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A Study Of Factors That Influence Partnerships Between Universities And Nonprofit Organizations

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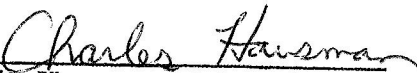
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A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN
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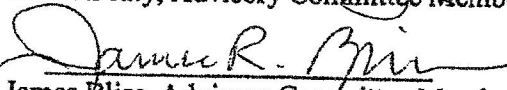
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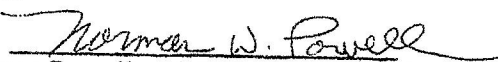
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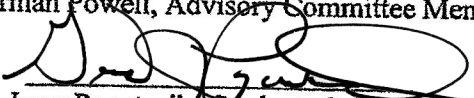
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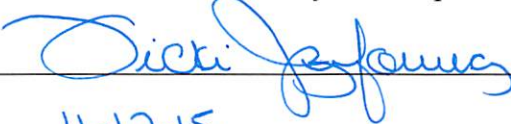

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A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN
UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the leaders of nonprofit organizations that tirelessly work in countless communities throughout the United States to develop resources that provide opportunities so that all persons can enjoy lives of dignity, responsibility, and opportunity. It is the hope of the researcher that this study will help institutions of higher learning and nonprofit organizations learn to more effectively work in partnership to improve the conditions of the communities that they collectively serve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express gratitude to the members of my committee (Dr. LeAnn Beaty, Dr. James Bliss, and Dr. Norman Powell) for their guidance and support during the months that it has taken to complete this study. I am especially grateful to my committee chair, Dr. Charles Hausman, who has selflessly supported my efforts and served as a constant and patient source of wisdom, guidance, and support. I also thank the faculty members of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program, who taught me so much during the past few years. I also express gratitude to members of my cohort, especially Charles Mullins and Brian Simpkins, who have provided the encouragement needed to complete this project.

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I am particularly appreciative of the Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc. Board of Directors and my co-workers, especially Virginia Embree and Brian Mullins, who supported me throughout this effort. Without their willingness to accommodate my modified work schedule during the final weeks of writing this document, I would have given up.

Above all, I have gratitude and appreciation for my husband Mark, and our son Matthew, who provide the sunshine in my life and inspire all things that I do. I also wish to thank my parents Jimmy and Jerrie Messer, who have loved and

supported me in every endeavor that I have undertaken, as well as my father-in-law Stanley Jozefowicz, who I am proud to count among my closest family.

ABSTRACT

This study examined factors that influence partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations. Specifically, the study examined how nonprofit leaders characterize “effective” University-Nonprofit Partnerships; strategies that nonprofit leaders have employed to develop effective relationships with universities; and barriers that nonprofit-leaders perceive as inhibiting these partnerships. The study utilized qualitative analyses to learn strategies that have contributed to effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships, to recognize barriers to these partnerships, and to identify strategies for overcoming the barriers. The study examined the experiences of seven nonprofit leaders who had worked in partnership with universities.

The results of this study show evidence that while University-Nonprofit Partnerships are effective avenues through which to respond to issues affecting both universities and nonprofits, this kind of partnership does not effortlessly come into being. These partnerships are particularly influenced by mutual trust and clear communication. Also impacting the effectiveness of the partnerships is a shared vision that recognizes and values the needs of each partner.

Recommendations for future research, based on inconsistencies in the literature compared to the information provided by the interview participants, are provided in Chapter 5.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Through partnerships we can contribute our small part and reap the benefits of everyone's effort; we can accelerate learning and distribute skills and knowledge; and we can add depth and breadth to our community impact. To make real the promise of partnerships, however, we must be prepared to build, sustain, and evaluate them in a thoughtful way.

(Compassion Capital, 2010, p. 4).

General Background

As with other forms of partnerships, there is added value for universities and nonprofits that work together. University-Nonprofit Partnerships can positively impact not only the entities themselves, but also the communities in which they are positioned. Of particular value is the role that these partnerships serve in educating students and the public about issues that are especially important to the nonprofit community partners such as socioeconomic and ethnic disparities (Worrall, 2007; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009).

Ideally, partnering nonprofits benefit through increased access to faculty experience, potential board of directors members, grant opportunities, libraries, and other facilities, as well as university expertise in capacity building and problem solving (Leiderman, Furco, Zapf, & Gross, 2003; Reardon, 1998; Baum, 2000). University-Nonprofit Partnerships have also expanded the role of universities and elevated the importance of their function in society (Grossman, 2004). Some universities, such as the University of Pennsylvania, have fully acknowledged the interrelatedness of the university and its surrounding

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community. This is exemplified in the first core principle of U-Penn's Center for Community Partnerships which reflects that "Penn's future and the future of West Philadelphia/Philadelphia are intertwined" (Netter Center, 2012).

Through University-Nonprofit Partnerships, also referred to in the literature as University-Community Partnerships (UCPs), universities collaborate with nonprofit organizations to integrate academic material, community-based service activities, and crucial reflection to real-life problems (Boyle & Silver, 2005; Bringle & Clayton, 2012). Other terms commonly interchanged for partnerships include collaborations, consortiums, collectives, and cooperatives. University-Nonprofit Partnerships may be singularly focused and/or short-term collaborations between a nonprofit organization and a single faculty member, department head, or other university leader. Conversely, the partnerships may consist of complex and long-term alignments between the universities, a nonprofit organization, and/or other partners including governmental entities or for-profit enterprises.

University-Nonprofit/Community Partnerships have been described as being at the heart of community research and action (Suarez-Balcazar et. al, 2004). With the possibility of improved quality of life among their communities and their residents, University-Nonprofit research partnerships offer an avenue to achieve "real-world relevance" (Currie et. al, 2005). In these alliances, which may involve service-learning components, and which are intended to be mutually beneficial for the university partners (including their students as applicable) as well as for the nonprofit organization partners, researchers serve as both

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collaborators and partners in a participatory process which is not under the control of the researcher, but instead is guided by the needs of the community (Nyden, Figert, Shibley & Burrows, 1997; Seifer & Connors, 2000).

Universities perceive partnerships with nonprofit organizations as a means to build bridges with their surrounding communities, improve their images and levels of community support, and increase funding opportunities (Holland & Gelmon, 1998). Research partnerships, in which nonprofit community organizations are intended to be viewed as full partners, further benefit universities because of the nonprofit partners' experiential knowledge, familiarity with the population of interest, and knowledge of the culture of the area and/opopulation of interest including program participants and other key informants (Wettenhall, 2003; Bolton & Stolcis, 2003; Jordan, Bogat, & Smith, 2001; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2004).

In an exemplary University-Nonprofit Partnership, the University of Pennsylvania set as a goal to work with community nonprofits in a manner that helped catalyze and multiply those entities' assets while fulfilling the university's mission of teaching and research (Boyer, 1996). In 1992, the Center for Community Partnerships (now known as the Netter Center for Community Partnerships) was founded for the purpose of creating a permanent anchor for university-based research and other programs that have made community service an integral part of the University of Pennsylvania's teaching and research mission (Hackney, 1992). Through the efforts of this center, charged in its founding statement to create new and effective partnerships between the University of

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Pennsylvania and the community, the university has made significant contributions resulting in positive changes in its community ranging from service learning to bridging the digital divide (Harkavy, 1998). More than a thousand students, faculty, and staff have worked together to improve not only the conditions of the surrounding community but also bettered the lives of its residents. According to the Netter Center's Director, Ira Harkavy, "Partnership is the key word" in working with local partners to integrate academia and community needs (Netter Center, n.d., p. 3).

Other universities, including Virginia Tech and the University of Kentucky, serve as homes to nonprofit membership organizations that provide training, education, tools, and resources to improve the capacity and functioning of nonprofit boards, staff, and volunteers. Virginia Tech's Center for Nonprofit Excellence brings together 300 member organizations who work to make the university's community a better place to live. The Kentucky Nonprofit Network is a statewide organization that exists to strengthen and advance Kentucky's nonprofit organizations through quality education, sharing of best practices and resources, technical assistance, and a unified public policy voice. Established in 2002, the Kentucky Nonprofit Network has over 500 member organizations.

Although University-Nonprofit Partnerships have become a common form of university community engagement defined as two-way streets of interaction or partnerships between campus and the outside world, the existence of these types of collaborations are more significantly justified by contemporary economic conditions (Boyer, 1996). University-Nonprofit Partnerships have become

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particularly essential over the past decade as the United States' economy has struggled, resulting in strained government finances and unprecedented reduction in public support for educational programs (McNichol, Oliff, & Johnson, 2011). Begun, Berger, Otto-Salaj, and Rose (2010) added that decreased funding from private sources has also contributed to the need for university partnerships. Scarcity of funds has necessitated maximization of available resources and prompted increased formation of partnerships and collaborative social interest initiatives between universities and nonprofit organizations (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Ostrander & Chapin-Hogue, 2011).

Despite the clearly documented rationale for creating and maintaining University-Nonprofit Partnerships, the building of these partnerships remains a complex task that is further complicated by few published studies documenting the perspectives of nonprofit organization partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2005; Bushouse, 2005; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Understanding the nonprofit perspective is essential to averting misunderstandings between university and nonprofit partners, which may function as though they "live in different worlds" (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Vaillancourt, 2007, p. 73).

Problem Statement

True partnerships between universities and community organizations are based on reciprocity and mutual benefit, which can be achieved when university and community partners engage in mutual planning, implementation, and

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activity/program assessment (Ramaley, 2000). As with any relationship, interpersonal factors including communication, trust, and attraction influence this type of partnership, as do mutual respect, equal voice, shared vision, and mutual interest (Sargent & Waters, 2004; Torres & Schaffer, 2000).

The impact of interpersonal factors may be of particular importance to University-Nonprofit Partnerships that are intrinsically complicated by the universities' positions of authority, presence of multiple constituencies, and competing interests within the campus, the nonprofit organizations, or both (Amey, Brown, & Sandmann, 2002; Keating & Sjoquist, 2000; Nyden et. al, 1997; Ramaley, 2000). This point is exemplified by respondents in a qualitative study of 25 representatives of nonprofit partnerships with academic health centers who identified themes of trust slowly built over a period of time, respect for the knowledge and experience of nonprofit partners, and equitable allocation of resources to carry out desired activities, as being among the strongest influences on the partnerships' effectiveness (Wolff & Maurana, 2001).

As the aforementioned study was exclusive to nonprofit partnerships with academic health centers, more research is needed to ascertain whether nonprofit organizations from disciplines other than healthcare such as housing, community development, self-sufficiency programs, child care, and so on, perceive interpersonal factors as having a similar effect on partnerships between nonprofit organizations and universities. Furthermore, beyond acknowledging the role of the nonprofit organizations in serving as experientially knowledgeable research partners that add chairs to the research table, and provide opportunities for student

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service-learning projects, there are additional gaps in research that examines the perception of the effectiveness, including the impact of interpersonal factors, such as parity or recognition of mutual contributions to University-Nonprofit Partnerships from the nonprofit organizations' perspectives (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2004); Nyden et.al, 1997; Baum, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Shaffett, 2002; Vernon & Foster, 2002; Leiderman et al., 2003; Miron & Moely, 2006; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009; Simon, Yack, & Ott, 2013).

This study identified factors that nonprofit organization partners perceived as either impeding or contributing to effective partnerships with universities. Shared feelings of influence and power, gained through equal engagement of all partners have been identified as principle components of effective partnerships (Independent Commission, 2005). Although mutual respect, equal voice, shared vision, and mutual interest are seemingly simple concepts, they are not quantifiable. Therefore, this qualitative study investigated nonprofit leaders' attitudes, feelings, and perceptions of University-Nonprofit Partnerships by asking the following open-ended, broad research questions, which varied in wording, prompts, probes, and follow-up inquiries:

1. From the point of view of nonprofit leaders with experience working in partnership with universities, what are the barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations?
2. What strategies do nonprofit leaders recommend for developing effective partnerships with universities?

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Study Focus and Purpose

This study focused on a sub-group comprised of nonprofit leaders who had worked in partnership with universities to develop programs or services targeting areas of practice that were aligned with common university interests. Among these were education, early childhood development, housing, community revitalization/poverty, healthcare, and addiction. University-Nonprofit Partnerships were examined from the point of view of leaders of the nonprofit partners because nearly all existing research on the effectiveness of these partnerships has been written from the point of view of higher education partners (Ferman & Hill, 2004). The literature supports that additional research is needed to explore not only the benefits of these partnerships, but also the challenges associated with them (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998).

This study was limited to leaders representing seven nonprofit organizations located in Kentucky or demographically similar contiguous states. The organizations were similar in purpose, scope and capacity to countless nonprofits around the nation. All of those interviewed had experience working in partnership with state funded universities located in their service areas (Kentucky or contiguous states).

The objectives of this study sought to identify effective strategies for University-Nonprofit Partnerships, recognize barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations, and recommend strategies to overcome these barriers. This was achieved by a threefold approach, beginning first by examining methods that the nonprofit leaders identified as having been

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particularly important to the success of the University-Nonprofit Partnerships of which they had been involved. Second, it sought to recognize barriers (including those experienced by the nonprofit leaders themselves as well as barriers that they perceived as originating from the universities). Third, using data obtained through the study, strategies were identified for overcoming acknowledged barriers to the partnerships.

The study utilized qualitative analysis to determine, from the nonprofit leaders' point of view, strategies and barriers to University-Nonprofit Partnerships. It specifically considered whether interpersonal factors such as communication, mutual respect, equal voice, shared vision and mutual interest impacted the partnerships.

All of the nonprofit representatives who were interviewed reported that their partnership experiences with universities were "effective." However, the majority of those interviewed clarified their assessments with explanations that indicated the need for partnership improvement. None of those interviewed, including a representative of one project that never got off the ground, reflected that the partnerships were entirely "ineffective." The study did not attempt to evaluate external factors with potential impact on University-Nonprofit Partnerships such as economic fluctuations, assuming these factors to be equally likely to affect all University-Nonprofit Partnerships

Definition of Key Terms

- A. *Community organization*—a nonprofit organization, or public agency including schools and government programs (Kendall, 1990)

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- B. *Community Engagement*—two-way streets of interaction or partnerships between campus and the outside world (Boyer, 1996)
- C. *Effective Partnerships*—partnerships that build on the capacity of each partner to accomplish its own mission while also working together (Holland & Gelmon, 1998)
- D. *IHE*—Institution of Higher Learning (college or university)
- E. *Meaningful outcomes*—outcomes that are tangible and relevant to communities, such as eliminating health disparities, creating affordable housing, community revitalization, and so on (Community-Campus, 2013)
- F. *Meaningful Partnership*—partnerships in which partners view themselves as having equal power in participation, decision making, and risk and accountability, while benefiting from their partners’ social, economic and/or political capital (McDonald, 2011; Yankey & Willen, 2010)
- G. *Nonprofit partner*—nonprofit organization working in partnership with a university, and possibly additional partners (operational definition created for this study)
- H. *Partnership*—a collaborative relationship between entities to work toward shared objectives through a mutually agreed division of labor (Kamel et al., 1998)
- I. *Service-learning*—educational methodology that combines community service with explicit academic learning objectives, preparation for community work, and deliberate reflection (Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring & Kerrigan, 2001)

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- J. *University-Nonprofit Partnership*—partnerships where universities collaborate with nonprofit organizations to integrate academic material, community-based service activities, and crucial reflection of real-life problems (Boyle & Silver, 2005; Bringle & Clayton, 2012)
- K. *University partner*—institution of higher education partner (operational definition created for this study)

Study Significance

This study is intended to make a meaningful contribution to higher education's community engagement efforts as well as to community development/nonprofit administration. Through interviews with nonprofit administrators, the study examined nonprofit organizations' perspectives in cultivating partnerships with universities so as to strengthen shared communities and/or benefit service populations. The unique viewpoints of the nonprofit partners will fill gaps in research by identifying factors that nonprofit leaders perceive as beneficial as well as detrimental to University-Nonprofit Partnerships.

While much literature focuses on the benefits that nonprofits stand to gain from partnerships with universities, the outcome of such partnerships is often considered to be unconstructive and burdened with problems resulting from opposing philosophies and practices (Martin, Smith, & Phillips, 2005). Despite philosophical differences, university partnerships have existed for more than a century and, although complex to maintain, countless partnerships have proven

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beneficial to universities and their nonprofit partners, as well as to their collective communities (Greene & Tichenor, 1999; Maurrasse, 2002; Strier, 2011).

This study offers a framework that conceptualizes the interpersonal factors that affect partner interaction influencing the difference between deficit models (compassion for the less fortunate) and genuine partnerships that satisfy some of the self-interests of each partner as well as the shared interest of the overall partnership (Torres & Schaffer, 2000). Little research has identified, from the point of view of the nonprofit partners, aspects of the partnerships that contribute to their success or failure. Likewise, there has been limited research focusing on overcoming tensions and obstacles that are common drawbacks in these partnerships (Granner & Sharpe, 2004). McNall, Reed, Brown, and Allen (2009) recommended that future research on the aspects of university partnerships should be cultivated to produce desired benefits.

A plethora of barriers challenge most all partnerships. Among the obstacles that are particularly likely to impact partnerships between universities and nonprofits are lack of shared common vision, differences in cultures and values, lack of communication, unequal and/or unacceptable balance of power and control, lack of support from ultimate decision maker, and differences in philosophies and manners of working (Compassion Capital Fund, 2010).

