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COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER: AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY
OF BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER
INITIATIVES**

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Expanding Access to Elite Institutions Through Community College Transfer: An Intrinsic Case
Study of Bucknell University's Community College Transfer Initiatives

A Dissertation Presented

by

CATHERINE SANCHEZ

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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College of Education

Expanding Access to Elite Institutions Through Community College Transfer: An Intrinsic Case
Study of Bucknell University's Community College Transfer Initiatives

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As a working mother of two children, I find myself often using the phrase, “It takes a village...” I like this phrase because it speaks to the way in which we all often need help from one another. I need my neighbors to pick up my kids when I have to work late. My neighbors need me to walk their dog when they’ll be out of town. I often marvel at how lucky I am to have such a generous and thoughtful village available to me.

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ABSTRACT

EXPANDING ACCESS TO ELITE INSTITUTIONS THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER: AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY OF BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER INITIATIVES

MAY 2020

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Elite institutions of higher education have been under increased scrutiny for failing to provide equitable access, and rightly so. Recent research reveals that students from underserved populations are severely underrepresented at elite colleges and universities. These findings echo research conducted nearly fifteen years ago, indicating that despite class-based policy efforts, like need-blind admission and no-loan financial aid, little movement has been made to expand access to students who could benefit the most from an elite education. This lack of movement serves as the entry point for this study, which argued that if community college transfer is to make a difference as a pathway, then more needs to be known about this function, and in particular there is a need for in-depth case studies of successful community college transfer initiatives at elite institutions.

Within a theoretical and empirical contextual frame, this study examines Bucknell University's Community College Scholars Program (BCCSP), which has been in operation since 2006, and is considered a successful, model program. This study does so by positioning BCCSP

as the extension of an earlier community college transfer initiative at Bucknell, the Student Transfer Enrichment Program (STEP), which began in 1988 and ran for several years. The goal of this dissertation was not to generate theory or to find causal relationships, but to tell the story of Bucknell's longstanding support for community college transfer. As an intrinsic case study, it engaged in an historical analysis, via archival research, of STEP, and then in qualitative data analysis of interviews with staff and faculty who are currently part of BCCSP.

In combining these two sets of analyses, this study found that Bucknell's longstanding support for community college transfer students represents an organizational saga. It concludes that while this saga may be unique to Bucknell, Bucknell's story can be used as a cautionary yet hopeful tale for peer institutions interested in developing programs for community college transfer as a way to provide equitable access to students from underserved populations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER	
I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Broad-Level Context.....	4
Bounded Context: Making the Case for Studying Bucknell University.....	8
Significance.....	10
Research Questions.....	11
Methodological Overview.....	12
Definitions of Terms.....	15
Organization of Dissertation.....	16
II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	19
Section One: Expanding the Premises for Community College Transfer to Elite Institutions.....	19
Section Two: What is Known About Community College Transfer to Elite Institutions.....	30
Section Three: Exploring the Concept of Organizational Saga.....	51
Chapter Summary.....	60
III: METHODOLOGY.....	62
Research Questions.....	63
Case Study as Method.....	63
Design of Present Study.....	65
Data Collection and Management.....	72
Data Analysis.....	86
Limitations.....	92
Ethical Considerations.....	96
Chapter Summary.....	97
IV: CASE STUDY FINDINGS.....	99
Part One: Bucknell University’s Current Transfer Initiative, BCCSP.....	100

Part Two: Setting the Institutional Context for Innovation	102
Part Three: The Development of STEP	106
Chapter Summary	161
V: DISCUSSION	163
The Initiation of Bucknell University’s Transfer Saga.....	165
The Fulfillment of Bucknell University’s Transfer Saga	168
Implications and Conclusion.....	179
APPENDICES	
A: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	186
B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	187
C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	195

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
<i>Table 1.</i> Archival documents accessed at Bertrand Library, Bucknell University.....	77
<i>Table 2.</i> Interview participants	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
<i>Figure 1.</i> A STEP student arrives by bus to Bucknell.....	124
<i>Figure 2.</i> A STEP student and her son at Bucknell	124
<i>Figure 3.</i> Three STEP students at Bucknell.....	124

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In June of 1990, 20 community college students made their way from Philadelphia to the town of Lewisburg in rural central Pennsylvania. These students, who arrived together by bus, were the inaugural cohort in Bucknell University's first community college transfer initiative, a partnership program with the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) that by the end of the six-week summer residency would be dubbed STEP, or Student Transfer Enrichment Program. The first 20 STEPers, as they called themselves, varied in racial identity, age (from 18 to 50), and family status; one student even brought her young son with her. This group lived in a dormitory, ate in the dining hall, took classes team-taught by Bucknell and CCP faculty, and engaged in enrichment activities meant to increase their understanding of life as a student at an elite, residential liberal arts college.

Bucknell University was one of the first elite institutions in the country to have developed such a program, which was based on Vassar College's Exploring Transfer program initiated in 1985. STEP had a rocky tenure. It fought for financial security and recognition on a campus that seemed resistant to change. And it struggled to have a clear mission that was consistent among its various institutional constituents. Bucknell's administration considered STEP to be an answer to the twin concerns of declining enrollment that had been building for the better part of a decade and the lack of diversity on campus, while Bucknell faculty considered it an act of social justice. These often-conflicting purposes never got fully resolved, and by the end of the 1990s, STEP had all but fizzled out.

In 2006, Bucknell University participated in the Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), a program funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (JKCF), which is a nonprofit

organization dedicated to the educational advancement of high-achieving, low- to moderate-income students. JKCF primarily provides scholarships for such students interested in attending elite institutions, but in the mid-2000s, JKCF became invested in the potential of community college transfer. The purpose of the CCTI was to expand pathways to elite colleges and universities for students in underserved populations who began their postsecondary careers at community college. Bucknell was one of eight partners chosen to participate, and by all accounts, it developed a successful transfer program. Reports from the CCTI show that Bucknell was the *only* partner institution to meet all eight promising practices identified by researchers as necessary for programmatic success (Burack & Lanspery, 2014).

In fact, the program that Bucknell developed with JKCF funding, the Bucknell University Community College Scholars Program (BCCSP), was so successful that JKCF offered an additional year of funding once the CCTI ended. Bucknell leaped at the chance, using that bonus year to strategize, and by 2012, the institution had created a pathway to reallocate endowed funds to absorb the cost of the program. Today, BCCSP is considered by many at the University to be an integral part of the organization. One of the more remarkable aspects of BCCSP is that participants are not just encouraged to apply to and, if accepted, enroll at Bucknell. They are encouraged to apply to their dream schools—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and the list goes on. Many BCCSP participants do end up transferring to Bucknell, but many do not; BCCSP completers can be found at elite four-year institutions around the country. In this way, Bucknell could be seen as finally performing, perhaps, an act of social justice.

To the casual observer, BCCSP seems like a program with a relatively short history. University marketing materials and media about the program place it in a particular context: It began in 2006 with JKCF funding as part of the CCTI and has been successful ever since.

Community college participants come from six area community colleges, including one in Maryland; they attend a six-week summer residency; receive advising from Bucknell faculty and admission staff; and if they apply to and enroll at Bucknell, they receive scholarships to cover the costs. A more informed, critical understanding of BCCSP, however, reveals a program that has a long and complicated history. BCCSP has its roots in STEP. In fact, most of what works well with BCCSP was developed for the STEP program in the late 1980s.

This intriguing history of BCCSP formed the basis for the present study, which focused on how Bucknell University has developed and maintained a successful community college transfer program, making it nearly unique among its peers. While an increasing number of elite institutions have become interested in the potential of community college transfer as a way to reach a diverse student population, including those from low-income backgrounds (Glynn, 2019), few have deep knowledge of this function. Bucknell's longstanding commitment to and experience with community college transfer are distinct within the organizational field of elite colleges.

To study this distinction, I applied Clark's (1970) concept of organizational saga, which allowed for a consideration of STEP and BCCSP not as separate initiatives, but as two ends of the same initiative. While Clark conceptualized saga as a way to understand distinction at an entire organization, the present study considered saga equally effective as an interpretive lens for understanding program development and distinction. In addition to applying the concept of saga, I considered the topic of community college transfer within multiple contextual layers, including philosophical perspectives on distributive justice as they pertain to higher education, as well as organizational decision-making around who gets in and who gets left out of elite higher education. To do this research, I identified constituents, decisions, challenges, setbacks, and

small victories that shaped what would eventually become a distinctive program. This dissertation argues that Bucknell's support for community college transfers, first as STEP and then as BCCSP, represents an organizational saga that grew out of the dual institutional goals of transfer as administrative function and transfer as an act of social justice. It then complicates the concept of organizational saga to show that saga initiation and fulfillment are not as straightforward as Clark (1970) understood them to be. This study concludes that the distinctiveness of Bucknell's community college transfer support positions it as both a model program and cautionary tale for its elite liberal arts peers and elite institutions more generally.

Broad-Level Context: Why the Study of Bucknell's Transfer Initiatives Matter

Two major premises undergird this study. The first is that elite higher education has a democratic obligation to expand access for students from underserved populations, particularly low-income students, and that doing so provides multiple benefits to the institution. The second premise is that because many students from underserved populations, and low-income students in particular, begin their postsecondary careers at community college, the transfer function represents a viable way to expand access to the elites. Though both premises are explored extensively in Chapter Two, this background section discusses them briefly to establish the study's broad-level context. First, though, this section offers a brief overview of the state of elite higher education in the United States.

A Glimpse into Elite Higher Education

For a good fifteen years, elite higher education has been under increased scrutiny for failing to provide equitable access to students in underserved populations, particularly low-income students. Texts that emerged in the mid-2000s, such as Bowen, Kurzweil and Tobin's (2005) *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education*, Karabel's (2005) *The Chosen*, and

Kahlenberg's (2004) *Untapped Resources: Low-Income Students in Higher Education*, helped to ignite a national conversation about who has and should have access to elite higher education. These and other scholars have adequately shown how elite higher education has long been (Karabel) and continues to be (Chetty et al., 2017) exclusive to those who already have privilege, cutting off access to those who might benefit most from the vast resources the elites have to offer. The Chetty et al. report has been widely cited for its stark findings: students whose parents are in the top 1% of the income distribution are 77 times more likely to attend an elite institution than students whose parents are in the bottom 20%, a finding that is consistent with previous research (Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin; Carnevale & Rose, 2004; Winston & Hill, 2005).

Dubious practices at elite institutions, such as favoring the already privileged and shifting definitions of merit to do so (Karabel, 2005), came to a head recently when the so-called "Varsity Blues" scandal hit in March 2019. This scandal revealed widespread cheating and bribery between elite college officials and wealthy and influential families to guarantee admission. It ensnared numerous elite institutions including Georgetown, Stanford, the University of Southern California, and Yale, and generated ample condemnation over what seems to many to be a system rigged to benefit the already privileged (Golden & Burke, 2019; Jump, 2019).

This scandal also jumpstarted a conversation about the worth of elite colleges. The *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Forbes* magazine, among many others, ran articles asking whether attending an elite institution actually matters for a student's future prospects. These articles reference a study by two economists who found that attending an elite college actually does not matter all that much...for wealthy students (Dale & Krueger, 2014). Kevin Carey (2019), writing for the *New York Times* notes, "When you're a 19-year-old YouTube star who

spends spring break on a billionaire's yacht, life tends to work out" (para. 6). For students from less privileged backgrounds, however, the benefits of attending an elite college are huge. Elite institutions provide the kind of economic and social mobility that less selective colleges simply cannot. They link students to a vast network of influential alumni. And the ample resources and high retention rates at elite colleges help to ensure that even students from severely under-resourced secondary schools can and do succeed (Dale & Krueger).

Premise One: The Democratic Obligation of Elite Higher Education

Given the unparalleled advantages that an elite education provides, scholars in many disciplines argue that elite higher education should be more accessible for students from less advantaged backgrounds. Some of the more convincing arguments come from the field of philosophy, in which scholars of distributive justice argue that spaces at elite colleges act as "scarce social goods" that can be converted into many other social goods," namely professional and political leadership positions in society (Gutmann, 1987, p. 196). According to Gutmann, who, incidentally, is the current president of the University of Pennsylvania, by controlling enrollment, elite colleges act as gatekeepers to these important and influential positions, which means that they must be held to the same principles of nondiscrimination as professional offices. These institutions must be clear on what specific qualifications they consider for acceptance and why, and they must be able to justify those qualifications to others.

Elizabeth Anderson (2007), a philosophy professor at the University of Michigan, in her article on fair opportunity in education focuses on access to consider the kind of elite college graduate society needs most. Anderson argues that elite institutions have an obligation to diversify because having diverse groups at these institutions helps to ensure that students, who go on to serve in influential societal roles, graduate with an "awareness of the interests and

problems of people in all sectors of society” as well as a “disposition to serve those interests” (p. 596). She goes on to say that such an education requires not only “technical knowledge of how to advance those interests” but also “competence in respectful interaction with people from all sectors” (p. 596). Anderson argues that an elite education that centers all four qualifications is essential to a functioning democracy.

Premise Two: The Community College Transfer Pathway to Elite Institutions

Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo (2008), in one of the only empirical studies that looks at community college transfer in relation to the distribution of elite higher education, apply Gutmann’s (1987) conclusion specifically to community college transfer students, who begin their college experiences elsewhere and do not have the same orientation to academic community building at elite colleges as do native (non-transfer) students. They claim, “a college’s general education requirement and cohort-based programming do not in themselves trump the right of qualified transfer applicants to receive equal consideration of their academic merits” (p. 451). In other words, elite institutions must not discriminate against community college transfer applicants who are as equally academically qualified as traditional applicants.

Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo (2008) also extend Gutmann’s (1987) argument to the function that community colleges serve in providing access to higher education. Community colleges, they argue, offer a “critical second chance” (p. 463) for students who have been “disenfranchised from their precollege schooling” (p. 462) through no fault of their own. As affordable institutions with open enrollment, community colleges have for over a century provided higher education opportunities for students who do not otherwise have access, and the transfer function has widely been seen as integral for upward mobility for students from less advantaged backgrounds (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Serban, 2008).

Although no study of community college transfer has directly applied Anderson's (2007) understanding of distributive justice in elite higher education, the present study contends that her argument is wholly applicable. Assuming Anderson is correct in saying that elite institutions must diversify because doing so benefits everyone—that our very democracy, in fact, demands it—then elite institutions (a) have an obligation to consider community college transfers as potential enrollees and (b) are justified in doing so particularly given the diversity typical of most community colleges. If Anderson herself were to suggest practical ways to diversify elite institutions, she would likely agree that recruiting from community college makes good sense. According to national data from the American Association of Community Colleges, more than 50% of community college students are students of color, about 30% are first-generation students, and nearly 40% are low-income students (“AACC Fast Facts,” 2019). In short, community colleges house the very kind of less advantaged student Anderson suggests is needed in substantial numbers at elite colleges and universities.

Bounded Context: Making the Case for Studying Bucknell University

It is within this broad-level context that the present study argues for bounding the study to the case of Bucknell University's support for community college transfers. That is, if (a) elite higher education has a democratic obligation to expand access, particularly for low-income students, and if (b) community college transfer offers a viable pathway to the elites to fulfill that obligation, then (c) understanding this function is necessary. To date, though, little research has considered this function in any depth. Burack and Lanspery's (2014) report from the CCTI and published by JKCF is the most comprehensive research available, and so it serves as a knowledge baseline. Other research that informed and came out of the CCTI (e.g., Dowd & Gabbard, 2006; Gabbard et al., 2006; Pak, Bensimon, Malcolm, Marquez, & Park, 2006)

confirms Burack and Lanspery's findings, as do the findings from a small handful of earlier studies of community college transfer to elite institutions (Morphew, Twombly, & Wolf-Wendel, 2001; Wolf-Wendel, Morphew, Twombly, & Sopcich, 2004).

None of these studies, though, does what Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo (2008) called for nearly 12 years ago. What is needed, they claimed at the time, are "case studies of successful institutions," or elite colleges that have successfully implemented and maintained support for community college transfer. But, they continue, "relatively few instances appear to exist," which still seems to be the case (p. 466). Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo argue for case study research because they know "a small number of specialized programs [at elite colleges] currently recruit and graduate community college transfers" (p. 466), but most elite institutions do not. Those that do, then, have important knowledge to share with the field. Other scholars, such as Tinto (2006), suggest that studying "the common elements of successful program implementation in different institutional settings that lead to program institutionalization over time" (p. 10) are necessary. Though Tinto was writing about student retention, one of his foci was low-income students and the need for a "body of research that tells the nature of institutional practices that enable more low-income students to transfer and, in turn, succeed at four-year" institutions (p. 13).

The present study takes up these calls for case studies of successful implementation of community college transfer programs at elite institutions. It identified Bucknell University's community college transfer support, first as STEP and then as BCCSP, as nearly unique among its peers, as distinct within the organizational field of elite colleges. Bucknell's support for transfers extends back three decades, which positions Bucknell as an institution with deep knowledge of this function, making it an ideal case to study.

Significance

This dissertation considers in-depth case studies necessary to move the limited knowledge about the function of community college transfer to elite institutions forward. Notably, since Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo's (2008) writing, the idea of community college transfer as a way to open up access to the elites seems to have taken off, especially recently. In fact, it could be said that community college transfers are "having a moment," as an increasing number of elite colleges and universities around the country "are working harder to get them" (Pappano, 2019, para. 25; see also Tugend, 2018). Princeton University, for example, just started accepting transfer students again in 2018 after a 20-year hiatus. Princeton claims it reopened its transfer pathway as a way to "attract students with diverse backgrounds and experiences, such as qualified military veterans and students from low-income backgrounds, including some who might begin their careers at community colleges" (Aronson, 2018, para. 5). Williams College, an elite liberal arts institution, began increasing the number of transfers they accept from community colleges in 2019, claiming that such students bring a "different energy" to campus (Pappano, para, 19).

If elite institutions are becoming increasingly interested in the potential of community college transfer as a way to reach students from less-advantaged backgrounds, they will do better if they base their programmatic efforts on what seems to work and why and, conversely, on what seems not to work and why. Although case study is considered a poor basis for generalization (Stake 1995), I contend that the story of Bucknell's community college transfer support can serve as both a cautionary tale and a model for successful program development for other elite colleges interested in instituting community college transfer programs.

Research Questions

The above sections of the introduction have begun to establish that elite institutions are obligated to provide more equitable access and that community college transfer represents a viable and justifiable way for them to do so. These sections have also begun to show that despite the increased interest in community college transfer to elite colleges, not much is known about this function. In particular, there remains a need for in-depth knowledge of elite institutions that have developed and maintained successful community college transfer programs. This dissertation takes up the call for such in-depth case studies (Dowd, Cheslock, & Melguizo, 2008; Tinto, 2006) by considering the success of Bucknell University's community college transfer initiatives.

Although this dissertation is presented within a complex, multilayered context that considers both empirical research and philosophical understandings of distributive justice, the questions guiding this study are actually quite simple. They are, in fact, the same questions the Burton Clark (1970) asked when he was interested in how Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore Colleges managed to rise to distinction among their peers. In the broader context, Clark was intrigued by the liberal arts college (LAC) as a distinctively American institution that other developed countries had “managed to do without” (p. 4). But even within this institutional grouping were colleges, like Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore, that had become “first rank” (p. 4), and Clark wanted to know why. To figure out what might be happening institutionally to bring about such a ranking, Clark asked simply, “How is it done? How has it been done?” These open-ended questions allowed Clark to conduct an historical analysis, identifying critical moments in time and elements of organizational development that led to distinction.

The present study is also interested in distinction, though at the programmatic level. As noted above, Bucknell University is one of the only elite colleges in the country that has had some form of support for community college transfers for the past 30 years. This longstanding support not only positions Bucknell as an institution with deep knowledge of community college transfer, it also sets it apart from its peers, many of which have either not managed to develop any programs to support community college transfer or have not been able to maintain such a program. Thus, Bucknell's support for community college transfer, through the STEP and BCCSP initiatives, is distinct. This study aimed to figure out what has happened and is happening institutionally at Bucknell that has led to this distinction. In short, this study asked, *How is it done? How has it been done?*

Methodological Overview

To answer the above questions, this study embarked on an intrinsic case study. Case study is considered an appropriate methodological choice when the researcher is interested in answering why or how questions (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 1995, 2008; Yin, 2003, 2014). Intrinsic case study is selected when the case itself is of specific interest. For Stake (1995, 2008), a single case might be of interest, "not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case. We have an intrinsic interest in the case" (p. 3). In intrinsic case study, the case is considered unique and is pre-selected for its uniqueness, not for what it might generally represent in the field. "Our first obligation," writes Stake, "is to understand this one case" (p. 4). The intrinsic case study design allowed for an exclusive focus on Bucknell's story of community college transfer support; it was the right design to answer the questions, *How is it done? How has it been done?*

Sources of Data

This study relied on three sources of data: archival material housed at the Bertrand Library at Bucknell University, contemporary documents culled from online sources, and interviews with Bucknell University staff and faculty who have been involved with supporting community college transfers for decades. Archival materials dating back to 1989 served as the primary source for understanding the history and development of the STEP; these materials were supplemented with a text on the history of Bucknell by Edwin Lewis Theiss and published in 1946. Other material data sources include contemporary documents and publicly-available media about BCCSP.

Interviews with Bucknell staff and faculty were integral to getting an inside look into BCCSP. The various perspectives from the interview data helped to give life to the document-based analysis of the development of Bucknell's support for community college transfers. Interview data helped to confirm the continuum of program development, from how and why the first iteration of the program, as STEP, came to be to, and the challenges and triumphs of getting transfer support to a point of institutionalization. Interview data also revealed current struggles with ensuring program sustainability, drawing connections between BCCSP and both internal and external dynamics.

Analysis of Data

Intrinsic case study is unlike other qualitative studies in that the primary purpose of the study is “to come to understand the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 77). Thus, while working with the data to “tease out relationships, to probe issues, and to aggregate categorical data” (p. 77), such “formal aggregation” (p. 77) was not as important as direct interpretation and narrative description. Analysis occurred from the moment I began working my way through the data,

using the study's research questions as a guide. This "working through" included extensive note-taking and memoing (Dey, 1993; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 1994) as a way to respond to what I was learning and interpreting in the archival and contemporary documents and interview transcripts. I then engaged in the process of open then analytical coding (Merriam & Tisdell), which allowed for the identification of categories. These categories were not used to abstract the data, however, like with other qualitative methods, because the goal was direct interpretation of the case. Instead, I used these categories to provide structure to the narrative; they became the central sections of the story told in Chapter Four.

As discussed in detail in Chapter Three, analysis also occurred through the process of writing up the case. Here, I found useful Stake's (1995) contention that "there is much art and much intuitive processing to the search for meaning" (p. 72) in case study research. The more I wrote about the case, the more I became immersed in the story, the more meaning I could derive from it. Writing up the case became writing *through* the case because the act of writing proved integral to breaking apart and examining the details of what I had found in the documents and interviews; writing *through* the case was how I put these details back together in a meaningful way for readers.

Limitations

Like with any research, the present study has limitations. The most important limitation, perhaps, is its limited scope to a single case, which thus makes it un-generalizable to other cases or the field at large. As Stake (1995) argues, though, "case study seems a poor basis for generalizability" (p. 6); it is neither the aim nor the strength of the method. Stake instead speaks of naturalistic generalizations, which are "conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened

to themselves” (p. 84). As the researcher, I was influenced by Stake’s view and provided the opportunity for “vicarious experience” by presenting a chronological narrative with an emphasis on time and place, both of which Stake considers “rich ingredients” for naturalistic generalizations (p. 87). Other limitations in relation to internal validity, including researcher positionality, and reliability, and how the present study addressed them, are discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

Definition of Terms

CCTI

CCTI is an acronym for the Community College Transfer Initiative, which was a four-year program (2006-2010) funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, with additional funding from the Lumina Foundation and the Nellie Mae Foundation. Associates from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation worked with eight elite institutions across the country to provide access and support to around 1,100 community college transfer students during the life of the program.

Elite

There is no one set definition of elite when referring to elite colleges and universities. The term “elite” is often based on Barron’s Selectivity Category in *Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges* (2009), which considers an institution’s acceptance rates as well as GPAs, SAT scores, and class rank of accepted students in deriving the category. Other factors include average salaries of graduates and percentages of graduates attending graduate or professional school. Bucknell University, which is the case at hand, received a rank of “1” (“most competitive) in *Barron’s Profiles*, which puts it in the same category of the nation’s Ivy League and Little Ivy institutions. This dissertation uses the term “elite” to describe institutions that have

highly competitive admissions rates, large endowments, a history of exclusivity, wealth, and power, or some combination thereof.

Liberal arts college

The term “liberal arts college” (LAC) in this dissertation refers to small, residential colleges that award primarily undergraduate degrees in the arts and sciences, and place “little emphasis on vocational preparation or study in professional fields” (Baker, Baldwin, & Makker, 2012, ¶2). Because there is some disagreement about what counts as an LAC in the higher education literature, this dissertation relies on Baker, Baldwin, and Makker’s classification in their replication of Breneman’s (1990) study, which is widely considered a more accurate representation than the Carnegie Classifications.

Transfer

The term “transfer” is typically used to describe the movement from one college to another, either a two-year to a four-year or a four-year to a four-year institution. In this dissertation, however, the term “transfer” is used primarily to describe transfer from a community college to a four-year institution, and specifically a elite four-year institution.

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. This first chapter served as an introduction to the study and provided the necessary contextual information to understand the problem and purpose of the dissertation. Chapter One also provided an overview of the methodology, the study’s significance and limitations, as well as a list of the terms used. Chapter Two grounds the study by examining three areas of literature. The first considers theories of distributive justice as they pertain to elite higher education. The discussion in this section supports the two premises undergirding the study that elite institutions have a democratic

obligation to provide equitable access and that community college transfer represents a viable way to do so. The second focuses on what is known about transfer from community colleges to elite institutions. As noted in Chapter One, this knowledge base is limited, but we do know some, primarily from the research for and from the CCTI. The review delves deeply into the findings in the CCTI final report composed by Burack and Lanspery (2014) and published by JKCF. It includes findings from previous studies that have considered transfer from community college to elite institutions, such as Smith College. The third part of the literature review focuses on ways of understanding institutional distinction, specifically at elite liberal arts colleges. Here, Burton Clark's (1970, 1972) work on organizational saga is explored extensively because it provides a conceptual grounding for the interpretation of the case of Bucknell's longstanding support for community college transfers.

