high levels of satisfaction with both the planning processes and results and appeared to foster more personal relationships between these faculty members and the Union overall.

Research Question 3: How do these faculty members recall their introductions to their college union?

Faculty introductions to the college union can be described in three categorical ways: those who attended Midwest University as an undergraduate student, those who recall the Union from their initial time on campus, and those who discovered the facility through the normal

course of their work. Other than the clear connection between the undergraduate-attending faculty and the theme of Participant's Connection to the Union, there was no discernible thread that seemed to link these introductions to other concepts or experiences faculty had with the facility.

Faculty members who attended Midwest University recalled very student-centered introductions to the facility, although the specific stories varied by participant. One retired faculty member remembered being in the building in the 1970s and being shown the facility by friends on campus. "I may have discovered it through some upperclassmen friends, who took me over there. We probably had some kind of a cultural experience like going to the billiards room and shooting pool, or maybe bowling at the bowling alley." This type of introduction appears consistent with what faculty had earlier described as student-based concepts of community, primarily focused on social gathering and campus activities. But even faculty members who didn't use the union for such recreational purposes still recalled being in the facility as an undergraduate. One health professions faculty member recalled: "Well, I mean I don't go bowling here… I mean I used to come here between classes like I mentioned, to study or relax, or I'd come here to eat, come here to meet friends." This faculty member also described his current use of the facility as food-centric, perhaps indicating that undergraduate trends might continue for faculty members in these situations. However, the undergraduate introduction to the Union was not a consistent experience for all future faculty members. One in particular noted: "We didn't really come to union that often. Maybe once a month … because it was it was very expensive… and quite frankly, there weren't a lot of minorities in the buildings." It is notable that this perspective was from one of the few faculty participants who did not identify as white.

Another group of faculty recalled the Midwest University Union from their initial visit to campus, most commonly from their interview experiences before joining the faculty ranks. One faculty member from the recreation and tourism department recalled his initial walkthrough vividly:

> During the interview I was brought into the building for a lunchtime interview in the, royal room… Now, I knew unions, you know, and I was aware of unions, I have been to other campuses… And so, so my initial reaction to the union at Midwest University was, this is a massive building.

The use of the Royal Room for candidate lunches and interviews permeated multiple faculty members' recollections. A more pragmatic public policy professor noted "when I was a faculty member interviewing candidates, we would quite often bring them to the Royal Room for lunch. Of course, the Royal Room's a bit upscale for my taste for lunch, I wouldn't normally come here," indicating the room's importance in spite of personal preferences. Faculty members who didn't recall being taken through the union as candidates gave more general, but unsurprising examples of early memories. One recently retired faculty member recollected "I would come here to award ceremonies from College of Arts and Sciences … but I don't remember the MUU ever doing any outreach to faculty." This response in particular was intriguing in that it appeared to place the onus on faculty introduction to the facility in the hands of the Union itself, as opposed to the academic department or other onboarding processes.

Still other faculty recalled discovering the union through the normal course of their work, although these answers were highly unique in nature and tended to follow more pragmatic needs. One faculty member, fresh into his new job at Midwest University, recalled a preexisting faculty culture of eating at the Union:

> My department in those days would band together and go to lunch in the union building together. And they simply invited me the first day I was there. They said what we do is we go to lunch in the union building across the street, and so I tagged along and after that I was hooked.

Other faculty participants recalled a more work-functional, but still self-initiated relationship

with the college union. One journalism professor recalled: "I started to learn more and more

about what the possibilities were and what things happen [in the Union] when I became an

advisor to a student group who had an office here." Another professor, who used to work for a

local organization located near Midwest University, was introduced to the facility out of

organizational need. She noted:

> I had a different introduction to it because I actually worked with the staff to host guests
> and provide a community-based environment for them within this facility. And so, I
> knew the facility probably more intimately than most of my colleagues when I started on
> the faculty.

These experiences appear far more rarely than the first two types of introductions (undergraduate

experiences and initial visits to campus) but still retain elements of the Participant's Connection

to the Union theme. Both of these final two examples – a preexisting faculty culture and a work-

functional need – occurred with faculty members who were well-versed in what the Union had to

offer in terms of facilities and services. While these examples are unique, they also occurred

early on in these faculty members' careers, perhaps giving guidance to any desired future

interventions the Midwest University Union might undertake in the future.

> *Research Question 4: What elements of their college union do these faculty members*
> *identify as contributing to, or detracting from, a sense of faculty community?*

I have found this particular research question harder than the others to qualify. On one

hand, faculty members were eager to talk about community in the facility, and gave numerous

examples of spaces, activities, and qualities that they found community-contributive (or not).

However, getting the participants to dig into those elements that specifically influenced a sense

of faculty community proved more difficult. As with other research questions, many of their

responses fit into the overarching theme of "Student Purpose," regardless of whether they were

describing the elements in positive or negative ways. Some faculty members were better able to frame a sense of faculty community, while others struggled to see a faculty community in the Union at all. While these responses varied greatly, they will prove very useful in providing suggestions for future practice and research in the final chapter of this study.