A review of the literature related to University-Nonprofit Partnerships examines the following areas: (a) benefits arising from University-Nonprofit Partnerships; (b) partners' mutual perceptions; (c) characteristics of effective partnerships; and (d) challenges to interdisciplinary partnerships. Also included in

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the literature review is an overview of the Family Scholar House, which is a University-Nonprofit collaboration and business model that is being reviewed by several cities across the nation (Brown, Corrigan, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2012).

The findings of this study are compared and contrasted to the literature. Recommendations for future research, based on inconsistencies in the literature compared to the information provided by the interview subjects, are provided in Chapter 5.

Research Questions

The questions that guided this study are as follows:

- RQ1. From the point of view of nonprofit organization leaders who have experience working in partnership with universities, what are the barriers to effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships?
- RQ2. What strategies do nonprofit organization leaders recommend for developing effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships?

These broad questions were asked of the research participants; however, prompts, probes, and follow-up inquiries varied and included some or all of the following:

1. Tell me about the specific project that was the focus of your organization's partnership with the university.
2. Why was this project important to your organization?
3. Why do you think this project was important to the university?

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4. Tell me about the partnership, how was it initiated?
5. What parties were involved on behalf of the nonprofit?
6. What parties were involved on behalf of the university?
7. Did the partnership develop as you had envisioned? Why/why not?
8. Did you consider the partnership to be effective? If so, what were the factors that made it effective?
9. What are some of the ways that participants from the university and/or the nonprofit acted that resulted in an effective partnership?
10. Were there barriers to the partnership? If so, were they overcome, how did that happen?
11. If you viewed the partnership as being ineffective, what characteristics made you consider it ineffective?
12. What barriers contributed to it being ineffective?
13. Were any of these barriers overcome? If so, how?
14. Can you suggest some strategies for nonprofit organizations to use to work effectively with universities?
15. Are there things your organization could have done differently to promote the formation and/or maintenance of the partnership?
16. From your perspective, are there actions the university took that affected the effectiveness of the partnership?
17. From you prescriptive, are there things the university could have done differently to promote the effectiveness of the partnership?

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18. What effect did mutual trust, communication, mutual respect, equal voice, and shared vision have on the effectiveness of your partnership?

Overview of Methods

The study was a qualitative assessment of the experiences of leaders of seven nonprofit organizations working in partnership with universities. It primarily sought to identify strategies and barriers that affected these partnerships. By conducting semi-structured interviews with nonprofit leaders sharing similarities (such as experience levels, educational credentials, and geographical location), as well as differences (for example, organizational purpose and mission), the researcher endeavored to identify barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations and to generate recommendations for establishing and maintaining effective collaborations.

Study Boundaries

The Foundation Center reports that there are more than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States (Foundation Center, 2015). As such, the opportunity for research related to the partnerships that these organizations have with universities is broad; however, the building of University-Nonprofit partnerships remains a complex task that is further complicated by few published studies documenting the perspectives of nonprofit organization partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Bushouse, 2005; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000).

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The perspective of the nonprofit partners is essential to averting misunderstandings that contribute to the failure of partnership efforts (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Scholars have called for additional research further examining the challenges of cultivating these partnerships (Israel et. al, 1998). This study was narrowly focused, examining only the experiences of seven nonprofit organization leaders working in partnership with public universities located in Kentucky or one of its bordering states.

Based on prior research, interpersonal factors such as communication, trust, and attraction, as well as mutual respect, equal voice, shared vision, and mutual interest, influence University-Nonprofit Partnerships (Sargent & Waters, 2004; Torres & Schaffer, 2004). As such, this study intentionally considered the influence of these factors on the partnerships' formation.

Theoretical Framework of Study

The strength of any partnership is increased through the mutual benefit of its partners. In the past decade, University-Nonprofit Partnerships have begun to shift from a government to a governance paradigm that utilizes the strengths of each partner and, in turn, creates win/win partnerships that increase benefits for all partners (Salamon, 2002). The theoretical framework applied to this study is based on the expectation that increased mutual benefit of the partners is the ultimate desired outcome of University-Nonprofit Partnerships.

According to Sargent and Waters' 2002 Framework of Academic Collaboration, all aspects of collaboration (including initiation, clarification, implementation, and completion) are influenced by interpersonal factors such as

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communication, trust, and attraction among the collaborating partners. Half a decade later, trust, mutual respect, and tolerance were again recognized as having significant impact on the development of university-nonprofit relationships (Buys & Bursnall, 2007). Similar importance of interpersonal factors was identified by earlier researchers citing desired characteristics including mutual respect, equal voice, shared vision, and mutual interest (Torres & Schaffer, 2000).

Beyond seeking to identify strategies and barriers that contribute to the formation and sustainability of University-Nonprofit Partnerships, this study aims to ascertain how nonprofit leaders perceive the influence of interpersonal factors on the effectiveness of the partnerships. Results may expand Sargent & Waters' Framework of Academic Collaboration or formalize the following framework that was developed by the researcher for this study.

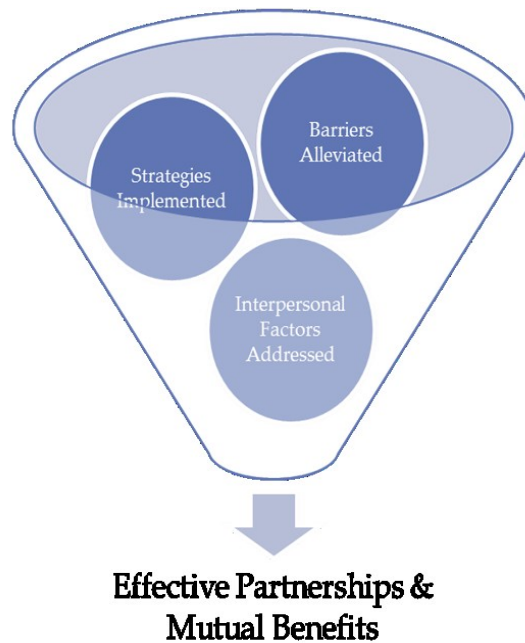


Figure 1: Framework for University-Nonprofit Partnerships producing Mutual Benefits

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Summary

There is an abundance of literature examining University-Nonprofit Partnerships from the viewpoint of participating universities in comparison to scarce research examining these collaborative efforts from the perspectives of nonprofit partners. Unquestionably, the available literature has contributed to the overall body of knowledge pertaining to University-Nonprofit Partnerships. However, by overlooking the perspectives of nonprofit partners, current research has inadequately prepared universities to successfully work in partnership with nonprofit organizations which commonly possess different cultures, values, philosophies, and manners of working (Compassion Capital Fund, 2010). Likewise, the literature has produced limited guidance for nonprofit organizations desiring in work in partnership with universities and has further contributed to the challenges that these organizations have in navigating barriers to working collaboratively with universities.

The nonprofit leaders who were interviewed for this study discussed strategies that their organizations had employed to work effectively with universities. Further, they identified barriers that were perceived as inhibiting their partnerships with universities. Of significant focus is the study's exploration of the impact of interpersonal factors on the partnerships. While restricted to a small subset of demographically similar nonprofit organizations, this easily replicated study, which can be expanded to include a larger sample, benefits universities and nonprofit organizations desiring to form partnerships in response

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to mutual need or interest. A more detailed discussion of the limitations of the study is provided in Chapter 3.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Most research on University-Nonprofit Partnerships has focused on either student development or outcomes for higher education (Howard, Gelmon & Giles, 2000). There is limited examination of the perception of University-Nonprofit Partnerships from the nonprofits' perspectives (Baum, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Shaffett, 2002; Vernon & Foster, 2002; Leiderman et al., 2003; Blythe, 2004; Miron & Moely, 2006; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009; Simon, Yack, & Ott, 2013). Likewise, there is limited research examining barriers or factors, including interpersonal aspects, which effect partnerships between universities and nonprofits.

This literature review is derived primarily from the Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete, and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). It explores the benefits of University-Nonprofit Partnerships, perceptions of the partnerships' effectiveness from the point of view of the nonprofit partners, commonly encountered challenges or barriers to interdisciplinary collaborations, and the impact on interpersonal factors on these relationships. The literature review focuses on the following:

1. What are the benefits of University-Nonprofit Partnerships?
2. What are the mutual perceptions of University-Nonprofit partners?
3. What are the characteristics of effective University-Nonprofit partnerships?
4. What are challenges to University-Nonprofit Partnerships?
5. What is an example of an effective University-Nonprofit Partnership?

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Benefits Arising From University-Nonprofit Partnerships

Successful partnership focuses on mutual benefits (Torres & Schaffer, 2000). Table 2.1 summarizes the benefits that are commonly gained by university and nonprofit partners. Through the combination of nonprofits organizations’ practical knowledge and experience and universities’ academic expertise, University-Nonprofit partnerships have the capacity for greater impact than either partner has individually.

Table 2.1

Potential Benefits for University and Nonprofit Partners

Potential Nonprofit Benefits	Potential University Benefits
Knowledge	Diversified Resources
Access to facilities and technology	Opportunities for Student Learning
Human Resources/Volunteers	Increased resources
Funding opportunities	Enhanced reputation as agent of social change
Capacity building including needs assessment and outcome evaluation	Access to research sites and research participants
Training/Technical Assistance/ Problem solving	Access to experiential expertise
Staff/organizational development	Access to cultural knowledge of target populations and service areas
Increased energy & fresh perspectives from presence of students	Lessened “Ivory Tower” perception
Prestige of university association	Access to government and philanthropic funding
Community/population level changes	Community/population level changes

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As depicted, potential benefits are numerous for both universities and nonprofit organizations that work in partnership. Among the benefits to nonprofits are access to intellectual, technical, and technological resources that would otherwise be unavailable to the nonprofit organizations including faculty and staff expertise, potential volunteers and committee members, funding opportunities, and facilities such as libraries, conference rooms, and recreation centers, as well as increased access to resources needed for program delivery (Leiderman et al., 2003; Cherry & Shefner, 2005; Minkler, 2003; Bushouse, 2005; Sandy & Holland, 2006).

Nonprofit partners further benefit from the universities' strengths in capacity building and problem solving; outcome evaluation; staff/organizational development; human resource, social and political aspects of community building; and needs assessments, program design, and training and technical assistance (Wing, 2004; Leiderman et al., 2003; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Cox, 2000; Weiwel, Gaffiken, & Morrissey, 2000). Students involved in service-learning may reinvigorate nonprofit organizations through their fresh perspectives, energy levels, and skills (Edwards, Mooney, & Heald, 2001; Vernon & Foster, 2002). Their presence may be further welcomed as additional human resources that can assist nonprofits organizations in expanding service delivery and advancing their missions (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Leiderman et al., 2003).

Although intangible, clout arising from the partnerships is a valuable benefit to the nonprofit partners whose organizational purposes may be "legitimized" or advanced by prestige derived from association with academic

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institutions (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2004; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Furthermore, nonprofit partners may acquire increased legitimacy and credibility by virtue of their affiliation with university partners (Leiderman et al., 2003).

Nonprofit organizations further benefit from partnerships with universities when the collaborations provide opportunities for them to educate students and the public about issues such as ethnic and socioeconomic inequalities (Worrall, 2007; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). From sustainability and succession standpoints, partnerships with universities provide opportunities that help nonprofit organizations prepare their next generation of leaders through such activities as service learning experiences and bringing community youth to campus for skill building and leadership development (Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009; Leiderman et al., 2003).

Primary among the benefits experienced by university partners are expanded opportunities for students that are derived from access to perspectives and sites that are essential for university research (Grossman, 2004). Through partnerships, nonprofits share with the universities their experiential knowledge, familiarity with the population of interest including program participants and other key informants, and cultural knowledge of the target population and/or service area (Jordan, Bogat & Smith, 2001; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2004; Nyden et al, 1997). University-Nonprofit Partnerships provide access to venues and circumstances in which faculty, students, and other university representatives can apply formal learning to “real” situations, and, in turn, develop fuller understanding of community goals and processes, which in turn allows the

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university partners to develop both applied and theory-based knowledge (Cox, 2000).

By providing opportunities for university service outreach, student learning, and data for faculty research purposes, University-Nonprofit Partnerships support all three areas of academe—service, teaching, and research (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2010). The partnerships provide avenues upon which to build relationships with the universities' immediate communities while creating opportunities in which faculty can engage in scholarly activities, including technical assistance, evaluation, and research (Holland & Gelmon, 1998). Working in collaboration with nonprofit community partners perceived as having local wisdom and experience serves to balance perceptions of academia as operating in an intellectual and detached "Ivory Tower" (Minkler, 2003).

Through community partnerships, universities can increase their visibility and appeal while emerging as an agent of public good (Compassion Capital Fund, 2010). As with many other entities, universities are charged with procuring adequate funding required to carry out their activities and projects. They also have an interest in developing communities that are safe and attractive so as to attract and retain students, staff, and faculty (Grossman, 2004). Partnerships provide avenues to meet these needs by allowing universities to access government and philanthropic funding favoring partnerships between institutions of higher education and community organizations (Cox, 2000).

Mutual benefits are important determinants of whether institutions remain committed to partnerships that, when successful, can satisfy both self-interests of

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the individual partners and shared interests of the combined partnership (Torres & Schaffer, 2000). This is particularly true if the partnerships' activities fulfill each of the partners' missions and goals (Holland, 2001). However, the levels of benefit can be negatively impacted if one partner is perceived as taking advantage of the other partners to address its own interests (Grossman, 2004).

In the past decade, the struggling U.S. economy and overextended government budgets have resulted in unmatched reductions in public support for educational programs, which has increased the universities' need to secure funds from other public and private philanthropic sources (McNichol, Oliff, & Johnson, 2011). Many of these grantors have become favorable to partnerships which they perceive as being cost-effective, operationally effective and having increased accountability (Brown, Potoski, & Van Slyke, 2006).

As multi-sector collaborative partnerships, University-Nonprofit Partnerships can play an integral role in response to unmet community needs that nonprofits cannot address single-handed. These areas of unmet need range from narrow, micro-impact (i.e., small scale service learning or student volunteer projects) to broad, macro-level projects such as tackling issues of affordable housing, community revitalization, or enhancing community health through the promotion of environmental and behavioral changes leading to improved population-level health outcomes (Cox, 2000; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000).

Partners' Mutual Perceptions

While University-Nonprofit Partnerships are dependent on a common understanding between nonprofit organization leaders and university

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administrators and faculty, such collaborations are sometimes viewed as “poor cousins” to other academic responsibilities such as teaching and research duties (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007). Partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations have been described as unequal due to the universities’ positions of prestige, privilege, and authority (Amey, Brown, & Sandmann, 2002; Keating & Sjoquist, 2000). Predictably, these relationships may be strained by differences in perceived power, purpose, ideology, culture, and communication including the perception of concepts such as involvement and empowerment (Tett, 2005; Stone, Henig, Jones, & Pierannunzi, 2001) observed that more attention must be given to finding common ground, developing relationships, and involving a broad-constituency in decision making.

Rather than being perceived as a true partnership, work with nonprofits may be viewed as charity where the university, as the home of experts, fulfills the needs of the community while the community partner simply serves as a conduit to “guinea pigs” for the university to study (Stewart & Alrutz, 2012). Although having the potential to be mutually beneficial, partnerships are not always perceived the same by each partnering entity. Research based partnerships particularly have the propensity for dysfunction and poor endings (Smith, 2015). Even with Participatory Action Research which is characterized by mutual benefits, community partners have grown weary of projects that, in their eyes, produce no tangible benefits (Sullivan, Bhuyan, Senturia, Shiu-Thornton, 2005).

Service-learning is likely the most recognizable form of University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Service learning is defined by Gelmon et al. (2001) as “an

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educational methodology that combines community service with explicit academic learning objectives, preparation for community work, and deliberate reflection” (p. v). More simply defined, the goals of service-learning are “*service and learning*” (Vernon & Ward, 1999, p. 30). This type of learning is intended to result in a mutually beneficial relationship for community and university partners alike. In 1985, a national coalition promoting service-learning and civic renewal was originated by the presidents of Brown University, Georgetown University, and Stanford University, and the president of the Education Commission of the States (Campus Compact, 2015). Now with more than 1,100 members, the Campus Compact provides colleges and universities nationwide with the tools and resources to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility. More specifically, the Campus Compact enables colleges and universities to work through partnerships to meet challenges associated with issues that matter to communities beyond the campus.

As with other forms of University-Nonprofit Partnerships, service learning partnerships are rarely examined from the perspective of the nonprofit community partner (Giles & Eyler, 1998; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Perry & Imperial, 2001). The beneficiaries of service-learning efforts are often influenced by the research institutions’ promotion and tenure systems or by the needs of the students, therefore shifting the outcomes toward the universities’ faculty and students and away from the community (Stoecker, Tryon & Hilgendorf, 2009). Available research indicates that nonprofit community organizations frequently report dissatisfaction with University-Nonprofit Partnerships related to the commitment,

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motivation, and scheduling needs of students involved in service learning collaborations, and also express frustration associated with the short-term commitments associated with service learning (Vernon & Foster, 2002). In some service-learning project evaluations, the nonprofit organizations' feedback was not solicited at all (Lowery, 2007).

From the viewpoint of nonprofit partners, parity, power and privilege are constant aspects of partnerships, even if not addressed overtly (Leiderman et al., 2003). Obstacles to collaboration extend beyond unequal power to include conflicts of interest, bureaucracy, competition over resources and recognition, differences in knowledge and experience, mistrust, and conflicting values (Gray, 2004). Few published studies or dissertations have examined the benefits of these intended reciprocal partnerships from the point of view of participating nonprofit organizations (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Shaffett, 2002; Vernon & Foster, 2002; Leiderman et al., 2003).