Chapter Three of this dissertation details the methodology used. It explores Stake's (1995, 2008) idea of intrinsic case study, situated within a larger discussion of case study as a qualitative research method. This chapter also discusses the data collection and analysis methods, connecting both to a rich understanding of methodological literature. It also details the site selection, the site itself, and the primary unit and subunits of analysis. Chapter Three discusses the limitations of the present study by considering validity, including researcher positionality, and reliability. It also explains ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study of Bucknell's longstanding support for community college transfers. In this chapter, I trace the development of the Bucknell's first initiative, STEP, through an archival analysis, identifying aspects of program development that have been highlighted in the literature as necessary for programmatic success. I move forward in time to examine, through analysis of interview data as well as archival and digital documents,

Bucknell's current support initiative, BCCSP. By beginning at the beginning and understanding the development of both programs, Chapter Four establishes a narrative through-line of transfer support at Bucknell.

Chapter Five considers the findings presented in Chapter Four in relation to the literature explored in Chapter Two. Chapter Five examines the factors identified as necessary for programmatic success, but interprets them within an organizational saga frame. Chapter Five concludes that Bucknell's commitment to community college transfers, first through STEP and then through BCCSP, represents an organizational saga. Chapter Five also concludes that Bucknell's transfer support can serve as both cautionary tale and blueprint for successful programmatic development.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter One highlighted the purpose of the present study, which answered the call for in-depth case studies of elite colleges that have developed and maintained successful transfer support programs. This dissertation examined Bucknell University's past and present transfer initiatives guided by the following research questions: *How is it done? How has it been done?* Chapter One also introduced the two premises undergirding the study: (a) elite higher education has a democratic obligation to expand access to students from less-advantaged backgrounds, particularly low-income students, and (b) community college transfer represents a viable way to do so.

Chapter Two first picks up that discussion to expand the discussion of these two premises, which helps to establish the case that the function of community college transfer to elite colleges is both necessary and feasible. Once this case is established, Chapter Two surveys the extant literature to present what is currently known about community college transfer to elite institutions. The last section of Chapter Two then turns to Clark's (1970) conception of organizational saga as a way to understand programmatic distinction.

Section One: Expanding the Premises for Community College Transfer to Elite Institutions

The first section of this review expands the discussion from Chapter One of the two major premises undergirding this study. The first is that elite institutions have a democratic obligation to expand access to students from less-advantaged backgrounds, particularly low-income students. The second is that transfer from community college represents a viable way to do so. The discussion of both premises is necessary because the reasons why an elite institution

should recruit and enroll community college transfers are not altogether obvious. Certainly, elite institutions do not need transfers for enrollment stability because they tend to have very low attrition rates (Glynn, 2019). Thus, the question becomes one of purpose. Why should elite institutions make the effort to develop and maintain programs for community college transfers? The literature explored below, drawn primarily from philosophical understandings of distributive justice as they pertain to elite institutions, helps to unpack the purpose behind community college transfer to elite institutions, or *why* this function matters.

There are, perhaps, many reasons that could be given for the democratic obligation of elite institutions to expand access, but the following discussion considers the two most often cited. One, elite institutions graduate future societal leaders to a greater extent than their less-selective peers (Karabel, 2005; Glynn, 2019), which makes spaces at these institutions “scarce social goods” (Gutmann, 1987, p. 196). As such, these spaces should not be reserved only for the already advantaged, but should be equally accessible to all who qualify. Two, there is ample evidence that a diverse student body in institutions of higher education is beneficial for all students, but particularly for students at elite institutions. Taken together, these two points show that diversity at elite institutions is especially necessary. It ensures that the nation’s future leaders are (a) representative of our diverse nation, and (b) educated in such a way that they are prepared to “serve all sectors of society, not just themselves” (Anderson, 2007, p. 596). This section of the literature review explores two arguments for equitable access to the elites, connecting them to the function of community college transfer specifically.

Transfer Access and the Elite Advantage

In *Democratic Education*, Gutmann (1987) focuses one chapter on distributing higher education, in which she questions who should have access to elite higher education and who gets

to decide the qualifications for admission. As noted in Chapter One, Gutmann argues that spaces at elite colleges and universities act as “scarce social goods that can be converted into many other social goods” (p. 196), namely professional and political leadership positions in society. By controlling enrollment, elite colleges and universities act as gatekeepers to these important and influential positions (Anderson, 2007; Farnum, 1997; Karabel, 1984, 2005). This control means, according to Gutmann, that elite colleges and universities must be held to the same principles of nondiscrimination as professional offices; they are not, as she puts it, “free to admit and exclude students arbitrarily” (p. 196). For Gutmann, the principle of nondiscrimination as it applies to university admissions has two key parts. First, the standards used to judge qualification for admission must serve “the legitimate purposes of the university” (p. 196). Second, all qualified applicants must be given “equal consideration” (p. 196).

The challenge has long been with what can or should be considered a qualification for admission to elite education. Gutmann (1987) argues that colleges and universities have what she terms “associational freedom” (p. 185) to create the kind of community they want and, thus, select students based on the contribution they could make to that community. Intellectual contributions are only one kind; students might also bring less quantifiable qualities such as “creativity, perseverance, emotional maturity, aesthetic sensibility, and motivation to learn” (p. 199). Gutmann and other scholars argue, however, that such character-based qualifications can easily become problematic because of the leeway it gives institutions in determining who gets in to and who gets left out of elite higher education. For Karabel (2005), who has exhaustively studied admissions to the Big Three elites (Harvard, Yale, and Princeton), character is “shorthand for an entire ethos and way of being” (p. 2), identifiable only by those who have it. It is, by its very nature, a nearly impossible thing to judge.

Karabel (2005) shows how favoring less quantifiable qualities creates a flawed system in which institutions can continuously redefine standards for admission based on whatever criteria they feel is most relevant to socially and politically powerful groups. A commonly cited example of the danger of merit is the use of the quota system to limit Jewish student access to most Ivy League institutions in the 1920s. Gutmann (1987) uses this example to argue for more objective admissions qualifications, explaining how these institutions at the time “used subjective standards” to justify “keeping out ‘socially undesirable’ minorities, Jews in particular” (p. 202). In his earlier work, Karabel (1984) argued that the move against Jews was based on what he calls “organizational self-interest” (p. 4). Karabel contends that elite institutions have always favored the group that controls “more of the resources it needs to pursue its own institutional interests” (1984, p. 28). He picks up this idea in *The Chosen*, showing how even admissions decisions that were connected to institutional ideals, like equal opportunity, were at least as equally driven by the institution’s need to stay relevant and viable in a competitive field.¹ Karabel (2005) provides ample evidence of organizational self-interest, such as when both Yale and Princeton decided to admit women in 1969, a move that could easily be seen as living up to the democratic ideal of equal opportunity. However, this decision, according to Karabel (2005) did not spring from a “commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity” but rather was made in large part because the institutions’ “ability to attract ‘the best boys’ was gravely endangered by their all-male character” (p. 8). For Karabel, then, all admissions decisions are up for scrutiny from a self-interest perspective, even those that seem to fulfill democratic obligations.

¹ Here, Karabel is likely responding, at least in part, to critiques that his theory of organizational self-interest was too narrow and should be expanded to include institutional ethos (e.g., Farnum, 1997).

Gutmann (1987), however, does not see organizational self-interest as inherently problematic. While she would likely agree with Karabel's (1984, 2005) conclusion that elite colleges operate with organizational self-interest, she would argue that because colleges are granted associational freedom, the institution should have a certain amount of leeway in deciding whom they admit. Admissions committees, claims Gutmann, cannot be forced to ignore character-based qualities because they might indeed result in enrolling a student body that results in the kind of culture an institution aims to create. The main distinction for Gutmann is that colleges and universities must not rely primarily on such qualities. "Admissions committees must remember that universities are, above all, academic communities...[and] since the necessary purpose of a university is academic inquiry," the only *essential* "qualification for admission...must be academic ability" (p. 202).

While Gutmann's (1987) conclusion about academic ability seems as though it might satisfy Karabel's and others' critiques of a subjective admissions system, academic ability as a qualification is not without its own problems, which Gutmann herself admits. Currently, because there is wide variation in the quality of the nation's K-12 educational system, and because that variation often leads to uneven college qualifications based on race and class, admission based on academic ability alone is perhaps not any less problematic than admission based on more subjective qualifications. Importantly, Gutmann takes up the thorny topic of academic ability by engaging in a back-and-forth about whether the principal of nondiscrimination can ever be overridden. On the one hand, rejecting a highly qualified applicant over an applicant who does not meet the academic threshold would violate the principal. On the other hand, because many students, primarily students of color and low-income students, "suffer, through no fault of their own, from a sorely inadequate primary education" (p. 218), admitting a lesser-qualified student

may fulfill a university's obligation not to perpetuate educational inequities. According to Gutmann, the latter would be acceptable only if the institution could offer exemplary compensatory education to such applicants. If this kind of compensatory program were offered, then admitting lesser academically qualified students because their backgrounds provided inadequate academic preparation would not violate the principal of nondiscrimination.

Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo (2008), in their study of the distribution of elite higher education, apply Gutmann's (1987) conclusion about nondiscrimination to community college transfer to elite institutions in two main ways. First, they argue, community college transfers, by the very nature of the community college as a part-time, commuter-based institution, have a different orientation to academic community, and thus might not possess the non-academic qualifications that elite institutions find culturally desirable. However, when Gutmann's non-discrimination principle is applied, claim Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo, it follows that admissions departments at elite institutions must make primary the academic qualifications of community college transfer applicants. To focus instead on the extent to which community college transfers possess the more subjective, character-based qualifications an elite institution prefers would be discriminatory.

Second, Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo (2008) argue that community colleges offer a "critical second chance" (p. 463) for students who have been "disenfranchised from their precollege schooling" (p. 462). By applying Gutmann (1987), the authors show that if community college transfer applicants are not as qualified as other applicants but meet the academic criteria for admission, elite institutions are justified in admitting them assuming compensatory support is made available. One caveat, according to Gutmann, is that only "the best [compensatory support] programs" (p. 221) that can actually help students realize their

potential would be justified. Admitting less-qualified students and providing sub-par compensatory programs would not be justified since doing so might set students up for failure.

Through the discussion above, a purpose for or mission behind transfer admissions becomes clear. Elite colleges, such as Bucknell, might be interested in enrolling transfers from community college because doing so helps to satisfy their democratic obligation to equitable opportunity, and they would be fully justified in using transfer in this way. However, the review above also shows how even a decision based on democratic ideals likely follows from, at least to a certain extent, organizational self-interest. History has proven that elite institutions have often made admissions decisions and policies based on self-interest and these policies have often resulted in limiting access instead of expanding it. There is some debate, though, as to whether that matters or whether acting with organizational self-interest is inherently problematic.

Transfer Access and the Socially Responsible Elite

Unlike Gutmann (1987), who focuses on access to elite education to argue about who gets in, Elizabeth Anderson (2007) in her article on fair opportunity in education focuses on access to argue about who gets out, or the kind of elite college graduate society needs most. According to Anderson, elite institutions have an obligation to diversify because having diverse groups at these institutions helps to ensure that students, who go on to serve in influential societal roles, graduate with an “awareness of the interests and problems of people in all sectors of society” as well as a “disposition to serve those interests” (p. 596). She continues, noting that such an education requires not only “technical knowledge of how to advance those interests” but also “competence in respectful interaction with people from all sectors” (p. 596). Anderson argues that an elite education that centers all four qualifications is essential to a functioning democracy.

Notably, Anderson's (2007) article takes a philosophical and ethical stance on distributive justice. She moves from the specific, first considering the important role of elite colleges and the type of graduates they should produce, to the general, arguing, ultimately, for a sufficientarian model of all levels of education. For the purposes of applying Anderson to the function of community college transfer to elite colleges, this dissertation relies solely on her arguments about diversity and integration in elite higher education. A discussion of diversity and integration across all of K-12 and postsecondary education is outside the scope of the present study.

In her argument for diversity at elite colleges, Anderson (2007) claims early on that she is not arguing for affirmative action, which she considers a "belated and marginal" policy (p. 598). In fact, Anderson is not arguing for any particular policy, but rather for a vision of a "very substantial representation of disadvantaged groups" (p. 617). According to Anderson, "people learn to pay attention to the internal heterogeneity of out-groups only when they are present in substantial enough numbers that their presence is not perceived as unusual" (p. 617). This learning, for Anderson, takes place primarily outside of the classroom, most effectively on campuses that are set up for close, constant contact. Anderson claims that "most selective colleges in the United States are residential colleges for sound educational reasons" (p. 614). These colleges, which attract the multiply advantaged, often provide the first real opportunity for advantaged students to have significant personal interaction with students from other ideological, racial, and class backgrounds.

Although numerous other scholars, particularly in the field of higher education, have made similar arguments about the benefits of diversity on college campuses (e.g., Chang, 1999; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Clarke & Antonio, 2012; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002;

Jayakumar, 2008; Pike & Kuh, 2006), Anderson (2007), argues for a need to consider diversity specifically at elite colleges because “elite ignorance and neglect of the problems of the disadvantaged is vast” (p. 617). According to Anderson, this ignorance stems from the cognitive deficits that form because of segregation and group stereotypes. Anderson acknowledges the well-established effects of segregation on the disadvantaged, including limited access to the “knowledge and skills, including social and cultural capital, they need to advance” (p. 602). However, she claims, this bank of research shows only part of the problem of segregation. “Segregation also deprives the more advantaged of knowledge” (p. 602) because their lack of proximity to the less advantaged allows them to remain ignorant of the problems, and ways of coping with problems, people in less advantaged groups face. Stereotyping, for Anderson, exacerbates the problem of segregation because a lack of exposure to diversity can reinforce negative group stereotypes that can then lead to avoidance and an inability to connect with or discomfort around people from disadvantaged groups. An integrated elite college, claims Anderson would make avoidance impossible.

Aries (2008) in her study of racial and class-based integration at Amherst College, a small, elite liberal arts institution, found ample evidence of stereotyping between different groups of students. Aries also found, though, that being in close proximity with diverse students encouraged students in different social groups to interact frequently. Aries shows, for example, how students of color and white students often discussed race on a deep level outside of class, and how “both black and whites spoke of benefitting from hearing the differing perspectives” (p. 103). Such interaction, claims Aries, was exceedingly important given that many of the white students “had not given a great deal of thought to race before coming to college, and had little consciousness about it” (p. 104). In terms of class, Aries found more negative stereotypes

attached to students from wealthy backgrounds, with the very rich being most often targeted. However, she also found that regular interaction across class boundaries helped students from all class backgrounds discover what they had in common. “For many students getting to know students from different class backgrounds and getting to know their life stories and perspectives,” writes Aries, “led to the breakdown of class stereotypes, the reduction of class prejudice, greater empathy and understanding, and the discovery of cross-class commonalities” (p. 129). In short, Aries’ study provides evidence for Anderson’s theory of the positive outcomes as a result of integration at elite colleges.

Despite Aries’ (2008) evidential support of Anderson’s (2007) integration argument, there are at least two possible objections to Anderson. For instance, it could be construed that Anderson suggests that the responsibility to educate the elite lies with the less advantaged. Another objection could be that simply bringing a diverse group of students together in one place does not always lead to integration (e.g., see Byrd, 2017; Jack, 2019; Tatum, 1997, 2017). Anderson would likely respond to such critiques by claiming that despite the challenges, there are vast possibilities for growth and learning in an integrated system. Further, Anderson’s insistence on the need for substantial diversity, and not just a token few, suggests that Anderson is arguing for systemic change. Importantly, for Anderson, as well as for Aries, the kind of integration that promotes learning should not be left to chance. Elite institutions, they claim, are responsible for providing structures, policies, and practices to create the opportunities and mechanisms for integration. Aries offers the kind of practical recommendations Anderson does not, such as creating opportunities for structured dialog, reinforcing diversity goals from institutional leadership, diversifying faculty and staff, and broadening the curriculum.

As the discussion shifts to consider the function of community college transfer, the connections to integration seem clear. Unlike with the Gutmann (1987) piece reviewed above, there is no study of community college transfer to elite institutions that applies Anderson's (2007) argument directly, but the present study considers Anderson's conclusion particularly relevant, and finds that it can be applied to the function of community college transfer to elite institutions much in the same way that Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo (2008) applied Gutmann's conclusion. Assuming Anderson is correct in saying that elite institutions must diversify because doing so benefits everyone—that our very democracy, in fact, demands it—then elite institutions (a) have an obligation to consider community college transfers as potential enrollees and (b) are justified in doing so particularly given the diversity typical of most community colleges. If Anderson herself were to suggest mechanisms to diversify elite institutions, she would likely agree that recruiting from community college makes good sense. According to national data from the American Association of Community Colleges, more than 50% of community college students are students of color, about 30% are first-generation students, and nearly 40% are low-income students (“AACC Fast Facts,” 2019). Community colleges, then, provide the very kind of less advantaged student Anderson suggests is needed in substantial numbers at elite colleges.

Importantly, though, Anderson's (2007) argument, coupled with Aries' (2008) findings, demonstrate that if elite institutions are increasingly interested in the potential of community college transfer as a way to reach underrepresented students, then they must consider the implications of bringing such students to campus and plan accordingly. Here, Gutmann's (1987) recommendation of compensatory programs seems relevant. Such programs, perhaps, should not

simply focus on academic support, but should also find ways to foster and support social integration.

Section Summary

The above section considered in greater detail the two premises undergirding this study that (a) elite institutions have a democratic obligation to expand access to students from less-advantaged backgrounds, particularly low-income students, and (b) community colleges offer a viable way to do so. This discussion centered philosophical understandings of distributive justice as they relate to elite higher education, specifically Amy Gutmann's (1987) argument about the social, political, and economic advantages that elite colleges provide, and Elizabeth Anderson's (2008) argument about the imperative for diversity at elite colleges. This section connected both arguments to the function of community college transfer, positioning this function as both a justifiable and feasible way for elite colleges to reach academically able, less-advantaged students. This section also introduced ways of thinking about organizational decision-making around who gets in and who gets left out of elite higher education. In particular, I explored Karabel's (2005) ideas of organizational self-interest and how it informs organizational action around admissions.

Section Two: What is Known About Community College Transfer to Elite Institutions

This section follows from the previous one in that if elite colleges are democratically obligated to expand access to students from less-advantaged backgrounds and are justified in doing so via community college transfer, then knowledge of this function is necessary. As noted in Chapter One, however, this knowledge is fairly limited. There are a handful of studies that considered community college transfer to elite institutions, but the bulk of what is known comes from studies that informed and resulted from the CCTI. The review below includes findings from

all of this work, primarily from the published final report of the CCTI authored by Burack and Lanspery (2014), but also from the unpublished studies that informed the development of the CCTI, which looked at the same eight institutions that eventually became the CCTI partner schools (e.g., Dowd & Gabbard, 2006; Gabbard et al., 2006; Pak, Bensimon, Malcolm, Marquez, & Park, 2006). It is worth noting that the unpublished studies have not undergone peer review; they also mask their data, which makes institutional identification impossible.

This review also includes the few studies about transfer to selective institutions that exist beyond the work of JKCF. This review considers specifically two studies that emerged before the CCTI that looked at the transfer function between two community colleges—Miami Dade and Santa Monica—and Smith College, a private LAC for women (Morphew, Twombly, & Wolf-Wendel, 2001; Wolf-Wendel, Morphew, Twombly, & Sopcich, 2004). These studies, which built on Cedja’s (1999, 2000) work on how students use community college to attain a Bachelor’s degree, found several factors that were integral to successful transfer programs, including a deep commitment from faculty at both the sending and receiving institution; personal connections between staff and students, with staff being able to perform a “gatekeeping role” by encouraging only those students who showed the most promise; and sufficient financial aid and academic support at the receiving institution.

Much of what was found in the two Smith studies is similar to the research for and from the CCTI, and so their findings are incorporated into the discussion below. Because the CCTI research constitutes the bulk of what is known about transfer from community college to selective institutions, the discussion is organized by what Burack and Lanspery (2014) identified as “lessons learned” from the partner institutions (p. 4): (a) establishing institutional readiness and buy-in; (b) finding and preparing the right students by developing robust partnerships with

community colleges; and (c) sustaining success through academic and social integration and engaging in continual assessment. The following sub-sections explore in-depth each of these lessons. Since readiness and buy-in constitute two rather substantive lessons, this review separates the discussions of the two. Buy-in is discussed first because of its integral role in establishing readiness.

Institutional Buy-In

In the final CCTI report, Burack and Lanspery (2014) found that programs met greater success at partner campuses where there was a “critical mass of support and commitment” (p. 22) among faculty and staff. They use the term “buy-in” (p. 7) to define this support, which allowed for transfer amenable policies and practices to exist at multiple administrative levels, including in admissions, financial aid, and academic and student affairs, as well as in the academy.

Burack and Lanspery identified several strategies among the partner institutions that were successful in establishing buy-in, including developing a communication plan to inform campus constituents of the program, ensuring transparency about the program and its purpose, designating inclusive and empowering leaders, and creating outreach strategies to identify campus constituents who might have community college experience and/or connections. These efforts, claim Burack and Lanspery, typically need to be spearheaded by a “transfer champion” (p. 23), often a senior administrator who is committed to the program and has the power to make significant institutional decisions. In addition to champions, the CCTI research identified the need for transfer agents, or “authority figures” on campus who could help students navigate the complexities of the transfer process and in so doing, “validate students’ aspirations and dispel fears of not belonging” (Dowd et al., 2011, p. 9; see also, Pak et al., 2006).

Transfer Champions

The term “transfer champion” also appears in some of the earlier unpublished research that informed the CCTI. For example, Gabbard et al. (2006) argue that the role of these champions cannot be underplayed, and, in their study, found that across institutional type, most champions are senior-level staff. In some cases, the president of the college was a key champion of transfer students, which, according to Gabbard et al., made “it easier to find strong advocates among not only the senior executive staff, but throughout the institution” (p. 74). For Burack and Lanspery (2014), champions could garner support from faculty, advisors, senior staff in admissions and academic and student affairs, as well as with trustees. Part of the work of champions included developing ways to communicate clearly about the role of transfer; identifying a senior-level staff member who could act as “a hands-on point person for overall project coordination” (Burack & Lanspery, p. 23); sharing information about CCTI students, and, in some cases, having them speak with the community; and finding internal constituents who had experience with community college. Transfer champions, according to Burack and Lanspery, needed to be “empowering” leaders who promoted “meaningful” engagement in the project (p. 23).

Although Gabbard et al. (2006) found that faculty “seemed to be less engaged as active advocates,” than “champions” in the administration (p. 74), much of the research for and from the CCTI shows how in some of the smaller partner institutions especially, faculty often assume the role of transfer champions. Dowd (2011), in a book chapter that uses CCTI data, shows how faculty at smaller institutions have a significant influence over policy and practice in relation to the “curriculum, counseling and advising, financial aid, and assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness” (p. 224). According to Burack and Lanspery (2014), because faculty

often “wield considerable power in institutional decision making” (p. 25), faculty involvement for the CCTI was essential, especially on the smaller partner campuses where “the level of faculty buy-in can spell the difference between success and failure for a campus change initiative” (p. 25). Dowd illustrates this point with a quote from a faculty member at one of the CCTI institutions who remarked, “anything that’s going to work in a place like this has to be faculty driven and faculty owned” (p. 225). Little to no faculty involvement with the CCTI, claim Burack and Lanspery, led to less favorable views about how the initiative fit with institutional mission and goals.

Regardless of whether transfer champions emerged from the administration or the faculty, Gabbard et al. (2006) explain how the work of transfer champions played out on three levels: “(1) in their individual commitment to their work; (2) in their commitment to pervasive and deep internal change at their institution; and (3) in their ongoing belief in strong personal relationships housed within carefully nurtured inter-organizational partnerships” (p. 74). The second level in particular exemplifies what Kezar (2014) calls “second-order change,” defined as “deep, transformational, or punctuated change” (p. 62). This kind of change, according to Kezar, is so significant that it “alters the operating systems, underlying values, and culture of an organization” (p. 62).

Transfer Agents

While transfer champions are those who hold greater institutional influence over decision-making, Pak, Bensimon, Malcolm, Marquez, and Park (2006) introduce a second term, “transfer agents” in their unpublished research that informed the CCTI. Pak et al.’s idea of transfer agent borrows from Stanton-Salazar’s (1997) conceptualization of “institutional agents.” Stanton-Salazar, using capital and empowerment theory, claims that institutional agents use their

positions of “status and authority” to “directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of highly valued institutional support defined [as]...resources, opportunities, privileges, and services” (p. 1075). For Pak et al., institutional agents who facilitate transfer, or “transfer agents,” are “teachers, counselors, and other authority figures that [sic] provided [community college transfers] with the resources to cross the cultural border that divides two- and four-year colleges” (p. 6). According to student respondents in the Pak et al. study, transfer agents at the community college helped them see the possibilities of transfer and encouraged their intellectual development to prepare them for transfer. They also, in some cases, provided more personalized support by taking students on campus visits and arranging interviews with admissions staff.

Respondents in the study also identified transfer agents at the four-year college who helped them transition to the unfamiliar environment and adjust to the rigor of the academic work. In a later study of the pathway between community college and selective colleges for Latinx students, Bensimon and Dowd (2009) also underscore the role of the transfer agent as critical to successful transfer. As “institutional authorities,” transfer agents “convey permission to students to assume the identity of an ‘elite’” (Bensimon & Dowd, p. 653), a status that is very difficult for students from underrepresented groups to gain on their own.

Much of the discussion of transfer agents at receiving institutions centers on their role in providing “transfer shock inoculation” (Pak et al., 2006, p. 33). The idea of transfer shock, or an initial dip in academic performance after transferring, has been studied since the 1960s (see Hills, 1965) and though researchers have moved beyond the concept of “shock” to studying the complex factors that affect the transfer experience (Laanan, Starobin, & Eggleston, 2010), there is sufficient evidence that most transfer students struggle academically in their first semester after transfer (Diaz, 1992; Glass & Harrington, 2002). Perhaps not surprisingly then, community

college students who transfer to selective institutions also struggle. This kind of transfer seems to overwhelm students who did well academically at their community college but who realize, quickly, that their previous coursework did not adequately prepare them for the rigorous workload required at their new “home” institution (Dowd, Pak, & Bensimon, 2013; Pak et al., 2006).