Clearly, the physical location is a strong factor in a sense of community to some faculty. For those whose offices or classrooms are, generally, near the Union, they appreciated the central location and one-stop ability. A faculty member whose office was very near the Union offered:

> If your classrooms and offices as a faculty person are within a stone's throw of the union, I think that proximity is going to mean that they're going to be more likely to take advantage of it than somebody who's not quite as close by. So I think that that's a factor, and whether or how much a given faculty member uses it, just how close their office is and how close their classrooms are.

Another faculty member-turned-administrator noted: "I use this building a lot more than I used to, when I was just a regular faculty member over in [name of college] because it's quite a distance." This proximity, however, is not a panacea: a law professor noted that a colleague who had been at Midwest University at least five years had no idea where the Union was located – almost directly across the street from the law building where they both worked. Additionally, although many faculty members praised the size of the Union as impressive, the building's large, confusing layout may be a hindrance to faculty use and therefore a sense of community. A public policy faculty member plainly stated: "I never know where I'm going when I'm going there." One participant thanked me for the clear, explicit directions to our interview room, noting "I'm glad you gave me directions because I had to kind of use my memory. I mean I've been here for dinner in this room but it's like okay, where the hell is that room again?"

For some faculty participants the look and feel of the facility contribute a sense of faculty community. The facility's "traditional" look and constructed materials and style made it feel "special," said one retired faculty member. Another went beyond the building's shell and felt at

home with "the total sensory experience. It's the sight, the sounds, the smells, I mean even for me, I do some of my best thinking there." Multiple faculty members noted that the building's cleanliness made it very attractive, with one describing the building as seeming "ageless" and crediting the staff with the condition of the facility.

Another notable element contributing to faculty community was a more recent painting feature added to a main lobby area. A few years ago, the Midwest University Union announced a new lobby gallery exhibit, featuring portraits of famous women in the institution's history. Some were "first ladies" of former chancellors, while others were early pioneers in science, the arts, and education. This particular exhibit was repeatedly called-out by faculty members as contributing significantly to a sense of community. One participant was teaching a class on women's issues at the time, and had their class perform a research project that involved the artwork on display. Another faculty member offered a more thorough explanation of what the artwork meant to community:

> I was here when the union director did the shift to all of the portraits of the women down on the mezzanine level … that communicates something to students, to see those types of visuals; so I think the inclusion of those types of things, the school flags in the royal room, communicate community, also communicate some unity.

Again, faculty members were apt to identify what contributes to community overall but were not readily delineating between elements of student community, faculty community, or any other communities within the Union. In fact, only one faculty member spoke in detail about what elements a distinct faculty community might require. He provided the following thoughts on faculty community, framed as a "third space" for faculty members:

> … so whether that's the back of a coffee shop, a conference room in the library, or a [conference] suite in the Union, at MU, it doesn't really matter, you just need a room in which the faculty members can kind of come together around research or teaching. The room doesn't have to be permanent, it doesn't have to be even the same room.

The most consistent negative element of faculty in the Union may have been the one most outside its control. Parking was broadly cited as a discouraging factor at the Union, although the Midwest University Union does not manage campus parking. In general, parking near the Union was bemoaned as "expensive" and "always crowded." One faculty member whose non-university group frequently uses the Union for meetings and events noted that "we lose a few [group members] a year due to inadequate parking." Another long-time faculty member and undergraduate alum mentioned that he enjoyed taking his children to the food court on the weekends for meals and entertainment, but "it could be awful trying to find a parking space." A retired faculty member described the parking as "nasty… and expensive."

Another aspect of the Union that detracted from faculty community was a perception of inadequate seating during peak mealtime, most notably lunch. As seen before, faculty members appear driven by convenience, and so a lack of seating, overcrowded food courts, and long vendor lines were hindrances on building use and community. Said one participant: "there's no seats for anybody else [besides students]. But then again, they don't know the place as well as a lot of the faculty do. So we're not going to hang around that area." Faculty who were more unfamiliar with the building's "nooks and crannies" described inefficient large-table seating in the main dining areas. One participant said she thought some faculty felt "crowded out" by students in the dining areas, which might contribute to a sense of feeling unwelcome.

The most unique response regarding elements harming a sense of community came from an education faculty member. She noted that many parts of the facility, though historic and well-kept, were not branded in such a way that fostered identity with Midwest University. As she (and many other participants) considered the Union as "neutral ground" on the campus, she believed that intentional branding, such as school colors, imagery from athletics events, and other

elements universal to campus might help better solidify the Union's role as the purveyor of "campus community," if not specifically community for faculty members. Noting that other, newer gathering spaces around campus were "very well branded," she simply remarked, "you don't get that feel here."

Research Question 5: What other interactions or opportunities do these faculty members desire from their college union?

This final research question was one asked almost directly of faculty participants. I was surprised to find that many of them took some time to think about the question and engage deeply in their experiences to find an appropriate response. Although I had some temptation to rely on the negative community responses from Research Question 4, faculty provided enough responses both in consistency and in breadth to give solid direction and cohesiveness to these desired opportunities in the Union. Focusing again on the theme of Faculty Convenience, the presence of a bar or pub (or similar space by other name) was a common response to this question. An alternative to Starbucks was also fairly-commonly desired, though hardly a universal request. Finally, a series of what one participant called "small conveniences" are also readily desired.