Institutions of higher education have been criticized for not responding to real-world issues (Toms, Lloyd, Carter-Edwards & Ellison, 2011). Through partnerships with nonprofit organization, university staff and faculty can gain practical knowledge which can be shared in classroom settings (Carracelas-Juncal, Bossaller, & Yaoyuneyong, 2009). Despite this observation, effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships may be impeded by faculty, who rather than considering nonprofit partnerships to be equally important to teaching and research duties, view these efforts as providing charity to the less fortunate (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Resentment and estrangement between the partners

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result from these unilateral efforts where the universities view their communities and their problems as subjects to be studied (Holland & Gelmon, 1998).

Partnerships are complicated by differences in perceived power, purpose, ideology, culture, and communication including the perception of such concepts of involvement and empowerment (Tett, 2005). This condition was more recently recognized by Toms et al. (2011), who observed that although nonprofit community organizations were appropriate partners for University endeavors, they were viewed by the universities as having few if any assets to contribute as partners (p. 6). Despite imbalances in power, nonprofit partners contribute aspects that the universities would not have on their own. Among these are authentic knowledge, access to target populations, and established reputations as being community change makers (Smith, 2015).

Universities may be viewed as “separate” from, and distinctly different, from the remainder of the community (Jacoby, 2003). Partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations may be further fragmented by competing interests within the campuses, the organizations, or both (Ramaley, 2000). Further complicating these partnerships are competition for resources, recognition of partners, and value clashes (Gray, 2004). Lack of trust results in constant tension and conflicts in these collaborations (Strier, 2011; Gray, 2004; Maginn, 2007). Nonprofit partners may question the motivation of university involvement in community projects. For example, they may not understand that universities could be motivated to act as “institutional citizens” by improving communities directly adjacent to their campuses for the simple reason of protecting the direct interests

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of the university, such as student/faculty/staff recruitment and retention through preservation and improvement of surrounding areas (Cisneros, 1996; Grossman, 2004).

Rather than representing transformative partnerships that are long-term, issue-based, and generate a collective identity, University-Nonprofit Partnerships may be short-lived as a result of one or more of the partners approaching the relationships from transactional (nonpermanent) standpoints based on the understanding that each partner has something the other needs (Enos & Morton, 2003). As such, short-term partnerships may be established in response to acute need but are not sustained long-term, therefore, not providing any significant impact on chronic community conditions (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Lounsbury & Strang, 2009).

None of these perceptions are surprising when one considers the complexity of multi-disciplinary University-Nonprofit Organization Partnerships:

On the outside, IHE-community partnerships appear simply to involve multiple members with a common goal. But each member enters the partnership with individual interests that are specific and more important to itself than to others. For example, a common partnership goal may be to produce affordable housing. The community's principal interest is to see that additional housing is built. The IHE partner's principal interest may be to provide practical business and construction experience for its students. A government funding agency may be trying to leverage its investment in community improvement and learn lessons to refine their

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neighborhood revitalization policies. The dynamic created results in a whole that is, in fact, more than the sum of its parts. (Cox, 2000, p. 9)

Characteristics of Effective Partnerships

The shared goals of University-Nonprofit Partnerships are to build communities and empower individuals so as to improve the human condition (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993). Taylor, Braveman, and Hammell (2004) described “university immersion” as being essential to the success of these partnerships. Ideally, partnerships are defined as “The coming together of diverse interests and people to achieve a common purpose via interactions, information sharing, and coordination activities” or as a “close mutual cooperation between parties having common interests, responsibilities, privileges and power” (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 1998, p. 239; Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 2001). The Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health (2002) at the New York Academy of Medicine elaborates on this definition: “A successful collaborative process enables a group of people and organizations to combine their complementary knowledge, skills, and resources so they can accomplish more together than they can on their own” (p. 2). Other elements of a “good partnership” include an understanding of each partner’s assets and capacities to participate, shared decision-making and resource allocation, realistic expectations, knowledge of community needs, understanding of different ways to work in communities, and recognition of mutual bases of legitimacy (Leiderman et al., 2003).

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The Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH), formed in 1996, is a membership organization of academic and nonprofit community partners that focus on issues related to healthy people and healthy communities. In 1998, the CCPH released the *Principles of Good Community-Campus Partnerships*. The nine cited principles include the following:

1. Agree upon values, goals and measurable outcomes.
2. Develop relationships of mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment.
3. Build upon strengths and assets, and also address needs.
4. Balance power and share resources.
5. Have clear, open and accessible communication.
6. Agreed upon roles, norms and processes.
7. Ensure feedback to, among and from all stakeholders.
8. Share the credit for accomplishments.
9. Take time to develop and evolve. (Holland, 2005, pp. 13-14)

In 1994, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) to encourage and expand partnerships between universities and communities. This office facilitates the formation of campus-community partnerships focused on economic revitalization, job creation, and community development through funding, training, and research. Effective university-community partnerships are characterized by the Office of University Partnerships as follows:

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1. Joint exploration of separate and shared goals and interests,
2. Creation of a mutually rewarding and shared agenda of work,
3. Articulation of clear expectations, capacities, and expected consequences for each partner,
4. Success measured in both institutional and community terms,
5. Shared control of partnership directions, and/or resources,
6. Focus on shared strengths and assets,
7. Identification of opportunities for early success and regular celebration of shared work,
8. Focus on shared (two-way) learning and capacity building,
9. Attention to communications and open cultivation of trust, and
10. Commitment to continuous assessment of the partnership itself, as well as of outcomes (Holland, 2001).

Barriers to University-Nonprofit Partnerships

Aspiring to support the development of comprehensive approaches to maximize community impact, it has been a common practice since the 1980s for private and public grant makers to require multi-agency partnerships as a condition of grant awards (Leiderman et al., 2003; Smith & Lipsky, 1993). Increasingly, funding sources prefer the comprehensive approach to community improvement that partnerships can provide and favor them when awarding resources (Cox, 2000). Although perhaps “mandated,” these contractually obligated partnerships seldom lead to effective partnerships or enduring

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partnerships (Mendel, 2013; Lounsbury & Strang, 2009). In some cases, community organizations did not even consider these “forced unions” of shallow and nonpermanent arrangements to be partnerships, and in the worst case scenarios, they experienced work-related complications, unfunded costs, and risks associated with participating in the partnerships (Mendel, 2013). Imposed partnerships, including those based on “contrived collegiality” are particularly prone to failure when nonprofit partners are viewed as being less than true partners with equal participation (Andreasen, 1995).

Two primary problems that commonly interfere with the effectiveness of University-Nonprofit Partnerships are (1) programs not being integrated into the central missions and goals of the partnering organizations; and, (2) an imbalance in power that leads to unequal relationships with nonprofit partners when they are patronized as charities (Kendall, 1990). These problems are intensified when partnerships within the university are decentralized with each department having its own set of expectations and guiding principles.

Nonprofit partners may have difficulty maintaining close contact with university personnel associated with campus-nonprofit collaborations. This is conflicting to the nonprofit organizations’ desires for ongoing, direct interaction leading to increased understanding of the nonprofits’ cultures, practices, and conditions in which they operate (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Community organizations have identified preferred university involvement to include a continuum of participation ranging from co-planning projects to evaluating and celebrating their outcomes (Torres & Schaffer, 2000).

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Example of an Effective and Mutually Beneficial University-Nonprofit Partnership

The Family Scholar House represents an effective and mutually beneficial partnership between a nonprofit organization and several Institutions of Higher Learning. In addition to information gathered from scholarly journals, highlights of this collaborative effort were gathered from Family Scholar House promotional items (brochure, website, and video) and from news coverage, and funding source announcements. In 2014, the researcher toured one of the Family Scholar House's facilities and also attended the organization's annual fundraising luncheon. Anecdotal information from these experiences was also used to compile the following highlight.

Founded in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1995, Family Scholar House, Inc. (originally known as Project Women) is a nonprofit organization with four campuses that were established between 2008 and 2013. The Family Scholar House provide apartments and an academic services center to assist single-parents (male or female) in navigating the barriers to earning college degrees. The organization's mission is "to end the cycle of poverty and transform our community by empowering families and youth to succeed in education and achieve life-long self-sufficiency" (Family Scholar House, 2012). Through its residential and nonresidential programs that aspire to change lives, families, and community through education, the Family Scholar House served more than 2,000 families with more than 3,000 children in 2012 (Family Scholar House, 2012; Weekly, 2013).

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Opening in 2008, the University of Louisville's Early Learning Campus (operated by the university's College of Education & Human Development) is where the children of Scholar House participants receive quality pre-school services in an exceptional, nationally accredited, 25,000 square-foot facility featuring, among other state-of-the-art attributes, a rooftop garden, a skylight, and glass floors to allow natural light to penetrate the spacious building. The Early Learning Campus, representing one of many partnerships between the University of Louisville and the Family Scholar House, has addressed a mutual need for child-care for Family Scholar House participants as well as other University of Louisville students, staff and faculty.

The partnership between the Early Learning Center and the University of Louisville is further solidified through the involvement of university student volunteers and interns from various disciplines, including medical residents, who learn through Center observations and field placements. This collaborative effort has been recognized as representing a national model that enables low-income, single-parent families to achieve college degrees and subsequent self-sufficiency (Brown et al., 2012).

One of the most significant indicators of the University of Louisville's commitment to its partnership with Family Scholar House is its contribution of land on which to construct the Louisville Scholar House (56 apartments) for a dollar a year lease. This particular University-Nonprofit Partnership has a myriad of additional partners including state and local government officials, U.S.

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Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), local businesses, private foundations, and others (Brown et al., 2012).

The Family Scholar House's success rates (86% of its participants graduating with degrees in nursing, social work, special education, justice administration, and other majors; 61% attending graduate school; and average grade point averages of 3.0) have made the organization a worthy partner for not only the University of Louisville but also for Jefferson County Technical College, Spaulding University, and 10 other colleges and universities in the Louisville-Jefferson County area and Southern Indiana. In a promotional video for the Family Scholar House (2012), Dr. James Ramsey, president of the University of Louisville, and Dr. Tony Newberry, now retired president of Jefferson County Technical College, discuss reasons that other universities and colleges should support Family Scholar House models.

President Ramsey describes the Family Scholar House as a "great example of what can be accomplished through teamwork" (Family Scholar House, 2012). He explains that the University of Louisville supports the Family Scholar House to benefit families who participate in the program as well to benefit the university. As an example of a university benefit, he cited the opportunity that is provided for the university to work with children whose parents are enrolled in the Family Scholar House program. Ramsey offers an endorsement that he hoped the Family Scholar House "gets replicated everywhere" (Family Scholar House, 2012).

Dr. Tony Newberry, who was the president of Jefferson County Technical College at the time the promotional video was filmed, echoes sentiments similar

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to President Ramsey. Enthusiastically declaring that he was “thrilled to have a partner like Family Scholar House” he implores viewers to “imagine if we could take this community partnership model and apply it across state lines” (Family Scholar House, 2012). Newberry acknowledges the value of the “aligned goals” that exist between Family Scholar House and institutions of higher education (Family Scholar House, 2012).

Conclusion

The study of University-Nonprofit Partnerships from the perspective of nonprofit partners is a limited field of inquiry. However, abundant literature of studies pertaining to University-Nonprofit Partnerships and related subjects informed this study.

This literature review began by defining the benefits of University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Three types of benefits were examined: benefits exclusive to the nonprofit partners; benefits exclusive to the university partners; and benefits that are of mutual value. In addition to concrete benefits such as access to buildings and technology, nonprofits potentially benefit from the universities’ prestige, clout and economic strengths and role as investors and developers. Primary among the benefits gained by university partners is access to the nonprofits’ experiential knowledge and established relationships within the community. Through this figurative “bridge to the people,” universities are able to achieve access to populations leading to the development applied and theory based knowledge. Mutual benefits influence ongoing commitment to partnerships. Economic conditions, reduced availability of funds, and funding source mandated

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multi-sector collaboration, all serve to encourage partnership efforts as a necessary function vs. an elected activity.

Mutual perceptions of university and nonprofit partners were explored in the next section of the literature review. University-Nonprofit Partnerships are often described as being unequal and strained due to the partnerships' imbalances in power and authority. The partnerships are not always perceived the same by both partners with research partnerships being particularly likely to end poorly. Even service learning, which is likely the most common form of University-Nonprofit Partnerships, may be dissatisfying based on level and duration of commitment. Beyond unequal power, partnerships are often troubled by conflicts of interest, bureaucracy, and competing value. Resentments may arise when nonprofits perceive their organizations, communities, or the people within them as only representing "subjects to be served." Universities may view nonprofits as having few assets to contribute to the partnerships when in actuality they possess authentic knowledge and established reputations for community change making. In long-term transformative partnerships, the partners share a collective identity in comparison to short-lived transactional partnerships that only exist because one partner has something the other needs.

Next researched were the characteristics of effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Ideally these collaborations have a shared goal of building communities and improving human conditions. Partnerships bring together diverse interests and people to achieve a common purpose through interactions, information sharing, and coordination activities. These efforts allow the partners

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to combine knowledge, skills, and resources so they can accomplish more together than individually. In 1998, the Campus-Community Partnership for Health released a list of principles of a good community-campus partnership. Among these are agreed upon values, goals and measurable outcomes; mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment; clear, open and accessible communication; and, shared credit for accomplishments. A similar list was publicized by HUD's Office of University Partnerships which characterized effective university-community partnerships as having shared goals and interests; a mutually rewarding and shared agenda of work; clear expectations, capacities, and expected consequences for each partner; shared control of partnership directions, and/or resources; attention to communications and open cultivation of trust; and, commitment to continuous assessment of the partnership and its outcomes.

The researcher examined existing literature studying barriers to effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Both private and public grant makers commonly require multi-agency partnerships as a condition of grant awards; however rarely do contractually obligated collaborations lead to effective partnerships. In the worst cases these forced unions result in unfunded costs, complications, and risks. Such imposed partnerships, including those based on "contrived collegiality," are particularly prone to failure.

The effectiveness of University-Nonprofit Organization Partnerships is often diminished by programs that are not integrated into the central missions and goals of the partnering organizations; and, unequal relationships where nonprofit

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partners are patronized as charities. The Family Scholar House was presented in the literature as an example of a mutually effective partnership between a nonprofit organization and several Institutions of Higher Learning. The organization's mission is "to end the cycle of poverty and transform our community by empowering families and youth to succeed in education and achieve life-long self-sufficiency" (Family Scholar House, 2012). Working in partnership with thirteen colleges and universities, the Family Scholar House serves more than 2,000 families annually.

This literature review accomplished two objectives. First, it defined the benefits of University-Nonprofit Partnerships identifying contributing factors and barriers to the partnerships' effectiveness. This section of the literature review was further supported by the presentation of an effective model partnership (Family Scholar House, 2012). Second, by highlighting gaps in existing research, it demonstrated the need for additional research on University-Nonprofit Partnerships from the nonprofit partners' perspective. Most research pertaining to University-Nonprofit Partnerships has focused on the universities' perspectives or on the universities' interpretation of their nonprofit partners' perspectives

The next chapter will describe the research methodology to collect and analyze data provided by nonprofit leaders in Kentucky and contiguous states who have worked in partnerships with universities.

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CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this study is to identify strategies for effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships; recognize barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations; and recommend strategies to overcome these barriers. This was achieved by a threefold approach, beginning first by examining methods that the nonprofit leaders identified as having been particularly important to the success of the University-Nonprofit Partnerships of which they had been involved. Second, it sought to recognize barriers (including those experienced by the nonprofit organization representatives themselves as well as barriers that they perceived as originating from the universities). Third, using data obtained through the study, including an examination of the impact of interpersonal factors, strategies were identified for overcoming the acknowledged barriers to the partnerships.

A qualitative, inductive approach was utilized to give consideration to previously researched phenomena (University-Nonprofit Partnerships) from a different perspective (Nonprofit partners). The study was based on open-ended, broad research questions related to factors that either contributed to or served as barriers to effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships. These questions varied in wording, prompts, probes, and follow-up inquiries.

Summarized in this chapter is the overall research design used in this study. This includes a discussion of the basic research design, data collection and data management, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

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Research Approach

Qualitative research is a nonmathematical analytic procedure that does not rely on statistical procedures or other quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It also allows for interactive and humanistic research (Creswell, 2003). DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) assert that qualitative research provides a method for gaining a better understanding through the exploration of meanings and perceptions. A general inductive approach to qualitative research considers different perspectives from that previously reached and allows research findings to emerge from the significant themes of the research participants' interviews (Dey, 1993). Although qualitative interviewing allows interviewees to share rich descriptions of their experiences, the interpretation or analysis of the raw data gathered through the interviews is left to the investigator (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The assumptions of these researchers guided this qualitative study, which was framed by its initial research questions and associated prompts, probes, and follow-up questions. Through the use of semi-structured interviews to collect data, the researcher developed a thorough understanding, from the perspective of experienced nonprofit leaders who had worked in partnership with universities, of the factors that impact effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships. In addition, the researcher examined literature and other documents (such as news articles, presentation slides, editorials, and reports) to support this study and to compile a case study on an exemplary University-Nonprofit Partnership that has been heralded in the literature as a collaboration and business model being reviewed by

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several cities across the nation (Brown, Corrigan, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2012). The researcher also reviewed documentation such as annual reports, IRS Form 990 filings, brochures, and promotional materials in order to construct snapshot descriptions of the nonprofit organizations represented by the leaders who participated in this study.