These academic challenges can reinforce feelings of inadequacy, claim Pak et al. (2006), since many students in this population have been told at one point that they were not “college material” and subsequently internalized negative messages about their abilities. When the community college transfers studied by Pak et al. arrived at their receiving institutions they reported feeling “overpowered by the sheer physicality” of the campus, and were “plagued by feelings of doubt as to whether they belonged there” (p. 31). Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, Morpew, and Sopcich (2004) use the term “culture shock” in their study of students transferring from Miami-Dade Community College to Smith College. The authors report that students were unsure whether they would ever fit in at this ““fancy schmancy college”” (p. 223). Besides having to understand their place at what felt like an elitist institution, community college transfers to Smith, who tended to be more diverse than native students, also had difficulty acclimating from a diverse, urban environment to a more rural, White environment.

Transfer agents, according to Pak et al. (2006), can help ease the shock of transferring to what feels like a foreign world by helping to create “special transfer programs” (p. 33) that allow for the development of close relationships between students and staff and peer mentors. According to the institutions Pak et al. studied, these programs included summer bridge residencies with intensive academic preparation, specified transfer housing on campus during the academic year, and transfer centers that serve as points of access for information and support.

For community college transfers in the Pak et al. study, these programs, which required effort and commitment at the organizational or structural level, were integral to students' ability to overcome the shock of transfer as they offered spaces to "gather, regroup, and find comfort and support" (p. 37). In addition to these programs, Pak et al. also found that involvement on campus and adequate financial resources were both important to reducing transfer shock, and both of which can be facilitated by transfer agents.

Despite the positive findings regarding the role of transfer agents in reducing transfer shock, Gabbard et al. (2006) are quick to note that the ways in which transfer agents supported students, at both the sending and receiving institutions, "varied greatly" (p. 27). They discuss the experiences of some students who had little guidance and their encounter with transfer agents "hinged on random incidents" largely because "there was not a formal mechanism in place" (p. 23). Although Gabbard et al. claim that the four-year institutions in their study seemed to have a more structured approach to supporting transfers than the community colleges, there was "a certain haphazardness to the whole process" (p. 30).

Other studies report similar findings. Bensimon and Dowd (2009), for example, found the absence of transfer agents "particularly striking" (p. 651). For the community college students whom they interviewed, the benefits "from the guidance of transfer agents appear[ed] to be the result of serendipity, being at the right place at the right time, rather than design" (p. 652). In a later study using CCTI data, Dowd, Pak, and Bensimon (2013) go on to say that "the approaches and systems for creating institutional agents are simply not well established" (p. 23).

Interestingly, Burack and Lanspery (2014) do not discuss the role of transfer agents in the final report for the CCTI. Instead, they use the term "trusted agent" (p. 57) as someone who is knowledgeable about students' personal circumstances, and can assist them accordingly, but

their discussion of such agents is limited to just one short paragraph. This lack of discussion is surprising given the discourse on transfer agents in the other research related to the CCTI, especially with regard to the role transfer agents can play in helping community college students adjust to both the cultural divide between the two institutions and the academic rigor of selective colleges.

Although the discourse on transfer champions and transfer agents is limited to the small bank of literature on transfer from community college to selective institutions, the scholarship discussed above indicates the significance of both roles in the success of transfer from community college to selective institutions. Put simply, community college transfers to selective institutions fare better when there is designated support from those with institutional decision-making power, such as high-level administrators and faculty members, and from those with knowledge about transfer who can help make transfer students feel welcomed and valued. As the above discussion also reveals, however, the development, support, and success of these roles seems relatively unstructured, which means that while there may be individual actors who take up the roles of champions or agents, there is often little institutional imperative for the development and support of either role.

Institutional Readiness

Part of the role of both champions and agents at receiving institutions is to ensure institutional readiness to enroll and support community college transfers. Readiness at the CCTI institutions depended largely on program alignment with the institution's strategic plan and mission as well as an established "learner-centered culture" that could "integrate a community college transfer initiative into existing institutional structures that support student success" (Burack & Lanspery, 2014, p. 22). Through surveys of faculty (at just Bucknell and Amherst)

and students, and through interviews with administrators, the authors found that partner institutions where the CCTI was aligned well with the institutional mission and/or strategic plan were more successful in program implementation. The authors point to Amherst's institutional mission to provide greater access to low-income students as an example of alignment. Campuses with a "welcoming community" (p. 22) were perceived as being learner-centered. Similar to establishing buy-in, ensuring a welcoming campus was based, in large part, on faculty involvement and whether they were "tremendous student advocates" (p. 22). According to one Mt. Holyoke student surveyed, that school's approach is to ask, "What can we do to help you succeed," rather than to say, "You're good, but we expect you to prove it," which seems to be the case at other selective colleges.

Campus readiness, claim Burack and Lanspery (2014), involved the support and development of "educational practices and structures that foster student success, such as advising and academic support services that are integrated into the academic culture and not perceived as remedial" (p. 22). They note that Amherst in particular "lacked the infrastructure" (p. 23) for such support given that the institution had not previously accepted many, or any, community college transfers. Amherst's response was to "experiment with several programmatic approaches in the context of a faculty-dominated culture" (p. 23). Burack and Lanspery do not explore this idea further, though, and so little remains known about whether or which approaches were tried, and, further, which ones were successful, and the extent to which Amherst's "faculty-dominated culture" played a role in establishing campus readiness.

Gabbard et al. (2006) in their study that informed the CCTI also explored campus readiness in relation to structured support programs. The authors essentially picked up where Pak et al. (2006) left off in their discussion of transfer agents and the structures necessary to develop

and support such roles. Gabbard et al. found that campuses that employed multiple types of support programs were more successful in ensuring readiness, including those that focused on recruitment, orientation, peer support, and academic preparation. One of the Smith studies (Wolf-Wendell, Twombly, Morpew, & Sopcich, 2004) also found that community college transfer students felt they were successful because of the extra support they received. This support included a pre-admissions program in the summer and intensive advising in the first semester, among other organized programs. Though the authors report that students had “internalized fears” (p. 228) of not being strong enough academically, they tout Smith’s ample “reassurance and support” (p. 229) in helping transfer succeed academically.

Notably, only the second of the two Smith studies explains how most of the transfers at Smith are part of Smith’s Ada Comstock program, which was established in 1975 as a way to expand access to non-traditional students, mostly those of non-traditional age. That transfers to Smith enter primarily through a long-standing and well-supported program is important especially when considered in relation to organizational context. A campus that has established a culture of support for nontraditional students is in a good position to support students transferring in from community college. This finding is similar to that in the final report of the CCTI. For example, Burack and Lanspery (2014) found that the CCTI at Mt. Holyoke College, also a selective women’s college, was successful in large part because of its long-standing Frances Perkins program, which is nearly identical to Smith’s Ada Comstock program. Since 1980, the Frances Perkins program has enrolled more than 1,000 women who were over the age of 25 and experienced disruptions to their education, women under the age of 25 with dependents, and military veterans (“Frances Perkins Program,” n.d.). This decades-long commitment to non-traditional students made it easier for Mt. Holyoke to garner support from faculty and staff,

“articulate goals and benchmarks...and generate passion” (Burack & Lanspery, p. 21) for a program that would enroll and support community college transfers.

Institutionalized support structures were highly recommended by Handel and Herrera (2006) in their speech at the JCKF National Forum in Washington DC, the transcript of which was later published by the College Board. Handel and Herrera argued that such structures could contribute to a “transfer-going culture” or “ethos” that often is sorely lacking at selective institutions. They go on to claim these changes are part of the “significant obligations” selective institutions have to create a “transfer-going culture” that focuses on both “access *and* achievement” (p. 11, italics in original).

However, there is evidence in some of the CCTI research that demonstrates the disinclination of the partner institutions to make the structural changes necessary to provide differentiated support for community college transfer students. Respondents in the Gabbard et al. (2006) study were “reluctant to discuss specific academic supports that low-income community college students would need once they transferred to an elite setting,” (p. 48), preferring instead to place responsibility for academic preparation on the sending community colleges. Gabbard et al.’s detailed list of exemplary programs to recruit, enroll, and support community college transfers further illustrates this point. Just one institution is highlighted as providing exemplary academic support for community college transfers; the remainder of the exemplary programs focus on enrollment and recruitment at the various partner schools. Notably, Burack and Lanspery (2014) do not take up the topic of academic support in the final CCTI report. They discuss academic success as it related to student outcomes, but not in relation to any particular support program at the partner institutions.

That the partner institutions were hesitant to engage CCTI researchers in discussions of academic support is not explored in the final CCTI report by Burack and Lanspery (2014), but it seems quite important, especially in light of the recommendations proposed by both Pak et al. (2006) and Handel and Herrera (2006). None of the CCTI research fully explores what the “on-going commitment from faculty” to engage in “sustained intervention” (Handel & Herrera, p. 5) to ensure adequate academic support might have looked like at the partner institutions. Thus, while there is ample discussion of programmatic structures that were put in place to recruit and enroll (i.e., changes to admissions and financial aid policies and practices) CCTI students, little remains known about how the partner institutions ensured that these students were supported academically on their respective campuses. Important questions remain about whether the partner institutions relied on existing structures or developed new ones and whether the support was concerted or ad-hoc.

Complicating the notion of academic support for community college transfers is the apparent reluctance of staff and faculty to single out transfer students as needing extra help. Morphew, Twombly, and Wolf-Wendell (2001) in their research of transfer to Smith College found that faculty and staff “were careful not to label or otherwise spotlight transfer students” (p. 18). Similarly, Gabbard et al. (2006) noted that institutions wanted to be careful not to create “a two-track system which could marginalize these students” (p. 32). Beyond the Gabbard et al. study, however, none of the CCTI research takes up the notion of marginalization, including the final report (Burack & Lanspery, 2014). As a result, it is unclear how the CCTI partner institutions provided differentiated support (Handel & Herrera, 2006; Pak et al., 2006) without singling out transfers as needing such support.

Partnerships to Find and Prepare the Right Students

Nearly all of the extant research on transfer from community college to selective institutions points to the importance of partnerships between the two institutional types. These partnerships require both commitment and a fair amount of work from staff and faculty to identify courses that can transfer, to provide prospective and actual transfer students with accurate information, and to ensure students are supported throughout the entire process. Morphew, Twombly, and Wolf-Wendel (2001) in their study of community college transfer to Smith College found that partnerships between two community colleges, Miami-Dade Community College and Santa Monica College, and Smith College were a “win-win...for all involved” (p. 9). For the community colleges, the agreement with Smith gave them a consistent outlet for bright students who wanted the liberal arts experience. It also helped boost their “academic image” (p. 9). For Smith, the agreement meant that they had a pipeline of diverse, qualified students. At the time when Morphew, Twombly, and Wolf-Wendell were writing, Smith was one of the only out-of-state institutions that was actively seeking partnerships with Miami Dade and Santa Monica. “In this sense,” note the authors, “Smith was referred to as “a little more progressive, cutting edge’ in terms of recruiting a diverse student body” (p. 10).

A partnership approach is also prescribed by Burack and Lanspery (2014) in the final CCTI report. In fact, the main title of the report is *Partnerships that Promote Success*. Their discussion of partnerships primarily focuses on the ways that institutional agents at the community colleges and selective institutions need to work together to identify the right students for transfer. Burack and Lanspery point to partnerships in the CCTI that included “structures such as advisory or oversight boards and planning committees” (p. 29) made up of deans, transfer advisors, and admissions and financial aid staff. These groups paved the way for

academic collaborations, such as courses co-taught by faculty from both institutional types, as well as the development of new positions, such as transfer liaisons who could identify and recruit academically promising community college students. Burack and Lanspery also discuss how “recruitment-enhancing communications” (p. 33) worked to reach prospective transfers. These efforts ranged from hiring professional and student advisors as “point people” to developing or revising online and written materials about transfer.

These efforts are similar to those that Smith had been engaging in with their partner schools (Morphew, Twombly, Wolf-Wendell, 2001). One key difference between the research on transfer to Smith and the CCTI is the existence of formal agreements. Morphew, Twombly, and Wolf-Wendell argued that while personal relationships between staff and even faculty at the community colleges and Smith helped the agreements work, formal, written articulation agreements were necessary for a smooth transfer experience. The institutions saw the need for formal agreements primarily to help the community college students, who were able to feel confident in the idea of transfer to Smith because they knew ahead of time which of their community college courses would transfer for credit. To be sure, credit transfer has been cited in the literature on transfer more generally as being a significant barrier to eventual degree completion. For example, Monaghan and Attewell (2015) using data from the BPS Longitudinal Study found that 28% of transfers lost between 10% and 89% of their credits when they transferred, and that about 14% of transfers “essentially began anew” (p. 14) at their receiving institutions. Those who lost credits during transfer were less likely to graduate than those who could transfer most or all of their credits, a finding that is consistent with other research (Glass & Harrington, 2002; Jenkins & Fink, 2016).

Burack and Lanspery (2014), however, devote little space to a discussion of credit transfer and articulation agreements. “Most campuses,” they claim, “found that articulation agreements were less important than processes, systems, and a willingness to negotiate” (p. 53). Instead, four-year campuses relied upon individual staff and faculty members to establish collaborations with community colleges to create these processes and systems. These collaborations resulted in everything from establishing “reasonable credit transfer policies” (p. 34) to identifying prospective transfers to co-teaching courses. At some of the receiving institutions, CCTI grant money went to developing new transfer liaison roles. For example, both Bucknell University and Mt. Holyoke used part of their funding to create a position whose main job was communicating and coordinating with area community colleges to identify prospective transfers and arrange campus visits. Similar positions were developed, and tended to be more robust, at the larger partner institutions. The USC Scholars program, for example, was led by a coordinator who held “regular office hours at each [community college] campus...advising students about transfer to USC” (Burack & Lanspery, p. 33).

Notably, most of Burack and Lanspery’s (2014) examination of partnerships exemplify those between community colleges and the larger universities that partnered for the CCTI (Cornell University, University of California at Berkeley, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill [UNC], University of Michigan [U-M], and the University of Southern California [USC]) and not the LACs. This is significant when considered within the frame of organizational context. It could be that the larger institutions in the CCTI had more success in developing and maintaining partnerships with community colleges because they already had structures in place within which programs to identify, recruit, and provide early academic preparation for community college transfers could more easily be built. At some of the larger universities, these

programs had identifiable names, staff, and designated funding, such as UNC's C-STEP (Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program), Cornell's Pathways to Success program, and Berkeley's TAP (Transfer Alliance Program²). In many cases, these programs included sub-programs to enhance student readiness for transfer, such as extended campuses visits and orientations as well as summer fellowship opportunities and academic bootcamps.

Faculty collaborations are not discussed in any detail by Burack and Lanspery (2014) who instead provide a short list of examples. These collaborations included team-teaching courses (Bucknell and Mt. Holyoke), leading joint workshops on teaching and learning (Amherst), and presenting together at national conferences (USC). This kind of collaborative work is demonstrative of what Handel and Herrera (2006) called for in their speech at the JKCF National Forum. Partnerships between faculty at community colleges and selective institutions, they claim, are essential to moving away from "devaluing a collective approach to...transfer student success" (p. 3). This shift is possible by first acknowledging the differences in organizational context between community colleges and selective institutions and then creating a "common culture...that embraces both systems" (Handel & Herrera, p. 3). There is no direct evidence of CCTI partner institutions acknowledging the differences in organizational context, at least not in the extant literature on the initiative. There is evidence, however, that several institutions made efforts to bridge the institutional divide. For instance, Burack and Lanspery note that the community colleges around the Ann Arbor area "appeared not to trust" the University of Michigan, and "often did not advise their students to apply" there (p. 31). In response U-M put on what they called a "road show" to "put a human face on" the university (p. 31). At the receiving end, Burack and Lanspery report that leaders at Bucknell University were

² Burack and Lanspery (2014) call Berkeley's TAP both the Transfer Alliance Program and the Transfer Assistance Program, but according to Berkeley's website, it is the Transfer Alliance Program

“concerned” about the CCTI because of “a past community college initiative” that enrolled students who “did not fit in well on campus and did not succeed academically” (p. 37). Bucknell responded by creating a summer residential bridge program during which students could try out courses and get a sense of the campus culture, encouraging faculty to co-teach courses with community college faculty, and meeting regularly with community college staff.

Sustaining Success

In the last section of the final CCTI report, Burack and Lanspery (2014) move from implementation of the CCTI to ways that the partner institutions sustained support for students during the course of the initiative (2006-2010). This support included developing and maintaining ways to integrate transfers, both academically and socially, once they were on campus, and engaging in continual assessments to determine the additional support students might need moving forward. It is worth noting that this section of the final report is rather brief, around six pages, and repetitive. That is, the efforts that the partner institutions took to implement the CCTI, discussed in detail above, were not all that different from how they sustained the initiative. However, there are aspects of this section that are worth highlighting, particularly how CCTI students fared academically and socially post-admission and the responses from the partner institutions.

Both academic and social integration have been cited in the student success literature as important factors in the persistence of community college transfers toward graduation from their receiving institutions (e.g., see D’Amico, Dika, Elling, Algozzine, & Ginn, 2014; Townsend & Wilson, 2009). This literature base has also shown that community college transfers have “somewhat different academic and social needs” (Townsend & Wilson, 2009, p. 419) than their

native peers and often do not easily integrate academically or socially, especially within their first semester.

With regard to academic integration, the CCTI students seemed to be not much different than community college transfers in general. Burack and Lanspery (2014) are quick to note that CCTI students proved to be “highly motivated to tackle academic work” (p. 54) before they transferred, with the majority (63%) reporting feeling “very well” or “well” prepared, but the post-transfer data reveal the challenges CCTI students faced: 45% of CCTI survey respondents reported feeling “a great deal” of difficulty with keeping up with readings, papers, and tests (with another 42% reporting “some” difficulty); 41% reported “a great deal of” difficulty with managing time (with another 41% reporting “some difficulty”); and 25% reported having “a great deal” of difficulty staying motivated and focused (with another 37% reporting “some difficulty”). Notably, Burack and Lanspery eschew these data in their discussion of CCTI students post-transfer, opting instead for a brief overview of these challenges.

Burack and Lanspery (2014) do give more detail about the strategies that the CCTI partner institutions used to help support CCTI students post transfer. These strategies include: de-stigmatizing academic support centers, providing extra math seminars, instituting early warning identification systems, and offering research opportunities. However, all of these strategies, like with previously discussed support programs, were at the larger partner universities; there is no discussion of these kinds of programs at the partner LACs. The partner LACs are mentioned in two other strategies Burack and Lanspery identify: advising, from both professional, faculty, and student advisors, and post-graduation planning, but again, neither of these strategies is presented in detail. Because this portion of the report lacks a full discussion about (a) the struggles CCTI students faced after transfer and (b) the response from the partner

institutions, little remains known about the extent to which CCTI students academically integrated into their receiving institutions and about the success levels of the programs instituted by the partner institutions. Most of what can be gleaned about academic integration comes from the survey data reported in the appendices. This lack of information may be because, as noted above, the receiving institutions did not seem open to discussing the academic needs of community college transfers (Gabbard et al., 2006). Thus, the efforts of selective institutions to ensure the academic integration of community college transfers are an area that requires continued inquiry.

The final report for the CCTI also considers the social integration of transfers. Burack and Lanspery (2014) acknowledge that community college transfers “may feel cultural dissonance” (p. 56) once at their receiving institution. As discussed above, transfer agents at both the sending and receiving institutions can play an important role in helping transfers to acclimate to their receiving institution. In this section of the CCTI report, Burack and Lanspery briefly highlight a handful of additional strategies the partner institutions used: the cohort model, post-admissions activities, personal support, and financial support. According to the authors, the cohort model helped transfers bond with one another, develop leadership skills, and identify with the culture of the institution.

Many of these programs began before enrollment, and some morphed over time. Amherst’s post-admissions support for transfers, for example, began with highlighting “points of connection rather than differences,” but by the end of the CCTI (in 2010) had “more of a cohort model, with on-going post admissions activities, paid peer mentors...and an institutionally funded point person on campus” (p. 57). There is little known about the effects of cohort models in the literature on transfer more generally, but these models, typically thought of as “learning

communities” or “living/learning communities” in the broader literature on student success, have shown some effect in facilitating social integration (Eck, Edge, & Stephenson, 2007), particularly for students from previously underserved populations (Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007).

In addition to cohort models, Burack and Lanspery (2014) discuss, very briefly, post-admissions activities, such as presentations on resources, and revisit the role of “trusted agents” who can provide personal support. Both are considered ways to help integrate transfers socially to campus and to help them build confidence in themselves as members of the community. Lastly, Burack and Lanspery discuss financial support as a way to integrate students socially, although the authors do not make the connection between the two explicit. The assumption might be that if students do not have the burden of worrying about finances, related to housing and supplies, for example, then they more likely will be able to focus on becoming active community members who can take full advantage of campus resources. In their study leading up to the CCTI, Pak et al. (2006) found that increased financial aid meant that transfers did not have to work part-time, which, overall helped reduce transfer shock and increase the likelihood of active involvement, such as participating in leadership and honors programs and collaborative research projects. Many of the CCTI partner institutions engaged in what Burack and Lanspery call “creative financial support” (p. 58), including funding for unpaid internships and assistantships, child care, conference registrations, travel costs for interviews, and health care coverage. This kind of creative approach seems integral to the success of community college transfers and their level of integration, especially since “financial aid policies are often tailored to the needs of native students” (Gabbard et al., 2006, p. 58).

Section Summary

The second part of Chapter Two explored what is known about community college transfer to elite higher education. The extant research about community college transfer to elite colleges largely considers what kinds of institutional conditions are necessary for the development of successful transfer programs. Researchers found that the most successful institutions were those that were (a) open to and prepared for supporting community college transfers; (b) supportive of senior-level staff who could champion program development; (c) created programs with particular features, such as a cohort model and targeted academic support; (d) made concerted efforts to establish clear and consistent pathways between the institution and partner community college; and (e) engaged in regular and meaningful assessment.

Section Three: Exploring the Concept of Organizational Saga

The above discussion of the topical research on community college transfer to elite institutions and of the theoretical scholarship on distributive justice and how it pertains to elite higher education helps to establish what is currently known about this function and why it matters. Part Three moves the discussion forward by connecting these two branches of literature to a way of conceiving programmatic distinction in higher education, and particularly at a elite liberal arts college like Bucknell University. This section focuses on distinction because of the case under scrutiny in this study. That is, the main presumption in this study is that something was and is happening institutionally at Bucknell around community college transfer that sets it apart from its peers. It stands to reason, then, that understanding what makes the case of Bucknell's support for community college transfer unique in the field requires a way of thinking about institutional distinction.

The discussion in Part Three centers the work of Burton Clark (1970), and particularly his book, *The Distinctive College*. In this text, Clark, a sociologist who was keenly interested in systems of higher education, studied the rise of three LACs at the turn of the Century in an effort to figure out why some colleges had met “academic acclaim,” while others seemed “caught in a circle of perpetual mediocrity” (p. 4). He wanted to know what organizational features and factors might lead to acclaim. “How is it done,” he asked. “How has it been done?” (p. 4). Before this section details the aspects of saga, it is worth noting that Clark (1970) considered the LAC a distinctive organization in and of itself. He situates his analysis of Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore within a brief discussion of the larger context of the LAC, which, he claims, is “*the romantic element in our educational system*” (p. 3). It is a type of college, Clark notes, that most other advanced countries have “managed to do without” (p. 4), which, coupled with its connection to the very founding of the nation, makes it “distinctively American” (Koblik & Graubard, 2000, p. VIII). Clark shows, however, that the LAC also has a long history of exclusion and elitism. As such, the LAC, over the centuries, has often found itself torn between competing ideals: The democratic ideal of equal opportunity and the institutional ideal of exclusivity.

Saga as Concept

It is within this backdrop of competing ideals that Clark (1970) went about studying three LACs that he identified as “highly regarded” (p. 5) at the time: Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore Colleges. He engaged each case in an historical analysis, working back through the history of the organization until he located “the critical years when the basic presentation,” or the “expression of a certain set of values...was initiated” (p. 6). Once he identified the critical point, Clark moved forward, looking for ways in which this “basic presentation...became firmly fixed in the

workings of the institution” (p. 6). For Clark, this process meant paying close attention to “innovating leaders” (p. 6) as well as factors and features of the organization that could be manipulated and then maintained in the face of internal and external changes. Through this analysis, Clark developed the phenomenon of organizational saga as a way to understand why some organizations surpass others in terms of their ability to live out their missions. “All organizations have a social role,” claims Clark, or a way of being and behaving within a defined social position, and many organizations form missions, or “a purposive way” of fulfilling their social role (p. 8). Only a select few, though, are what can be called “strongly purposive” (p. 8) in their ability to move their mission beyond simply a statement of purpose to the point where it is “transformed into an embracing saga” that helps to identify the organization as distinctive or even “legendary” (p. 8).

In the last chapter of *The Distinctive College*, Clark (1970) explains saga further, how the movement from mission to saga is a complex, often lengthy process that involves numerous constituents. The mission gets tested and reformed over the years, and the story told about the purpose of the organization often gets embellished by its members. For Clark, one of the most important aspects of saga is the emotional connection between the staff and the organization’s mission, and amongst staff members themselves whose “deep emotional investment binds [them] as comrades in a cause” (p. 235). They then work as one, a community helping to build a something they see as extraordinary. The aspect of legend is also central to saga, and Clark illustrates how organizational “themes” become legendary. While saga looked different at the three LACs studied, all developed from an enduring sense of purpose. For Clark, Antioch’s saga was nonconformity, Reed’s was academic purity, and Swarthmore’s was excellence. A quick glance at the way these institutions currently refer to themselves, nearly 50 years after Clark’s

writing, underscores the power of saga. On its website, Antioch's main message is that by attending Antioch, students "participate in a movement rooted in a tradition of breaking boundaries" ("About Antioch," n.d.); Reed College claims its place as "one of the most intellectual colleges in the country" ("About Reed," n.d.); and Swarthmore guarantees students an unparalleled "vigorous academic experience" ("What's Distinctive About Swarthmore," n.d.).