The issue of alcohol on a college campus is not a simple matter, and faculty members who mentioned interest in an alcohol-approved space were well aware of the implications of such a request. Some faculty advocating for such a space saw opportunities to bond with doctoral students in an exclusive space, help advance careers, and engage in productive conversation. One faculty member recalled his time as a graduate student: "I remember, especially as a grad student, having that relationship… finishing working on a project that day with my professor, and going to have a beer and just chat and develop a deeper relationship." Another faculty

member who has served on the campus dining committee saw a bar or pub as an opportunity for students to learn how to have a cocktail and engage in conversation without getting "blasted." Alcohol wasn't a unanimous community-builder, though, as one faculty member noted of a higher-end bar in the union: "I'm not sure there are enough people who would stick around in the evenings to really patronize that." One senior administrator, a supporter of the concept, offered the following imagery of the space:

> If it was a cocktail lounge for faculty, a martini lounge or something like that, yeah, people will go pretty fast. And all you'd have to do is get a couple of senior faculty to show up. And then once they show up, everybody else would start showing up and it becomes the hangout.

The concept of senior faculty and administrators drawing in more of their ranks was also expressed more openly by a retired faculty member:

> Get the senior administrators of the university to start using it. Have them start having a cup of coffee in the commons, have them start having lunch in the Royal Room, and before you know it, the little ass-kissers will be coming out of the wallpaper.

Clearly, there is desire on the part of faculty to be seen with senior leadership.

Starbucks, already perceived as a strong student focal point from earlier questions, may have pushed faculty members to desire their "own" coffee space in the Union. Earlier answers provided images of this space as very crowded by students, even describing it as "a zoo," but faculty also provided alternative ideas and concepts they find more appealing. Although there are other vendors for coffee in the Union, they do not contain any "space" like Starbucks has. Transforming this other vendor into an alternative space "more like a coffeehouse" might provide faculty a more desirable location to stay for a period of time. One faculty member thought this space already existed in the Union, but "it's not advertised." Still another participant felt that the faculty-coffee concept could be incorporated into the faculty-bar idea, and the whole space would feel "classy and really upscale."

Homing in one last time on the theme of Faculty Convenience, about one-third of the participants mentioned small items, convenient features, and individual needs that a union of adequate resources might meet. One faculty member who lives near campus wished that the Union hadn't lost its (campus affiliated) credit union and corresponding ATM, since she now has to get in her car to visit the bank. Two participants expressed desires for the Union to return their small personal care retail outlets, specifically an old barber shop and a beauty salon – although one also admitted "I would imagine a little bit more retail might be nice, but I don't know the dynamics of that." Another faculty member wished that the bookstore would return to its older operational scheme, since which time it has been adopted by Barnes & Noble Bookstores: "I mean, it's really limited. The way it used to be, you could easily walk through the shelves, the aisles, the stacks of all the classes, and I liked that. I don't think you can do that anymore." These "small conveniences" also hold a pattern of "things that once were" in the Union, which may link back to the Personal Connection to the Union theme as well.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine faculty experiences in a case study college

union. I will begin the final chapter with an overview of the study. This chapter then includes

relevant discussion from the findings of my case-study interviews, taking each research question

once more and attempting to arrive at a conclusion. The chapter concludes with discussion of this

study's limitations, some recommendations for future practice, and recommendations for future

research.

Summary of the Study

The study felt at different times predictable and informative. The literature review

conducted prior to my interviews had painted a picture of faculty involvement in a college union

that was at its most common haphazard, and at its best a manner of a convenient alignment of

interests. Both instances were clearly visible in my conversations with participants: some had

come to love the Midwest University Union on their own, while others had a specific need that

was able to be met. In each case, there was something valuable to learn about drawing faculty

into the facility and what they might be looking for. The study seemed to involve a high

percentage of faculty members who were alumni of Midwest University, whether through self-

selection or the natural state of faculty at the institution. I was unable to find any published data

from the institution regarding this statistic in their entire faculty body, nor any comparable figure

from the University of Arkansas, so I am unable to come to a conclusion on whether this is

notable or not.

One unexpected element which seems the most divisive was the faculty lounge/cocktail bar concept. Those who spoke of the idea were either strongly doubtful it would contribute to community or were fully convinced that it was the most-desired feature. While both could technically be true, I remain unconvinced that it would provide a notable contribution to faculty culture, given that the Royal Room used to be faculty-specific but had to eventually open its doors to all visitors. This does not mean that Midwest University should not pursue a pub-type venue for its larger strategic purposes but rather that faculty may not be the optimal target audience.

Still, I was impressed at what the faculty members had to say. They demonstrated a clear affinity for the college union; one of them even said "religion is too strong a word" in describing his affection for the facility. They spoke specifically at many times, but regularly enough seemed able to view the Union's holistic position on campus and address it accordingly in the interview questions. A college union director at any research-intensive institution would be fortunate to have such staunch faculty allies across campus, and I believe that Midwest University's combination of campus presence, current leadership, and constituent involvement (including faculty) will serve it well in the future.