Research Questions

This study was guided by these research questions:

1. From the point of view of a nonprofit organization, what are the barriers to effective relationships between universities and nonprofit organizations?
2. What strategies do nonprofit organizations recommend for developing effective partnerships with universities?

Study Approval

Before this study began, the researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB) at Eastern Kentucky University. Approval to complete the study was awarded on February 4, 2015 (Appendix C). Prior to applying for IRB approval, the researcher completed the required Basic Training Course on Human Subjects Research through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online training system.

Research Sample

This study utilized a purposive sampling technique to guide case selection. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the participants of the sample are made by the researcher based on

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criteria such as the participants' specialized knowledge of the research issue or their willingness to participate and capacity to contribute relevant and appropriate data (Oliver & Jupp, 2006). Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the intent of the researcher is to discover, understand, and gain insight; and as such, the researcher should select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998).

The study focused on nonprofit leaders with experience working in Kentucky and its contiguous states, with the expectation that the selected partnerships and the communities in which they serve (and within which state-funded universities are located) would share cultural and socioeconomic characteristics (southeastern United States) with implications for successful collaborative efforts. The small sample size (seven nonprofit leaders) allowed the researcher to consider each of the leaders' perceptions as they assigned meaning to factors that either contributed to, or served as barriers to, the effectiveness of the University-Nonprofit Partnerships of which they had been involved. Sampling for meaning has been defined as having the ultimate objective of interviewing "individuals from whom the nature of the experience can be elicited through verbal descriptions and narratives" (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995, p. 102).

The researcher made 17 telephone calls to nonprofit leaders in areas of Kentucky and contiguous states where state funded universities are located. In each of these cases, the researcher anticipated the likelihood that the nonprofit leader had been involved with University-Nonprofit Partnerships due to the complexity of the agencies and proximity to large universities. The purpose of the

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calls to these leaders was to introduce the research project and to determine whether the leaders had experience working in partnership with universities. A recruitment script (Appendix D) was used to verbally explain the project to the potential research participants and to inquire as to their capability and willingness to participate in the study.

The overall criteria for inclusion in the sample were:

1. Nonprofit leaders who had experience working in partnership with universities located in Kentucky or contiguous states on projects that extended beyond providing short-term volunteer and observation opportunities for students;
2. Nonprofit leaders who represented organizations with assets of at least \$5 Million at the time of the university partnership;
3. Nonprofit leaders who were willing and available to participate in the study.

The potential research participants were not asked to classify their partnership experiences as being “good or bad,” or “productive or unproductive” and no similar classification of experiences was used when considering which participants to include in the study. Of the 17 potential participants, 12 were confirmed to meet the three selection criteria cited above. Of the five who were “screened out,” at least one of the criterion was not adequately met. Two had minimal experience and had only worked on one-time community events in partnership with a university and multiple other community partners, one shared a referral relationships with a university but no special consideration was shown to

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those referred to the university by the nonprofit, one had partnered with universities to provide limited volunteer and observation experiences to students, and one had relevant experience but did perceive themselves as being the appropriate organizational representative to include in the study.

From the remaining 12 leaders, all of who fully met the three selection criteria, the researcher narrowed the sample to seven leaders with diverse service and target population foci. As much as possible, the researcher attempted to limit the sample to leaders of organizations with experience that would align with service and research interests of academia (child development, substance abuse addiction, employment/economic development, healthcare, housing/community revitalization, and self-sufficiency/development. Table 3.1 shows the process that was used to select the research sample.

Table 3.1

Study Sample Information

Participant	University Partnership Experience in KY or surrounding states	Nonprofit organization budget or assets of at least \$5M	Nonprofit leader willing to participate in study	Nonprofit focus area	OTHER NOTES
001	Yes	Yes	Yes	Employment	Selected for inclusion in study
002	Yes	Yes	Yes	Self-Sufficiency & Education	Selected of inclusion in study
003	No	Yes	Yes	Poverty	Not selected for inclusion - only worked with university on a single small-scale effort

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Table 3.1 (Continued)					
Participant	University Partnership Experience in KY or surrounding states	Nonprofit Organization budget or assets of at least \$5M	Nonprofit leader willing to participate in study	Nonprofit focus area	OTHER NOTES
004	Yes	Yes	Yes	Child Care	Selected for inclusion in study
005	Yes	Yes	Yes	HealthCare	Selected for inclusion study
006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Housing & Home ownership	Selected for Inclusion in Study
007	No	Yes	Yes	Healthcare	Not selected for inclusion in study – involvement with universities limited to volunteer and observation opportunities for students
008	No	No	Yes	Mental Illness	Not selected for inclusion in study – involvement with universities limited to client referrals
009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Substance Abuse Recovery	Selected for inclusion in study
010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Housing	Met all criteria but not Selected for inclusion in this study due to duplication of focus area

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Table 3.1 (Continued)					
Participant	University Partnership Experience in KY or surrounding states	Nonprofit Organization budget or assets of at least \$5M	Nonprofit leader willing to participate in study	Nonprofit focus area	OTHER NOTES
012	Yes	Yes	Yes	Housing (Internship Program)	Selected for inclusion in study
013	Yes	Yes	Yes	Housing & Self-Sufficiency	Met all criteria but not Selected for inclusion in this study due to duplication of focus area
014	Yes	Yes	Yes	Childcare	Not selected for inclusion in study – requested that another individual within the organization be selected for inclusion
015	No (see note)	Yes	Yes	Poverty	Not selected for inclusion in study – involvement with universities limited to client referrals
016	Yes	Yes	Yes	Housing & Childcare	Met all criteria but not selected for inclusion due to duplication of focus area
017	Yes	Yes	No	Substance Abuse Recovery	Not selected for inclusion; not the person most involved with the partnership

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Participants 001, 002, 004, 005, 006, 009 and 012 were selected for participation in the study. All of the study participants reflected qualities of a “good informant,” including being knowledgeable about the topic, able to provide detailed information about their experience, and willing to talk (Morse, 1991).

Participant 001

Participant 001 is a manager who worked in partnership with a flagship university while overseeing an employment program within an independent, nonprofit organization addressing substance abuse addiction. This organization, with an annual budget of \$5 million, originated more than 35 years ago through the efforts of an affluent, high profile volunteer organization. The organization’s efforts are further legitimized by its state issued licensure as well as the credentials of its clinical staff members.

Participant 001 worked with the University to develop an avenue through which more than 100 recovering substance-abusing individuals were hired for temporary entry level positions, many of which developed into full-time employment with competitive rates of compensation, opportunities for advancement, and comprehensive fringe benefit packages. The Program Manager said that the university benefited from the goodwill garnered from its involvement in this community partnership by helping people who needed a “hand up.”

The partnership existed for approximately 13 years before the university’s adoption of a policy prohibiting employment of individuals with criminal convictions precluded most of the nonprofit’s clients from qualifying for employment.

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Participant 002

Participant 002 is the former Chief Executive Officer of a statewide organization that was established more than 40 years ago. Participant 002 worked with multiple state-funded universities to institute a large-scale self-sufficiency (including housing and childcare) and education program for single parents. The organization represented by Participant 002 has an annual budget of \$30 million and a powerful and prestigious board of directors, including ex-officio members who are influential in state government. The organization's efforts are further legitimized by the receipt of numerous state and national awards recognizing its services and management abilities. The organization's relationship with state-funded universities has been solidified through successful implementation of these self-sufficiency partnerships with several universities throughout the state. Some of the partnerships have developed to the point of universities hosting more than one of the projects.

Participant 002 worked with multiple universities to explain the projects and their funding structures, as well as the roles of the required partners, which include a university, a nonprofit developer/service provider, and several funding sources and investors. In all cases, the participating universities were required to commit to coordinating services and assuring access to campus resources to the partnerships' housing and education initiatives designed to enable head-of-households to reach self-sufficiency. In some cases, the universities made more concrete contributions to the projects, such as providing long-term land leases at nominal costs. Through the eight projects so far created by these partnerships,

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financially at-risk single parents are assisted in achieving college diplomas while their children's educational outcomes are also improved.

Participant 002 is no longer involved in a capacity where he has direct involvement with the self-sufficiency project. However, he reported that University-Nonprofit Partnerships that are the crux of the creation and success of these projects continue to be cultivated by his former employer. There are currently three more of these self-sufficiency/education projects in various stages of development across the state. To meet funding source requirements, all of these require University-Nonprofit Partnerships.

Participant 004

Participant 004 is the former Chief Executive Officer of a nonprofit organization, established more than 40 years ago, which exists to build better communities in 10 economically distressed communities. Participant 004 worked with a rural state-funded university to improve conditions shared by campus and community alike. Among these were housing, recreational opportunities, and child care. The organization represented by Participant 004 has net assets of \$13 million and has received several state and national awards for its work in struggling communities. It has established partnerships with a myriad of local and state organizations and lists a nearby state-funded university among its partners. Considering that this nonprofit's mission statement encompasses a commitment to the belief that education is the key to self-sufficiency, it is not surprising that this partnership exists. The organization's relationship with the university is built on a successful, but modest in size and scope, partnership effort utilizing the

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combination of university and nonprofit resources, to carry out a project benefitting members of their collective community.

For the multi-purpose (housing, recreational opportunities, and child care) project that was the primary focus of the interview for this study, Participant 004 worked with another large out-of-state nonprofit housing developer to conceive and propose a project that would use external funding to construct housing for parents attending the university, public recreational facilities (including a swimming pool and walking trails), and a child care center that would serve the children of residents of the housing development as well as those of university employees. The role of Participant 004 was to bring together the university, the out-of-state nonprofit, funding sources, and other key stakeholders (such as local elected officials) to explain the project's financing structure and the anticipated role of each partner.

Although the project was initially well received by the university, it did not progress beyond planning stages due to competing interests for the use of the university-owned property upon which the project would have been constructed. Following the unexpected decision on behalf of the university to withdraw the consideration of the use of its land, combined with the transition and relocation of the nonprofit's long-term executive (Participant 004), the partnership effort informally and amicably dissolved.

Participant 005

Participant 005 is the former Executive Director of a multi-purpose nonprofit organization, established more than 35 years ago, which provides a

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network of services in a high poverty area designed to promote safety, self-sufficiency, and independence. Participant 005 worked with a state-funded university medical center to decrease health disparities among the uninsured by utilizing a cost effective, community based approach to disease management. In partnership with another nonprofit organization sharing a similar mission, the organization, administered by Participant 005, entered into a partnership with a university where the university served as the fiscal agent, project evaluator, and bridge between the two nonprofits that were primarily charged with linking program participants with services.

The project achieved its projected outcomes and increased access to healthcare for more than 12,000 uninsured people, thus improving their health status. Hospital admissions and emergency room visits also decreased, resulting in substantial savings for local hospitals—including those operated by the university. Despite its success, the project eventually came to a stormy end resulting from clashes over “ownership,” shared credit for project accomplishments, and other struggles.

Participant 006

Participant 006 is the Executive Director of a large housing organization and has worked in partnership with a flagship university for nearly two decades on numerous projects related to affordable housing, homeownership, neighborhood revitalization, and self-sufficiency. This organization, with annual revenues of more than \$25 million is overseen by a high-profile board of directors who serve five-year terms. Two members of the board are appointed by the local

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government. Participant 006 has developed and delivered a training program that focuses on partnering with universities.

Participant 006 has worked with the university on several initiatives, including neighborhood revitalization efforts to reclaim campus neighborhoods at risk of losing homeownership due to increased student rental. An innovative partnership utilized funds provided by the housing organization, the university, and private/public funding sources to establish a housing down payment assistance program for university employees desiring to live in the reclaimed neighborhoods. The university's most significant commitment to the partnership's housing focus is a gift of a large (more than 15 acres) tract of excess land that it donated many years ago to be used for affordable housing. As the university has announced that nearly half of its workforce will be eligible for retirement within five years, the housing organization has targeted low-to-moderate income seniors for a multi-phase residential development that will be developed on the donated land.

All of the partnership efforts between the University and housing organization, where Participant 006 is employed, are ongoing.

Participant 009

Participant 009 is a nonprofit agency administrator who worked in partnership with a flagship university while overseeing a healthcare clinic within an independent, nonprofit organization addressing substance abuse addiction. This organization, with an annual budget of \$6 million, originated more than 20 years ago through the efforts of an affluent and politically connected board of directors

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that has remained powerful even as new generations of board members have replaced most of its founding members. The organization's efforts are further legitimized by the fact that it was used by a former governor as a model for a statewide initiative addressing substance abuse recovery.

Through this partnership the university's nursing education program operated an onsite healthcare clinic for participants of the residential substance abuse recovery program. This partnership was of particular significance because at the time of its inception there were scarce options for healthcare for uninsured individuals including the majority of those residing in the recovery program. Participant 009 said that the university's nursing education program benefited from the hands-on experience that its students gained while providing healthcare services to the recovery center's clients.

The partnership existed for approximately 15 years before the clinic's operation was assumed by another healthcare provider. Although Participant 009 said that the level of service provided by this provider is not as specialized to the needs of the recovery center, it is of limited significance due to recent changes in the availability of healthcare insurance which has allowed previously uninsured persons to more easily obtain healthcare.

Participant 012

Participant 012 is the Executive Director of a faith-based housing and community renewal organization. This membership organization was established more than 25 years ago and is supported by a coalition of 30 interfaith congregations and numerous supporters including local, state, and regional public

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and private sources. This organization has worked in partnership with several colleges and universities on several projects of varying size and scope.

Participant 012 worked in a unique four-way partnership comprised of a private foundation, a large nonprofit, several universities, and a network of 11 small-to-midsize nonprofit housing organizations. This effort was coordinated by the large nonprofit which secured grant funds from the private foundation to implement a paid college internship program to increase the capacity of small to mid-size housing nonprofits in the state. Participant 012 represented one of the small-to-midsize organizations that hosted interns made possible through the partnership. The internships provided the housing organization with fresh perspectives and technological knowledge such as website design and social media capacities. On the other hand, the university partner also benefited, as its students obtained real life work experience in improving housing and community conditions within the service area.

Data Collection

Interviews were supported by a review of literature and other documents generated data for this study. Data was collected from seven participants via one-on-one semi-structured interviews with leaders of nonprofit organizations who had worked in partnership with universities. Semi-structured interviews were used so as to allow participants freedom to lead topics of discussion (Patton, 2002). Follow-up questions, probes and prompts were utilized to either clarify or further explore responses.

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The interviews for this study were conducted one-on-one and face-to-face at locations of the interviewees' choosing. According to Clarke (2006), the person being interviewed should be given the choice of venue. Three of the leaders chose to host the interview at agencies where they gained experience working in partnership with universities; two, who were no longer employed by the organization where they had worked with universities, chose to meet at alternative office settings; one chose to meet in a private room at a restaurant; and one elected to be interviewed at her home.

The interviews focused on the participants' responses to issues related to working in partnership with universities including barriers to collaboration, factors that contributed to productive collaboration, and impact of interpersonal factors on partnership efforts. The interviews focused on two primary questions that were asked of the participants followed by prompts and probes when necessary. Prompts and probes are recommended to give structure to the interview and to allow interviewees to use their own voices to explain their experiences (McCracken, 1998). All questions were not directly asked of all those interviewed as they sometimes provided information in their overall responses that answered anticipated questions.

The researcher established rapport with the interview participants through introductions and by explaining key points, as recommended by Rose (1994). Among the items explained was the purpose of the interview, clarification of the topic being explored, format and length of the interview, and confidentiality considerations. The researcher explained that participants did not have to answer

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any questions that they were not comfortable answering. The researcher also requested permission to use a digital recording device to record the interview and explained that only the researcher and/or a transcriptionist would hear the recording.

Following the interviews, which ranged from 30 to 60 minutes, the recordings were transcribed verbatim. All collected data was maintained in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office and will be retained in electronic (flash drive) and hard copy formats for three years from the completion of the study.

Ethical Considerations

In adherence to the guidelines of Eastern Kentucky University Institutional Review Board, written consent was obtained from each of the research participants. Prior to the beginning of the digitally recorded interviews, the participants were provided with a consent form that explained the following aspects of participation:

- Why they were being asked to participate in the study
- Who was doing the study and what was the purpose of the study
- Where was the study being conducted and how long would it last
- What were the participants being asked to do,
- Were there any reasons they should not participate in the study
- What were the possible risks and discomforts associated with participating in the study
- What were the benefits of participating in the study

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- Did they have to participate in the study and were there alternatives to participating
- Were there costs associated with participation and would they receive any payment of reward for participation
- Who would see the information that they provided
- Where to direct questions about participating in the study

Data Analysis

The primary focus of this study was to allow nonprofit leaders who had worked in partnership with universities to verbalize and make meaning of their partnership experiences. Seidman (2006) described this method as putting “behavior in context” (p. 10).

Through this study’s data analysis, information was coded and themes were identified. Data analysis has been referred to as the explication and interpretation of research (Moustakas, 1994).

Coding

Interviews were transcribed into written text to enable coding so that meaning could be assigned to data. Coding is defined as a “word or short phrase that symbolically assigns “a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 3).

Information from the interviews was initially broken into key concepts that were compared for similarities and differences in the data provided by the research participants. Codes were assigned to data that emerged from the research

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questions and from follow-up questions, probes, and prompts. For example, references to either the presence or absence of interpersonal factors impacting the partnerships were coded. Following the assignment of codes, similar experiences or characteristics are grouped together and categorized through the assignment of conceptual labels (Pandit, 1996).