Initiation

In unpacking the concept of saga, Clark (1970) was able to identify (a) the conditions in which saga gets formed, or "initiation" (p. 237) and (b) the conditions in which saga gets institutionalized, or "fulfillment" (p. 245). Initiation of saga can occur in three possible conditions: the new context, the revolutionary context, and the evolutionary context. The new context, perhaps not surprisingly, is the one in which saga can most easily be formed. For Clark, starting with a new organization, as was the case with Reed College, means that "old preferences might be brought to bear, imported and impressed from the surrounding society, but at least the men with new ideas do not have to cope with an established organizational structure and the rigidities of organizational custom" (p. 237). In the case of the new context at Reed, "the environment stood back" (p. 238), claims Clark, which allowed Reed's leadership at the time to establish structures and systems unencumbered by existing or previous beliefs about the organization.

Saga can also be formed in the revolutionary context, when an organization is in flux or crisis, when the very survival of the institution is questioned. Change gets a foothold when leadership is forced "to give up established ways or else give up the organization," claims Clark; "the deep crisis re-creates some of the conditions of the new organization" (p. 238). At this point, another, more visionary leader must step in, as was the case with Antioch College. Such a leader,

claims Clark, can “conspire in lifting the hand of tradition” (p. 238), which can help pave a new path for the organization. These moments for the organization, of being in deep crisis and being lifted out with a new mission or purpose, becomes an integral part of the story that the organization tells itself.

The last condition, the evolutionary context, is the most common, according to Clark (1970). In this context, the organization is stable; it is “at least paying the rent and satisfying the expectations of some students and faculty,” and has a reasonable amount of support from alumni (p. 239). While this context might not seem ripe for change, Clark contends that “commitments and patterns vary widely in rigidity,” and that “if relatively flexible, they can be sometimes used as a platform, a base camp, for deliberate and fairly rapid evolutionary change” (p. 239). Clark uses the case of Swarthmore as an example, and exemplifies the sway of a powerful leader. At this time, Swarthmore’s new leader found a way in to change, “to introduce a new mission, to build the supports to turn the mission into a legend” (p. 239). In the evolutionary context, Clark cautions that a distinction can be made between “closed and open stability,” between the extent to which constituents are “tolerant or intolerant of change” (p. 239). But, he argues that organizations in this context might be more open to change than is typically thought, and that the key is often “the state of organizational ambition” (p. 240).

For Burack and Lanspery (2014), as discussed above, context also proved important to the success of transfer program development. They considered context in relation to institutional readiness. That is, institutions that were more tolerant of change and that could align transfer program development to the institutional mission were more successful in developing the structures necessary to support transfer. Handel and Herrera (2006) understood institutional context to be related to the development of a “transfer-going culture” or “ethos,” which they

found essential to programmatic success (p. 11). The more open the institution was to change, the more likely the development of a culture accepting of transfer.

Given the important role of leadership in each context, Clark (1970) highlights leadership, and charismatic leaders specifically, as a necessary consideration in the development of saga. Here, Clark pulls from Weber's concept of charisma, which helps him explain how some leaders gain followers not because of their knowledge or experience but because their "unusual qualities" are attractive (p. 240). Charismatic leaders, because of these qualities, are able to have an "uncommon influence" (p. 241) on an organization, gaining a large following of devotees. For Clark, charismatic leaders can enter into any one of the three initiation contexts, either building a base of believers quickly, as is usually the case in new and revolutionary contexts, or slowly over time, as is usually the case in the evolutionary context. In any of these contexts, however, the extent of the leader's influence is largely dependent on subordinates, who act as a kind of guiding force. The pressure subordinates can exert may be greater in evolutionary contexts when the organization is neither new nor in crisis, but charismatic leadership can enact change nonetheless. "What is initially required," claims Clark, "is an opening for leadership, usually manifested by a willingness to improve" (p. 244) at the organization.

Clark's (1970) understanding of leadership and the important role it plays in the development of saga is reminiscent of Burack and Lanspery's (2014) understanding of the role of the transfer champion discussed above. Like a charismatic leader, the transfer champion is an "empowering" leader who can earn the support of trustees, senior staff, faculty, and staff (Burack & Lanspery, 2014, p. 23). Transfer champions also are committed to deep, internal change at the institution. At the three LACs that were part of the CCTI, Burack and Lanspery found that transfer champions tended to be faculty members, who often "wield considerable power in

institutional decision making” (p. 25). Clark separates out the roles of leaders, which he understood to be college presidents, and the roles of the faculty, whom he saw to be institutionally influential in a different way, as discussed below.

Fulfillment

The initiation of saga, according to Clark (1970), is “to an important degree” based on “the accidents of history and the unique features of particular contexts” (p. 245). The fulfillment of saga, or the institutionalization of an organizational theme, is “more regular and predictable” (p. 246). Through his analysis of Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore, Clark could identify five common aspects of fulfillment: the personnel core, the program core, the social base, the student subculture, and the ideology. The personnel core is best described as the level of faculty dedication to an organizational theme. Even a charismatic leader with an extraordinary, innovative idea will gain little traction, claims Clark, if the faculty do not “swing in line and remain committed” (p. 246). Leaders of higher educational institutions tend to come and go, but the personnel core tends to remain fairly stable. Thus, organizational change, and the potential for distinction, depends to a great extent on the willingness (and ability) of faculty to protect “the experiment, the plan, the idea from the quick erosion that could otherwise take place” after a new leader emerges or “new forces in a fast-changing environment” surface (p. 247).

For Clark (1970), the program core is the most common and obvious way that saga is identified in the organization. “When claims of distinctiveness are made,” he notes, “we hear most about the program” (p. 248). This core includes specific courses or other academic requirements, but it also includes less obvious and structured institutional practices, such as ways of teaching or beliefs of the faculty about teaching and learning. The more the staff of the organization engage in particular practices, the more symbolic meaning the practices take on,

and the more culturally valuable they become. The practices-as-rituals “become partly mystified” (p. 250) claims Clark, and thus help to form a legend. Here, Clark gives the example of the practice of not reporting grades to students at Reed. This practice, continued over time by different groups of faculty, became symbolic of an institution that was not focused on academic output but on “learning for learning’s sake” (p. 250). The story about the practice, then, subsequently informs future practice.

The social base may not be as obvious an element of saga as the program core, but to Clark (1970) it is equally as essential. The social base is made up of “groups and aggregations in the larger society” from which organizations “draw money, moral support, personnel, and students” (p. 250). As such, the social base must be inspired to believe in the mission of the organization. At small colleges like the ones Clark studied, the social base often consists largely of alumni who can, in turn, wield great influence, particularly if the institution has few other sources of support. As a result, “a change in character” at the organization requires “either winning their support” or doing the hard work of finding new groups of supporters (p. 250). The key to success, according to Clark, is for even the small institution to have multiple and diverse groups within the social base so that when one group disagrees with an organizational decision or direction, another can be called upon. Nonetheless, claims Clark, alumni are a powerful group because of their potential to “hold beliefs enduringly pure” (p. 251), which aid in the development of institutional legend. Such support can be paradoxical, however, since alumni also tend to be resistant to change, especially with regard to the institution’s character.

The fourth aspect of saga fulfillment comes from the students themselves, or, more specifically, the subculture of freedom associated with students at higher education institutions. Clark (1970) argues that unlike at other types of institutions, such as hospitals or prisons,

students “are free to form their own structures and to bring their own values to bear upon the rest of the institution” (p. 252). They also are free to choose their own academic paths and the way they interact with the organization; they can put in minimal or maximum effort, can start movements for including or excluding ways of thinking and operating, and can opt to leave the institution altogether for another one. Thus, “the student body becomes a major force in defining the institution” (p. 253), and as such, the “dominant subculture of the student body” (p. 253) must be on board for any legendary change to occur at the institution. If they are, their influence in maintaining the organizational legend from one student generation to another cannot be understated.

Lastly, Clark highlights the role that ideology plays in fulfillment of saga. It is a kind of last step in the saga-building process because the development of ideology depends on all of the other fulfillment factors outlined above. Once the institution “has developed or is developing a distinctive theme,” the members of the institution can be ideologically “stubborn” and thus overlook organizational behaviors and decisions that might otherwise seem wrong or untenable (p. 254). These decisions and behaviors then become part of the legendary story of the institution. “The more special the history,” claims Clark, “the more intensively cultivated are the ways of sharing memory and symbolizing the institution” (p. 254). This image is not just contained to the organization, but through students and other groups, gets pushed out to the larger social world, which in turn helps in the “assembling of an external social base” that “embodies the central idea” of the organization (p. 255). This image, or theme, often comes through in how the institution talks about itself to the outside world. Institutional tag lines, phrases often repeated over the decades or centuries even, can be a sign that an institutional ideology has formed.

The Transferability of Organizational Saga

Although Clark (1970) conceptualized saga in relation to an entire organization, it has been used in other ways by scholars, from imagining the role of diversity officers (Malewiski & Jaramillo, 2017) to corporate managers (Martin et al., 1983; Wilkins & Martin, 1979). Given the potential of its varied applications, it stands to reason that the concept of saga is fairly malleable, and thus can be used to explore factors and features individual programs. Programs, like organizations, are often driven by specific missions that get tested by the influence of different kinds of leaders as well as varying levels of staff and faculty dedication, student participation, and external support. Like organizations, programs can have defining or critical moments when they become something more than themselves, when they gain the undying support of adherents, and subsequently take on a kind of symbolic meaning within the institution, so much so that adherents cannot imagine the institution without them.

It is in this spirit that the present study understands saga. Saga presents a way to explore and comprehend the complexities of Bucknell University's longstanding commitment to community college transfer. Further, Clark's (1970) study of saga offers a model for how to approach such an historically-based study of distinction. It suggests ways to identify points in time and aspects of the organization and the external social world that could be important in the development of programmatic distinction. The aspects of saga can also be connected to what is known currently about community college transfer to elite colleges.

Chapter Summary

The first part of Chapter Two reviewed philosophical scholarship on distributive justice as it pertains to elite higher education. This scholarship has established that elite institutions are (a) obligated to provide equitable access and (b) are justified in doing so assuming they provide

necessary compensatory support once students are enrolled. This line of thinking was then applied specifically to the function of community college transfer. This section also introduced ways of thinking about organizational decision-making around who gets in and who gets left out of elite higher education. In particular, I explored Karabel's (2005) ideas of organizational self-interest and how it informs organizational action around admissions.

The second part of Chapter Two explored what is known about community college transfer to elite higher education. The extant research about community college transfer to elite colleges largely considers what kinds of institutional conditions are necessary for the development of successful transfer programs. Researchers found that the most successful institutions were those that were (a) open to and prepared for supporting community college transfers; (b) supportive of senior-level staff who could champion program development; (c) created programs with particular features, such as a cohort model and targeted academic support; (d) made concerted efforts to establish clear and consistent pathways between the institution and partner community college; and (e) engaged in regular and meaningful assessment.

The last part of the literature review connected these two banks of literature to the concept of organizational saga, which Clark (1970) developed as a way to understand institutional distinction. Clark identified specific contexts within which saga can be initiated as well as aspects of the fulfillment of saga. This study proposed that the concept of saga can be applied to singular programs and considered how such an application is justified.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter One of this dissertation established the reasons supporting the examination of Bucknell University's initiatives for transfer support. Elite institutions are under increased scrutiny for failing to provide equitable access, particularly for low-income students, and community college transfer seems to be a viable option for elite institutions to do so. Bucknell University is one of the only elite institutions in the nation to have long-established initiatives to support community college transfers and, thus, is an institution with deep knowledge of this function. Researchers of community college transfer to elite institutions have called for in-depth case studies of successful institutions. The present study answers that call by examining Bucknell's past and present initiatives.

Chapter Two first explored what is known already about community college transfer to elite higher education, then considered philosophical understandings of distributive justice as they pertain to elite higher education, and lastly connected these two branches of literature to Clark's (1970) concept of organizational saga. The present chapter focuses the study on the case at hand, Bucknell University's support for community college transfer, by first reviewing the questions guiding the research and then describing both the process of selecting Bucknell as the research site and the site itself in detail, as well as the bounded unit of analysis, which I understood to be STEP and BCCSP as two ends of the same community college transfer initiative. This chapter connected to relevant methodological research to explain of the procedures used for data collection and management, and then looped in the conceptual framework to explore data analysis procedures. Lastly, this chapter considers the study's limitations in relation to both validity and reliability in case study research.

Research Questions

Like Clark's (1970) study of three liberal arts colleges at the turn of the Century, the present study is also interested in distinction, though more at the programmatic level. Bucknell University is one of the only elite colleges in the country that has had some form of support for community college transfers for the past 30 years. This longstanding support not only positions Bucknell as an institution with deep knowledge of community college transfer, it also sets it apart from its peers, many of which have either not managed to develop any programs to support community college transfer or have not been able to sustain such programs. Thus, Bucknell's longstanding and continuous support for community college transfer, through the STEP and BCCSP initiatives, is distinct. This study aimed to figure out what has happened and is happening institutionally at Bucknell that has led to this distinction. In short, this study asked the same questions Clark did of Antioch, Reed, And Swarthmore Colleges: *How is it done? How has it been done?*

Case Study as Method

There is not widespread agreement among methodological scholars about what case study is. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) contend that confusion about case study arises because “the process of conducting a case is conflated with both the unit of study (case) and the product of this type of investigation” (p. 37). In identifying case study as its own type of qualitative inquiry, Merriam and Tisdell conclude that “the single most defining characteristic of case study lies in delimiting the object of study: the case” (p. 38). Here, Merriam and Tisdell align themselves with Stake's (2010) view that case study helps researchers focus on the one thing they are most interested in, such as “one playground, one band, one Weight Watchers group” (p. 27). Because the “what” is central to case study, it is imperative that the unit of analysis be a bounded system,

something that can be “fenced in” (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 38). Merriam and Tisdell explain that the case could be any type of bounded unit, such as a person, “a program, a group, an institution, a community, or a specific policy” (p. 38). Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) illustrate case study as a circle with a heart in the middle. The heart represents the study’s focus while the circle “defines the edge of the case” (p. 28).

Within the case study method, a researcher has many options of how to go about the study. These options largely depend on the purpose or goal of the project. Case study research can include a single case or multiple cases, it can explore in-depth a particular intervention, or it can compare and contrast cases. Methodological scholars, most notably Yin (2014) and Stake (1995, 2003, 2008), have developed terminology to differentiate among these possible approaches. For Yin, case studies are explanatory, exploratory, and/or descriptive, with the most important application being “to *explain* the presumed causal links in real-world interventions that are too complex for survey or experimental methods” (Yin, p. 19, emphasis in original). In this sense, Yin takes more of a post-positivist stance than a constructivist one; that is, he “assumes the existence of a single reality that is independent of any observer” (Yin, p. 17). He does, however, also acknowledge the potential of case study to identify and explore “multiple realities” (p. 17) depending on the experiences and perspective of the researcher.

Stake (2003), on the other hand, sits squarely in the constructivist camp. He understands case study as a form of storytelling that communicates “emic meanings held by the people within the case” (p. 144). But, he claims, the storytelling is done by a researcher who provides “experiential and contextual accounts,” and by so doing “assists readers in the construction of knowledge” (p. 146). Many qualitative methodology scholars agree with Stake’s view of case study. Tesch (1990), for example, places case study under the umbrella of the

“interpretive/descriptive” (p. 98) approach to qualitative research because, she claims, case study is often undertaken as a way to “discern meaning” (p. 67). Such a position is similar to Stake’s (1995) claim that case study calls for a researcher’s “subjective judgment, analyzing and synthesizing, all the while realizing their own consciousness” (p. 41).

Stake identifies two main types of case study research: intrinsic and instrumental. Intrinsic case study is chosen if the researcher’s primary interest is the case itself “in all its particularity and ordinariness” (p. 136). Instrumental case study is chosen if the researcher’s primary interest is “to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization” (p. 137). In instrumental case study, the case is of “secondary interest,” and thus assumes “a supportive role” in facilitating “our understanding of something else” (p. 137). For Stake, the use of multiple instrumental cases results in what he calls “collective case study” (p. 138), which is undertaken when each case with its particularities adds “will lead to a better understanding, perhaps better theorizing” (p. 138) about a general phenomenon.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) add that case studies can also be historical when “the history of a program or organization” (p. 40) is of particular interest. Historical case studies allow for the past to become present through the conveyance of the “experience of actors and stakeholders” (Stake, 2008, p. 134) at the time. Readers of this kind of case study have the opportunity to “vicarious[ly] experience” (Stake, p. 134) the organization or program through the thick description its historical development, as discussed in more detail below.

Design of Present Study

While the approach taken here is informed by the scholarship on case study as a whole, the current study adopts Stake’s (1995, 2008) constructivist view of case study and relies on his conception intrinsic case study, in which the “particularity and complexity of a single case”

(1995, p. xi) is the primary focus. This intrinsic need to learn about a single case tends to be driven by curiosity about something that is unique to that case. Stake (1995) notes that while a case study can be of a “typical” case, “often an unusual case helps illustrate matters we overlook in typical cases” (p. 4). This dissertation aimed to understand the case of Bucknell University’s support for community college transfers, which I considered unique, or distinct among elite liberal arts colleges, and even elite institutions more generally.

Like Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the present study contends that much can be learned from historical case study, particularly the history of institutional programs. It traces the development of Bucknell’s current program for community college transfers, the Bucknell University Community College Scholars Program (BCCSP), back to its origins, first as the Bucknell-CCP partnership and then as STEP (Student Transfer Enrichment Program). It moves forward chronologically to show how internal and external constituents and contexts played a role in that development. Ultimately, the present study ties both the historical and contemporary together by considering STEP and BCCSP as two ends of the same initiative, which served as the bounded unit of analysis.

Unit of Analysis

In qualitative research generally, the selection of the unit of analysis is typically purposeful because the goal is not generalizability, but rather a deep understanding of what is happening with that particular unit, or sample (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For Patton (2015), “the logic and power of qualitative purposeful sampling derives from the emphasis on in-depth understanding of specific cases: *information-rich cases*” (p. 53, emphasis in original). Such cases, claims Patton, “are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (p. 53). The purpose for selecting the unit of analysis

can vary, of course, depending on the goal of the research. Some researchers use convenience samples, for instance, while others seek out samples that are typical or unique (Merriam & Tisdell). In intrinsic case study specifically, the case is preselected because the researcher has identified a “need to learn about that particular case” (Stake, 1995, p. 3). However, even in intrinsic case study, claims Stake (2008), there is a process of selecting what to focus on within that case, or “embedded cases,” such as specific events, people, and places (p. 130).

Much like Clark’s (1970) preselection of three liberal arts colleges at the turn of the Century for his study of distinction, the present study preselected Bucknell University because of its distinctive status as an institution with a long-standing, successful program to support community college transfers. The process of identification was fairly straightforward. Through my academic support work at an elite college, I became interested in supporting our small community college transfer student population and began researching how best to do so. I quickly realized that there is little research to guide best practices at elite colleges, especially compared to the reams of research about community college transfer at less selective public institutions. In my research, however, I learned about BCCSP’s success. Although I initially considered comparing Bucknell’s experience with transfer to that of the two other liberal arts colleges that were part of the CCTI (Amherst and Mt. Holyoke Colleges), when I began researching BCCSP in earnest, I learned about the initiation of STEP in the late 1980s and became keenly interested in the history of transfer support at Bucknell. At that point, I understood Bucknell’s community college transfer support to be a distinct, or “atypical” case (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 98) worthy of close examination. In short, I had developed an intrinsic interest as a researcher in Bucknell’s community college transfer initiatives.

Unit of Analysis in Present Study

This section describes the bounded unit of analysis in the present study, which I understand to be STEP and BCCSP as two ends of the same community college transfer initiative. I first provide a brief, current description of Bucknell University to establish the institutional context. I then describe briefly the programmatic aspects of STEP and BCCSP, which I do here to demonstrate in practical terms the connection between the two.

Brief Description of Institutional Context

Bucknell University is a private, co-educational, liberal arts university located in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, about one hour north of Harrisburg, the state's capital city. Most of the campus sits upon a hill overlooking the town of Lewisburg, and it is often described as the quintessential college campus, with its "stately" Georgian buildings and multiple quads between them. Bucknell earns its university status by serving roughly 60-70 graduate students, primarily in engineering, but the majority of its student population is undergraduates (3,600), who hail from 31 states and 42 countries ("Fast Facts," n.d.). Bucknell has earned the rank of "most competitive" by *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, putting it in the company of the nation's elite institutions. *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Bucknell as the 35th best LAC in the nation, which places it in the range of such schools as Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania, Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts, and Oberlin College in Ohio. Bucknell's faculty-to-student ratio is 9:1 and the University boasts an 88% completion rate within six years (compared to 58.3% nationally) ("Fast Facts," n.d.). Bucknell hosts 27 Division I sports teams, making it home to "one of the largest varsity athletics programs in the country" ("Athletics," n.d.). It also has a large and active Greek life with 8 fraternity and 10 sorority chapters ("Fraternity & Sorority Affairs," n.d.).

In terms of the student body, Bucknell Common Data Set for 2019-2020 lists 1,764 men and 1,838 women as full-time degree-seeking undergraduates. In that population are 2,693 White, non-Hispanic students and 693 students of color combined (235 Hispanic/Latino, 123 Black or African American, 2 American Indian or Alaska Native, 181 Asian, 1 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 151 two or more races). For the fall of 2019, Bucknell received 238 applications for transfer and admitted 76, 25 of which enrolled (note that these rates are not exclusive to transfer from community college). In terms of aid, Bucknell awarded need-based aid to 1,369 undergraduate students in 2019, of that number, 1,195 were awarded need-based scholarship or grant (no-loan) aid. This figure is a bit misleading, however, since it includes any amount of scholarship or grant money. The *Equality of Opportunity* report by Chetty et al. (2017) shows, for instance, that 73% of Bucknell's undergraduate students are in the top 20% of the income distribution, and a full 20% are in the top 1%. In contrast, only 2.3% are in the bottom 20% of the income distribution.

Description of Unit of Analysis

I learned through preliminary research that Bucknell University's distinct support for community college transfer students has gone through multiple iterations. The first version was a partnership between Bucknell and the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) and was, according to the earliest documentation, referred to simply as the Bucknell-CCP program. This program was an effort by Bucknell to recruit a more diverse student body and by CCP to elevate transfer options for high-achieving students. The partnership between these two institutions coincided with a national project on transfer spearheaded by the American Association of Colleges, whose goal was to replicate Vassar College's successful Exploring Transfer program at several elite colleges around the country.

By the time the Bucknell-CCP partnership program became a reality at Bucknell in the summer of 1990, it had been renamed the Student Transfer Enrichment Program or STEP. STEP was not that much different than Bucknell's current program, BCCSP, except for its exclusive partnership with CCP. Each summer Bucknell brought around 30 CCP students to campus for a six-week residency during which students took three courses that were team-taught by Bucknell and CCP faculty. STEP participants lived on campus in dormitories, ate in the dining halls, and engaged in extracurricular activities designed to encourage cohort-building and develop in students a college-going ethos. Many of these activities were cultural in nature, such as visits to museums and music venues.

The second version of the program, BCCSP, entered the planning stages in 2006 when the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (JKCF) launched the Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), which funneled significant resources to Bucknell. Bucknell used JKCF funding to reconfigure STEP, but it kept many of the same programmatic features. For instance, BCCSP brings between 25-30 students to campus each summer for a six-week residency during which students take three courses. When BCCSP was first launched in 2007, these courses were team taught by Bucknell and community college faculty, much like in STEP, but that practice changed a couple of years in and now these courses are taught exclusively by Bucknell faculty. Students also participate in enrichment activities meant to aid in cohort creation and to orient students to academic and social life at an elite four-year college. Participants also have the opportunity during the residency to conduct research and get explicit instruction in academic writing.

One of the key differences between STEP and BCCSP is that Bucknell now partners with the following six area community colleges to identify potential participants: Harrisburg Area Community College in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Montgomery County Community College in

Blue Bell, Pennsylvania; Garrett College in McHenry, Maryland; Lehigh Carbon Community College in Schnecksville, Pennsylvania; and Reading Area Community College in Reading, Pennsylvania. There is now a transfer admission dean who works with these area community colleges to identify potential recruits, with the main goal of bringing in as diverse a group as possible.

Another key difference is that after the summer residency, BCCSP participants decide whether or not they want to apply to Bucknell. Notably, even if they are not interested in transferring to Bucknell specifically, participants are guaranteed mentoring and support from Bucknell faculty and staff as they complete their associate's degree at their community college. If participants are admitted to Bucknell, they then receive mentorship and support specific to their academic interests as well as assistance with credit transfer and scholarships to cover tuition. They are also eligible for financial assistance for other expenses, such as room and board and books. BCCSP participants who transfer to Bucknell continue to be part of their cohort but are encouraged to join the Bucknell University Student Transfer Association (BUSTA) to meet other transfers on campus. They continue to receive faculty mentoring and targeted support from the Dean of Transfer Admissions and transfer student fellows until graduation.

This study considered STEP and BCCSP to be the bounded unit of analysis. Importantly, I understood this analytic unit to exist within multiple contexts. That is, each initiative could be placed within progressively larger contexts of the institution, the elite liberal arts colleges, elite higher education and higher education more generally, and, finally, within a specific socioeconomic reality. Stake (2008) refers to the relationships between a case's "activity" or "functioning" and contexts as interactivity (p. 131). For Stake, no case study exists in a vacuum, devoid of influence by the outside world. Understanding the "social, cultural, situational, and

contextual” is actually a strength of case study, claims Stake, since it helps researchers discern relationships that quantitative studies often cannot (p. 131).

Notably, Clark (1970) also found interactivity central in his study of institutional distinction, although he did not use that term. For Clark, an organizational saga is built in part by an institution’s relationship with an external social base, and the strength of a saga is dependent on how the institution is viewed by the world at large. This dissertation, which used organizational saga as an interpretive frame, explored the interactivity of the program with the institutional and the external contexts.