But how much of a college union's space, resources, staffing, and effort should go towards faculty, specifically? While campuses will almost certainly have unique needs, it is fair to say that faculty members, as part of the community, will always have needs to be met; exactly what those needs are, and whether the union is positioned to take them on, are separate questions for specific union programs. The long-heralded calls for faculty involvement and participation in the union have not been followed-up upon in our field (ACUI, 1957; McWhorter, 1960; Adair, 1975; Marshall, 1988); and if college unions are to thrive, they must find best practices related to

faculty work and incorporate them into the college union research corpus. There are enough examples elsewhere in student affairs of effectively-researched partnerships with faculty members (see Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1999; Jaasma & Koper, 2001; Zhao & Kuh, 2004) to make the case for effective – if not self-preserving – partnerships across campus. Even if partnerships do not extend beyond a few specific, ongoing initiatives, it may be enough to justify educational, purposeful investment in the college union program.

Moreover, continuing the college union's work with students while enhancing a relationship with faculty may have wide-reaching implications for student affairs at an institution. Peltier's (2014) recommendation of forging personal relationships with faculty members showed a connection between appreciation of student affairs and an understanding of cocurricular learning in higher education. As faculty roles naturally continue away from students and towards other priorities like research (Milem, Berger, & Day, 2000), specific partnerships and relationships may become even more important links between the two worlds. On many campuses, the college union is poised to lead the way in these initiatives but can only do so if the commitment and effort are made upfront.

Research Questions & Conclusions

Research Question 1: How do faculty members at a case study institution describe their college union's role in developing community for students and faculty?

Clearly, faculty see the college union primarily as a space for students to use and congregate. The sheer volume of responses that were student-focused, even if indirectly, demonstrated a clear understanding of the primacy of student utilization of the facility. Many of the participants spoke at length about the facility in romanticized terms, indicative of a personal sense of community with the facility. Most were able to list many functional elements of the

union's operation and programming that contribute to community, such as meeting spaces, food, informal gathering opportunities, and other operations. Providing valuable services for the community, the union at Midwest University clearly commands respect and draws in participation from much of campus.

The ability of faculty members to identify with and romanticize such elements of community is impressive at a research-intensive institution such as Midwest University. Levin's (2012) study of faculty at research-intensive institutions indicated that these faculty generally value research and productivity above these interpersonal student relationships. However, it is entirely plausible, given the study's selection method, that the participant pool here represented the "best case" for faculty working with students at the Union. Levin's conclusions may still hold but would need to be examined on a larger scale at Midwest University to ultimately be confirmed or debunked. The notion of faculty feeling greater commitment to students and the institution at large after participating in some form of Union-sponsored programming or committee appears to parallel Pribbenow's (2005) findings related to service-learning experiences among faculty.

Research Question 2: What interactions do these faculty members have with the college union at their current institution?

The responses in this section were probably the most predictable given the services that the Midwest University Union offers to the general public. Faculty participants were generally patrons of the building's dining offerings, though taste and convenience differed. All faculty members had attended some sort of seminar, in-service, program, or event in any number of the meeting rooms and larger performance spaces in the facility, typically more so for faculty-related

events than student ones. Coffee and the convenience of passing through the facility as a climate-controlled shortcut were also frequently mentioned as regular uses of the facility.

While these responses appear predictable for a faculty member in a primarily student-driven facility, campus ecology theory provides some additional insights.   One of the more applicable theories is Clark and Trow's (1966) Subculture Approach, which breaks individuals into four distinct subculture groups. Analyzed through this lens, most of the faculty participants in the study appear to fall into the Academic Subculture group, which values experiences like the pursuit of knowledge and emotional ties to the college (Clark & Trow, 1966). They are less interested in campus activities and events as they are academic meetings, they spend time buried in books in the library, and they eschew more traditional campus culture norms in exchange for the pursuit of information. Despite some affection for the institution, and a few inclinations towards athletics at Midwest University, most faculty members did not exhibit notable traits of the other three subcultures: Collegiate, Nonconformist, or Vocational (Clark & Trow, 1966).

Additionally, Pervin's (1967) Transactional Approach provides relevant context due to its interactionalist nature between participant and environment. Pervin's study of fifty Princeton University seniors demonstrated relationships between a perception of self, perception of environment, and tendencies to drop out of school. Obviously some context is lost given the framing of Pervin's work on dropout students, but the greater point of his work spoke to fit with environment and how individuals interact within it (Pervin, 1967). Finding the idealized self in an environment would lead to satisfaction, and those elements were present in this study. Faculty members with high praise for the facility seemed comfortable within it, even if they did get turned around and lost periodically. Given the lengthy tenures of many faculty participants, and the length of time they self-reported as being affiliated with the Midwest University Union, a

clear sense of satisfaction and congruence emerges from the data. However, this is conjecture, given that we did not modify Pervin's instruments to deal specifically with faculty members for the study.

Research Question 3: How do these faculty members recall their introductions to their college union?