After coding, the researcher searched for patterns in the codes using axial coding. Axial coding is used to make connections between main categories and sub-categories (Pandit, 1996). The final stage of data analyzing is clustering and thematizing (Moustakas, 1994). By identifying themes and sub-themes, the researcher was able to reach a deeper understanding of the nonprofit leaders experience in working in partnership with universities. These themes were used to construct textural descriptions of the nonprofit leaders' experiences substantiated by narratives and quotes (Creswell, 2013). The textural descriptions were then reviewed and composite themes based on common experiences of all research participants were identified. The composite themes answer this study's research questions. Figure 3.1 represents the data analysis process that was used for this study.

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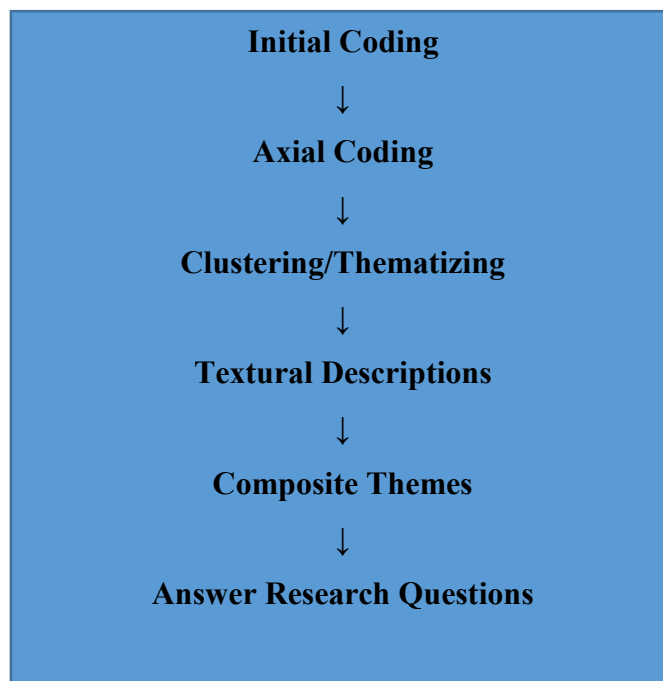


Figure 3.1. Data analysis process used for this study.

Value of Study

The value of this study to university and nonprofit partners is that it provides information that may help each of the partners to develop strategies to work in more effective partnership. As both partners stand to benefit from University-Nonprofit Partnerships, and are even sometimes mandated to join forces, it is to their mutual advantage to learn to foster and nurture these collaborative efforts.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the number of nonprofit leaders who were studied. Seven may not be large enough sample to reflect experiences and opinions of a larger group of nonprofit leaders. A second limitation may be hesitation on behalf of the nonprofit leaders to be candid if they have concerns

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that their relationships with partnering universities may be jeopardized. Next, the study may be limited by the fact that only one representative of each nonprofit partner was interviewed. However, in five of the seven represented partnerships, the individual who was interviewed was the only personnel involved in the collaborative effort. Additional staff from the remaining two partnerships were not available to be interviewed—one had moved out of state while the other was not available for health reasons. Although this study considered the interviewed leader as being the voice for the overall nonprofit organization partner, those who were interviewed may not have accurately reflected the total philosophies of the nonprofit organizations which they represented.

Controlling for Bias

An apparent concern in this study is the fact that the primary researcher is a current nonprofit leader who has worked in partnership with more than one university while representing more than one nonprofit organization. Precautions were taken while conducting the research interviews to avoid the introduction of unintended bias. Additionally, the researcher relied upon two colleagues, both of whom are veteran nonprofit leaders who have worked in collaboration with universities, to review the study's results and findings. Neither of these found bias in the interpretations and were favorable to the study's contribution to nonprofit leadership and community development.

Study Boundaries

This study consisted of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with seven nonprofit leaders with experience (past or present) in University-

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Nonprofit Partnerships. The nonprofit leaders represented partnership efforts that took place in Kentucky or its contiguous states. Interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes, and were conducted in person at locations chosen by the nonprofit leaders. The interview questions focused on qualitative aspects of the nonprofit leaders' experience as they have sought effective partnerships with universities.

Summary

This chapter outlines the qualitative study at Eastern Kentucky University of factors that contribute to, or serve as barriers to, effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations. This study, conducted from the perspective of the nonprofit partners, involved semi-structured interviews (n=7) of nonprofit leaders with experience working in partnership with universities. Sample selection, ethical considerations, study boundaries, limitations, controlling for bias, and value of the study are all discussed. An explanation of the interview process is provided. This study is specific to the experiences of nonprofit leaders in Kentucky or contiguous states who have experience working in partnerships with universities. It is not generalizable to other contexts.

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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine nonprofit leaders' perceptions of (1) strategies that contribute to effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships; (2) barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofits (including recommendations of strategies to overcome barriers); and (3) impacts of interpersonal factors on the formation and continuation of University-Nonprofit Partnerships. This study was informed by the following research questions: (a) from the point of view of nonprofit leaders, what are the barriers to effective relationships between universities and nonprofit organizations?; and (b) what strategies do nonprofit leaders recommend for developing effective partnerships with universities?

Through semi-structured interviews, nonprofit leaders who agreed to participate in the study, described their perceptions and experiences working in University-Nonprofit Partnerships. They also discussed the impact of interpersonal factors on the formation and continuation of these partnerships. The research findings reported in this chapter are based on analysis of the semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information responding to the study's research questions that focused on factors that either contributed to the formation and sustainability of effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships or that served as barriers to the formation of these collaborative relationships. All interview participants were screened to confirm that they represented organizations with adequate capacity (organizational purpose and interest, longevity, monetary resources, professionalized personnel, and/or key

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stakeholder support) necessary to legitimize their participation in university partnerships. Each of the projects that were the focus of these partnerships had significant impact in areas that were also aligned with common university interests. Among these were education, early childhood development, housing, community revitalization/poverty, healthcare, and addiction.

The nonprofit leaders responded to interview questions pertaining to the importance of the partnerships to the universities, the nonprofit organizations, and their mutual communities. They also discussed the formation of the partnerships, including sources of their initiation, and elaborated on whether the working relationships developed as envisioned, met productivity expectations, and/or experienced barriers that limited their collective potential. For partnerships deemed by the nonprofits to be effective, contributing factors to the successful efforts were identified. In some cases, the nonprofit leaders did not consider the partnerships to have been wholly effective (for example, at least one of those interviewed said the effort was only partly effective while another said that the attempted partnership failed to produce any benefit). The nonprofit leaders who reported being involved in less than ideal partnerships were asked to describe the troubled partnerships' characteristics and to identify any associated barriers to the collaborative attempt. If applicable, they were requested to explain how such barriers were overcome. Some of those interviewed contributed suggestions for strategies that could be used by nonprofit organizations when working in partnership with universities including initiating and maintaining the partnering relationships.

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Background

The seven participants of this study (Participants 001, 002, 004, 005, 006, 009 and 012) were nonprofit leaders with experience working in partnerships with universities in Kentucky or one of its bordering states. Although the interview participants included both executive and program management level staff, all were considered to have held key roles in the partnership efforts. They ranged in age from approximately 50 to approximately 70 years old; five were female, and two were male. All of the participants had at least twenty years of experience in nonprofit leadership. Three of the seven had 30 years of leadership experience. All had college degrees. Two had bachelor's degrees and five had master's degrees. One was a Certified Public Accountant and one was a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. All had earned awards or other recognition for their work. While some of those interviewed continue to be involved in university partnerships, others have transitioned to positions or employers where they are no longer involved with these collaborative efforts.

Study Findings

Several themes emerged from the data in response to the research questions: **In response to Research Question 1, the following themes were identified in relationship to barriers between University and Nonprofit Partners.**

According to Participant 006, "Relationships, I think, on the surface are easy to talk about, but difficult to manage and foster." The nonprofit leaders who were interviewed for this study identified a number of barriers that they perceived as being either potential or actual impediments to the University-Nonprofit

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Partnerships of which they had been involved. The identified barriers were primarily categorized as (1) political, economic, and personnel changes that caused misalignment between the interests and motivation of the partners; and (2) interpersonal factors that negatively impacted the functioning of the partnerships. Most commonly reported of the interpersonal factors that challenged the formation and/or continuation of the partnerships were (a) lack of shared vision; (b) ineffective communication; and (3) unequal distribution of power.

These barriers are the focus of this section of the Research Findings narrative:

1. Political, economic, and personnel influences
2. Lack of shared vision
3. Ineffective communication
4. Unequal distribution of power

Although a section of narrative will be devoted to each of these barriers, there is considerable overlap among them. The nonprofit leaders sometimes used similar, but different, terms to describe seemingly alike concepts (for example, rather than saying the partnership was unequal in power or lacked a shared vision, one of the nonprofit leaders reported a perception that the nonprofit partner and the people it served were treated like “lab rats” by the university), when this occurred the research categorized the comment to the barrier of which it most closely aligned. In all cases, such judgement calls on behalf of the researcher are explained with a verbatim quote from the nonprofit leader.

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Political, Economic, and Personnel Changes

Each of the nonprofit leaders reported that their partnerships with universities had been effected by political, economic, and personnel changes. Although the economic influences described by the leaders did not deviate from conditions directly related to budgetary constraints or availability of financial or other resources, they were much broader in their discussion of what the researcher labeled as “political influences.” This term, for the purpose of this narrative, is used to reference internal political conditions or policy changes among the partners. Personnel changes involved shifts in partner leadership or key personnel. Although this barrier was related to both nonprofit and university partners, it was more commonly associated with personnel changes in the universities.

Participant 004 described a University-Nonprofit Partnership that with seeming effortless brought together a university, a large out-of-state nonprofit, a local mid-sized nonprofit, and a state level housing finance agency. This effort envisioned the development of multi-family housing for single-parent university students, a child care center for university students and employees; and a community swimming pool and walking trail. The concept was initially embraced by the university’s president, who agreed that university-owned land could be used for the project. However, according to Participant 004, “the community kind of got wind of [the proposed project] and the pressure started on the university.” She explained that community members had questioned whether there were better uses for the land and consequently the city put pressures on the university regarding its use. Participant 004 said, “I wasn’t privy to exactly who

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was involved or whatever but [the project] just fizzled. I don't think it had anything to do with [the nonprofit partner]. I think it was between the university and the city.”

Another political influence that led to the premature end of this partnership effort, according to Participant 004, was concern voiced by private landlords. They speculated that the proposed housing development for single-parent students would affect their businesses' cash flows as student families moved away from privately owned rental housing to reside on campus. Participant 004 noted, “Private landlords were never happy with what we were working on. The university came under pressure on that, too.”

Although the university president yielded to political pressures and abruptly halted the project, Participant 004 acknowledged that she understood that the president had to “pick his battles” because of all that he had “going in the community.” She said that she didn't fault him for the position that he took by abandoning the project because political pressures “matter” in the small town where the university is located.

Citing her own pending employment transition and relocation from the area, Participant 004 recognized that she had not been a strong advocate in attempting to convince the university to remain involved with the partnership's efforts. As was the case among five of the seven interviewed nonprofit leaders, Participant 004 reported that she was the only one from her nonprofit who was involved with the university partnership.

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University-Nonprofit Partnerships face barriers to both creation and longevity. In some cases, partners make policy decisions that while necessary for the wellbeing of the overall entity are disadvantageous to the partnerships. As a result of such policy decisions, the partnerships may become casualties of changes in the conditions under which they previously existed.

Participant 001 focused on the demise of an employment program within the university in which marginalized individuals (all with histories of alcoholism and/or drug addiction and little or no job experience) were prioritized by the university's temporary employment program for entry level positions in various departments within the university. Participant 001 reported that the partnership failed after 13 years of successful collaboration because of a restrictive policy change within the university concerning the employment of persons with criminal histories. Although the university saw the need for this policy, it led to the end of the partnership because the majority of the substance abuse treatment center's program participants didn't meet the pre-employment standards of the university's new policy.

Participant 001 reported that she attempted to discuss the application of the new policy with a representative of the university's human resources department. Interestingly, the individual who was in charge of interpreting the criminal history policy had been one of the first people that Participant 001 had worked with in creating the partnership effort. However, according to Participant 001, this staff member developed an entirely different view when she became

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head of human resources and was not willing to make any exceptions pertaining to the interpretation and application of the new policy.

Business aspects of operating universities impose fiduciary responsibilities, including balancing expenses (for example, personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, utilities, overhead/indirect costs, maintenance, and other costs) with revenue (for example, government support, grants and contracts, fundraising, and tuition payments). Hence the institutions must control expenses and maintain revenues including student enrollment. Participant 006 reported economic concerns as causing his university partner to become engaged in an intense partnership with a private development company to build new housing for the university's growing student body. As a consequence of its immersion into this public-private partnership, the university partner lost interest in working with the nonprofit to implement a down payment assistance program for university employees desiring to live near campus. The abandonment of this project resulted in loss of benefits to the university's employees, the university itself, and the community at large. Not only would university staff members have profited by being assisted to purchase affordable homes near their place of employment, the project would have improved blighted conditions in the university's adjacent communities where single family homes now used as student rentals had fallen into disrepair.

Another example of economic considerations contributing to the termination of a partnership effort involved the proposed enhancement of a university-operated child care center. As reported by Participant 004, this

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collaboration between the university, local government, and a nonprofit organization, was initially supported by the university's leadership. However, upon the resignation of the child care center's long-term director, the expansion effort was aborted and the partnership collapsed when the university president made a decision to end university involvement in childcare because of financial loss.

Also succumbing to financial considerations was a paid internship program that placed highly skilled undergraduate and graduate level students in much needed roles within rural housing programs. This internship program was the product of an innovative partnership comprised of a statewide nonprofit housing organization, a network of small to mid-size housing nonprofits, several colleges and universities, and a private foundation that provided grant funds to compensate the interns. Through this partnership the capacity of small to mid-size nonprofits was bolstered by interns with expertise in disciplines including technology, marketing, and counseling. Despite the internship program's significant impact on the student participants, the nonprofit organizations, and the communities they served, once the grant funding expired the partnership between the nonprofits and the colleges and universities came to an end. Participant 012 noted, "I think the universities do see a value in [the internship program]. But I just haven't seen where they want to put money out there to make it happen."

Changes in key personnel, either in the nonprofit organizations or the universities, created barriers that effected the creation or continuation of partnership efforts. Participant 009 described a health clinic for recovering

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substance abusers that had been operated by a nearby university's nursing education program. This successful endeavor lasted for more than 10 years, at which point Participant 009 learned that its university partner would no longer have access to the funding source for operating the clinic. Although the nursing education director could have remained involved in a lesser role with the clinic which became controlled by a third-party entity, she chose to withdraw the services of her nursing students and subsequently the quality of clinic services declined. Participant 009 said, "[The nursing education director] was passionate about these health clinics, but she had run the game a long time and when her role started to change, she didn't change with it."

Participant 009 said that after a third-party entity began to provide the clinic's services, there was no opportunity for the university partner to compromise to provide nursing services for lower costs than previously had been charged to the grant. Because of significant changes in the healthcare climate, which had made healthcare more readily available than it was at the inception of the partnership, it was no longer in the nonprofit's best interest to contract these services to the university. Despite changes in the partnership with the university, the nonprofit partner continues to count the nursing program among its supporters. According to Participant 009, "I think it was more about changes and managing those transitions and changes. I think we've come out pretty darn good. We managed to maintain good relationships with all of them."

Participant 004 describes the impact on a partnership effort resulting from a key staff member's departure. University representatives and Participant 004

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had spent a year planning for a new on-campus child care center. During the development of a large and complicated grant proposal that was to have been submitted by the local government on behalf of the University-Nonprofit Partnership, the university's director of childcare moved away to accept another job. Attributable to the childcare director's departure as well as to economic considerations, the president closed the center and this partnership ended.

Participant 002 discussed a partnership that he had tried to initiate between the housing finance organization where he was previously employed and a university where the president had announced his pending retirement. Failing in his effort to enlist the support of the outgoing president, Participant 002 stated that he didn't believe the partnership effort (which would have created housing for student families) was a priority for the retiring president. Participant 002 added, "I think that he didn't want to make a decision that would be a long term decision and he wanted to let the new president decide whether this would be a priority of his administration."

Participant 002 additionally reported subsequently educating the university's new president about the proposed partnership effort. This was a successful effort as the president joined the partnership within a year of assuming his position and the project's development is now underway.

Participant 005 described a contentious partnership between a health clinic of a large university and two mid-size nonprofit organizations, one of which was located more than an hour's drive from the other. She said that conflict over control and ownership of the project, parity among project partners, and other

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issues (further described below as interpersonal factors) were exacerbated by the personal dysfunction of key university personnel assigned to the partnership.

Although Participant 005 believed the personal issues of these staff members (who were eventually terminated from their positions), should have been external to the project, tension resulted within the project and ultimately led to the partnership's breakdown. Discord within this partnership culminated in a prominently positioned editorial (written by Participant 005) that appear in a Sunday edition of a widely distributed regional newspaper.

Lack of Shared Vision

Differences in partners' perceptions of their collaborative purpose hinder the formation and continuation of partnerships. Participant 006 discussed this barrier in detail when describing his organization's efforts to work partnership with a university. The two-pronged partnership that he described encompassed the implementation of a down payment assistance program for university employees desiring to purchase homes near campus and the construction of housing for senior citizens on a plot of land owned by the housing organization but surrounded by university-owned farmland. (The senior housing development is discussed in more detail later in this section.)