Data Collection and Management

According to Dey (1993), the term “data collection” in qualitative research is a bit of a misnomer since “data are not ‘out there’ waiting collection” (p. 16). Instead, qualitative researchers notice data; or more specifically, they assign the label of data to *what* they notice. In this sense, data are “in fact ‘produced’ by the researcher” (Dey, p. 16) as a way to make meaning. There are multiple ways to produce data, including though observation, document review, and interviews, and most methodological scholars agree that using multiple methods to gather data is best. Doing so helps to triangulate, or measure for convergence. For example, what is said in an interview can be “checked against” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 245) what is observed in documents or on site, which can help the researcher clarify meaning (Stake, 2008).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) point out that the techniques used to gather or produce data largely depend on “the researcher’s theoretical orientation...the problem and purpose of the study and...on the sample selected” (p. 106). The present study, which was interested in the historical development of Bucknell University’s support for community college transfers, relied upon archival materials and contemporary institutional documents as well as semi-structured

interviews with staff and faculty who have been involved in Bucknell's transfer initiatives. The way in which I conceptualized working with each data source was informed by the literature, which, as discussed below, offered important considerations and procedures for both data collection and analysis.

Archival and Contemporary Documents

Yin (2012) refers to “archival data” as one of the six common sources of case study data collection (p. 12). For Yin, the use of these data, which he considers to be any “information stored in existing channels” (p. 12), can “elongate the time perspective and provide a firmer basis” for the study due to their historical nature (p. 123).³ Scholars in other disciplines, such as organization and management studies, also point to the potential of archival research for its ability to present a complex, longitudinal view. For example, Welch (2000), in writing about the archaeology of business networks, argues that data from archival materials are “particularly suited to generating developmental explanations, in other words, explaining processes of change and evolution” (p. 2). Welch references a study of a car manufacturer in which researchers were able to establish a robust longitudinal view of development by conducting archival research. In this case, the archival data revealed a much more complicated story of development than interviewees, who were employees, recalled.

Most qualitative methodologists prefer to use the term “documents” when describing material sources, including those found in archives. A “document,” according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) refers to “written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study” (p. 162). Data found in documents, the authors argue, can be used in the same ways as data derived

³ Notably, in an earlier text, Yin (2009) presented archival analysis as a method separate from case study, but in later texts he discusses archival materials as a potential data source for case study research.

from interviews and observations. Merriam and Tisdell rely on Glaser and Strauss' (1967) comparison of data obtained from documents to that obtained in fieldwork:

When someone stands in the library stacks, he is, metaphorically, surrounded by voices begging to be heard. Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant or the sociologist's interviewee. In those publications, people converse, announce positions, argue with a range of eloquence, and describe events of scenes in ways entirely comparable to what is seen and heard during fieldwork. (p. 163)

Of course, working with documents in qualitative research is more than a matter of looking through the stacks or archives of a library. Scholars in composition studies, for instance, who discuss working in the archives consider the process of identifying documents to be fairly haphazard. That is, the identification and availability of documents often occurs through "happy accident" (Gold, 2008, p. 14) more than through developing a detailed plan. Gold and others (Ferreira-Buckley, 1999; Gaillet, 2010; Ramsey, Sharer, L'Eplattenier, & Mastrangelo, 2010) encourage researchers to embrace chance as well as the inevitable confusion that arises with not necessarily knowing what one is looking for.

Regardless of how a researcher might come across documents, there are important considerations and procedures for working with them, much like with non-material data sources. One important consideration in using documents is determining whether they are primary or secondary sources. To do so, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that qualitative researchers borrow from historians, who distinguish between the two to determine how the document should be used. Primary source documents are "recorded closest in time and place to the phenomenon by a qualified person" (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 178), whereas secondary source documents are

written about an event or phenomenon by someone without first-hand knowledge or experience and, thus, are interpretive. While secondary sources are considered useful for providing context, they are not considered so for providing the kind of analyzable data that primary source documents do.

Sorting out whether documents are primary or secondary requires an understanding of where, how, and why documents originated. Once materials are located, researchers must analyze them to verify authenticity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This perhaps can be most easily done by asking and answering a number of questions about the document, such as the following: Why was the document produced? By whom? For what purpose? What biases might be present? Does the document appear complete or are parts missing? Do other, similar materials exist that substantiate or contradict the document? (Lincoln & Guba, 1981; see also, Merriam & Tisdell). These questions point to important potential limitations with using archival materials. For one, archived documents were not created for researchers or even with researchers in mind, which makes them potentially inappropriate for research. Secondly, materials in various archives are often selected by archivists for a specific institutional purpose. Glenn and Enoch (2010) explain how archivists are “vital agents” in that “they are the ones who catalog the materials...decide what to preserve and how to catalog it, thereby controlling the materials” that researchers have access to (p. 20). Thus, researchers must be clear on what they are looking at in the archives, as well as how and why those documents came to be.

In terms of analyzing archival materials or documents specifically, the discussion among the qualitative methodologists reviewed for this chapter is fairly brief. Stake (1995), for instance, offers up only one page for discussing document review. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) summarize the process of content analysis, which can be both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative

content analysis is concerned with frequency, or how often a particular theme or message appears in sets of documents whereas qualitative content analysis is a more researcher-centered intuitive process that focuses on deriving meaning from the data.

Notably, this view about the archival research process being both researcher-centered and intuitive corresponds with that of scholars in other disciplines, namely composition studies, who have much more to say about working in the archives. Gold (2008) shows how “doing archival research is largely organic” (p. 18). He recommends that researchers “read absolutely everything and try to make sense of what happened” (p. 18). This process, Gold concedes, “is messy as hell” (p. 18), but is necessary for discovery. Ferreira-Buckley (1999), another composition scholar, agrees and calls for an immersion process in which the researcher understands not just the documents at hand but how those documents are situated in time and space. For Gaillet (2010), the immersion process means adopting the historian’s toolbox for preparing to view and analyzing archival materials. To do the latter, Gaillet suggests an 11-step process that includes staying grounded to the research question, categorizing materials, situating the documents in the “political, social, economic, education, religious, or institutional histories of the time,” identifying and understanding the intended audience, and deciding how to organize and present the findings (p. 35).

Like with other qualitative data collection methods, scholars are quick to point out that working with archival materials involves a great amount of researcher reflection. Neither the qualitative methodologists nor the archival scholars in composition studies discussed above suggest specific ways of engaging in reflection, but the standard methods in qualitative research seem implied. That is, researchers should engage in journaling, memoing, or a similarly engaged,

reflective writing process (Dey, 1993; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 1994) while collecting, managing, and analyzing archival data.

Archival Materials and Documents in the Present Study

The views of working with and analyzing archival materials and documents discussed above helped to shape the considerations and processes for the present study. This section provides a detailed explanation of how I accessed and prepared for analysis the archival materials used in this study.

Archival materials at the Bertrand Library at Bucknell University dating back to 1988 served as the primary source for understanding the history and development of Bucknell’s support for community college transfers. When I knew I would be conducting a site visit to Bucknell in August of 2019, I contacted Bucknell’s archivist to inquire about materials and set up an appointment. The archivist responded positively; the Bertrand Library had the materials I was looking for and I would be welcomed to view them. When I entered the archives, I had no expectations simply because I had no idea how many documents there might be and what might be contained in them. I was pleasantly surprised to see six boxes full of documentation of the development of STEP (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Archival documents accessed at Bertrand Library, Bucknell University

Title	Item Type	Record Group	Detail
Community College of Philadelphia (CCP), 1989-1990	File-Box 1 (1) 2.5-inch box (0.21 linear feet)	Vice President for Academic Services and Planning Records	Administrative calendars, correspondence, and records relation to the Bucknell-CCP program.
Community College of Philadelphia (CCP), 1990-1992	File-Box 1 (4) 5-inch boxes and (1) 2.5-inch box (1.88 linear feet)	Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs	Correspondence, reports, speeches, programming materials, committee records, academic calendars, strategic planning materials, and policy documents.

In my first go-around, I scanned the boxes to see what they contained, slowing down and taking note of documents that seemed particularly interesting. For my second go-around, I dug in, surveying each document carefully to begin building an understanding of the formation of Bucknell-CCP Partnership that eventually became STEP. The documentation in these boxes, as revealed in Chapter Four, is comprised of primary documents, and mostly administrative communication: internal letters and memos among Bucknell staff and faculty and between staff and faculty at Bucknell and CCP. There are other letters and memos between Bucknell and CCP constituents and external organizations, including the Association of American Colleges, Vassar College, the Ford Foundation. There was even a box that contained some information about BCCSP, but those documents were primarily marketing materials. Because I knew that my time on site would be relatively short, and that I would engage in analysis off-site, I went through the boxes a third time to take photographs of each document with my smartphone (around 350 photographs total).

When I returned to my home office, I printed the documents to make organization and analysis, easier. To manage the data, I sorted the documents chronologically and then inputted the following information from the documents into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This database included the following information: Type of document, originator, recipient(s), date, subject, and researcher notes. Having all of this information in one spreadsheet allowed the data to be easily sorted and moved around by indicator. I found it useful to conduct multiple sorts, by originator or year or subject, and to create additional spreadsheets based on these sorts. While I worked through each document to generate this database, I kept a research journal to note thoughts and ideas as they were occurring to me, and to write memos, a practice which is described in greater

detail below. The research journal, then, served not only as an “audit trail” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 252), or log to track the research process, but also as an analytic space.

In addition to identifying materials in the archives, I located contemporary documents about Bucknell’s partnership in the CCTI and the development of BCCSP. These documents were found on Bucknell’s website by using the following search terms: “BCCSP,” “Community College Scholars,” “CCTI,” “Jack Kent Cooke Foundation,” and “Community College.”

Notably, I also searched on the website for materials about STEP, but there were no results. The documents I located included webpages about the program and its development through the CCTI, as well as Bucknell-produced media, such as University newspapers and press releases, and promotional materials, such as a YouTube video about how the program benefits students and the institution. To understand more about Bucknell as an institution and its institutional priorities, particularly those around equity and inclusion, I searched for and located Bucknell’s strategic plan. This plan, titled, *The Plan for Bucknell 2025: A Thriving, Inclusive and Sustainable Future*, was approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2019, and is available in truncated form online. Like with the archival materials, I printed, sorted, and logged these materials.

Interviews

The archival materials and documents were necessary to build an understanding of the history of Bucknell University’s support for community college transfers, to answer the question, *How has it been done?* But, to answer the question, *How is it done?*, required an understanding of Bucknell’s more recent transfer initiative, BCCSP. To do so, I analyzed contemporary program documents that I located in the Bertrand Library as well as through Bucknell University’s website and publicly-available media. In addition, I interviewed three members of

Bucknell's faculty and staff. I considered these interviews necessary to collect—or produce—data about BCCSP, particularly because there was limited archival documentation about the development of this later initiative, especially compared to the documentation of STEP.

In qualitative research, interviewing is recommended for cases within which select individuals are of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) for their “multiple views of the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). There are three main types of qualitative interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured, depending on the type of research question(s) guiding the inquiry or, put more simply, what the researcher wants to know. Structured interviews are survey-like, while unstructured interviews are more exploratory in nature. Semi-structured interviews are “guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored,” although questions are typically flexible and need not follow a prescribed order (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 110). According to Merriam and Tisdell, good interview questions are those that are “open-ended and yield descriptive data” (p. 121). Patton (2015) contends that the best interview questions illicit answers about experience and behavior, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, senses, and demographics. Conversely, bad questions include those that lead the interviewee to a specific answer, those that ask for a yes or no answer, and those that ask multiple questions at once (Merriam & Tisdell).

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), a good interview begins with building trust with participants. To do so, the authors recommend thinking about interviews as extended conversations about a topic of interest. They employ the term “responsive interviewing” (p. 7) to describe such conversations, and they recommend that well before the conversations take place the researcher identifies a specific role to play and considers ways to bridge potential social or cultural divisions. Rubin and Rubin recommend that being “honest, open, fair, and accepting helps build trust” (p. 79), and show how sharing knowledge with potential participants shows

sympathy and understanding. Researchers often begin composing interview questions well before the scheduled interview to leave time to practice feeling comfortable and natural asking and following up with probes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These questions typically go into an interview protocol or guide so that the researcher has a written format to rely upon if necessary. Some of the planned questions can even be shared with participants beforehand to give them a sense of what will be asked.

Of course, a key part of interviewing is identifying potential participants, which can be done in several ways, such as through on-site observations or informants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This purposive identification of interviewees can help the respondent be comfortable; they have been selected because of their involvement and/or knowledge about the topic, so they can be assured that they have “something to contribute...or an experience worth talking about” (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 128). Typically, a researcher brings with them a certain level of experience and knowledge, too, though, and so they need to be aware of how they interact with interviewees with regard to both content and rapport. For the former, Patton (2015) recommends remaining as neutral as possible so that the personal views of the researcher do not color responses. For the latter, Patton recommends expressing interest in what is being said, which can go a long way in encouraging interviewees to keep talking.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note the importance of researcher positionality in working with respondents because of the “power dynamics inherent in the interview” (p. 130). The researcher comes to any interview situation with both visible and invisible social identities and positions, which can affect whose “voice” is represented, or the “construction of the ‘story,’ and forms of representation to other audiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 130). Researchers must be aware of these identities and positions and the inherent biases that accompany them, and, further,

how those biases might predispose them to ask or hear things in a certain way. “A skilled interview,” claim Merriam and Tisdell, “accounts for [all of] these factors” (p. 130), and takes the necessary steps to create a respectful, generative interview space.

There is some debate about what to do during interviews to record what is being said (and not said), particularly for case studies. Generally, audio recording is considered the standard in qualitative studies because it is fairly unobtrusive and “ensures that every word said is preserved for analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 131). Stake (1995), however, recommends note-taking during interviews for case studies because he finds that interviewees are “often dismayed” with how they come across or because the transcripts do not “convey what they intended” (p. 66). Furthermore, transcripts are often sent well past the date of the interview, “long after context and innuendo have slipped away” (p. 66). All of this, claims Stake, can lead to a potential loss of meaning.

Rubin and Rubin (2012), however, suggest ways to overcome this potential loss, including transcribing interviews as soon as possible after interviews have taken place. Doing so, they contend, allows the researcher to still be “in the moment” while transcribing, or checking over transcriptions. It also allows for quicker member-checking while the conversation is still fresh in the participants’ minds. Qualitative methodological scholars tend to take the position that personally transcribing the interview data is the best option since doing so gives researchers the opportunity to become very close to the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Most acknowledge, however, that personally transcribing interview data is quite time consuming and arduous, and that time and other constraints in the process can present real-life roadblocks. In short, there is no one right way to record what happens in the interview, but the bottom line is that researchers should be aware of the ways that the data can be affected by procedural decisions.

Interviews in Present Study

As noted above, interviews with Bucknell staff and faculty were integral to getting an inside look into the University's current transfer initiative, BCCSP, and to offer a more general understanding of Bucknell's longstanding support for community college transfer students. This section details the steps taken to identify potential participants and to collect and work with interview data.

I received the names of three people involved with BCCSP from a community college transfer student at the college where I work as an associate in the Writing Center. This student was a BCCSP alum and spoke highly of the program and after speaking about his experience, he offered names of people to contact. After receiving word from the IRB offices at both the University of Massachusetts and Bucknell University that I was able to proceed with my study, I reached out via email to the three contacts in June of 2019, and received positive responses from all three almost immediately. I subsequently arranged days and times to meet with each participant in August 2019 during a planned site visit to Bucknell. I forwarded to each participant a list of potential questions (see Appendix A). I also forwarded the informed consent form (see Appendix B). I did so because I felt strongly about following the interview protocol (see Appendix C) and data storage protocol I had already established for the IRB application process.

In preparation for the interviews, I researched each participant to learn more about their roles and how long they had been at Bucknell. I was pleased to see that as a whole they represented a cross-section of those involved with BCCSP (see Table 2). Two of the three participants have been at Bucknell for around three decades and have deep knowledge of Bucknell's transfer support, having been involved in transfer initiatives early on. One participant is fairly new (six years). Two of the participants are tenured faculty members, both in

psychology, and one of them has served in the senior administration for many years. One of the participants is a mid-level (dean) staff member and the current administrator of the BCCSP program.

Table 2. Interview participants

Pseudonym	Role	Length of Service
Raymond	Provost’s Office/Faculty	33 years
James	Faculty	27 years
Carla	Dean’s Office	6 years

I conducted semi-structured interviews with all three participants during the last week of August 2019. I had a number of questions and probes (see Appendix A), although all of the interviewees spoke freely and at length about BCCSP, their involvement in it, and their hopes for the program’s future. Each interview lasted approximately 70 minutes. Despite Stake’s (1995) hesitations discussed above, I opted to record the interviews, with participant consent, so that I could replay the recordings as many times as needed to be sure I accurately captured the participants’ views and thoughts. I used an application called *Recorder* on my password-protected smartphone to audio record each interview. I also took notes during the interview to capture parts of the conversations that seemed particularly noteworthy.

My positioning as a staff member at an elite liberal arts college helped me to build rapport with the participants, though I was also cognizant of how my positioning could affect the dynamic. For instance, in one interview, the participant spoke about Bucknell in such a way that seemed to place it as inferior to my (highly ranked) home institution. In response, I carefully steered the conversation back to the topic at hand and away from a conversation that could potentially create a power boundary. Notably, at the time of the interviews, I had little information about BCCSP’s precursor initiatives, which actually proved quite useful: my limited view allowed participants to formulate their own responses to my questions about program

origination. Had I known then what I know now about the development of STEP, my questions about program origination would likely have been more structured, perhaps too structured, to elicit the same kind of responses in the interviews. For example, when I asked one of the faculty members how the program got started, he said it was for “social justice reasons.” When I put this finding next to those from the archival material about the Bucknell-CCP partnership, I was reminded of Welch’s (2000) conclusion discussed briefly above: employees’ recollection of an event or program is often different than the documentation about that same event or program. In this way, the archival documents and interview data were already forming a compelling story.

After returning to my home office and sending thank-you notes to participants, I uploaded the interview audio files from *Recorder* to my personal, password-protected iCloud account. Next, I engaged in the process of transcribing the audio files using a program called *Descript*, which is a secure online transcription service that uses automatic speech recognition (ASR) software. *Descript* can be used online or the application can be downloaded to a computer, the latter of which I did for this project. No ASR program is 100% accurate, but using *Descript* for the first round of transcription saved a lot of time. Once the rough transcription was saved in the *Descript* application, I saved each file as a Microsoft Word document, and then worked through each transcription file while listening to the audio file of the interview on the *Recorder* application. Doing so gave me the opportunity to correct the transcription so that it matched the recording, but more importantly, it brought me much closer to the data. This process required a meticulous attention to detail and parts of the recording that needed to be played repeatedly to ensure I was composing exactly what was said. Lastly, I created new final Microsoft Word files of the transcribed conversations, which I sent as password-protect pdfs via email to participants for member checks. Before doing so, though, I “cleaned up” the

transcriptions by removing filler words, such as “uh,” and “um,” and by deleting side conversations that were not at all related to the conversation about BCCSP. Although it was not required that I mask interview data, I assigned pseudonyms to participants nonetheless.

During the conversations with the three participants, the names of two other people at Bucknell came up as additional potential participants. I made two separate attempts to contact via email with both people, explaining the project and the work I had done thus far, but neither responded. In addition, when I sent the interview transcripts to the three participants for member checks, I asked participants to share, if they were comfortable doing so, the names of additional people with whom they thought I should connect. However, none of the three participants responded with additional names. In short, the multiple efforts undertaken to increase the number of interviewees through snowball sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) were unsuccessful. However, I found the range of viewpoints even within the three individuals interviewed to be satisfactory and I considered their collective understanding of BCCSP to be adequate. One of the goals of data collection in qualitative research is saturation (Merriam & Tisdell), and though there are likely aspects of the development of BCCSP that I did not learn through the three interviews, the transcript data showed a fair amount of repetition. By the time I conducted my third interview, I found it unnecessary to take many notes since much of what was shared I had already heard in the two previous interviews.

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing data always begins with the research questions. That is, the researcher identifies parts of the data that are “responsive” or are a “potential answer or part of an answer to the question(s)” guiding the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 203). In qualitative research, data collection and analysis should occur simultaneously. Merriam and Tisdell describe

a preferred scenario in which the researcher begins analysis with the first bit of data, taking notes and developing “hunches, ideas and things to pursue” (p. 197) as they work through the data and as they embark on collecting more, now informed by what they have already considered. Stake (1995), in his discussion of case study analysis specifically, agrees. He notes, “there is no particular moment when data analysis begins” (p. 71), but that the researcher begins to figure out a case the minute they decide to study it. Researchers are curious and want to know what the case is about, especially if they “encounter something really new,” at which point they begin the act of “dissection, to see the parts separately and how they relate to each other” (p. 72) in an attempt to make meaning.

One way to interact with the data early on is through annotation, which the researcher can begin at the earliest point of data collection. Dey (1993) contends that annotating the data, recording observations and ideas, is the key to analysis. It is “a way of opening up the data, preparing the ground for a more systematic and thorough analysis” (p. 98). Annotating, for Dey, is a fairly straightforward process of interaction between researcher and data, with the researcher asking “the interrogative quintet ‘Who? What? When? Where? Why?’” (p. 87), and recording preliminary answers either in the margins of printed materials or in computerized files. Dey, like Miles and Huberman (1994) and other methodological scholars (Bogden & Bilken, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), recommends memoing as a way to capture impressions along the way. Researchers might ask a “when” question of the data, note an answer in the margins, and then make a note of the note that asks another question or records a particular thought or feeling. These memos can help researchers “clarify or elaborate” on what they are seeing in the data, which helps to put researchers on the “road to ‘thorough’ description” and to “provide a basis for well grounded interpretation” (Dey, p. 94). As noted above, it is recommended that researchers

annotate and write memos beginning with the first bit of data, which helps to inform their interaction with the next bit of data collected and so on. Qualitative methodologists underscore the iterativeness of this process; researchers should return to their first bit of data after having interacted with additional data, and continue to refine impressions along the way.

Dey (1993) describes how this iterative process is essential to helping the researcher interpret data. He goes on to say that “analysis can go beyond interpretation” (p. 100) to include categorization or classification based on abstraction as a way to make comparisons. For Stake (1995), however, the act of categorization is more for “general qualitative research” (p. 77). Case study researchers often stop at interpretation, especially those engaged in intrinsic case study:

With intrinsic case studies, our primary task is to come to understand the case. It will help us to tease out relationships, to probe issues, and to aggregate categorical data, but those ends are subordinate to understanding the case. The case is complex, and the time we have for examining its complexity is short. To devote much time to formal aggregation of categorical data is likely to distract attention to its various involvements, its various contexts. Usually, we will try to spend most of our time in direct interpretation. (p. 77)

With direct interpretation, the researcher pulls the data apart to consider it and puts it back together to draw meaning, without considering the case in relation to other cases.

Data Analysis in Present Study

As discussed above, the present study was an intrinsic case study of Bucknell University’s longstanding support for community college transfers. Although I initially considered comparing Bucknell to other elite LACs, this study took a different turn because I became intrinsically interested in what Bucknell had done and is doing that might help to explain its development of distinctive transfer initiatives. Accordingly, the questions guiding the inquiry

were, *How is it done? How has it been done?* And therefore, the analytic approach was direct interpretation.

Research Journal

As recommended by qualitative methodologists, I began analysis as soon as I started learning about Bucknell's initiatives for transfer support. Even before the site visit, while I was perusing webpages and researching the program, I started writing in my research journal, noting questions and initial impressions about the program and its components. When I conducted the site visit at Bucknell, I wandered around campus and the town of Lewisburg with a notebook and pencil and my voice recorder application at the ready. I made observational notes of the numerous fraternity and sorority houses that line the bottom of the hilly campus, the as-advertised stately buildings on campus, and the lush green quads connecting them. While in the archives, I made notes about findings from the mundane, like standard memos from the president of the college to the provost, to the extraordinary, like the "I'm not racist, but..." letters about STEP from outraged alumnae. During interviews, I made notes of interesting bits of conversations and potentially incongruous understandings of Bucknell's transfer programs.

After the site visit, I wrote a lot about what I had seen and heard and what I was thinking at the moment. Once I began sifting through the hundreds of pages of archival materials, I made notes in the margins that I later transcribed into the Excel database I had created. These notes were similar to codes in that I was working to identify what the documents were about and how they helped me to build the story of STEP to answer the question, *How has it been done?* As I worked through each chunk of time in the history of the program, I wrote memos in response to the notes. These memos were sometimes questions, such as, "What happened here?" and sometimes interpretive statements, such as, "This faculty meeting seems so different than the one

with the provost and deans.” These memos also sometimes served as spaces to collect the more emotive responses to what I was reading, such as, “What is wrong with these people?!” Having such an outlet proved to be a useful way to ensure a more intellectually-based subjectivity toward the data.

I also took notes and memoed in the research journal when working with the interview data transcription. Like with the archival materials, I made notes of what I heard in the audio files and noted what I remembered in the physical setting of the interviews. Doing so helped to re-place me in the moment of the conversation. The memos were similar to those described above in that I asked questions or remarked on connections and dissimilarities I was beginning to see, especially now between the two sets of data. Given these emerging connections, at many points I stopped working with the interview data and returned to the archival data to check various documents I had unearthed. I captured this iterative process in the research journal as well, making note of new questions and ideas surfacing as a result of the back and forth.

Forming the Narrative

The notes and memos described above began the analytical process that expanded significantly when I began writing up the findings. The process of writing up the findings, presented below in Chapter Four, involved writing and stopping to check the documents and interview transcripts and writing and stopping and so on, a process that was almost overwhelming. There were so many data to work with, and so many stories emerging from the archival materials and interview transcripts, that it was hard to keep track of what was happening and what I should include and exclude. Here, it was useful to do two important analytic tasks. The first was to go back to the database to look at the sorts I had done by topic and originator or recipient, as well as the notes or codes I had made (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The second was to

bring in Clark (1970) and his conception of the development of organizational saga, which helped me to begin to see STEP and BCCSP as two ends of the same distinctive initiative. Both analytic tasks aided in categorizing the data and establishing a structure to the narrative.