Faculty participants experienced the college union for the first time either through their undergraduate career on campus, their initial campus visit as part of the job process, or through the normal course of their work. Those who had undergraduate experiences seemed to hold more personalized notions of the union's meaning, while the other two groups took more functional and academic perspectives of the union's role and purpose.

What no faculty reported was any sort of formalized introduction to the union facility or program as a faculty member. This was a specifically desired idea by at least one participant, as a means of providing an earlier introduction to newer faculty members and establishing a relationship upfront. Although not requested by many faculty members in this study, this concept might prove relevant to many older calls for such involvement in unions (see McWhorter, 1960; Adair, 1975; and Marshall, 1988).

Research Question 4: What elements of their college union do these faculty members identify as contributing to, or detracting from, a sense of faculty community?

Faculty community proved more difficult to specifically address in the study. Participants whose buildings and offices were closer on campus to the Union felt a clear draw due to proximity, which was confirmed as an issue by those farther away. Its "traditional" look and feel, complete with institutionally-relevant art, was a contributing factor, as was the friendliness and helpfulness of the building staff. A lack of Midwest University-specific branding was seen as a

detriment, as were lacks of both convenient parking and lunchtime seating for building visitors. Still, the participants generally felt as though the building contributed to community at large, even if the sense of faculty community was not as direct or intentional.

Hearing multiple faculty frame their sense of community in terms of their workplace or academic college was interesting. More than one quarter of the study's participants indicated that most faculty members likely found a closer-knit community in their colleges or departments, due to the nature of their work. As one participant discussed, many colleges at Midwest University now feature "third spaces" with better branding in place. Other faculty members discussed the value and importance of mentoring and having conversations with doctoral students as an important community element, which would confirm Sheridan, Murdoch, & Harder's (2015) findings. The desire to maintain their status as educational experts (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994) may notably detract from both the ability and desire to share community with another space, such as the college union. When faculty are pushed to form community, as Amey (1999) studied, they often maintain community within their academic units first and foremost. This devotion to the workplace may be used as leverage by the college union, but only if union practitioners are able to find direct academic links to their work, such as the examples seen in the study.

Research Question 5: What other interactions or opportunities do these faculty members desire from their college union?

While faculty were very satisfied with the union overall, many had calls for additional features or services catered to their needs. As mentioned earlier, a bar or club atmosphere was mentioned by a few participants, although I have questioned its utility. One participant very familiar with the facility called for more institutionally-specific branding, which would include more spaces and opportunities to purchase branded merchandise. A few faculty members called

for the return of the hair and beauty salons, or for the local credit union to open its branch back up in the facility. Calls for better parking are obvious, and at least two participants asked for better wayfinding through the Union.

What is notable in this list is what is lacking – additional academic opportunities and partnerships. Perhaps faculty members already believe they have done their job in this regard, so to speak; but not every faculty member had an academic relationship with the facility. The one quasi-academic requested opportunity – the deliberate introduction of the facility to faculty – is a weak link to the concept at best. The college union history provided earlier in the study detailed the many calls for academic partnerships with colleges, but the Midwest University Union has no obvious obligation to pursue this from either faculty or administration.

While there aren't many specific research links to this question, Wilson's (2013) study on younger faculty members may have been confirmed by the results, in at least an indirect manner. Faculty participants were split on the utility of a space like Starbucks, but still yearned for a space to call their own. Wilson's conclusions pushed toward the idea that younger faculty desired coffeehouse-type space, suitable for flexible situations and more personal encounters (2013). While this specific trait was not desired by most participants, their age range breakdown would not clearly fit into Wilson's "younger" category – although some did recognize the generational differences present in the modern professoriate.

Conclusions

The overall tone and results of the study paint a picture of faculty in college unions that is mostly positive, if not overly widespread. These participants clearly valued their experiences and time in the college union and seemed versed in the language of student primacy that permeates other college union literature. They felt welcome in the facility, even if the college union was not

the first choice of venues for food and gathering among some of the participants. They regarded highly the meeting and events function of the facility and had high praise for both the feel of the facilities as well as the staff who manage and support them.

The faculty participant group was not, however, overly diverse, or even as diverse as the rest of the Midwest University faculty body. They were, as mentioned previously, primarily older, male, and white. While this does not invalidate any conclusions on its own, it is an important note in any efforts to expand further upon the results of this study. A more diverse sampling might prove less welcome in the college union, for example, given the historical context of these facilities as primarily occupied by white men. Because of this context and participant group, efforts were made to ensure that the voices of minoritized participant groups (such as women and racial minorities) were made clear in this study's results.

The most notable take-away from this study should probably be the college-specific concept of community that appears to permeate the Midwest University campus. Even the most union-friendly faculty participants in the study noted their school or college (Law School, School of Education, etc.) often served as their primary mechanism for community with other faculty members. The college unions role was primarily to serve their needs for greater campus community, or cross-disciplinary community, rather than the first-level needs.

Faculty also clearly see the union as a third space, consistent with many of the ideas described by Oldenburg (1999). The constant attention to the gathering function of the union, as well as the frequent characterizations of dining and beverage, draw similarities to many depictions of third spaces. While Oldenburg's descriptions do not mention a "pass through" concept or function, this frequent utilization of the college union to escape harsh climates might

also align with this construct. Additionally, the faculty desires for a faculty-inclusive lounge or pub would be highly indicative of Third Space Theory and its roles (Oldenburg, 1999).