Participant 006 explained that his organization and the university differed in their expectations for timeliness related to implementation of the down payment assistance program. Specifically, he had encountered a significant time lag in response to requests for the university partner's involvement in setting up a structure governing how the down payment assistance program would operate

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including eligibility parameters. He also asked for the university's assistance in promoting the program to its workforce. However, this request was not met with a timely response. According to Participant 006, "It took literally over a year to even get over that hump [in regard to employee eligibility and program promotion]."

Participant 006 reported that eventually the promotional aspect of the down payment assistance program was assigned to an attorney within the university's real estate department. He said that this assignment failed to produce the desired results when the attorney "dropped the ball" and "never went anywhere with it."

The down payment assistance program partnership was created with the intention that a report detailing its experience and success would be written and published upon the project's completion. However, Participant 006 reported that the university lost focus on the project (because of its involvement in a public-private collaboration to develop student housing) and the creation of this document was delayed. According to Participant 006, "The university really never jumped on board. I found out with the university that whatever is important [to them] at the time, that is where their focus goes."

Upon completion of the public-private initiative to construct student housing, the university announced that it was done with those projects and soon afterward contacted Participant 006 to revisit the University-Nonprofit Partnership. However, the two entities learned that they had significant differences in their vision for how the partnership would operate. Participant 006

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noted that the university partner “wanted [the nonprofit partner] to go out and buy blocks and blocks of property. That’s not our mission. [The university partner] wanted [the nonprofit partner] to go out and borrow a substantial amount of money to acquire property. . . [The university partner] wanted to do things on a much larger scale than what [the nonprofit partner does].

Ineffective Communication

Ineffective communication, or in some cases, general lack of communication, was described by nonprofit leaders as creating a barrier to developing and sustaining University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Participant 006 attributes much of the breakdown in communications and follow-through to the overtaxed university official to whom the project was assigned. On the other hand, he credits a particular assistant within that official’s office with moving “communications in the right direction.”

Participant 006 worked with the previously-mentioned assistant on negotiating the approval of a legal right of way through university farmland that would allow access to land owned by the nonprofit where housing for senior citizens, including university retirees, was to be constructed. The nonprofit had already expended \$5,000 on expenses related to the approval of this right of way. This assistant, who is the wife of a high-ranking faculty member, learned that her husband had no knowledge of the intended right of way that will cut through the university’s farmland of which has substantial importance to the programs that he administers.

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The objection to the right of way by this faculty member brought another layer of bureaucracy into the partnership, observed Participant 006. In relationship to the university's exclusion of this faculty member, who had a vested interest in knowing about the partnership's intention, Participant 006 observed a common lack of open communication within his university partner: "I have found in the university, sort of like, everybody is on the need-to-know basis."

Unequal Power

A significant barrier to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofits is unequal balance of power and lack of parity between partners. In most cases, the nonprofit leaders described situations where their roles were passively minimized by their more powerful university partners. However in some cases, as with the following situation described by Participant 009, disregard for the nonprofit as an egalitarian partner was more forceful: "The [head of the university's nursing education program] was very good, and very committed and very passionate, but she was also very bossy. And I had already learned to walk cautiously with her." Participant 009 further describes that whenever she attempted to discuss partnership concerns with the university nursing program's director, the nursing director "pulled off big power" in response and exerted that power "nicely."

Citing what he perceived to be a lack of internal direction within the university partner, Participant 006 described an unequal distribution of power where his organization was adversely effected by the university "starting and stopping" the partnership's efforts. His sentiments were echoed by Participant

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004, who acknowledged that as the nonprofit partner, her organization was “not in the driver's seat” of making decisions related to the partnership. She said that power clearly rested with the university partner.

Participant 005 related a situation where she reacted to a perceived imbalance of power within the University-Nonprofit Partnership of which she was involved: “[The members of the partnership] were all in a meeting once around the table and things had gotten contentious. There was a heated discussion going on. And ‘Jane’ (representing the university partner) kept saying, ‘Well, I'm the Principal Investigator. I'm the PI and I get to say how this goes because I'm the PI.’ And I said, ‘Just because you're the PI doesn't mean I'm the Peon.’”

Participant 005 said that many times a university really doesn't give the community organization the freedom to sit there and push back on them or to say, “We have value and what we care about matters.” She further observed that inequalities in University-Nonprofit Partnerships were common in rural areas where community organizations may not have the strong leadership needed to avert their organizations from being “trampled or treated as ‘less than’ by a university partner.” Participant 006 reflected a similar opinion when discussing the necessity of nonprofit partners perceiving themselves as business entities rather than assuming the role of a “little sister corporation” to the university partner.

In discussing her partnership experience, Participant 005 speculated that its inequalities were partially attributed to jealousy of the university partner

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arising from attention and credit granted by media sources to the nonprofit partners:

The community groups were getting too much leverage, too much attention, too much credit for [the success of the project]. It was almost like [the university partner] felt like [the nonprofit partner] got a little uppity, or got a little above our raising, and too prominent in the whole thing. We kind of overshadowed [the university partner] role. And it was almost like the university resented it, and so they had to pull it back and take over again. And that was unfortunate, because I think it would have been a really good example of a successful university-community partnership.

In response to Research Question 2, the following themes were identified as strategies to develop University-Nonprofit Partnerships.

The nonprofit leaders recommended multiple strategies for developing University-Nonprofit Partnerships. The recommended strategies were primarily categorized as (1) relationships with university decision makers; (2) shared vision (mutual benefit); and (3) shared “ownership” and equal voice. There is notable overlap among these strategies. For example, shared vision/mutual benefits directly aligns with shared ownership. The nonprofit leaders sometimes used similar, but different, terms to describe seemingly alike concepts, when this occurred the researcher categorized the comment to the strategy of which it most closely aligned. In all cases, such judgement calls on behalf of the researcher are explained with a verbatim quote from the nonprofit leader.

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These strategies are the focus of this section of the Research Findings narrative:

1. Relationships with university decision makers
2. Shared vision/mutual benefit
3. Shared ownership and equal voice

Relationships with University Decision Makers

Although the university president was the most commonly mentioned university decision maker having power to influence the outcomes of partnerships, the power of other university administrators and faculty were also recognized by the nonprofit leaders. For example, Participant 009 acknowledges the investment of time and use of influence committed by the university's nursing education director in the creation of clinics for underserved populations, including recovering substance abusers such as those served by Participant 009's organization:

She ran it; she really did. I mean, she created it. She had had [the university's] cooperation to do it; she was the one who invested the energy in it to make sure it happened. For 30 to 40 years, she was the driving force of the clinics, and not only ours but others and they were her children.

Although Participant 006 cited the importance of the support of the university president he also recognized the power of the vice president of Finance and Administration, who he described as "pretty much operating everything that

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is not academic in the university.” He further acknowledged that this individual was often overburdened with the magnitude of his position and “kind of lost focus” of the partnership effort. As a result, Participant 006’s organization has adopted the strategy of appealing directly to the university president through a mutual friend in an attempt to get the partnership back on track.

Describing the university president as the university’s “top man,” Participant 006 is confident that the president will be able to influence support for the partnership from the vice president of Finance and Administration, as well as from the faculty member opposed to granting the nonprofit right of way through university-owned land: “If the president says do it, [other university leader] is going to be on board.”

Neither of the University-Nonprofit Partnership projects discussed by Participant 004 came to fruition, yet she recognized the role of the local university president, who she described as “a real visionary who was extremely supportive” in putting the partnership efforts together. As an example of his support for the partnership, she explained that the president assigned the university’s facilities team to identifying university land that would be suitable for a large mixed use development: “[The university president] is so accessible. I walked by his house every day and talked to him out on the street. He's just that accessible, and he's always in the community.”

She elaborated further on the level of interest the president showed when he hosted a meeting and luncheon with the housing finance agency to discuss the housing and childcare aspects of the proposed partnership effort. Participant 004

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said that he was equally accommodating to the large out-of-state nonprofit housing developer whom he treated as though that entity belonged to the project and was part of the community: “The university president wanted to do the project. He had everybody falling into line working on it.”

In discussing the partnership initiative coordinated by his organization targeting the achievement of self-sufficiency among single-parent college students, Participant 002 advised on the strategic importance of having the right people involved:

Any time you are doing any program like this, you have to get the right people involved. And you have to do your best to make sure that those people are just as committed to the development as you and your organization are.

Participant 002 explained that since the partnership of which he had been involved included multiple nonprofits and universities from throughout the state, his efforts to coordinate the complicated effort was made easier when university spokesmen spoke with each other regarding their experiences and successes with the projects. He attributes the partnership’s history of effectively building on its achievements as the primary attraction for new partners deciding to join in the effort. He noted:

When presidents saw how this program was working they would say, “hey let’s replicate this here, let’s do that here, we want [to have a partnership].” I actually received calls from communities and university officials who wanted one in their area, and we had made a commitment [that] we would only do one a year. So we had put people on the waiting

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list to get one. As the word spread about [the self-sufficiency partnership project], there was a demand for it and [universities] wanted to make it work.

Working on a program-specific level, Participant 001 discussed her partnership with staff recruiters who worked in the university's temporary employment program. In explaining the importance of these personnel to her organization's employment placement partnership with the university, Participant 001 described how the partnership was initiated, formalized, and then nurtured through shared weekly lunches and regular visits to the substance abuse treatment center/nonprofit partner, where Participant 001 was employed. She said that the partnership was created and continued out of friendship, which although seemingly very simple, is "basically how anything works."

Shared Vision (Mutual Benefits)

The presence of shared vision was frequently acknowledged as a key determinant in the effectiveness of University-Nonprofit Partnerships. In most cases, the leaders linked shared vision to efforts that considered the self-interests of both partners. None of the leaders who were interviewed described partnerships that were intended to benefit only one partner. Rather, they described collaborative strategies that produced benefits for each of their partners.

Participant 009 discussed the motivation of a university's nursing education program that through a University-Nonprofit Partnership operated a health clinic serving the participants of a residential substance abuse recovery program. In addition to observing that the university has a "certain mandate,

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drive, or desire to outreach into the community or be part of the community,” she commented that the partnership provided data collection opportunities required for the nursing education program’s accreditation: “[The university nursing education program] had a desire to get involved because it was a good place for them to place their nursing students who were doing their clinicals.”

Although slowed by other university priorities, the down payment assistance program made available to university employees through a partnership between the university and the organization where Participant 006 is employed, offers a threefold benefit. The initial benefit is to members of the university’s work force who will have access to affordable homeownership opportunities in close proximity to their place of employee. Second to benefit is the housing organization fulfilling its mission of housing development and community revitalization; and, third, the university will benefit through improvements to adjacent neighborhoods making the area and the university more attractive to current and prospective students, employees, and donors.

Participant 004 reported that University-Nonprofit Partnerships, such as the one in which she was involved targeting student housing, are mutually attractive to nonprofit housing partners as well as to university partners who are charged with attracting and retaining students. In the case of the particular university with whom she partnered, she cites its mission as a further explanation of its commitment partnership efforts that improve conditions for university students. Participant 004 noted, “[The University] had this mission in caring about

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serving Appalachian counties where students have particular needs of affordability and support to get higher graduation rates.”

According to Participant 004, a strategy that can promote mutually beneficial partnerships is based on “finding where [the partners] have gaps and deciding how you're going to make it a win-win.” For example, in the University-Nonprofit Partnership of which she was involved, the university had decrepit housing and a service gap arising from having a substantial number of single-parent students.

Participant 005 reported that each of the partners had respective roles and all were viewed as experts in those areas. In an innovative and award winning University-Nonprofit Partnership, the two nonprofit partners worked directly with “people in poverty, people without much education, people who were in substandard housing.” Through the work of the nonprofit partners, the university partner was provided with avenues through which it could make connections between chronic diseases and what's going on in the “real world” of those who were served through the partnership. Participant 005 said, “Both [the university and nonprofit partners] from the beginning understand what we're trying to do. We have the same idea about where we are trying to go.”

Participant 002 reported that part of the universities’ role is to educate the citizens of the state. The partnership effort in which he was involved promoted self-sufficiency by expanding housing and childcare options for single-family parents attending universities. He explained that he believed communication is the most important contributor to shared vision. For example, if a university partner

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has never before worked with a perspective nonprofit partner, it's important that there be proper communication between them to assess whether there are reasonable expectations of them being able to successfully work together.

According to Participant 002, “[The university and nonprofit partners] work together to ensure that ‘Hey, this is my vision,’ and ‘This is our vision,’ and ‘How do those visions can come together to create a development?’”

In discussing the internship program of which her organization was a partner, Participant 012 reported that the partnership was mutually beneficially because her housing and community revitalization organization was provided access to individuals with skills that would have otherwise been unavailable to the organization. The internship program also responded to the interests of its student participants by placing them in on-the-job training positions that were directly in their fields of interest. Participant 012 reported that the partnership effort was a mutually positive experience for both the nonprofit and the university partners. She said that the experience was especially affirming and its mutual benefit was increased as a result of the interns' professor who was sincere in her desire to place the interns in positions that benefitted the host organizations.

Shared “Ownership” and Equal Voice

Identified as another primary contributor in the development of effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships is shared ownership and inclusion of key partners. While the absence of similar attributes were considered as barriers to effective partnerships, their presence contributed significantly to the effective partnership efforts reported by the nonprofit leaders.

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The avoidance of turf battles over project “ownership” and the denial of equal voice to all partners were commonly described strategies for working in successful partnerships. For example, Participant 005 reported the necessity of overcoming community perceptions of the project as being a “community project” instead of a “university project.” She said this perception was not welcomed by the university partner who was, in fact, the grantee organization.

Participant 005 related a learning experience associated with shared ownership and equal voice that arose from the nonprofit partner’s contact with members of the press who wanted to do a story about what they perceived as being a community project. The project director representing the university partner became angry when the nonprofit partner failed to mention the university’s role in the project. Participant 005 said, “I know enough about relationships to know that you've got to share credit and you shouldn't forget to mention your partners. Sometimes [the nonprofit partner was] guilty of what we always accused the university of being guilty of.”

Participant 002 voiced an apparently simple strategy for developing effective University-Nonprofit Partnership that he found to be “obviously important.” His recommendation was for partners to establish shared ownership from the start using good communication to clarify expectations for how the relationship is intended to work.

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In response to Research Question 3, the following themes were identified in relationship to the impact of interpersonal factors on University-Nonprofit Partnerships

Various interpersonal factors were reported by the nonprofit leaders as having impact on the formation and continuation of effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Key among these was factors which in some cases positively contributed to the partnerships but in others deterred the collective efforts. Discussed in this section are trust, partner attraction, and philosophical aspects of working in collaboration.

Trust

Trust, identified by Participant 002, is a key contributor to establishing working relationships between the nonprofit partner, most commonly represented by its Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director, and the university partner that in most cases is represented by the university president or another high ranking university official such as a vice-president, dean, or department head. He stressed that nonprofit leaders should feel charged to ensure that the university partner is made to feel comfortable with the University-Nonprofit Partnership including its role in helping the university partner fulfill its mission to educate students. On the other hand, Participant 002, says that the nonprofit partner has to trust that the university partner is reliable and will “come through for them.” He also noted that “the most important aspect of any effort for a university and nonprofit to work together is trust. Both entities must trust each other and recognize how partnering together can serve the needs of both organizations.”

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Conversely, the lack of trust was identified as damaging to partnerships. For example, Participant 009 discussed a long-time University-Nonprofit Partnership of which her organization was a partner. Many years into this partnership, the nonprofit organization learned that it was not only paying the salary of healthcare professional assigned to the clinic by the university, but that it was also being charged administrative costs. This financially lopsided partnership was not well perceived by the nonprofit partner, according to Participant 009: “I like the idea of working with colleges, but if they don't bring any money to the table, it's costly.”

An additional trust factor affected the partnership of which Participant 009 was involved. She described a meeting with the university partner and another local healthcare provider. During this meeting, Participant 009 learned that the clinic at her organization had actually been financed by a grant belonging to the other healthcare provider and only subcontracted to the university to provide healthcare services for residents of the substance abuse recovery center. Participant 009 said, “We thought it was [the university’s] grant. We did not know that it wasn’t.”

Participant 004 reported that there was “a lot of trust” between the nonprofit and university partners with whom she worked. She particularly commented on the university president’s level of trust for the nonprofit partners. This trust was exemplified by the president taking Participant 004 at her word when she introduced an out-of-state nonprofit housing developer into the partnership effort. Participant 004 noted, “[The university president] had all those

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contractors staring at him knowing that it was going to be a big project. I think that's an example of where he trusted me that we're going to get it right. He had [the local contractors] into those meetings, those luncheons.”

Participant 004 emphasized the importance of trust in partnership building by observing that “When that level of trust is not there and [the partners] hold information tight, it makes it so much harder to get to a shared vision.” She recommends that partners devote time to building trust and relationship to help move the partnership’s projects forward

Building on her assertion that personal relationships are important in partnerships, Participant 005 said that it is important that partners not only respect each other's roles but that they clearly define those roles in the beginning of the partnership’s formation. She also believes that it is important for the community to understand the roles of the partners. This should not be limited to just an understanding of the nonprofit partners but also encompass an understanding that academics have a role in the project, particularly in measuring and evaluating the value of the partnership effort.

Participant 005 additionally said that it was important that nonprofit partners recognize and respect the value of the university partner’s contributions to the partnership effort. At the same time, however, she voiced that university partners need to understand and value the contribution of the nonprofit partners. She stated that nonprofits should not be discredited because of their lack of knowledge of research aspects such and measurements and surveys. According to

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Participant 005, nonprofit partners have little appreciation for discussing project evaluation strategies as they just want to attend to their direct service obligations.