Even with the narrative structure more firmly in place, though, I still found the process of writing simultaneously arduous and incredibly useful in building my own interpretation of what I was seeing in the data and what I most wanted to relay to readers. Here, I was reminded of a line by E.M. Forster in his book *Aspects of the Novel*: “How can I tell what I think until I see what I say?” Forster was interested in how writers do not always (and maybe should not always) know where they are going, but get there by following their thoughts, ideas, and hunches. In this case, I found I needed to follow the data to see the story of saga emerge. This understanding of analysis was perhaps what Stake (1995) had in mind when he argued that “there is much art and much intuitive processing to the search for meaning” (p. 72) in case study research. Stake goes on to quote a Hughes poem, *The Thought Fox*, which portrays writing as a kind of fumbling around in the dark until something appears on the page. Of the poem, Stake writes:

Where thoughts come from, whence meaning, remains a mystery. The page does not write itself, but by finding, for analysis, the right ambiance, the right moment, by reading and rereading the accounts, by deep thinking, then understanding creeps forward and your page is printed. (p. 73)

This fumbling, searching, deep thinking, and surfacing with the “story” is a hallmark of the inductive approach in qualitative data analysis, but, interestingly, few methodologists other than Stake (1995) discuss writing, aside from notetaking and memoing, as an analytical act. In fact, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) have an entirely separate chapter on writing up the research, which they refer to as “reporting and disseminating the results” (p. 267).

As a writing instructor, I find this separation of writing from data collection and analysis (again, with the exception of note taking and memo writing), to be unsurprising but also problematic. What I did in the present study might best be described as writing *through* rather than *up* the findings. I considered writing through the findings to be an integral part of the analysis and not something undertaken after analysis was complete. Like Forster, I found that I could not see what the data were saying or how to interpret what they meant until I got in deep in the writing process.

Limitations

There has long been a robust conversation among qualitative methodologists about the limitations of qualitative research and how researchers should discuss them. There is some consensus among scholars that researchers must ensure that readers can understand how and why the study was undertaken, feel secure about the findings, and discern the applicability of the research in a real-world setting. The steps a researcher takes to do so are typically described in relation to validity and reliability, much like in quantitative studies. Merriam and Tisdell (2016), present a thorough discussion of how concerns of limitations in qualitative research have changed over time, noting the numerous revisions to the concepts—and terminology—of validity and reliability (e.g., see Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). They argue, though, that contemporary understandings of validity and reliability in studies that fall within the constructivist paradigm generally center on methodological rigor, or what the “researcher can do to ensure trustworthiness” (p. 242). Methodological rigor, for Merriam and Tisdell includes internal validity (or credibility), reliability (or consistency), and external validity (or transferability), which were the three areas of concern for the study.

Internal Validity

Internal validity in qualitative research is primarily concerned with representations of reality. Constructivists understand reality not as a static or positive state, but rather as something that is “holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 243). Of course, this understanding makes reality impossible to capture fully, but qualitative researchers can take practical steps to increase internal validity or the credibility of findings. One of the key ways to do so is to employ the strategy of triangulation, which can be achieved by using multiple modes of data collection, relying on multiple data sources, and applying multiple theories as a way to interpret the evidence (see Denzin, 1978). Other ways to ensure internal validity include conducting member checks, spending an adequate amount of time collecting and analyzing data, and articulating researcher positionality (Merriam & Tisdell).

The study took the following steps to ensure internal validity or credibility. *Triangulation* occurred through (a) reliance on multiple modes of data collection, including document and artifact analysis, interviews, and observations of campus, and (b) multiple sources of data, including interviews with more than one participant at the research site and numerous kinds of documents, including both archival and contemporary documents, for analysis. Another strategy I employed to increase internal validity was member checking once interviews were complete and transcribed. Lastly, I maintained awareness of my positionality as a researcher, as discussed below, so that my “biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 249) were clear to me, research participants, and, ultimately my readers. Employing these strategies to increase internal validity helped to inspire trustworthiness in the findings and interpretation of evidence.

Researcher Positionality

My interest in Bucknell University's longstanding support for community college transfers is driven by both professional and scholarly curiosity about how elite institutions might best provide equitable access. I work for an elite liberal arts college and have, for years, focused part of my time to academically supporting the small population of community college students who transfer in each semester, particularly those from community college. My institution is undoubtedly committed to bringing in students from previously underserved populations, but it often struggles with what to do beyond access, with how to support students in these groups both academically and socially, and what to do when they feel marginalized on our traditionally white and wealthy campus. When I was asked seven years ago to pilot a half-credit seminar for our transfer students, I first jumped at the chance but then realized quickly that there was very little research to guide its development. I learned through digging that my institution participated in the CCTI, which was surprising given that I had never heard anyone mention it and when I began to ask around, no one had much to say about it; it was almost as if it were a forgotten time in our institutional history. Unlike Bucknell University, which managed to institutionalize a program with CCTI funding, my institution has not yet found a way to develop any structural support for transfers.

This positionality had the potential to be a limiting factor in my understanding of Bucknell's community college transfer support initiatives. I went into the project thinking that the institution I am most familiar with is lacking in a way that Bucknell seems not to be. To attend to such a limitation, I engaged in the process of researcher reflection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) by writing out my thoughts about what I was learning about Bucknell, as discussed in detail above. This continual working through my biases helped to establish an intellectually-

focused lens with which to view the data from the Bucknell archives and from the interviews. Each time I found myself comparing institutions, I would stop to capture my thoughts and to reframe my thinking. Notably, the need for these moments of reflection on institutional comparisons became much less frequent the more I became immersed in Bucknell's story.

Reliability

As opposed to being focused on replication as with quantitative studies, reliability in qualitative studies is concerned with whether “the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 251). In other words, because qualitative studies do not study a static or fixed phenomenon, replication of results is impossible—both people and circumstances change too much for replication to occur. But, readers of qualitative studies should reasonably expect the results to make sense given the evidence provided. Ways to increase reliability or consistency in qualitative research are the same strategies discussed above in the Internal Validity section (Merriam & Tisdell) in addition to what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as an audit trail. An audit trail is an accounting of how researchers arrived at their results, and can include details on data collection, coding and categorization processes, and thoughts that occurred along the way. Miles and Huberman (1994) described an audit trail as researcher memoing, which they consider to be one of the most “powerful sense-making tools at hand” (p. 72) because they help the researcher make connections and decipher relationships. The detailed discussion above of the researcher journal I kept for note-taking and memoing demonstrates the ways in which I attempted to keep an audit trail.

External Validity

External validity in qualitative case study research is primarily concerned with transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While some qualitative scholars advocate for

generalizability and recommend comparative case analysis to allow for the drawing of theoretical conclusions that can be widely applicable (e.g., Gomm, Hammersly & Foster, 2000; Schofield, 2000), others (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995, 2008) are critical of the need for generalizability, claiming that such a positivist approach misses the point of case study research. The present study adopted Stake's (1995) view that that case study should necessarily be focused on the particular and thus "seems a poor basis for generalization" (p. 7). Stake sees a distinct and powerful relationship between context and meaning in bounded systems, naturally limiting the applicability of findings to different contexts. He also claims, however, that the findings from case study research can lead to what he calls "naturalistic generalization," which occurs when "readers can see themselves and/or their experiences in the case study" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008, p. 263). For Stake, an emphasis on the particular "implies knowledge of other [cases] that the case is different from" (p. 8). In other words, readers of any given case study, the present study included, bring with them an understanding of the general topic and thus will be able to ascertain how the specific case under scrutiny is different from or similar to other cases.

Ethical Considerations

Ultimately, participants and readers of a research study want to have confidence in the researcher. They want to be sure that the researcher is competent, accurate, and has acted with integrity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2009) outlines important ethical considerations with regard to data collection, data analysis, and research dissemination. With regard to data collection, the primary ethical concern is with potential risk to participants. Researchers must take great care to ensure that participants are safe from harm and that their rights as humans are not violated. I ensured participant safety by submitting my research plan to the institutional review boards (IRB) at the University of Massachusetts and Bucknell University before

beginning my research. Part of this plan included creating and sending to participants an interview protocol as well as an informed consent form to be signed by all participants (see Appendix B).

Ethical considerations during data analysis include data ownership, removing names from responses during coding procedures, and ensuring accuracy in participant responses (Creswell, 2009). During data analysis, I ensured that the data were secured on my personal password-protected devices, including my smartphone and laptop computer. As noted above, I engaged in member checking by sending participants interview transcripts so that I could ensure an accurate understanding of participant responses. These transcripts were mostly verbatim conversations, but lightly edited to remove filler words (e.g., “uh” and “um”) as well as side conversations that were wholly unrelated to the topic at hand. Lastly, ethical concerns arise in writing up the research (Creswell). Such concerns include using unbiased language, including all relevant data by not “suppressing, falsifying, or inventing findings to meet a researcher’s or audience’s needs” (Creswell, p. 92), and explaining clearly and in detail the research process. To address this set of ethical concerns, I adhered to the American Psychological Association’s guidelines about unbiased language; I reported on all relevant data I collected; and I detailed the research procedures so that readers could make informed judgments about the credibility of my findings.

Chapter Summary

The present chapter helped to focus the study on the case at hand, Bucknell University’s support for community college transfer, by first reviewing the questions guiding the research and then describing both the process of selecting Bucknell as the research site and the site itself in detail, as well as the primary and subunits of analysis. This chapter connected to relevant methodological research to explain of the procedures used for data collection and management,

and then looped in the conceptual framework to explore data analysis procedures. Lastly, this chapter considered the study's limitations in relation to both validity and reliability in case study research.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

As noted in previously, this dissertation centers Clark's (1970) conception of organizational saga as a way of understanding programmatic distinction, and more specifically as a way of understanding what makes Bucknell University's support for community college transfers so distinct among its peers. This study asked the same questions of Bucknell's community college transfer initiatives that Clark asked more generally of Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore in their rise toward institutional distinction: *How is it done? How has it been done?*

This dissertation proposes that Clark's understanding of saga can be applied to programmatic development as a way to understand how a program develops distinction. As discussed in Chapter Two, the features and factors Clark identified as necessary for saga can be aligned with findings from previous studies of features and factors necessary for successful community college transfer programs at elite institutions. For instance, institutional context was found to be important to the level of success of community college transfer programs at elite institutions. Institutions that were open to and committed to structural change were more likely to succeed (Burack & Lanspery, 2014). The role of transfer champions was also found to be necessary for success. In the cases of the LACs that took part in the CCTI, transfer champions tended to be college leaders, including presidents, senior administrators, or influential members of the faculty.

In his study, Clark (1970) determined that to examine distinction, one must research the organization's developmental history to identify a critical point, then move forward chronologically, isolating organizational features as well as internal and external factors that influenced that development. The present study adopts Clark's approach and in this chapter

presents the findings from studying Bucknell University's development of its support for community college transfer students. This chapter begins, though, by describing Bucknell's current support initiative for community college transfers, the Bucknell University Community College Scholars Program (BCCSP) in order to establish BCCSP as a distinct program worth examining.

Part Two first explores the institutional context of Bucknell to establish the conditions within which the Bucknell initiated support for community college transfers in the late 1980s, and then discusses the role of charismatic leadership. Part Three delves deeply into the story of the development of Bucknell's first transfer initiative, which would eventually be dubbed STEP, or Student Transfer Enrichment Program. It identifies the very beginning of this initiative, then moves forward chronologically to explore in detail the development of the STEP program, identifying along the way internal and external factors that influenced that development. Part Four does the same, but for BCCSP, which, as discussed in Part One below, is portrayed as its own program, but in many ways is actually the more mature and learned older sibling of STEP.

Part One: Bucknell University's Current Transfer Initiative, BCCSP

Bucknell University's current support initiative for community college transfer students, the Bucknell University Community College Scholars Program (BCCSP), presents itself as a support initiative for "high-achieving, low- to moderate-income community college students who want to take their education beyond an associate's degree" ("Bucknell Community College Scholars Program," n.d.). The program's language establishes an unmistakable connection to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (JKCF) and its Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), which was touted as an initiative to help "high-achieving, low- to moderate-income community

college students to transfer to, and succeed at,” a elite four-year institution (Burack & Lanspery, 2014, p. 3).

BCCSP is presented as a program that includes multiple steps. First is the application process, which is open to community college students who have a 3.5 or higher GPA, who have completed 12 college credits by January 15, and who have demonstrated potential for academic success and campus leadership/engagement. Second is participation in the summer residency program, during which program participants live on campus, take two courses with Bucknell faculty, and participate in academic and social enrichment activities. Third is finishing the associate’s degree with advising from faculty and staff at both Bucknell and the home community college. Fourth is applying to Bucknell for transfer if students choose to do so. As noted earlier, many BCCSP participants choose to apply to and enroll at other institutions. Fifth is entering Bucknell as a transfer, which includes financial support in the form of tuition scholarships and supplemental resources for room and board and books, as well as academic support in the form of individual advising and educational planning (“Bucknell Community College Scholars Program,” n.d.).

The documentation of BCCSP that Bucknell publicizes leaves little doubt that Bucknell considers BCCSP a distinctive program. For the past several years, BCCSP has appeared in official campus publications as a newsworthy program that opens up pathways to a elite education for nontraditional students who otherwise would not have such an opportunity. These publications include heartfelt stories of community college students who speak of their disadvantaged backgrounds and the “second chance” that BCCSP provides. Such stories are also featured in a nearly 11-minute documentary about BCCSP on YouTube. Significantly, none of this public-facing documentation of BCCSP, including the University’s description of and media

about the program, mentions earlier iterations of Bucknell's support for community college transfers. Instead, it speaks of Bucknell's initiative to support community college transfers beginning in 2006 with the grant funding from JKCF.

An historical analysis of documents in the Bucknell University archives, however, reveals a far more complex story. Archival documentation illustrates a critical moment in time when Bucknell initiated its first community college transfer program: a program very similar in structure to BCCSP, which eventually would become STEP, or the Student Transfer Enrichment Program. These documents detail the difficulties Bucknell faced in developing STEP, from securing funding to getting faculty on board to convincing alumni it was an important and worthwhile effort. These documents also illustrate the small victories, as detailed in the experiences of the very first STEP cohort at Bucknell.

The following sections isolate and explore these critical years in detail. They trace the program's development, from the first available communication about the program to the last, in an effort to identify influential internal and external factors. First, though, it is necessary to establish the institutional context of Bucknell in order to understand "the conditions of action" for "institutional innovation" that led to "distinctiveness" (Clark, 1970, p. 237). According to Clark, the initiation of saga occurs in one of these institutional contexts, the understanding of which helps to show the "structural permissiveness and conduciveness to change" at the institution (p. 237). Thus, understanding Bucknell's institutional context helps to establish its readiness for developing a community college transfer program.

Part Two: Setting the Institutional Context for Innovation

Standing in the Malesardi Quadrangle at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania is like standing at the crossroads of time. It is the quintessential quad: green and lush, dotted with

new orange and blue Adirondack chairs to honor Bucknell's official school colors. During the first week of school, in late August, students drift around, in and out of the administrative, classroom, and library buildings that encircle the quad; some looking as if they know exactly where they're going, others as if in a daze. Visitors are welcomed, and if they sit quietly they can catch whiffs of campus life—conversations about classes and social gatherings, about summer experiences and meeting up later for lunch.

Four plaques anchor the quad, bronzed memorials to Bucknell alum, Bob Malesardi, whose \$20 million donation in 2016 to Bucknell's financial aid endowment marked the largest-ever single donation to the University. Malesardi entered Bucknell as a 16-year-old freshman in 1941, and lived that year in Roberts Hall, Bucknell's first building, which was once called the Old Main. Theiss (1946), an historian and keeper of Bucknell's greatest early memories, recounts the story of the construction of Old Main: How on a frigid morning in 1849, a group of Baptists set off from Philadelphia by train to check on the progress at the "infant University that had just been founded at Lewisburg...to promote the welfare of Baptists in the Keystone State" (p. 11). While some in the group visited the school, then in a church basement, others ventured up the icy slopes until they reached the spot where they could place the stakes, which were "hammered down through the snow and frozen ground with powerful strokes" (p. 13). Mere months later, construction began on the Old Main, designed by famed architect Thomas Carrere, who declared it to be "one of the stateliest college buildings in America" (p. 13).

In an article in the *Bucknellian*, Bucknell's current president, John Bravman, recalls touring campus with Malesardi in 2016, not long after Malesardi's pledge. Bravman and Malesardi, then 91, stood looking at the still-stately Roberts Hall (renamed in the 1930s to honor Daniel C. Roberts, whose \$300,000 donation restored Old Main when a fire nearly destroyed it).

Bravman wondered to himself what Malesardi must be thinking as a witness to over half a century of changes at the institution. In the article, Bravman reflects on the weight of Malesardi's gift. He explains how such a donation, which will endow scholarships to Bucknell, is a "forever gift" that will not only open up the pool of students the University draws from, but will also significantly change the lives of countless students in the years to come (Fassett & Worthington, 2016, para. 22).

The notion of the crossroads of time, felt so keenly by Bravman and Malesardi, seems an apt description for Bucknell in many ways. Certainly, this notion is applicable to Bucknell in the late 1980s when it began exploring the idea of bringing in transfers from the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). Although Bucknell had had its share of ups and downs over the decades, it was, as Clark (1970) would say, an "established and reasonably successful college" (p. 239). But the external environment was rapidly changing and Bucknell found itself caught in a wave of declining enrollment that was surging across the country. The population of college-eligible 18-21 year olds was shrinking, a phenomenon that would hit "undergraduate, private colleges located in rural areas" particularly hard (McMeekin & Dede, 1980, p. 228). At the same time, the proportion of minority students in the college-age pool was increasing and many in this population were opting to begin their postsecondary careers at community college instead of four-year institutions ("Higher Education in the '80s," 1989). Quite suddenly, Bucknell was faced with an institutional need it had not faced in a long time: finding a new pool of students.

Given the new reality of the student population in the late 1980s, Bucknell at the time can be seen as occupying a space somewhere between a revolutionary and an evolutionary context (Clark, 1970). It was "paying the rent" (Clark, p. 239), so to speak, and living up to the expectations of faculty, students, and alumni, but it was also looking ahead with trepidation,

wondering how it would stay viable if enrollment declined to the extent predicted, and, further, how it would stay relevant in an organizational field that was increasingly enrolling minority students. In other words, while Bucknell might not have been in crisis in the late 1980s, it was certainly staring down a potential “unstable setting” (Clark, p. 238). This tenuous straddling between the revolutionary and evolutionary context created the conditions necessary for innovation, and innovative leadership.

Leadership

Clark (1970) notes the differing roles of leaders, and charismatic—or gifted—leaders especially, in the varying institutional contexts. Charisma plays an integral role in both new and revolutionary contexts. In the former, a charismatic leader “who has the will to build and shape” (p. 242) is needed to ensure there is an able and interested group of followers. In the latter, a charismatic leader is needed because “the old rules do not work and someone must try to devise new patterns” (p. 242). In both of these cases, the leader’s ability to devise new structures or systems and encourage others to support them are key. Clark also argues that a charismatic leader plays an important role in the evolutionary context, especially if the institution is “relatively stable...[but] looking for improvement” (p. 244). In this context, charisma might not be as “bound tightly by time” as it is in the new and revolutionary contexts. That is, leaders have “leeway” in advancing ideas for change and for gaining supporters; urgency is not a main driver (p. 244).

Bucknell University’s leader at the time that a community college transfer initiative was first considered was Gary Sojka. Sojka’s background is in the sciences; he has a Ph.D. from Purdue and taught at Indiana University, where he was dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for three years before becoming Bucknell’s 13th president in 1984 (“2002 Honorary Degrees,”

n.d.). Sojka's interest in athletics led to substantial change in Bucknell's athletic system during his 11-year tenure as president. And his commitment to funding the liberal arts helped to increase financial support for Bucknell, whose endowment fund nearly tripled under his watch. Sojka's record of success as president adequately illustrates his effectiveness as a leader. Halfway through his tenure, though, Sojka faced the enrollment challenges described above. They had no doubt been building over the years, but by 1988 it was clear that some kind of change needed to happen.

Part Three: The Development of STEP

This section of Chapter Four details the findings from researching the development of Bucknell's first community college transfer initiative, a program that would eventually be called STEP. As noted above, this section begins at the beginning, with the very first available communication between Sojka and then president of the Community College of Philadelphia at the time, Judith Eaton. It then moves forward chronologically, identifying important points along the pathway, as well as influential people, decisions, and reactions. The purpose in this section is to present a complete narrative of the development of the first transfer program at Bucknell, much of which is reconsidered in Chapter Five through the lens of organizational saga.

A Partnership is Born

Although the impetus for Sojka's outreach to Eaton in February 1988 is unknown, what is clear is Sojka's interest in the potential that a partnership between Bucknell and CCP holds. Sojka wrote in a letter to Bucknell Provost, Tom Greaves, on the 17th of February that he had heard Eaton was interested in reaching out to Pennsylvania colleges to expand pathways for transfer. Sojka first expressed concern to Greaves about credits, that community college transfers "often try to transfer as much as ninety hours of credit" (para. 1). Regardless, he wrote, "this

certainly sounds like something we should be interested in,” and considered it a viable mechanism “to improve minority recruitment” (para. 1).

Notably, Sojka does not wait for a written response from Greaves, for on the same day he writes to Eaton, expressing Bucknell’s interest in program development with CCP:

I have recently learned that you may have some interest in developing programs that would improve articulation between community colleges and independent colleges and universities with regard to minority students. Please know that Bucknell would be interested in developing any program that would help us in our efforts to improve minority student recruitment. (February 17, 1988, para. 1)

The purpose of CCP’s outreach to four-year, “independent” colleges is not clear. However, it seems reasonable to assume that Eaton, a well-known advocate for access to higher education at the time, saw such partnerships as a way to elevate transfer options for high-achieving, under-resourced CCP students. But Eaton only responded with a quick reply to Sojka: “Thank you for your good note,” she writes. “It is my understanding that [our provosts] will be talking to one another” (para. 1).

It is with this simple communication that Bucknell’s provost, Tom Greaves, becomes heavily involved in the potential of a Bucknell-CCP partnership. But Greaves is not nearly as enthusiastic as Sojka. In an April memo, Greaves expressed his hesitation about whether a partnership with CCP was the right course for Bucknell, and attempted to temper Sojka’s expectations:

Recognize...that they [CCP] are putting together dozens of these arrangements in Pennsylvania, and that their invitation to us conotes [sic] no special attention to BU. According to my telephone conversation with them, they think it is going to be quite

uncommon for any of their students to go to BU. Their main focus are [sic] the institutions in the Philadelphia area, especially public institutions. (April 27, 1988, para 1)

Sojka, though, either directed Greaves to act or convinced him of the merits of such a partnership because exactly one month later, Greaves wrote a letter to Addie Butler, an administrator at CCP, to extend an invitation to Butler and other CCP staff to visit Bucknell. The visit would be an opportunity, writes Greaves, for CCP staff to meet with “Admissions staff and others so that you can get a sense of what Bucknell is like in order to provide the best information for CCP students who may contemplate transfer to Bucknell” (Greaves, May 27, 1988, para 1). It is with this letter and invitation that Greaves emerges as a kind of proxy leader. In fact, Sojka will not dip his hand back in to partnership development until early 1989.

The exchanges between Bucknell and CCP up until this point indicate that the relationship between the two institutions was headed for little more than a formalized articulation agreement, which would allow CCP students a elite option for continuing their education and Bucknell a ready outlet for minority applicants. Within six months, however, a much more complex program began to emerge. In an October 26 letter Greaves invited Douglas Fenwick, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs at CCP, to view a videotape about Vassar College’s Exploring Transfer program. Vassar, in Poughkeepsie, New York, had been successfully administering its Exploring Transfer program since 1985. This program was—and still is—“a summer program to encourage and enable highly capable community college students to pursue the baccalaureate degree at selective liberal arts colleges” (Alexander, 1989, para 2). Vassar’s program grew out of a partnership with LaGuardia Community College, much like the budding partnership between CCP and Bucknell.

In his letter, Greaves indicates that Bucknell is considering Vassar's program as a potential model for the partnership with CCP, but he underscores the need not just to replicate Vassar's program at Bucknell. We need to "look at the Vassar model within the realities of our own institutions," Greaves writes. He then goes on to list these realities:

...summer pay rates, administrative support and admissions, faculty availability, means of overseeing the program from PCC's [sic] point of view, mechanics of joint administration, general selection/admissions guidelines we may want to propose, how we get our respective faculties to get jointly involved, and the process ahead for writing a proposal. At least those are a few things we will want to work on, and your own list will need to be added to it. (para 2)

Although there is no direct response to Greaves, there is evidence that his recommendations were taken up. A memo dated November 22, 1988 extends an offer from Associate Provost and Classics Professor Barbara Shailor to Richard Smith, an associate professor in the English Department. It is clear from the memo that the two had met earlier to discuss the potential of Smith in the role of Program Coordinator "for Bucknell's joint venture with the Community College of Philadelphia" (para 1). In the memo, Shailor clarifies that the role would include recruiting Bucknell faculty to teach in a summer program, liaising with CCP faculty, facilitating "academic and co-curricular matters...[and] with the advisory board and other appropriate individuals, evaluat[ing] the effectiveness of the program at the conclusion of the session" (para 3). There is no documented response from Smith to Shailor, but later program materials show that Smith accepted the position.

Like Greaves serving as a proxy leader for Sojka, Shailor takes on a proxy leadership role for Greaves. She continued to work hard behind the scenes on what was beginning to look like a

replication of Vassar's Exploring Transfer program. Part of Shailor's work was coordinating with administrators, faculty, and staff about a meeting to be held on December 16, 1988 with representatives from Bucknell, CCP, Vassar, and LaGuardia Community College. To faculty members at both Vassar and LaGuardia, Shailor writes, "We are most interested in hearing about your experiences in the Vassar Summer Program and any advice you might be able to offer us in establishing a similar program at Bucknell" (Shailor to Hemmes, November 29, 1988, para 2). To Mark Pursley, the director of corporate and foundation relations at Bucknell, Shailor writes, "it is possible that Bucknell will be submitting a grant proposal" to replicate Vassar's program (Shailor to Pursley, November 30, 1998, para 2). She then invites Pursley to the meeting.

Prior to the meeting, Greaves composed a document titled, "Some Thoughts on a Bucknell/Community College of Philadelphia Program." In it, Greaves outlined the necessary parameters of a Vassar replication program, which had suddenly gained real traction with the potential of grant funding from the Ford and AT&T Foundations:

Funds from the Ford Foundation and AT&T have been allocated to the American Association of Colleges to support at least five programs similar to the Laguardia-Vassar [sic] program. In the October 7th meeting at Vassar, representatives of the selection committee laid out some basic parameters that they would probably want to see in any proposal. In my judgment these parameters are not seen as immutable, but dramatic departures from the original Laguardia-Vassar [sic] format would need persuasive justification. (Greaves, Dec. 5, 1998, para 1).