The most puzzling element of this study, in my opinion, remains the quantity of faculty participants (50%) who hold undergraduate degrees from Midwest University. Consulting with their office of institutional research produced no information to which to compare this statistic to, nor does that information appear readily available at my own university. However, the number feels like a much higher one that would be present in a truly random sample. This may serve as an indicator of tendencies of undergraduate alumni faculty to return to locations and experiences that proved important or impactful in their earlier time at Midwest University. This does not appear to fix neatly into any theoretical framework included in this study, but may prove useful for future pursuits of college unions seeking to maximize faculty member inclusion.

Study Limitations

This qualitative study remains limited in a few ways. First, the faculty members interviewed for this research had preexisting relationships with the union, which may have caused them to be generally disposed to seeing positive traits instead of negative ones. While positive attitudes may not render conclusions as invalid, it may place more than due emphasis on existing conditions and experiences and hinder creativity in new possibilities.

Second, the institutional type may prohibit transferability to other institutional contexts and cultures. In larger, research-intensive institutions, there may be tendencies toward academic siloing, which participants here stressed might have impacts on their academic communities. As community is central to our research questions, institutional types with different academic underpinnings may not frame the same study in the same way.

Third, the specific mix of faculty participants in this study may limit the value of conclusions for groups not well represented. For example: Midwest University has a higher percentage of faculty of color and female-identifying faculty than those who participated in the study. A more balanced group, better representing the whole of the faculty body, may shape emergent themes differently and have notably different responses to research questions.

Recommendations for Practice

The study was fortunate in that participants were asked directly for experiences they desire, which many of them took as a call for suggestions at the Midwest University Union. While not all practical requests to their everyday routines are applicable here, the larger issues they often brought up serve as general guides for potential practice in the college union field.

First, the target communication of relevant programs and services to faculty, especially newer faculty members, may help establish longer-term trends. Multiple faculty participants in this study found their "home" in the Union as undergraduate students, and so interventions for newer, younger faculty members may help contribute to the same larger patterns of behavior and relationships. Highlighting the more faculty-centric features of a facility such as dining options, meeting and event space, and recent facility improvements may help "sell" the union programming in more practical ways. Focusing too on faculty in buildings near the college union facility might also take advantage of a faculty member's need for convenient programs and services.

Next, look for academic partnerships with different colleges and departments, and ask how the union might help serve their – and their students' – needs. At least a quarter of the participants in this study were selected for participation due to their ongoing academic program or partnership with the union, and all seemed highly vested in the union's success and

appreciative of the partnership. Forging agreements with academic units – whether for space, special services, or a new program concept – brings an academic legitimacy to the college union and can help spotlight the academic partner in a centralized campus facility. Potential examples of areas or departments with whom to partner might include higher education programs, a hospitality program, a public policy school, an arts department, or other ideas. These partnerships represent the modern, actualized version of what McWhorter (1960) and Noffke (1963) called for in faculty-union partnerships over fifty years ago.

Third, college union practitioners should find ways to engage specific faculty members outside of the union board context. One long-term benefit of faculty rotating through union board is the gradual distribution of faculty advocates throughout the colleges, which may provide for wider campus support at later dates. Finding more ways to involve select faculty members could strengthen and quicken this process. The academic partnership is one route to accomplishing this, but others may exist. Inviting faculty to specific events, such as union town hall meetings and faculty focus groups, may show good faith on the union's part and result in better decision-making. Additionally, taking ideas, concepts, and invitations to faculty senate – as one might do with student government – shows a commitment to the investment and involvement of faculty members in the college union program.

Finally, college union administrators might be served well in these efforts to enlist the support of higher-level faculty and administrators. In addition to wielding the power to make partnerships happen, these individuals seem to command respect from peers and academic units. Their efforts, and perhaps even simply their presence in notable spaces, may add legitimacy and immediacy to the college union's plans.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on the experiences of specific faculty members at a case study college union, namely, those with preexisting relationships with the union. Given the way this study was framed, there are multiple opportunities to expand on this knowledge and further our understanding of these experiences.

First, this same study could be conducted at other institutional types. At several points in this study, I referred to the nature of faculty on a research-intensive campus like Midwest university. The experiences of faculty members at such an institution may by very different from those at other institutional types, including vocational schools, community colleges, liberal arts institution, private institutions, and others. Similar studies at other institutional types may provide a broader understanding of cross-campus faculty needs.

Next, this study could be conducted again at Midwest University, but with a different purposeful sampling of faculty. Since faculty participants in this study had preexisting relationships with the Union (which I have described as "good relationships"), identifying faculty with no such link to the facility might produce notably different results. These faculty might be identified through participation in a larger campus assessment of the Union, such as through the Skyfactor/EBI Benchmarking Survey. These faculty might have different experiences with the Union, might want different opportunities with it, and might find community formed in different ways.