As an extreme example of broken trust in a University-Nonprofit Partnership, Participant 005 related a story about how the partnership of which she was involved received a national award, but the university partner did not inform its nonprofit partners of the recognition. Unknown to its nonprofit partners, staff from the university traveled to Washington, DC to accept the award. No mention was made of the nonprofit partners' involvement and they were denied the opportunity to celebrate the partnership's success. In reaction, Participant 005 submitted an editorial to the regional newspaper. In this commentary, she acknowledged the role of the university partner in its administration of the grant funded services, but chastised the university for failing to recognize the commitment of its nonprofit partners.

Although no longer employed by a nonprofit organization, Participant 005 said that if she were to have another opportunity to be part of a University-Nonprofit Partnership, she would want upfront clarity about the intentions of the partnership and its partners. In addition to citing the importance of honesty in effective partnerships, she summarized that partnership efforts require mutual respect and patience for the length of time it takes for change to occur: "I need to not have an attitude about your contribution. You need to not have an attitude about my contribution. Everything is necessary."

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Attraction

Several factors, which are generally classified as *attraction* for the purpose of this study, were cited by the nonprofit leaders as impacting the formation and continuation of University-Nonprofit Partnerships. In some cases, even terminated partnerships continued to produce benefits associated with a former partners' attraction to the mission of the other.

Participant 009 presented an example of this when she said her former university partner continued to be associated with her nonprofit organization's fund raisers and special events. She saw the continued support of this powerful university entity as enhancing the nonprofit's reputation.

Potential access to a partner's resources can also be a source of attraction. Participant 009 observed that university partners generally have good public relations in the community and often have established government connections of one type or another. Participant 006 acknowledges that while University-Nonprofit Partnerships are "not the easiest relationships to manage," in the long run, the benefits could be significant because "universities are flush with cash."

Participant 006 describes a situation where he used a mutual source of power to attract the participation of a university partner. Relying on a political contact that he had established through years of playing golf together, Participant 006 encouraged interaction between a city administrator and the university president (who has since departed that position).

During this exchange, the city administrator, on behalf of Participant 006, explained to the university president the value of providing the down payment

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assistance program as a fringe benefit that would contribute to the satisfaction of university employees while making them feel connected to communities near the university. The city administrator then successfully challenged the university president to “step up” and match the city’s contribution to the down payment assistance program.

Philosophical Aspects

The nonprofit leaders also reported differences or similarities in philosophy, which had the propensity of negatively or positively influencing the partnerships’ levels of effectiveness. Participant 009 describes herself as always trying to be helpful and cooperative so as to gain as much as possible from the relationships. She said that she tries to appreciate other partners’ circumstances and their contributions to the partnership effort and tries to not focus on deficiencies: “You take what you can get and you piece it together and are thankful for what you get.”

Participant 006 described a philosophical difference with a representative of his university partner who apparently viewed the down payment assistance program as a “nonstarter” with no chance of success, In fact, Participant 006 reported that although this representative eventually acquiesced to the implementation of the program he expressed concern over what would happen if everybody in the university learned about the program and overwhelmed university staff with their interest.

Participant 006 discussed a disconnect in mission between his housing organization and the university. He explained that while his organization will

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serve university staff and faculty as part of its overall mission, the organization exists to serve the community at large: “We are not the development arm for the university—for its staff and faculty.”

Participant 006 reports additional frustrations on behalf of the university-partner resulting from its perception that the nonprofit organization is not moving fast enough in response to university requests. Participant 006 believes that these frustrations may be born of misunderstandings related to scale: “I think universities are used to doing things on a much larger scale than what nonprofits do; our capacity is relatively limited.”

Participant 006 elaborated that timeframes might be different for nonprofit partners. He explained that in his organization, a three- to five-year schedule is acceptable. However, he perceives the university-partner as preferring shorter timeframes of 18 months to 26 months.

Differences in motivation for participating in University-Nonprofit Partnerships can serve as a basis for philosophical conflicts among partners. For example, Participant 005 described her organization’s measure of “successful participation in the partnership” as being based on the number of impoverished community members who through the efforts of the project partners acquired access to healthcare. As for the satisfaction derived by the university partner from its participation in the partnership, Participant 005 reported that “The university was really happy because they had their academic research.”

The decision of whether to act on an opportunity may have philosophical implications. Participant 006 describes a situation where he learned that the

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university was divesting itself of excess farmland and had planned to transfer it to a private entity. However, the university found that as a government institution it could not transfer the land to a private institution.

The university then asked Participant 006 if it could transfer the land to his organization so that the land could later be transferred to another entity of the university's choosing. Although initially agreeing to serve as an intermediary in the disposition of the land, when no other use for the land surfaced, Participant 006 offered to return its ownership to the university. The university responded to his offer by asking if his organization had a use for the property of which he replied, "Not now, but maybe someday we can use it." The university agreed that his organization could keep the land.

Years later, the university asked that Participant 006 return the property. A self-described "tenacious guy," Participant 006 cited impending action on the senior citizen housing development to be constructed on the donated land and refused to transfer its ownership back to the university. He speculated that the university's motivation for wanting to reclaim the property was driven by its desire to tie the tract of land to a neighboring commercial development. If this were to occur, the land would not be used for the development of housing units and would serve no purpose related to the mission of the housing development organization where Participant 006 is employed.

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Summary

The population for this study was comprised of nonprofit leaders with experience working in partnership with universities located in Kentucky or a contiguous state. The population size was relatively small (N=7).

The study provided insight into the opinions and experiences of nonprofit leaders in regard to their involvement in University-Nonprofit Partnerships. The study involved individual semi-structured interviews with each participant. As necessary, follow-up questions, prompts, and probes were used to clarify or obtain additional information. The findings presented in this chapter are based primarily on analysis of interview transcripts, and are supported by reviewed documents referenced by the nonprofit leaders during the course of their interviews.

After completing the coding analysis, three major themes emerged. Findings were discussed as they corresponded to these three major themes. The first theme focused on nonprofit leaders' perceptions of barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations; and their recommendations for overcoming these barriers. This section examined frequently reported barriers including political, economic, and personnel changes, as well as interpersonal factors (lack of shared vision, ineffective communication, and unequal power).

The second theme centered on strategies that nonprofit leaders recommended for developing effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Among the commonly cited strategies was relationship building with key university

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decision makers, development of shared visions and mutual benefits, and shared ownership and equal voice.

The third theme's focus was nonprofit leaders' perceived impact of interpersonal factors on the formation and continuation of effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Explored in this section were trust, attraction, and philosophical aspects of working in collaboration.

Chapter 5 will examine these findings in regard to implications for practice, policy and future research.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine, from the perspective of nonprofit leaders, (1) barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations; (2) strategies that contribute to effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships; and (3) impacts of interpersonal factors on the formation and continuation of these partnerships. The qualitative study was conducted through semi-structured face-to face interviews with nonprofit leaders (*Participants*), who had experience working in partnership with universities, supported by the review of documents referenced by the participants during the interviews. This chapter reviews and discusses the findings of this study. It also outlines the implications of the findings for universities and nonprofit organizations who stand to gain mutual benefit from working in partnership. This chapter concludes with recommendations for further research.

Discussion

Two fundamental questions framed this research:

1. From the point of view of nonprofit leaders with experience working in partnership with universities, what are the barriers to effective relationships between universities and nonprofit organizations?
2. What strategies do nonprofit leaders recommend for developing effective partnerships with universities?

Although various follow-up questions, prompts, and probes were used to clarify or further explore responses, the following probe was explored with all of

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the participants in relationship to the research questions: What is the impact of interpersonal factors on the formation and continuation of effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships?

As reported in Chapter 4, the research questions were answered by interwoven and overlapping themes that emerged from the data. Although much of the study reflect existing research that characterize University-Nonprofit Partnerships as being impaired by obstacles including conflicts of interest, bureaucracy, competition over resources and recognition, differences in knowledge and experience, mistrust and conflicting values, some of the collected and analyzed data revealed experiences that were contrary to these portrayals (Gray, 2004). In agreement with previous research, including that by Strier (2014), all of the study participants (n=7) acknowledged the dominate role of their university partners and the top-down nature of the partnerships.

Although university and nonprofit partners often have different motivations for working in partnership with one another, mutual benefit, and win/win outcomes, are critical in achieving mutually satisfying collaborative efforts. Aligned with the research of Minkler and Wallerstein (2010), who reported that University-Nonprofit Partnerships support all three areas of academe—service, teaching, and research, the Participants observed that their university partners were primarily motivated to participate in University-Nonprofit Partnerships because of student education and research obligations. Student education opportunities were accessed through five of the seven represented partnership efforts. Two provided internships and hands-on practice

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opportunities, two supported students through the provision of housing and child care, and two provided research opportunities in health related projects (one of these provided hands-on experience for university students as well as faculty research opportunities).

Participants recognized that university partners often joined the partnership effort to gain access to opportunities that integrate academic material and, community-based service activities. The participants' recognition of this source of motivation confirms research by Boyle and Silver (2005) and Bringle and Clayton (2012). Despite acknowledgement of university partners' mandates to participate in research, nonprofit partners may become resentful if they perceive the universities as only viewing the nonprofit organizations' communities and their problems as subjects to be studied (Holland & Gelmon, 1998). This sentiment was further reflected by Grossman (2004), who voiced that partnership efforts, and resulting benefits, can be negatively impacted when the university is perceived as taking advantage of its partners to address its own interests.

Participants of this study reflect Grossman's (2004) research through similar opinions. An example is evidenced by Participant 005, who stated that she felt like the nonprofit partners and the people they served were treated like "lab rats" by the university partner. She contrasted her organization's measure of successful participation (number of people directly assisted in accessing healthcare) to that of university partners who "were really happy because they had their academic research."

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Universities want to improve communities directly adjacent to their campuses to protect the direct interests of the university (Cisneros, 1996; Grossman, 2004). They also have an interest in developing communities that are safe and attractive so as to attract and retain students, staff, and faculty (Grossman, 2004). Participants' feedback supported this research and acknowledged that their university partners' were motivated by partnership efforts that produced a direct benefit to the university and its students. Participant 002 discussed a statewide effort to promote self-sufficiency among single-parent students by bringing housing and childcare opportunities to university campuses. This particular project, which requires the inclusion of nonprofit partners, directly benefits university partners because of its student recruitment and retention implications. Participant 002 noted:

When [university] presidents saw how this program was working, they would say "hey, let's replicate this here; let's do that here; we want one." I actually received calls from communities and university officials who wanted one in their area, and we had made a commitment we would only do one a year. So we had put people on the waiting list to get one. As the word spread about [the self-sufficiency partnership project], there was a demand for it and [the universities] wanted to make it work.

The research participants are altruistic in their desire for the University-Nonprofit Partnerships to produce direct benefits to individuals such as increasing their levels of self-sufficiency or improved health, or to address broader societal needs including the remediation of poverty, substandard housing conditions, or other

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societal disparities. Although having considerable potential for mutual benefit as well as even greater community impact, the research participants perceived that universities did not always consider University-Nonprofit Partnerships as priority endeavors due to shifts in institutional interests associated with learning, financial, compliance, and political mandates or influences. Some of the research participants acknowledged that even within their own organizations, which were likely more singularly focused than their university partners, the partnership efforts were sometimes secondary to responding to other organizational urgencies or mission driven obligations.

The research participants' perceptions of barriers to effective partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations closely correspond with existing scholarly research that has established University-Nonprofit Partnerships as being "messy" and complex to maintain (Maurrausse, 2002; Maurrausse, 2013; Strier, 2011). Martin, Smith and Phillips (2005) characterized University-Nonprofit Partnerships as being unbalanced and producing outcomes that are unconstructive and burdened with problems resulting from opposing philosophies and practices. Rather than perceiving them as equal partners, university partners may view nonprofit partners as "poor cousins" and consider the educational institutions' involvement in the University-Nonprofit Partnership secondary to teaching and research duties (Buys & Bursnall, 2007). Inequality in university and nonprofit partnerships has been attributed to the university partners' positions of prestige, privilege and authority (Amey, Brown & Sandmann, 2002; Keating & Sjoquist,

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2000). Predictably, these relationships are strained by differences in perceived power, purpose, ideology, culture, and communication (Tett, 2005).

Although reporting that benefits were often gained from their participation in the University-Nonprofit Partnerships, the research participants acknowledged that the partnership efforts were affected by interpersonal factors including communication, trust, shared vision, and equal power.

For example, Participant 006 reflected on an imbalance in risk when he discussed the following situation:

[The university partner] wanted [the nonprofit partner] to go out and buy blocks and blocks of property. That's not our mission. [The university partner] wanted [the nonprofit partner] to go out and borrow a substantial amount of money to acquire property. . . [the university partner] wanted to do things on a much larger scale than what [the nonprofit partner does].

This example clearly illustrates a difference in the shared visions of the university and nonprofit partner. Participant 006 reacted with frustration to the pressures placed on his organization by the university and declared that his agency was “not the development arm” for the university, its staff, or its faculty.

Lack of trust results in constant tension and conflicts in University-Nonprofit collaborations (Strier, 2011; Gray 2004; Maginn, 2007). Trust was recognized by the participants as being essential for successful partnerships. Participant 002 stated that “The most important aspect of any effort for a university and nonprofit to work together is trust. Both entities must trust each other and recognize how partnering together can serve the needs of both

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organizations.” The participants’ partnership experiences ranged from those that they perceived as fully trusting, to those that they perceived as entirely lacking trust, to those where they believed they were denied full access to information or opportunities to participate in decision making related to matters pertaining to the partnership.

As a strategy for developing effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships, the participants based the strengths of their partnerships on win/win situations to generated benefits for their university partners, as well as for their own organizations. Mutual benefits are important determinants in partners’ commitment to their collaborative effort (Holland, 2001). Participant 004 recommended “finding where [the partners] have gaps and deciding how you're going to make it a win-win.”

The participants of this study unanimously recognized that their partnership efforts had produced mutual benefits; and that their nonprofit organizations brought strengths to the partnerships that far exceeded serving the needs of the less fortunate. This observation is in direct opposition to existing research that describes nonprofits as being viewed by universities as “charities” having few if any assets to contribute as partners (Kendall, 1990; Toms et al., 2011).

Despite literature characterizations that University-Nonprofit Partnerships are unbalanced, unconstructive, and burdened with problems resulting from opposing philosophies and practices, and despite experiencing barriers in their own partnership efforts, six of seven of the research participants reported

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experiencing at least mostly positive outcomes from the collaborative efforts (Martin, Smith & Phillips, 2005). For example, two of the partners maintained University-Nonprofit Partnerships that lasted for more than a decade and that provided mutual benefits to both the university and nonprofit partners. Although these two partnerships came to an end because of changes within the university partner, the nonprofit partners continue to view their collaborative efforts as being effective, worthwhile, and producing desired results.

The longest established partnership has been in existence for more than twenty years and still continues in its efforts. Although described as “stop and go” by the nonprofit partner, the combined effort has resulted in benefits for the members of the university’s workforce who have gained access to affordable homeownership opportunities; to the housing organization that has fulfilled its vision of housing development and community revitalization; and, to the university through improvements to adjacent neighborhoods increasing the university’s attractiveness to current and prospective students, employees, and donors.

One of the participants reflected a successful statewide partnership that continues to exist and has been so effective at producing mutual benefits that universities are now on a waiting list to participate. The model program for this initiative has been referenced in the literature as being reviewed for replication by several cities across the nation (Brown, Corrigan, & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2012).

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Five of the partnerships are no longer in existence. However, participants affiliated with four of these acknowledge that their collaborative efforts resulted in mutual benefits for their organizations as well as their university partners. Although three of the participants reported non-eventful partnership terminations associated with policy changes within the university or the expiration of grant funds that had supported the project, another participant described a stormy ending ensuing from interpersonal factors including lack of parity in decision making, disputes over project ownership, and inadequate recognition of mutual contributions. Another participant acknowledged that while technically the partnership effort in which she was involved would be classified as ineffective because it failed to produce any results, she continued to favorably view the partnering university president whom she described as “a real visionary who was extremely supportive” of the partnerships efforts.

Implication of the Study

An implication of this study which distinguishes it from existing research pertaining to University-Nonprofit Partnerships is the importance assigned by research participants to establishing relationships with university decision makers. This strategy was identified as being even more influential than interpersonal factors on the outcomes and effectiveness of the partnerships. Although the participants most frequently identified the university president as the university decision maker having power to influence the outcomes of partnerships, the power of other university administrators and faculty were also recognized. In some cases, the president’s own interest and willingness to coordinate the

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partnership propelled its efforts and ensured institutional focus. In other instances, the president wielded his power in influencing that other personnel within the university supported the efforts of the project.

Participant 006 stated that “If the president says do it, [the other university leader] is going to be on board.” Participants recognized that relationship building with these powerful individuals as imperative to enlisting and retaining their interest and involvement in the partnerships. Participant 002 advised that nonprofits have to do their best to make sure that the university representatives who are involved with the partnerships are as equally committed to the partnerships’ efforts as are the nonprofit partners.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strength of this study is that it fills gaps in research pertaining to University-Nonprofit Partnerships that have overlooked the perspectives of the nonprofit partners. Previous research has reported that the building of these partnerships remains a complex task that is further complicated by few published studies documenting the perspectives of nonprofit organization partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Bushouse, 2005; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Sandy & Holland (2006) wrote that understanding the nonprofit perspective is essential to averting misunderstandings between university and nonprofit partners. Vaillancourt (2007) went as far as to report that practitioners and researchers had been described as if they “live in completely different worlds, and it is not always easy for a practitioner to adapt to the way

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academics express themselves” (p. 73). Through one-on-one, face-to-face interviews, the researcher was able to capture the perspectives of nonprofit leaders who had worked in partnership with universities. The semi-structured interview format, supported by probes and prompts as needed, allowed for flexibility in adapting to the experiences and personalities of the participants. The interviews were strengthened by the participants’ significant levels of experience working in partnership with universities.