Greaves then went on to list nine parameters that seemed necessary for a replication of Vassar's program:

1. A “genuine, co-equal collaboration” between faculty at both CCP and Bucknell, most easily achieved through team-teaching courses
2. An intentional targeting of CCP students “who would probably not go on to a third or fourth year of college studies without” the summer program
3. The development of a “group spirit and mutual support among the students,” most easily achieved through a residential experience, advising, and co-curricular programming
4. Enough funding to ensure the program comes at no cost to participants
5. An integration of financial aid counseling into co-curricular offerings
6. “Unambiguously strong support from the presidents of the two institutions”
7. Full academic credit for participants from Bucknell
8. Guaranteed financial aid for CCP students who wish to enroll at Bucknell, but a clear stipulation that transfer only to Bucknell (as opposed to “any senior college to which she/he can gain admission”) is not necessary for program admission
9. Completion of Associate’s degree before transfer

In addition was a list of six parameters that seemed optional, including: the length of the program, the courses taught, the start date, the total number of participants, the extent to which participants are “isolated from the regular student body, and from family members,” and, most importantly for Bucknell, “the degree to which the program focusses on minority students. Bucknell’s need for more minority students is, of course, widely recognized as an urgent matter,” writes Greaves. He closes with a short note about funding, which highlights a potential \$25,000 grant, which Bucknell would need to match through other funding sources.

Although Greaves attended the December 16 meeting to discuss the LaGuardia-Vassar replication, it is unclear the extent to which he discussed the above parameters. He did address

the group with a prepared “list of givens” (Shailor to Sojka & Greaves, Dec. 5, 1988, para 3) after a welcome by Bucknell President, Gary Sojka, and CCP President, Judith Eaton. The group at the meeting was comprised of 13 representatives from Bucknell, including Sojka and Greaves; 2 representatives from CCP, including Eaton; and 1 representative each from Vassar and LaGuardia. The group’s discussion was based on a number of questions grouped in four main topics: The experiences of Vassar and LaGuardia, institutional aspects of CCP and Bucknell, the program curriculum, and the residential experience. Questions ranged from the general, “What seemed to ‘work’? What did not ‘work’?” to the specific, “Demographically, what is the make-up of the student body at CCP and at Bucknell? What are the characteristics of the CCP-Bucknell student? What kinds of math and verbal skills do they have?” Questions about the residential experience were primarily concerned with staffing: “Will Bucknell be selecting residential staff to meet shared criteria or will some staff members [be] coming from Philadelphia? What student support services will be needed?” (“Topics for Discussion,” December 16, 1998). Notably, there is no available follow-up documentation about this meeting, such as meeting notes or minutes.

There are minutes of a different meeting, however, with a different group of people from Bucknell—four members of the faculty and one staff psychologist—including Vice Provost Shailor and English Professor Richard Smith, the recently appointed transfer program coordinator. The tone of this meeting is quite different than the December 16 one. In fact, this meeting centered on concerns about the CCP-Bucknell program. At the top of the list, documented by Shailor, was the need for “improving the overall environment at Bucknell for minority students. This is a general problem and not one limited to this summer program,” Shailor notes. “There is a sense that Bucknell must heighten its efforts to make the campus a

welcome place for minorities.” And then a topic is addressed that had not yet surfaced at all in the discussions of the program thus far: “Bucknell needs to determine why previous summer programs for minorities failed, and to learn from past failures how to make this new program work effectively.” No other information exists in these minutes, or any other documentation, about these failed summer programs, but these comments from Shailor indicate that the faculty especially are concerned about the institutional culture at Bucknell and how ready the institution might be to host a diverse, non-traditional student group. Shailor’s notes continue with a list of recommendations for the program, including providing counseling and adequate financial aid for participants and offering an orientation program for faculty who sign up to teach. The minutes close with the suggestion that if the program comes together as planned, then “Bucknell faculty should go to Philadelphia to meet interested faculty from CCP” (Shailor, Minutes, Dec. 1988, para 11).

However, there was little time for administrators and faculty at Bucknell to fully explore the questions and concerns raised in the two meetings detailed above. For in January 1989, Bucknell drafted, finalized, and submitted their proposal to the Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer. The proposal, titled “Strengthening the Transfer Experience: The Bucknell University-Community College of Philadelphia Summer Project,” is roughly 20 pages. It first states the program’s purpose: to “address the specific problems experienced by minority and non-traditional students from CCP who have strong potential to complete successfully at least a four-year degree, but who, due to particular aspirations and knowledge, are at risk of halting their studies at the community college level” (CCP-BU Proposal, January 1989, p. 1). It then draws a comparison between the proposed Bucknell-CCP program to the Vassar-LaGuardia one: “CCP and BU have much in common with our counterparts in New York State,” the

proposal states. “CCP is urban, with its main campus located just north of center city Philadelphia.” What follows this comparison, though, is a stark contrast between CCP, as a public community college and Bucknell, as a private, elite liberal arts university:

CCP is large: 37,000 commuting students comprising 11,200 full-time equivalents. CCP is a public institution offering a wide variety of academic and occupational programs to its Philadelphia constituency. Admission is broadly inclusive, with the GED or high school diploma the central credential...Bucknell University, like Vassar, is private, entirely residential, elite, and classically collegiate: BU faculty place strong emphasis on both teaching and scholarship; students live and study in stately Georgian buildings on a well-groomed rural campus; and classroom studies and residential life are closely interwoven. (CCP-BU proposal, January 1989, pp. 2-3)

It is within this inter-institutional context that the proposal reiterates what has been Bucknell’s primary mission for a CCP partnership all along: “Bucknell’s present minority [student] population, not counting foreign students, stands at less than 5% of its 3,300 undergraduates, a number that is clearly inadequate relative to current institutional objectives for diversifying our student body” (CCP-BU proposal, January 1989, p. 6). Bucknell positions its interest in this student population in terms of increasing “the richness that diversity gives to the academic culture,” (p. 5) and then goes on to highlight all the institution has done to expand access to low-income students and students of color. These efforts include targeted recruiting, offering “preferential financial aid,” hiring a Minority Students Advisor, creating a Race and Gender Resource Center and a Black Studies minor, and engaging in affirmative action hiring policies to increase the diversity of faculty and staff (p. 6).

The bulk of the proposal details the centerpiece of the program—the six-week summer experience—comprised of four main components intended to “provide a broad variety of experiences for the participants:” curriculum, residential life, counseling workshops and seminars, co-curricular activities. The curriculum component includes coursework and academic workshops. Students “select two of the three courses offered, each of which will be taught by one faculty member from CCP and another from BU” (pp. 11-12), and participate in workshops that offer “advanced writing and study skills” development...and perhaps laboratory and analytic techniques [taught] by faculty in the natural sciences and engineering” (p. 12). The residential life component focuses on students’ interaction with two peer counselors, one of whom “will facilitate developmental programs (e.g., discussions of human awareness, personal growth),” and one of whom will engage participants in “recreational and social programs (ice cream sundae nights, picnics, field trips, etc.)” (p. 13). The counseling workshops and seminars piece centers on providing guidance on admissions, financial aid, and career development based on the “Strong Campbell Interest Inventory” administered by Bucknell Psychological Services (p. 14). Lastly, the co-curricular activities component includes “special activities,” similar to the ones listed in the residential life component but connect the social with the academic. For example, a co-curricular activity could be a “field trip to engage students in understanding the structures and social patterns in rural America and how those patterns connect with life in urban settings” (p. 15).

The remainder of the proposal details plans for program evaluation; developing a “formal transfer arrangement” between Bucknell and CCP via a “planned articulation agreement” (p. 17); Bucknell’s commitment to admission and financial aid for program participants; and explaining specific attributes of the Bucknell-CCP program that would differ from the Vassar-LaGuardia

one, namely the length of the program (six weeks instead of five), housing for both student participants and CCP faculty who will co-teach courses, salary parity between CCP and Bucknell faculty (both will receive the same amount, around \$3,200 per course). The proposal also includes a detailed budget, which totals \$82,529. The proposal was submitted on January 18, 1989.

Just one month after the proposal was submitted, on February 17, 1989, Bucknell learned it had won of the grants in the National Project on Community College Transfer. And just five days later, Bucknell President, Gary Sojka, submitted the institution's acceptance of a \$25,000 matching grant, agreeing to "observe both the schedule for development of its proposed program and the reporting responsibilities contained in its proposal" (Sojka, 1989). Not long after, Bucknell Provost, Tom Greaves, reached out to both CCP President, Judith Eaton and CCP Dean Aram Terzian to discuss the need for a workshop for both CCP and Bucknell faculty as well as coordination between the two institutions to raise "the rather considerable amount of money that we need...Let us hope that effort bears abundant and early fruit" (Greaves, March 14, 1989, para 4).

There would not be much discussion about funding for a month or more, though, as both institutions focused on developing the program further. In a March 27, 1989 letter to Sojka, Eaton claims that "creative cooperation between two-year and four-year institutions is essential," and then invites Sojka and any Bucknell faculty who might be interested to a two-day conference on May 1-2 at CCP "to initiate our latest phase of work" (para 3.). The goal of the conference was to "bring together faculty and administration at each of the institutions responsible for curriculum, transfer program arrangements, minority concerns, and research to address issues of transfer and work at ways of helping more students transfer" (para 3). Eaton's letter included a

preliminary schedule for the conference, which featured such speakers as UCLA Professor Arthur Cohen, who founded the Center for the Study of Community Colleges, and Reginald Wilson, who was a Senior Scholar in the Office of Minority Concerns at the American Council on Education. The CCP conference was driven by a number of questions around transfer policies, the effect of transfer on “minority” students, how research could help inform practice, and concerns of faculty and staff (“Building a Transfer Network,” 1989). These questions are worth citing at length here to get a sense of CCP’s main concerns about building a transfer network with Bucknell:

What issues are raised when the need to have a coherent learning experience for the community college student comes in conflict with the student’s need to accumulate credits for transfer? What are the major administrative challenges in promoting and facilitating transfer? What are effective curricular activities that help underprepared students overcome educational deficits? What are the policy issues that need to be addressed to assure minorities have access to education? What is the relationship among the nature of transfer approaches used, the information which will be generated, and the appropriate application which can be made of results? What concerns do faculty and administration have about the use of research? What is an appropriate way to develop a research agenda for a transfer network?

The conference included panel discussions and presentations that centered these questions.

Conference participants concluded with a discussion of how the institutions could work together to take appropriate next steps.

Not all would progress smoothly from there, however. In June of 1989, Judith Eaton announced her resignation from CCP. Sojka wrote a congratulatory letter that was tinged with

worry. “All of us at Bucknell are very concerned about your departure at just the moment that CCP and Bucknell are beginning their exciting Exploring Transfer Project. Nonetheless...you have our very best wishes for your usual successful performance” (para 1). Eaton, who left CCP to lead the Council for Aid to Education, responded briefly by noting, “I do want to keep my hand in (where) appropriate as my work might relate to the CCP-Bucknell project” (para 1), but there would be no further communication between the two institutional leaders. And CCP would be without a president until 1991.

Another constant worry was finding sources for the matching funds necessary for the \$25,000 grant from Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer. In a brief letter to Dean Colton Johnson at Vassar, Bucknell Provost Tom Greaves writes,

I wanted to follow-up in writing to say that Bucknell University would be happy to support a proposal to major foundations to establish a pool of scholarship funds to underwrite the further educational studies of community college students coming through such programs as Vassar’s ET [Exploring Transfer] Program. If we can join you on the hustings looking for funds, let us know. (Greaves, July 6, 1989, para 1)

There is no documented response about potential funding sources from Vassar or from any other organization as development of the Bucknell-CCP partnership continued on.

The First STEP: Program Implementation and Response

Despite the loss of CCP’s President Judith Eaton, and the inability to secure a source for the matching funds, the extensive work that the two institutions had undertaken from 1988-1989 came to fruition in the summer of 1990, which marked the first summer residency program for community college transfer students at Bucknell University. Prior to the start of the program on June 25, 1990, work was being done to finalize curricular and residential plans, to inform the

Lewisburg area about the program, and to continue to secure funding. Around this time, Bucknell also started sending out press releases about the program.

In June, there was a status update that detailed several new developments. The first focused on the curriculum. Three pairs of faculty from CCP and Bucknell had “met together on both campuses, and have, over the last few months, developed their team-taught courses”: Environment of Life, Literature and Social Criticism, and Mathematical Sensitivity and Engineering Limits (CCP/BU Summer Program Status Update, May 1990, p. 2). Other developments included (a) the announcement of the program coordinators at CCP—Luke Russell, associate professor of English at CCP, and Richard Smith, professor of English at Bucknell; (b) the selection of participants—25 chosen from a total of 120 applications after a screening and videotaped formal interview; (c) the plan for housing—two floors in air-conditioned Swartz Hall; and (d) the current state of the budget—outside funding had yet to be secured, leaving the majority of the program costs uncovered.

The status update also included demographics of the first summer cohort. This cohort was overwhelmingly African American (20 students), but also included four Caucasian students and one Asian American student. In terms of marital status, the majority were single (16 students), two students were married, and five were separated or divorced (the status was listed as unknown for two students). The students were mixed in terms of age with the majority in the 18-25 range (13), seven in the 26-35 range, three in the 36-45 range, and another two in the 46-50 range. Nine of the students had children, fourteen did not (the status was listed as unknown for two students). All of the students were enrolled at CCP and represented a wide range of disciplines. The demographics of the 13 CCP students placed on the program waiting list were very similar.

The first mention of the program in the press was a June 7, 1990 article in the *Lewisburg Daily Journal* (a now defunct newspaper) written by Amy Simms. In the article, Simms outlines the program whose purpose is stated as a way “to encourage low-income and minority students from the city’s [Philadelphia’s] two-year college to strive toward four-year baccalaureate degrees” (para 1). Simms quotes Tom Greaves and Deanna Congileo, Bucknell’s associate director of public relations, both of whom highlight BA completion as a main goal of the program. “We will see this program as a success if students go on to any four-year college. We view this as a mutual educational experience,” claims Congileo (Simms, para 10). The CCP-Bucknell partnership, according to Greaves, would help to “show the participants that private, elite residential institutions, like Bucknell ‘should be high on their aspiration lists’” (Simms, June 7, 1990, para 4).

Not long after, Greaves references the Simms article in a letter to five Lewisburg officials: the town manager, the president of the chamber of commerce, the area district attorney, and two area chiefs of police. “Enclosed you’ll find a copy of a recent news article that appeared in the *Lewisburg Daily Journal*,” writes Greaves (June 19, 1990, para 1). “My purpose in writing to you is simply to inform you, as key public officials, of the program and to establish a link to you in the event that questions from area residents or merchants arise” (para 2). Greaves then goes on to explain whom the program has targeted and outlines the demographic information detailed above. He notes, “We do not anticipate compartment problems” (para 5), but then states,

On weekends and on other occasions, groups from the program may find themselves on Market Street shopping and enjoying Lewisburg. The high percentage of minorities among them will make them more noticeable than other groups coming to the Bucknell

campus this summer. You may want to inform staff and others who are likely to encounter students of our program. (para 6)

Greaves was also busy at this time continuing Bucknell's search for funding sources. In two letters, one to Dean Terzian at CCP, and one to Colton Johnson at the Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer, Greaves praises the work of CCP in helping to get a foothold with CIGNA as a potential funder, but then admits that Bucknell so far had found "that raising the funds in support of the program is going more slowly than we'd like" (Greaves to Johnson, June 14, 1990, para 4). According to Greaves, Bucknell had the "\$25,000 in matching funds committed from a University discretionary grant, but [we must] continue to work on attracting funds specifically for this program that will supplant that particular source of matching funds as well as cover the budget above \$50,000" (Greaves to Johnson, June 14, 1990, para 4).

Responses to the Program

The first year of the summer residency brought about varied responses from CCP students who participated in the program, Bucknell faculty who taught in the program, and Bucknell alumni. These responses varied by constituent, with the students having the most positive responses by far, the faculty having a less positive response, and the alumni having the most critical response of anyone.

Student Responses. The most positive response by far was from the program participants, who memorialized their experience in a 22-page student-produced album that includes reflections, photographs, poetry, and quotes. The cover of this album is the first material document that refers to the program as STEP or the Student Transfer Enrichment Program. In it, the students refer to themselves as the "twenty-five pioneers" who embarked on a "wonderful adventure" ("The First S.T.E.P.," 1991, p. 1).

The group cohesion that formed among participants is evident in the introductory paragraph of the album: “The only way one could ever imagine the depths of those incredible forty-two days,” they write, “is to have been there among the STEPers themselves” (p. 1). It is also the focus of many student reflections: “I’ll always remember our group, the pioneers. All the laughter, and especially the tears, has forged a bond that can never be undone, even if we lose touch over the years” (“The First S.T.E.P.,” 1991, p. 2). “Everyone here is just like a family,” writes another participant. “This is an impressive hard-working group who can be nothing other than successful” (p. 3). After a team-building activity at a ropes course, one student wrote how the activity was called “a ‘bonding.’ Funny, I already feel bonded to everyone in this Program” (p. 12). Another student remarked on the same experience, writing, “What was learned, moreover, and probably brought us even closer, was trusting in one another” (p. 6).

The theme of personal growth is evident throughout the album. Some participants expressed this growth in emotional terms: “I’ll never be the same person I was before this Program, & I have grown and am more enriched because of it” (p. 12), wrote one participant. Another noted, “Through this experience at Bucknell, I now have a sharper sense of what my own beliefs are, and how they came to be” (p. 9). For others, the growth was more academic: “Being at Bucknell feels so right,” writes one participant, “I feel more self-aware, this is my first success...The desire to go on with my education has been crystallized” (“The First S.T.E.P.,” 1991, p. 2). One participant expressed academic growth and plans specifically in relation to Bucknell: “My dreams are getting better and bigger every day that I am here...I want my BA now, and I will get it here at Bucknell” (p. 10).

The album includes some faculty reflection, which also refers to student growth. CCP English Professor, Alison Tasch, noted that students in her and Ernie Keen’s class “brought to

this difficult task an abundance of both head and heart... You were outspoken and often eloquent, you listened to each other attentively, and you characteristically seemed to see Ernie and me as partners in your classroom community” (p. 16). However, Tasch had more to say about how much the faculty grew by working together with students in the program:

For the faculty, each course asked us to take the risk of going beyond the familiar territory of our own disciplines and institutions, and thus to expand our own learning as we asked the students to expand theirs... Each of us, faculty and students, knows much that the others do not, because each person’s ideas and experiences are unique. So, we the faculty hope, as the students learned from us, we keep learning from you. As we encounter and interpret new written texts, so we encounter “texts” of our own individual lives and of our society. (p. 15).

In addition to reflections, the album included poems written by students, quotes that capture particularly memorable moments, and photographs, primarily of students. The photographs, especially, serve as a tangible reminder of the diversity of the group. On the first page of the album is a photograph of a student of color walking with her luggage, having just disembarked from a Bucknell University bus (see Figure 1, below), while other students in the background gather their belongings from the sidewalk. Another photograph shows a participant hugging her young son, who accompanied her to the program (see Figure 2, below). A third photograph depicts three participants of color in front of a building, smiling with arms around each other (see Figure 3 below).



Figure 1. A STEP student arriving by bus to Bucknell. First S.T.E.P. 1990



Figure 2. A STEP student and her son at Bucknell. First S.T.E.P. 1990



Figure 3. Three STEP students at Bucknell. First S.T.E.P. 1990

Faculty Responses. The responses from the faculty who taught in the program were not as rosy as those of the students portrayed in the album discussed above. In August of 1990, Associate Professor of Geography Ben Marsh wrote a reflective letter to Professor of English Richard Smith about teaching in STEP. In that letter, which was copied to Gary Sojka and Tom Greaves, Marsh bullet points what he sees as the positive aspects of the program, excerpted here:

- We provided a high-profile academic success to some student [sic] who may have very much needed one.
- Several good students are transferring to Bucknell in the next few months.
- This was the most rewarding teaching I have done in my career. I have never been closer to a group of students as I am to this one. It was also an extraordinary opportunity to learn about the needs and perspectives of urban, African-American students, in regard to both their cultural circumstances and to the limits of their educational preparation. (Marsh, 1990)

Marsh also bullet points what he calls “serious shortcomings” of the program, again excerpted, as follows:

- We didn’t learn from Vassar’s experience. They warned us of a multitude of pitfalls which we might encounter, and we hit most of them anyway. That was simply stupid on our part.
- We didn’t learn from each other either. The faculty never sought, in any organized fashion, to share their experiences during the program or to help each other out. (Time pressure is surely partly to blame for this problem.)
- We failed to convey an accurate sense of what a four-year college *is*. Formal discussions outside the classroom concerned primarily the mechanics of

university operation—financial aid and admissions, for example—rather than the liberating life of the mind which keeps us all here.

- We have not agreed on the purpose of the program. Was it for the students or for Bucknell? We displayed conflicting (and often insulting) messages to the students. Some were angry at being victims of a P.R. scam—and we surely couldn't prove they were wrong. Others found the program to be a strategy for recruiting minority students to Bucknell, without providing them the opportunity for deciding whether another school would be more appropriate. I also felt used. I did not spend my summer teaching for the benefit of Bucknell as an institution. I spent it for the benefit of the students (and myself). (Marsh, 1990)

These “shortcomings,” as Marsh terms them, stand in stark contrast to the experiences the STEP students put in their commemorative album. There is no documented response to Marsh from Richard Smith, but there is a memo to Marsh from President Gary Sojka that reveals Sojka's complicated relationship to the program. “I also am guilty of ‘using’ the CCP Program,” writes Sojka, “but when it comes to Bucknell, I don't see any reason to ‘hide our light under a bushel.’” Sojka continues, “We do need to define more clearly what we are doing and we will work on that. Nonetheless, I feel it is possible to run a program that is mutually beneficial to the students and the University” (Sojka memo to Ben Marsh, August 22, 1990, para 1).

Alumni Responses. Undoubtedly, the most critical response to the STEP program comes from two Bucknell alumnae, class of 1989, who wrote letters to Sojka expressing their dismay in learning about the CCP-Bucknell partnerships. Both alumnae reference an article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* about the program, which ran on July 31, 1990. In that article entitled, “Born Again at Bucknell,” author Huntly Collins highlights the experiences of several STEP

students, including Alonzo Pride, Jr., a 44-year-old high school dropout who “never imagined he’d someday enter one of the nation’s leading private liberal arts colleges” (para 1), and Kathy Pino, a 26-year-old mother of two who, Collins notes, “is one of a handful of women on public assistance” (para 9). Pino, Pride, and nearly all of the STEP students interviewed by Collins expressed an interest in transferring to Bucknell after completing STEP and whatever courses they had left to complete for their Associates degree at CCP.

Upon reading the *Philadelphia Inquirer* article, one alumna, Sue Ann Wise, wrote that she “experienced a growing sense of disbelief and horror. I think my current state of shock has not yet allowed me [to] fully appreciate the magnitude of the administrators [sic] decision to admit Community College of Philadelphia graduates into Bucknell” (Wise to Sojka, August 1, 1990, para 1). Wise’s primary concern was with educational quality and the potential devaluation of her Bucknell degree:

While I applaud Bucknell’s effort to diversify...I refuse to believe that the Community College of Philadelphia offers the same quality of education that Bucknell does...The CCP students will have to take remedial classes in order to catch up to Bucknell students or classes will be taught at a slower pace to accommodate the CCP students. In either case, both Bucknell and CCP students will suffer and the value of a Bucknell education will significantly decrease. (Wise to Sojka, August 1, 1990, para 2)

Wise goes on to recount parts of the *Inquirer* article to illustrate how the CCP students interviewed did not give her “confidence” that they could handle a “rigorous class schedule of the average Bucknell student” (para 3). “A would be hot dog vendor,” she writes. “A high school drop-out. A welfare mother. How can these students possibly compare to the students who have just completed two years at Bucknell, a university that likes to compare itself to Ivy League

schools?” (para 3). Wise closes her letter by reiterating how much a Bucknell degree will decline because of the STEP program:

When I applied to Bucknell, I was impressed by the fact that it was ranked number one among liberal arts colleges east of the Mississippi in 1985...I chose Bucknell because it offered more than a degree...it offered its name on the diploma...I used to love to hear, “Bucknell? I hear it’s pretty hard there and pretty hard to get into.” Now I am sure I will hear, “Bucknell? Don’t they have some sort of cooperative arrangement with the Community College of Philadelphia? It must be easy to get into.” (para. 4)

Wise’s letter is accompanied by a second letter. Another Bucknell alumna, Kimberly Rose, writes: “I support the idea of a six week summer session for CCP students, but I have serious reservations about accepting these people as full-time Bucknell students” (Rose to Sojka, August 3, 1990, para 1). Rose’s letter focuses on what she sees as a “lowering [of] Bucknell’s standards to attract minority students,” which, she claims, “will only hurt Bucknell in the long run” (para 1). Rose positions herself as having been a low-income student at Bucknell who “probably filled some minority quota,” but, she continues, “my high school grades and SAT scores were well above Bucknell’s average” (para 2). Rose then questions the institutional motive for the CCP-Bucknell partnership:

Allowing minority students, whether Black, Hispanic, Oriental, or poor, to perform at substandard levels and applying extraordinary measures to ensure that these students graduate may improve Bucknell’s standing with federal funding agencies, but it also diminishes the value of a Bucknell degree for those of us who earned it by meeting or exceeding Bucknell’s standards and requirements. (para 2)

Like Wise, Rose finishes her letter with a concern for Bucknell's "reputation for selectivity and academic excellence, which she thinks is "at stake" (para 4).