Next, given the nature of some faculty participants, a study of specific partnerships between a college union and an academic department would undoubtedly produce usable, tangible results for union practitioners. Examining programs through lenses of cooperative partnerships and mutual goal pursuit, research might be framed from a business lens to seek

common threads that permeate these partnerships, resulting in potential best practices for college unions to pursue on their campuses. Studying these partnerships, as has been done previously with service learning and faculty-in-residence programs, may add further legitimacy to the college union's efforts and provide new avenues for engagement in the academic department. A model for union-academic partnerships might result from such a study.

Finally, this same study might be conducted again at Midwest University (or a similar institutional type and context) but focus more deliberately on minoritized populations of faculty. In our study, women were underrepresented as compared to Midwest University faculty overall statistics, as were people of color. The deliberate inclusion of faculty members with disabilities and younger faculty members might also contribute to a more diverse set of experiences.

Conclusion

Faculty members at institutions of higher education represent an important presence on campus, and an increasingly siloed constituent group for campus-bound resources and facilities. With the growth and expansion of a campus should come the growth of its college union, but simply enlarging a facility is not enough. Faculty represent a diverse group of people who hold a special connection to a campus, and college unions cannot ignore their presence, nor the possibilities they represent. Seeking their opinions, engaging in partnerships, and creating a faculty-friendly atmosphere might be a union's second most important change behind its obligations to students. Recognizing the expertise that faculty members bring to the campus, and the opportunities they present as potential clients and customers, may have notable benefits for college unions, for faculty members, and for students and alumni as well.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I.   Demographics
      a.   Let's talk a bit about you, first. Can you tell me about your role as a faculty member here at Midwest U? What do you teach, how long have you been here, etc.?

      b.   What are your areas of research interest? What degree(s) do you have?

II.   Philosophy/Role of Union on campus
      a.   Why do you think this facility exists?

      b.   Who is this building "for"?

III.   Introduction to the college union
      a.   At your previous institutions, what was your union like? Generally, did you go there? How did you learn about it?

  b. Same question, but now here at Midwest U. How did you learn about the union here? Do you recall your introduction to this building, its programs, etc.? Did someone help?

IV. Current interactions with Midwest U union

  a. Let's talk about formal involvement with the union. Have you served on any union-related committees, groups, teams, etc.? If so, for how long? What was that experience like?

  b. Now, casual use. Why do you come here? What are you seeking out/doing? What primary uses, services, resources, etc. are you looking for? How often? Do you bring (or meet) people here? Who, and why?

V. Regarding Community

  a. What role does the union at Midwest U play in forming community for students? For faculty in general? For you specifically?

  b. Do you feel welcome here as a faculty member? Is this building a place for you? Why or why not? What about faculty in general?

  c. What specific elements about this union help or hurt a sense of faculty community? (may include things like location, size, resources/services, dining, programs, etc.)

VI.   What does this union not have that you wish it did? Why do you want those things? What about other faculty members?

VII.   What else should I know about how you use this facility? What else should I know about your expectations of it?

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Demographic Information

DIRECTIONS: Please answer each question as accurately as possible by filling in the blank or checking the box next to your selected choice or choices.

Please indicate your Gender:

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Nonbinary
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Would you describe yourself as transgender?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

What pronouns do you prefer?

☐ He/His/Him
☐ She/Hers/Her
☐ They/Their/Them
☐ Other (please specify): _____

What is your sexual orientation?

☐ Straight/Heterosexual
☐ Gay or Lesbian
☐ Bisexual
☐ Pansexual, Polysexual, or Asexual
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Which categories describe you? Check all that apply

☐ Asian
☐ Black/African
☐ Caucasian
☐ Hispanic/Latinx
☐ Middle Eastern/North African
☐ Native American
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Please indicate your current age.

☐ Under 18
☐ 18-24
☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54
☐ 55-64
☐ 65 or Above
☐ Prefer not to answer

Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.

☐ Some High School/High School Diploma/GED
☐ Technical or Associate Degree (AA, AS)
☐ Undergraduate Degree (BA, BS)
☐ Master's Degree (MA, MS, MEd)
☐ Professional Degree (MD, DDS, DVM, MBA)
☐ Doctoral/Terminal Degree (PhD, EdD, MFA)
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ Other (please specify): _____

How many years have you worked at this institution?

☐ Less than one year
☐ 1 to 3 years
☐ 3 to 10 years
☐ 10 to 20 years
☐ 20 years or more
☐ Prefer not to answer

How many total years have you worked at any higher education institution, including this one?

☐ Less than one year
☐ 1 to 3 years
☐ 3 to 10 years
☐ 10 to 20 years
☐ 20 years or more
☐ Prefer not to answer

Please return this form to the researcher when you are finished. All information in this research will be kept confidential. Please refer to the enclosed consent form for more information.

APPENDIX C

IRB AUTHORIZATION FOR STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

To:	Rob Stagni ARKU 634
From:	Douglas James Adams, Chair IRB Committee
Date:	12/17/2018
Action:	**Exemption Granted**
Action Date:	12/17/2018
Protocol #:	1811161645
Study Title:	Interview Protocol: A Case Study of Faculty Experiences in a College Union

The above-referenced protocol has been determined to be exempt.