An additional strength of this study is its use of participation verification that was employed to increase the reliability of the results. By involving the participants in confirming the researcher’s interpretation of the data that they provided, the internal validity of the study was strengthened.

Limitations of the study include the small number (n=7) of participants included in the study. Seven may not be large enough sample size to reflect experiences and opinions of a larger group of nonprofit leaders. A larger sample size could have produced different results. However qualitative research is not intended to generalize study findings to other populations and this study is limited to the seven participants with partnership experiences in Kentucky or contiguous states (Hoyt & Bhati, 20007). As such, and as discussed in more detail later in this section, further research is needed to either confirm or disconfirm the study’s initial findings.

All participants were assured that their identity and the information they provided would be held in confidence. However there could have been hesitation on behalf of the participants to be candid if they had concerns that their

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relationships with partnering universities could be jeopardized as a result of the information they provided. Beyond public documents referenced by some of the participants which confirm some of the information that they provided, no other means of confirmation was used to confirm that the provided information was accurate or perceived the same by their university partners. Some of the participants reported on partnership efforts that ended several years ago. The accuracy of their reports could have been affected by memory or by harbored resentments related to their partnership experiences.

Next, the study may have been limited by the fact that only the leader of each nonprofit partner was interviewed. In five of the seven represented partnerships, the individual who was interviewed was the only nonprofit representative involved in the collaborative effort. The two additional staff members who had been involved in the partnerships were not available to be interviewed. Although this study considered the interviewed leader as being the voice for the overall nonprofit organization partner, those who were interviewed may not have accurately reflected the total philosophies of other nonprofit staff who were involved in the partnership.

An additional limitation of this study is the potential for bias on behalf of the researcher who is a current nonprofit leader with experience working in partnership with more than one university while representing more than one nonprofit organization. Precautions were taken when conducting the research interviews to avoid the introduction of unintended bias. Additionally, the researcher relied upon two colleagues, both of whom are veteran nonprofit leaders

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experienced in working in collaboration with universities, to review the study's results and findings. Neither of these found bias in the interpretations and were favorable to the study's contribution to nonprofit leadership and community development fields of practice.

Future Directions for Research

This research study attempted to examine factors that influence effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships from the perspectives of the nonprofit partners. Influenced by existing research, and frequently by their own histories of involvement in partnerships with universities, nonprofit leaders are likely to view these partnerships as being strive with constant tension and conflicts (Strier, 2011; Gray 2004; Maginn, 2007). By generalizing their expectations of partnerships outcomes based on existing research, both nonprofit and university partners may in fact contribute to self-fulfilling prophecies of untenable collaboration.

The results of this study form a starting point for future research to address the development and continuation of University-Nonprofit Partnerships from the point of view of nonprofit partners, further research is necessary to confirm or disconfirm the results of this study. The study should be repeated within a larger, more diverse sample size. For example, the study could be repeated with study samples representing a different geographical area of the United States. Although the participants of this study reflected similar experiences related to collaborative efforts with university partners, differences may be found with an expanded sample.

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Although this study sought to gain the perspectives of nonprofit partners, further research should involve university partners. Only through the combination of nonprofit organizations' practical knowledge and experience and universities' academic expertise, can these collaborative efforts achieve greater impact than either partner can effect individually.

The study identified establishing relationships with, as well as obtaining support from, university decision makers as a significant predictor of the effectiveness of University-Nonprofit Partnerships. Further research should be devoted to developing protocols and strategies for enlisting the support of university decision makers, including presidents, as a strategy for forming and sustaining partnerships.

Conclusion

While restricted to a small subset of demographically similar nonprofit organizations, this easily replicated study, which can be expanded to include a larger sample, benefits universities and nonprofit organizations desiring to form partnerships in response to mutual need or interest. Based on the information provided by the study participants, these "challenging" partnerships have the potential to produce benefits for each of the partners and their larger communities despite being confounded with conflicts and stress influenced by interpersonal factors including trust, shared vision, mutual respect, communication, and shared voice.

The results of this study suggest that studying factors that impact effective partnerships between university and nonprofit partners is worthy of future

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research. The findings further suggest that nonprofit partners desire to work in partnership with universities in a governance paradigm where the strengths of each partner are utilized to create win/win partnerships that increase mutual benefits (Salamon, 2002).

Effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships are fully justified by contemporary economic conditions that have strained government finances and resulted in unprecedented reduction in public support for educational programs (McNichol, Oliff, & Johnson, 2011). Scarcity of funds has necessitated maximization of available resources and prompted increased formation of partnerships and collaborative social interest initiatives between universities and nonprofit organizations (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Ostrander & Chapin-Hogue, 2011). Recognizing that limited resources are available to support both universities and nonprofits, University-Nonprofit Partnerships serve as avenues through which each of the partners can collectively access otherwise unavailable resources.

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APPENDIX A

Research Questions

A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1. From the point of view of nonprofit organization leaders who have experience working in partnership with universities, what are the barriers to effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships?
- RQ2. What strategies do nonprofit organization leaders recommend for developing effective University-Nonprofit Partnerships?

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APPENDIX B

Research Consent

A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Consent to Participate in a Research Study –

A Study of Factors that Influence Partnerships between Universities and Nonprofit Organizations

Why am I being asked to participate in this research?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about partnerships between Universities and Nonprofit Organizations. You are being invited to participate in this research study because you have self-identified that you are the leader of a nonprofit agency that has had experience (past or present) in University-Community Organization Partnerships. The organization that you represent is located in Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, or West Virginia and has an annual operating budget of at least \$5 million. If you take part in this study, you will represent one of seven participating nonprofit organizations.

Who is doing the study?

The person in charge of this study is Vicki M. Jozefowicz, EdD candidate at Eastern Kentucky University. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Charles Hausman.

What is the purpose of the study?

By doing this study, I hope to add to the limited collection of studies that have examined factors influencing the formation of productive partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations from the nonprofit organizations' perspectives.

Where is the study going to take place and how long will it last?

The research interviews will be conducted at your office unless you select an alternative location. It will take approximately 30-60 minutes or less of your time. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately 90 minutes or less.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will explore your perceptions of the factors that you believe to have either impeded or contributed to the formation of productive University-Nonprofit Organization Partnerships. The interview will involve open-ended broad questions; however, wording, prompts, and follow-up inquiries will vary.

Are there reasons why I should not take part in this study?

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Your participation is voluntary. Your answers will remain confidential. Neither will you, the nonprofit organization where you are employed, the university with which you partnered, nor the project on which you partnered, be named in any way.

What are the possible risks and discomforts?

There are no risks, hazards, or discomforts associated with this study.

Will I benefit from taking part in this study?

Study findings may be used by universities and nonprofit organizations, such as the one where you are employed, to strengthen their efforts to work together in meaningful partnerships.

Do I have to take part in this study?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study with no adverse results.

If I don't take part in this study, are there other choices?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except to not take part in the study.

What will it cost me to participate?

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

Will I receive any payment or rewards for taking part in the study?

You will not receive any payment or reward for taking part in this study.

Who will see the information I give?

Your information will be combined with information from other nonprofit leaders taking part in the study. The information from your interview will be maintained confidentiality with no names, agency names, university names, or locations used in the final product.

Every effort will be made to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave information, or what that information says. Your questionnaire will be kept in a locked file in a file drawer.

However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. Also, we may be required to show information that identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as Eastern Kentucky University

What if I have questions?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about

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the study, you can contact the investigator, Vicki Jozefowicz at 859-893-1938. If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the Division of Sponsored Programs at Eastern Kentucky University at 859-622-3636. We will provide you a copy of this consent form your records.

What else do I need to know?

You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your condition or influence your willingness to continue taking part in this study.

I have thoroughly read this document, understand its contents, have been given an opportunity to have my questions answered, and agree to participate in this research project.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person taking part in the study

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APPENDIX C

IRB Approval

A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



Graduate Education and Research
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Institutional Review Board

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NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

Protocol Number: 15-138

Institutional Review Board IRB00002836, DHHS FWA00003332

Review Type: Full Expedited

Approval Type: New Extension of Time Revision Continuing Review

Principal Investigator: **Vicki Jozefowicz** Faculty Advisor: **Dr. Charles Hausman**

Project Title: **Factors that Influence the Formation of Productive Partnerships between Universities and Nonprofit Organizations**

Approval Date: **January 25, 2015** Expiration Date: **8/15/15**

Approved by: **Dr. Tara Shepperson, IRB Member**

This document confirms that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the above referenced research project as outlined in the application submitted for IRB review with an immediate effective date.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all investigators and staff associated with this study meet the training requirements for conducting research involving human subjects, follow the approved protocol, use only the approved forms, keep appropriate research records, and comply with applicable University policies and state and federal regulations.

Consent Forms: All subjects must receive a copy of the consent form as approved with the EKU IRB approval stamp. Copies of the signed consent forms must be kept on file unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB.

Adverse Events: Any adverse or unexpected events that occur in conjunction with this study must be reported to the IRB within ten calendar days of the occurrence.

Research Records: Accurate and detailed research records must be maintained for a minimum of three years following the completion of the research and are subject to audit.

Changes to Approved Research Protocol: If changes to the approved research protocol become necessary, a description of those changes must be submitted for IRB review and approval prior to implementation. Some changes may be approved by expedited review while others may require full IRB review. Changes include, but are not limited to, those involving study personnel, consent forms, subjects, and procedures.

Annual IRB Continuing Review: This approval is valid through the expiration date noted above and is subject to continuing IRB review on an annual basis for as long as the study is active. It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to submit the annual continuing review request and receive approval prior to the anniversary date of the approval. Continuing reviews may be used to continue a project for up to three years from the original approval date, after which time a new application must be filed for IRB review and approval.

Final Report: Within 30 days from the expiration of the project, a final report must be filed with the IRB. A copy of the research results or an abstract from a resulting publication or presentation must be attached. If copies of significant new findings are provided to the research subjects, a copy must be also be provided to the IRB with the final report.

Other Provisions of Approval, if applicable: None

Please contact Sponsored Programs at 859-622-3636 or send email to tiffany.hamblin@eku.edu or lisa.royalty@eku.edu with questions about this approval or reporting requirements.



Eastern Kentucky University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and Educational Institution

A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN
UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Script

A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Recruitment Script (used verbally or via telephone or as an email “cover letter”)

I am a candidate for a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Eastern Kentucky University. I am also a veteran nonprofit administrator (25+ years) and currently am the Executive Director of a Community Action Agency serving a four county area in Kentucky (annual budget \$20M). My dissertation is entitled **A Study of Factors that Influence Partnerships between Universities and Nonprofit Organizations**

You are being invited to voluntarily participate in the above-titled research study. By doing this study, I hope to add to the limited collection of studies that have examined factors influencing the formation of productive partnerships between universities and nonprofit organizations from the nonprofit organizations’ perspectives. Study findings may be used by universities and nonprofit organizations to strengthen their efforts to work together in productive partnerships.

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you have self-identified that you are the leader of a nonprofit agency that has had experience (past or present) in University-Nonprofit Partnerships. The organization that you represent is located in Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, or West Virginia and has assets of at least \$5 million.

If you choose to participate, I will travel to a location of your choosing to conduct a semi-structured interview with you and/or other staff members who are responsible for cultivating partnerships with universities. The interview should take approximately 30-60 minutes to complete. All responses will be held in the strictest of confidence. Individual participants will not be identified when analyzing the data. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

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VITA

A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN
UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

VICKI M. JOZEFOWICZ

105 Bennett Court
Richmond, KY 40475

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(859) 624-2046 (work)
(859) 893-1938 (cell)
Email: jozef@foothillscap.org

Education

Eastern Kentucky University **Richmond, Kentucky**
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

(Degree expected December 2015: Dissertation:

A Study of Factors that Influence Partnerships between Universities and Nonprofit Organizations)

Eastern Kentucky University **Richmond, Kentucky**
Master's Degree in Public Administration, Community Health Option

Eastern Kentucky University **Richmond, Kentucky**
Bachelor of Science, Social Work

Employment Experience

Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc. (Richmond, KY)

Executive Director April 2002 to present

- Overall administration of nonprofit, community action agency
- Supervision and direction of more than three hundred fifty full and part-time staff
- Formulation and oversight of \$20M annual budget derived from government, foundations, United Way, developer fees, private sources, and other public and private grants and contracts
- Research and development of grant applications and funding proposals for health, human service, educational, economic development, and housing programs
- Development of new program initiatives/agency expansion efforts
- Monitoring of agency budgets, work with fiscal staff to assure proper spending
- Supervision of program management
- Liaison to eighteen member, volunteer Board of Directors
- Representation on statewide, regional and local boards, committees and commissions

A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Eastern Kentucky University (Richmond, KY)

Part-time Graduate Faculty Member August 2008 to present

- As Adjunct Faculty, provided instruction of graduate level courses in the Department of Government (POL 846, POL 847 & POL 847S)
- Courses include Nonprofit Management, Strategic Planning/Grant Development, and Strategic Planning/Grant Development (Service Learning)
- Development & approval of graduate level service learning project which including participation in 13 week Professional Learning Committee
- Development & implementation of nonprofit courses taught in hybrid format (in-class combined with online)
- Development & teaching of online courses in nonprofit management and grant writing
- Serve on Field Study Research Committees

Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc. (Richmond, KY)

Associate Director/Chief Development Officer May 2000 to April 2002

- Research and development of grant applications and funding proposals
- Development of new program initiatives
- Direction of development team and assisted managers in fund development
- Monitoring of agency budgets, works with fiscal staff to assure proper spending
- Tracking of service goals and compiles agency statistics
- Supervision of program management
- Representation on statewide, regional and local boards, committees and commissions
- Development of marketing and publicity initiatives for the Agency
- Coordination of fundraising efforts

Chrysalis House, Inc. (Lexington, KY)

Executive Director January 1990 to May 2000

- Overall administration of Kentucky's oldest and largest women's substance abuse treatment facility offering supportive services and an array of housing options
- Supervision and direction of fifty member, multidisciplinary staff
- Formulation and oversight of annual budget derived from governmental, foundation, and corporate grants, United Way, program fees, and private sources
- Research and development of grant applications and contract proposals
- Liaison to thirty member volunteer board of directors
- Staff representative to all board committees including By-laws and Personnel; Finance; Fund Raising; Public Relations and Special Events; Facilities and Professional/Clinical

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- Compliance with federal, state, and local fire, building and health codes.
- Coordinator of public relations activities including, press releases, community education and media coverage of agency activities. Primary agency representative for press interviews and radio/television talk shows.
- Oversight of program expansion resulting in extensive growth during eight-year period. Increased annual budget from \$130,000 to \$2.5 M.
- Provision of technical assistance to other Kentucky programs desiring to model Chrysalis House. These areas included Elizabethtown, Somerset, Bowling Green and Louisville
- Project Director of 1999 Treating the Total Woman Conference – a statewide conference targeted at the development and enhancement of housing and supportive services for recovering women and their children

Chrysalis House, Inc. (Lexington, Kentucky)

Program Director July 1988 – December 1989

- Manager of transitional housing program for recovering substance abusing women
- Responsible for treatment planning; chart review; provision of group and individual counseling; delivery of life management education sessions and provision of referrals
- Expanded program services including securing funding and hiring a counselor to provide therapy onsite vs. referring clientele to external providers
- Supervision of treatment staff
- Procurement of resources including clinical supervision from Licensed Clinical Social Worker and psychiatric consultation for dual diagnosed clientele
- Provided supervision to graduate and undergraduate social work students; volunteers; and community service workers referred from court system

YWCA Spouse Abuse Center (Lexington, Kentucky)

Counselor October 1985 – June 1988

- Provision of individual and group counseling to victims of domestic violence and their children
- Responded to crisis telephone calls; screened, admitted, and oriented shelter clientele
- Training of entry level staff and practicum students

Other Qualifications

Organizational Memberships (Present):

- United Way of the Bluegrass Madison County Board of Trustees
- Recovery Kentucky Task Force
- Eastern Kentucky University Master's of Public Administration Advisory Committee

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Honors and Awards:

- Outstanding Treatment Provider
Robert Straus Award, KY School of Alcohol and Drug Studies
- Outstanding Individual Contributor
Kentucky Coalition for Women's Substance Abuse Services
- Excellence in Housing Award
Kentucky Housing Corporation, Governor's Housing Conference

Related Experience:

- Peer reviewer for United States Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. Experience includes on-site and field reviews of various substance abuse and mental health grant applications. 2000 - Present.
- Grant reviewer for the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky. 2006 – 2007
- Member: *A Practice-Based Symposium on Comprehensive Family-Centered Treatment* (Sponsored by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) in conjunction with the Rebecca Project for Human Rights).
- Member: Eastern Kentucky University Strategic Planning Committee
- Contract Grant Writer: Eastern Kentucky University – wrote funded applications for Migrant Health Center (College of Allied Health) and Migrant Education (College of Education)

Publications:

Beaty, L., Jozefowicz, V. M., Mohanty, S., & Windland, L. A. (2014). Helping At Risk Women Transition Back Home. *PRISM: A Journal of Regional Engagement*, 3(1), 3.