If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol that may affect the level of risk to your participants, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have any questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact the IRB Coordinator at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

cc: Michael T Miller, Investigator

APPENDIX D

INITIAL COMMUNICATION EMAIL WITH PARTICIPANTS

Rob Stagni

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study
Attachments: Consent Form [SAMPLE].pdf

Hello _____,

Thank you for your interest in this study. It is my hope that this study can result in better working and community between college unions and faculty members.

For this study, I will be visiting the Midwest U campus between January 29th & 30th, 2019, and would like to conduct a one-hour, 1-on-1 interview with you about your experiences in the college union. These interviews will be held in the Midwest U college union facility. Participation is completely voluntary, and there are no known risks associated with this research project. All responses will be kept confidential. You may reference the attached sample consent form for more information, but I am also happy to answer any questions you may have. The consent form is for your information only – I do not need a signed copy at this time.

At present, the following interview times are available; please let me know what your preferences are and we'll get you scheduled in. If none of these times work due to your schedule, but you would still like to participate, I am happy to make additional arrangements – please just let me know! I am also happy to meet earlier or later in the day. If neither of these days work for your schedule, we can make other arrangements as well.

Tuesday, January 29th:
- 8:30-9:30am
- 10:00-11:00am
- 11:30am-12:30pm
- 1:00-2:00pm
- 2:30-3:30pm
- 4:00-5:00pm
- 5:30-6:30pm

Wednesday, January 30th:
- 8:30-9:30am
- 10:00-11:00am
- 11:30am-12:30pm
- 1:00-2:00pm
- 2:30-3:30pm
- 4:00-5:00pm
- 5:30-6:30pm

Please let me know your preference. Again, thank you for your time and participation in this research!

Sincerely,
Rob Stagni, M.S., EdD Candidate, University of Arkansas

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

Faculty Experiences in a College Union
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Principal Researcher: Robert F. Stagni
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Michael Miller

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE
You are invited to participate in a research study about faculty experiences in a college union. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as a faculty member who either has previously been engaged with a college union or is presently engaged as such.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Who is the Principal Researcher?
Robert F. Stagni, University of Arkansas, stagni@uark.edu

Who is the Faculty Advisor?
Dr. Michael Miller, University of Arkansas, mtmille@uark.edu

What is the purpose of this research study?
The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of faculty members towards their college union at a case study institution.

Who will participate in this study?
Faculty at one institution who have been identified as having a relationship with the college union.

What am I being asked to do?
Your participation will require the following:
        Participate in a loosely-structured interview about your experiences
        Allow yourself to be audio recorded during this interview, using pseudonyms
        Provide any request follow-up information either via email or over the phone

What are the possible risks or discomforts?
There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?
The participant may gain a clearer understanding of the college union's role, and their place in it.

How long will the study last?
Your participation will consist of a one-hour semi structured interview. If additional time is desired, a follow-up interview time can be arranged. You may also be contacted in the weeks following the interview if questions arise, or to clarify statements made.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?
No, there is no compensation for participation in this study.

Will I have to pay for anything?
No, there is no cost associated with your participation.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?

If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may refuse to participate at any time during the study. Your relationship with the university or this college union will not be affected in any way if you refuse to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Pseudonyms will be used in the interview recording and transcription processes to ensure confidentiality and to protect the names of individuals as well as the institution itself. Once the recordings are transcribed, the audio files will be destroyed. Interview transcripts will be kept in a protected database.

Will I know the results of the study?
At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. You may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Michael Miller (mtmille@uark.edu) or Principal Researcher, Robert F. Stagni (stagni@uark.edu). You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?
You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Robert F. Stagni, University of Arkansas, stagni@uark.edu

Dr. Michael Miller, University of Arkansas, mtmille@uark.edu

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
109 MLKG Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

_____

APPENDIX F

TABLE F1: FACULTY PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Race / Ethnicity	Age	Degree	Area / Program	Years at Institution
Pre-1	Male	Straight / Heterosexual	Caucasian	65+	Master's	Retired	3-10
Pre-2	Male	Gay or Lesbian	Caucasian	65+	Doctoral/Terminal	Retired	20+
1	Male	Straight / Heterosexual	Caucasian	65+	Doctoral/Terminal	Public Health	20+
2	Male	Straight / Heterosexual	Caucasian	55-64	Doctoral/Terminal	Public Affairs	20+
3	Male	Straight / Heterosexual	Unknown	65+	Master's	Retired	20+
4	Female	Gay or Lesbian	Caucasian	35-44	Doctoral/Terminal	Education	10-20
5	Male	Straight / Heterosexual	Black / African	55-64	Doctoral/Terminal	Law	20+
6	Male	Straight / Heterosexual	Black / African	45-54	Doctoral/Terminal	Public Health	1-3
7	Male	Straight / Heterosexual	Caucasian	55-64	Master's	Public Health	3-10
8	Female	Straight / Heterosexual	Caucasian	55-64	Doctoral/Terminal	Music	3-10
9	Female	Straight / Heterosexual	Caucasian	45-54	Doctoral/Terminal	Public Affairs	20+
10	Male	Gay or Lesbian	Caucasian	45-54	Professional	Law	20+