Both Tom Greaves and Gary Sojka responded to Wise and Rose in letters that explain the purpose of the STEP program and how CCP students were selected. They also attempt to assuage fears that Bucknell is lowering its standards. Greaves writes, "The students who came to Bucknell this summer were not a cross section of CCP students. Each was carefully selected by a joint Bucknell/CCP faculty committee" (para 2). He explains that the group was comprised of "minority or non-traditional student[s] who had the skills, self discipline, and commitment to succeed in a demanding, academic environment and had the potential to complete a bachelor's degree" (para 2). Greaves goes on to underscore the point that Bucknell would not be the right fit for every STEP participant, "but in the faculty's judgment, more than half would succeed here if they chose to come" (para 4). He then turns to the expertise of the Bucknell faculty who taught in the program. "Is the combined judgement of the four Bucknell faculty to be trusted? Together they have 65 years of teaching experience on this campus. I'm inclined to believe they know who is ready for Bucknell" (para 4).

Sojka's letter to Wise and Rose is similar, but focuses more on the institutional reality of the time. First, he highlights the role that community colleges play as a gateway to higher education for a growing number of students, and, thus, as a potential market for Bucknell. "Increasing numbers of the ablest minority and non-traditional students are getting their initial exposure to higher education in two year colleges," writes Sojka. "Thus, we were interested in exploring a way to access that market" (para 3). He then focuses on the inevitable changing demographics of the college-going population due to a smaller pool of traditional (i.e., white) enrollees. "All colleges (that includes the Ivies and Stanford, as well as lesser known and less

well-endowed institutions) have had to accept students from their waiting lists in recent years” (para 4), he writes. “When the number of high school graduates begins to recover, the increases will be due, in large part, to greater numbers of minority students” (para 4). Sojka explains that Bucknell “will hit its target with regard to both the number of enrollees and the academic preparation of its incoming freshmen” for the 1990-1991 academic year, but that it “must look to new markets in the future if we are to continue to prosper” (para 4).

Sojka then folds social justice in to his response to Wise and Rose, connecting that mission to institutional need as well:

As we move out the egocentric, go go 1980’s and into the ‘kinder and gentler’ decade, it is my impression that colleges will fare better if they are perceived to have a serious commitment to social justice and if they are seen to extend themselves to serve the populations that are properly prepared to fully benefit from the services they offer.

Bucknell is only for the academically able and the highly motivated student. That is the kind of student our CCP program is designed to help us find. (para 7)

Sojka invites Wise and Rose to contact the faculty who taught in the program for their perspective, noting that he is “sure they would be able to add to what Vice President Greave and I have already provided” (para 8).

There would be no more alumni responses as the administrative discussion of STEP turned exclusively financial toward the end of the summer of 1990. In an August 23 memo titled “STEP Program Funding Perspective,” Tom Greaves, now with the title of Vice President for Academic Services and Planning, outlines the reality of the budget: “Bucknell cannot fund STEP for summer, 1991, without substantial external funding beyond sources presently available to the University. [This means, for example, that the Hewlett grant will not be used.]” Greaves notes

the institutional desire to continue STEP but does not give much hope for funding prospects from “corporate or foundation sources,” which he claims have been “judged to be, on the whole, discouraging.” He finishes the memo with a reminder that the institution will continue to pursue funding from only the sources it already had identified as possibilities, such as CIGNA, but that it will not work to identify new sources. The next day, Greaves sent another memo to the Bucknell finance department with a full accounting of the program. The total cost of the program was \$77,012, which was roughly \$5,000 less than the projected budget in the grant proposal.

Program funding was also the topic of an August 13, 1990 letter to Gary Sojka from Howard Simmons, then executive director for the Commission on Higher Education in Philadelphia. In the letter, Simmons applauds the “apparent success of Bucknell’s cooperative Program with the Community College of Philadelphia,” but then expresses disappointment in the lack of follow through from potential funding sources. “As you are aware,” Simmons writes, “there is a great deal of rhetoric about access for and success of minority students nowadays from all sectors of our society; however, few have gone as far as Bucknell to translate this rhetoric into action” (para 1). Simmons points to a system of higher education that, in his estimation, “is becoming more elitist and unaccommodating to the special needs of Hispanic, African-American, and other minority students” (para 2). He ends by telling Sojka to keep up “the good work” nonetheless.

One STEP Forward, Two STEPs Back: The Struggle for Program Survival

There is evidence that the STEP program ran in 1991 and 1992, but there is little administrative discussion of the program. This lag could be due to the lack of established leadership at CCP. The third President of CCP, Ronald Temple, would not be inaugurated until February 1991, although there was correspondence between Bucknell President Gary Sojka and

Temple in January of that year. The relationship between Sojka and Temple does not seem to have the mutual admiration that Eaton and Sojka had at the beginning of the Bucknell-CCP partnership. Their correspondence is limited to the constant worry of funding. A January 29, 1991 letter from Bucknell President Gary Sojka asks CCP's Temple to sign a joint letter to CIGNA to secure funding for STEP for that summer. Sojka writes, "As I mentioned to you in an earlier conversation, external support is vital to us if we are to continue the program at the same level in which it was carried on last summer" (para 1). Temple signed on and in early February, he and Sojka sent a letter to Wilson Taylor, president and CEO of CIGNA, with an unusual proposal. Instead of a direct ask for funding the STEP program, Temple and Sojka propose joining "forces with CIGNA, linking the strengths of our two institutions with CIGNA's Audenreid High School program in Southwest Philadelphia" (Temple & Sojka to Taylor, February 4, 1991, para 2).

According to the letter, CIGNA had an enrichment program at Audenreid, which is now a charter school, "to reverse the dismal school dropout rate of Philadelphia minority youths, to encourage them to complete high school thereby becoming employable by CIGNA and other corporations" (para 2). Temple and Sojka claim that joining forces would strengthen CIGNA's program "by offering a route for those graduates (they might be called 'CIGNA Scholars') with capabilities and aspirations to achieve more, to further their post-secondary education before taking their place in the labor market and out community" (para 3). Temple and Sojka reference materials from STEP, which they enclosed, to show how the program "was a great success," and then express hope "that sources of support, like CIGNA, in the Philadelphia community will allow us to continue to build upon what has been a promising beginning" (para 4). Despite the efforts of Temple and Sojka, there is no indication of funding from CIGNA or evidence that a

joint partnership among the three organizations ever came to be. In fact, there is no evidence of funding from any external source for STEP in 1991.

However, a 14-page report on STEP written by Psychology Professor Ernie Keen in 1991 indicates that the program did indeed run. Keen's report is grounded in research on educational equity; racial, economic, and psychological barriers to transfer; and meritocracy. Its scholarly tone sets it apart from the other, more administrative, documentation about STEP as does its argument for a renewed vision of the program—one that focused less on institutional need (say, for entering new markets, as Sojka had written in his letters to alumnae Wise and Rose) and more on social justice. "The STEP program seeks to be unambiguous," writes Keen. "Removal of barriers to transfer for targeted populations is much less likely to reinforce to social, political, and economic dynamics that keep people in their place than most of what this or any private university does." Keen then connects the problem of barriers to the various aspects of STEP that he thought needed review: The selection of teachers, the selection of students, team teaching, the curriculum, and accommodations Bucknell should make for transfers. He concludes with a call to action for the institution: "Needed is some consciousness of Bucknell's mission as participating in the centuries-long project of creating equality of opportunity in human society" (Keen, 1991).

There was a STEP program in 1992, but little is known about it. Sojka sent out an invitation to a "reception cordially honoring the 1992 STEP students" on July 2—but the documentation about the program does not pick back up until 1994, when there seems to be a resurgence of enthusiasm about it. Again, there were administrative changes at CCP. Temple stayed just two years at his post, leaving for a position as chancellor of the City College of

Chicago in July 1993. CCP's new president, Frederick Capshaw, would not officially assume the position until March 1994.

On March 17, 1994, CCP invited Bucknell to a "breakfast reception to recognize" the STEP program and to discuss ways to move the program forward. Sojka and three Bucknell administrators attended the breakfast, and upon their return, Sojka wrote a memo to thank them for accompanying him. "Even now," he writes, "I am not entirely sure how the meeting was set up and structured...and it appeared that basically all you got for your efforts was a chance at some lox, bagels, and orange juice" (Sojka to Gerdes, Rice, and Becker, March 21, 1994, paras 1-2). Sojka does concede that he thinks "this meeting may have been the step we needed in order to get CCP's support in approaching appropriate Philadelphia foundations or individual philanthropists. If that's the case, your efforts certainly will not have been in vain" (para 3).

Sojka also reached out to CCP's new president, Frederick Capshaw, after the meeting. He writes in a March 21, 1994 letter, "You are now the third CCP President that I have had the pleasure of interacting with over the years, and I wish you every success as you tackle the difficult and demanding tasks that lie ahead" (Sojka to Capshaw, March 21, 1994, para 1). Sojka highlights the past success of STEP, calling it a "first-rate program" (para 2), but the letter focuses primarily on securing funding and getting CCP's help in doing so: "It would appear that in the long run continuation will likely depend upon our ability to secure funding from some appropriate Philadelphia foundation or philanthropist," Sojka writes (para 2). He then asks directly for help from Capshaw to gain "access to such a source of funding or, better yet, supporting us in our efforts with such an individual or group," which, Sojka notes, would "materially improve our chances of finding the support we need" (para 2).

On the same day, Sojka wrote a letter to one such Philadelphia philanthropist, Ruth Ferber, who sat on the Board of CCP and was present at the breakfast. The message in this letter is the same as in the one to Capshaw. “I think that [our] brief gathering made it abundantly clear that the [STEP] program is valuable and serves well the CCP students who take part in it,” Sojka writes (Sojka to Ferber, March 21, 1994, para 1). The discussion again turns to funding: “Our problem remains, however, finding a stable and appropriate way of funding the program” (para 1). And then to CCP: “Since Bucknell appears to lie outside the geographical limits imposed by most Philadelphia philanthropic organizations and foundations,” Sojka writes, “we will undoubtedly need the help of CCP in order to gain access to resources that could keep this program alive” (para 2).

It is clear that others at Bucknell were also considering ways to fund STEP. In a memo to Sojka on August 11, 1994, Associate Provost Jim Rice proposes that Bucknell reimagine STEP as a “more generic ‘Diversity/Outreach’ program, which would allow it to be part of “a future campaign objective” (Rice, 1994, para 1). Rice explains that this move “would allow the University latitude in initiatives worthy of endowed support” (para 1). The letter includes a handwritten note from Sojka that reads, “I do agree!” A document follows that provides further explication of this more general fund—\$1.5 million for “need-based scholarship support for future STEP participants” (“The STEP Program,” n.d.), but there is no evidence that such a fund was actually established.

What is evident is a targeted effort by both Bucknell and CCP to review the STEP program, including the “basic principles...and a list of the major activities during the project period” (Capshaw, 1994, para. 2). An exchange between Sojka and Capshaw in the fall of 1994 shows Sojka’s increased openness to work with Capshaw: “We are delighted that you...came to

campus to talk with some of our current STEP students,” writes Sojka in a September 26 letter. He then thanks Capshaw for extending ideas for external funding, noting “your idea is very exciting, but most of all I am impressed by your willingness to work with us to find a way to build upon this already successful program” (para 1). Capshaw responds two months later with an equally congenial letter: “It was a pleasure to visit your campus and have the opportunity to discuss the STEP program with you,” he writes.

The letter from Capshaw includes several documents meant to provide a review of the program’s objectives, processes, and accomplishments to date. Again, there is an unexpected twist. The focus from CCP’s perspective is not find a way to secure sustained funding for STEP at Bucknell but to grow the program substantially. The main goal, according CCP documents, is to “expand STEP to serve 100 minority and low income CCP students” by “engag[ing] 8 private colleges and universities in addition to Bucknell University” (“The STEP Learning Community Major Objectives,” September 1994, paras 1-2). This work would, of course, require CCP to “engage faculty from participating institutions in teaching and curriculum activities” as well as to ensure “commitments from participating institutions to provide attractive financial aid packages for at least two STEP scholars” (para 5). Another goal, according to CCP, would be to establish a “learning community that is inclusive of the institutions and persons participating in the STEP program” (para 9). The “centerpiece of the STEP program” (para 7), however, would remain the summer residency program at Bucknell.

Other documents included with Capshaw’s September letter to Sojka include a timeline of the STEP enrollment process for CCP students and a timeline for expanding the STEP program, which CCP dubbed the “STEP Learning Community.” CCP envisioned the enrollment process in terms of identifying students who would do well in and benefit from STEP. The steps

in the process included such activities as course advising and program explanation at the time of admission to CCP; identifying, interviewing, and advising potential STEP scholars prior to their taking 19 credits at CCP; “special academic seminars in cooperation with transfer institutions,” financial aid counseling, and attending the summer residency program when CCP students are between 19 and 30 credits; and then continued advising for eventual transfer once 31 credits are earned (“The STEP Learning Community Activities, March 1994). CCP envisioned the growth of the STEP Learning Community as comprised of activities during the pre-proposal stage and then by year for the first three years. Pre-proposal activities included connecting with interested administrators and faculty at four-year institutions, developing a STEP alumni network, and reaching out to foundations and corporations for financial support. Year One activities included developing a STEP curriculum among the faculty at participating institutions, establishing a community of STEP participants at CCP, and recruiting additional four-year institutions. Years Two and Three included activities included program assessment, additional recruitment of both STEP scholars and interested institutions, and continued development of STEP scholars alumni network.

Such an expansion of the STEP program is surprising, though, given the experiences Bucknell had had up to this point in attempting to secure external funding, and given statistics that Bucknell provided in their overview of the program. At that point—four years in—a full quarter of STEP completers had not yet even completed their Associate’s degree at CCP (“Bucknell Presentation,” 1994). In thinking back to this early time in the program, a current professor at Bucknell, who taught in STEP in 1994, claimed that “there was not a mechanism, financial or otherwise, for students to transfer.” The students in STEP “had similar kinds of experiences to what they have now but none of them transferred because there was no money for

them to transfer. There were no spots for them to transfer [into]...there was really no avenue for them to pursue Bucknell.”

Changes in Leadership and Priorities

It is clear that little came of CCP’s work on reviewing the STEP program and ambitious planning for the future. The lack of movement is likely due to a major change in leadership at Bucknell. Gary Sojka announced his resignation from the Bucknell in January 1995, and was replaced by William “Bro” Adams who, as discussed below, had reservations about Bucknell’s commitment to STEP. In a note to Sojka, Psychology Professor Ernie Keen writes, “the exchange between you and [CCP President] Fred Capshaw awaits your next move” (Keen to Sojka, January 11, 1995, para 1). Keen continues, “it has occurred to us that you may prefer to leave this with your successor...[but] we rather hope you will have time to pursue these plans into a later stage before you leave office” (para 3). Sojka responded two weeks later: “I think the ball has been in Fred Capshaw’s court, but no matter...I’d like to get this done while I am in office, but if I can’t I’d be pleased to brief Bro” (Sojka to Keen, January 30, 1995, para 1).

Documentation from 1997 indicates there was a STEP program in 1995, but there is no actual documentation of that summer—no student lists, no celebration invitations, no faculty responses. There is a handwritten note by Bro Adams that lists STEP coordinator names—“Richard Smith, past; Ernest Keen, present”—and that questions CCP’s financial commitment: “CCP has not helped with funding/administration” (“STEP,” July 6, 1995). There is also a letter from Capshaw to Adams that indicates an interest in a continued partnership between Bucknell and CCP. Capshaw writes, “I enjoyed our chance to get to know each other and to share our perspectives on [the program]” (Capshaw to Adams, July 6, 1995, para 1). “I’m delighted that you agree,” he continues, “that there is a real opportunity to both advance the existing program

and perhaps develop new initiatives” (para 1). There would be no movement in the partnership until later that year, though, when Capshaw would again write to Adams. In this later letter, Capshaw recounts his participation in a reunion of the Exploring Transfer Program put on by the Ford Foundation. “While the program featured presentations by capable administrators and faculty,” he writes, “it was the testimony of the students that most moved me and others” (Capshaw to Adams 1, November 6, 1996, para 2). Capshaw discusses how STEP and similar programs at other institutional partners were transformational for students:

The students explained how exposure to the environment of a high quality four-year college raised their aspirations for themselves and inspired them to believe in their own abilities to succeed in a competitive environment. The faculty spoke eloquently of their appreciation for what inner-city students bring to the classroom in experience, maturity, and the willingness to question...I know that in these days of tight budgets and re-thinking priorities some important initiatives will be shelved. I want to do all that I can to work with you to continue this program. (paras 2-3)

Capshaw followed this formal letter with a more informal one that included a financial commitment as well. “Last year...I promised a contribution of \$10,000 per year from our college” for STEP, writes Capshaw, but “without invoice or occasion for transmittal, the check was never cut...Please accept the \$20,000 payment enclosed...as an expression of our earnest desire to see this important program continue” (Capshaw to Adams 2, November 6, 1996, paras 1-2).

In early December 1996, Bucknell President Bro Adams responded to Capshaw with gratitude for the \$20,000 check. Adams also stated that he has approved the STEP program for the summer of 1997, but, he claims, “we are conducting a formal review of the program to

determine whether it ought to continue at Bucknell and, if so, what changes in its direction and organization might be appropriate” (Adams to Capshaw, December 2, 1996, para 2). Adams goes on to explain that the purpose of the review is twofold. First, Bucknell’s “efforts to secure external support for the program were not productive,” explains Adams. “Second and perhaps more important,” he continues, “I started to wonder if the program was serving directly Bucknell’s fundamental interests, particularly in the area of our ambition to diversify the student body” (para 3). For Adams, the effect of the STEP program on Bucknell faculty was obvious as was the effect on CCP students. “What I am not sure of,” writes Adams, “is how much of an impact STEP students have had on our student body, even in those few cases where students from the summer program have matriculated to Bucknell” (para 3). Adams explains that the “great pressure on the financial aid budget and the need to apply greater resources to the recruitment of students from diverse backgrounds” makes him “wonder where we can most productively commit our limited resources” (para 3). Adams rounds out the letter with ideas for external funding, perhaps looking again to the Ford Foundation.

At Adams’ request, a group of Bucknell faculty and staff met in December 1996 to review the STEP program. The STEP Review Committee was charged with examining the benefits of the STEP program for Bucknell and then determining if Bucknell could make the program “better or more productive,” or whether allocating the money elsewhere “would prove more rewarding” to the institution (Clark to Adams, December 11, 1996, para 1). The group determined that keeping the STEP program was the best course of action, but also recommended some modifications. The first modification was for Bucknell to be more involved in “the [participant] selection process, targeting more students in the age range of traditional Bucknell students (yet keeping with our already established commitment to racial and ethnic

participation)” (para 2). The group suggested a tighter partnership between the admissions staff at Bucknell and CCP to achieve this goal. The second modification was again focused on expansion. The group suggested that Bucknell reach out to other four-year institutions, such as Penn College (of Technology) in nearby Williamsport, Pennsylvania, to gauge their interest in participating in the STEP community. The third suggestion focused on possible external funders. The group urged Adams to consider the Whitaker Foundation with which some members of the group had “had prior dealings” (para 4). The fourth modification was continual assessment of both the goals and progress of the program. The final suggestions for change were based on administrative practices. The group advised that Bucknell undertake “a concerted effort to work with STEP students during their first year at CCP” (para 7) as well as develop “definitive procedures for administrative responsibilities for the academic component of the program. Presently,” they argued, “this is done on an ad-hoc basis” (para 8).

The STEP Review Committee’s recommendations to Adams was followed up by a more robust review by Martin Ligare, associate professor of physics and Review Committee member who taught STEP students from 1993-1995 and served as STEP academic coordinator in 1996. Ligare’s report from the faculty perspective begins with the “assumption that Bucknell is firmly committed to increasing the diversity of its student body” (Ligare, “The STEP Program and Bucknell: A Faculty Perspective,” January 26, 1997). He then lists three points that he sees are crucial to increasing the minority student population at Bucknell. First, he claims, is the need to recruit “high-quality students” (para 2), which he believes the STEP program does by providing access to “talented students that we don’t reach through our regular recruiting channels” (para 4). Those regular channels, according to Ligare, do identify high-quality students, but those students also “attract the attention of other prestigious universities, and...[Bucknell is] often at a

competitive disadvantage when we try to recruit them” (para 5). Ligare argues that Bucknell faculty are in a good position to be “effective recruiting agents” (para 4) for the institution, especially since they tend to develop close relationships that bond students to Bucknell (para 5). Since the program’s inception in 1990, 24 STEP alumni had “either received Bucknell degrees or were currently enrolled” (para 6). With more intentional recruitment from STEP, Ligare suggested that these numbers could increase significantly.

The second recommendation from Ligare was greater attention to the transition of STEP students to Bucknell campus and to the town of Lewisburg. “I have seen students arrive from Philadelphia,” writes Ligare, “not ready for the academic pressure of Bucknell, not ready for the cultural environment of central Pennsylvania, and not ready for life on a residential campus” (para 8). Ligare suggests that Bucknell consider ways to integrate the program more to campus, such as allowing “regular Bucknell students to enroll in STEP classes” (para 10) to create points of contact between the two groups earlier on. Ligare’s third recommendation focuses on creating community on campus to make minority students feel more welcome. Students who participate in STEP form a tight-knit cohort, claims Ligare, but that community could extend outward once STEP students have transferred to Bucknell to include other minority students on campus. “The STEP program clearly helps build a network of students, faculty, and administrators,” writes Ligare, who are “committed to [the] idea of increasing diversity at Bucknell, and committed to doing something to enrich the campus” (para 11). Ligare concludes by noting that Bucknell could use the money earmarked for STEP to “additional targeted financial aid for minority students recruited through our normal channels” (para 12), but that doing so would not necessarily bring the same kinds of students that STEP does, “students with backgrounds that

enrich the campus...[and help to] build an environment in which all the advantages of multiculturalism can be realized” (para 12).

There is no documented response from Adams to Ligare or to the STEP Review Committee. In fact, there is no further documentation of the STEP program until after it was reimagined as the Bucknell Community College Scholars Program (BCCSP) in 2006 after receiving funding from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. The STEP program at that time, according to Raymond, a current Bucknell administrator, eventually “just sort of died because while those of us who had been involved with it [early on] were committed to the access, it was also increasingly evident that it was not a good use of University resources.”

A Little Funding Goes a Long Way: STEP Becomes BCCSP

Bucknell University’s hopes for diversification via community college transfer were revived in 2006 with a large infusion of funds from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (JKCF). Raymond, an administrator at Bucknell, recalls that “the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation knew about [Bucknell] and reached out to us for that initial grant.” Typically, as noted above, Bucknell had not taken many transfers, even with the STEP program. “And that was because we didn’t need them,” claims Raymond. “Our retention rates were high.” But Raymond also knew that Bucknell’s enrollment numbers would not remain steady forever. “I think those of us who have been involved in this a long time...we’ve been looking at what’s happening today” with regards to enrollment, “knowing that it’s coming, and we’ve been talking for a long time here about the changing demographics and the sustainability of our models.” When JKCF approached Bucknell about the Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), it seemed like the right choice at the right time, and Bucknell now had years of institutional knowledge with STEP to guide their planning.

Reimagining STEP as BCCSP: Retaining the Old in the New

The administrators tasked with developing BCCSP considered the experience of STEP. Raymond explains how they asked themselves, “What are some of the things out of the old [STEP] program that we liked, and what do we need to do differently?” They then worked with faculty who had taught in STEP as well as staff in admissions and enrollment management to figure out how best to bring in transfers from community college. For Raymond, what community college students do, especially in terms of academics, at their two-year institutions is “radically different than what they’re going to encounter” at Bucknell. One way to ease the transition from community college to Bucknell was to create a program that centered the cohort model. Raymond describes the process:

We strategically began to think about how to bring students to campus and as part of that experience, how to create a mutually supportive cohort that might enable them to transfer, so that students are not just thinking individually about transferring, but about transferring to Bucknell with a group of people they already know and have a community with.

Much like with its STEP precursor, BCCSP was “built on this idea of bringing students to campus,” claims Raymond. It also had the same format: community college participants would live in the residence halls and take three courses team-taught by Bucknell faculty and faculty from the sending community college.

In addition, BCCSP program developers decided that students would also participate in a range of enrichment activities to give them an opportunity to have what Raymond referred to as “honest conversations about what transfer means.” The first enrichment session was designed as community building. Developers wanted to give BCCSP students a way to make connections

with others on campus who were themselves first-generation and/or low-income students.

Raymond explained that he has always shared his story during that first enrichment session of being a first-generation working-class college student who put himself through Ohio State and then through graduate school. “I didn’t have any models for college,” he says. “My dad dropped out of school in the 8th grade. My mom in 11th grade.”

Raymond and other developers of BCCSP also built in enrichment sessions to help students understand the four-year college environment so that they could learn about how to access academic support, what deans and advisors do, and how to request accommodations. They also wanted program participants to have practice filling out the Common App and to learn about the intricacies of the financial aid process. A final enrichment session was developed to teach participants about the role of Bucknell mentors. Unlike the more ad-hoc nature of mentoring in STEP, BCCSP mentors had to be established members of the Bucknell staff or faculty community who would be a constant point of contact for participants over the summer and who would continue to advise and support students throughout their two years at community college. Mentors would be responsible for talking with students about transfer “not just to Bucknell,” says Raymond, “but transfer generally to finish the Bachelor’s.”

Once these program pieces were set, Bucknell was ready for the next phase of development. Raymond explains, “We went out and partnered with five community colleges, four in Pennsylvania and one in Maryland.” But it was not an easy sell initially. “We had to convince them that we were not trying to poach their best students,” which they did by ensuring potential partners knew that Bucknell’s goal was degree completion and that participants could not transfer until they finished their associate’s degree. They told the partners, “We want your best students, but we want you to also enjoy success with them.” There were a couple of institutions

that questioned Bucknell's motives, so personal relationships had to be built. Eventually, with the program pieces set and the partnerships established, Bucknell was ready to launch BCCSP in the summer of 2007. "When we brought our first cohort to campus there were 30 students," recalls Raymond. And "they did really, really well."

BCCSP ran well during the next three years with the help of consistent funding from JKCF. During that time, Bucknell continued to check in with their community college partners to ensure the program was operating smoothly. Each year, Bucknell managed to bring in a cohort of around 30 students, meaning that each year they managed at least two groups—one that was recruited in October to come for the summer and the other that had completed the summer and went back to their community college to continue their degree.

Institutional Commitment: Championing the "Future of Bucknell"

After the four years of funding and a successful program, administrators at Bucknell were approached once again by JKCF. Raymond explains that the Foundation asked him and Mark Davies, who at the time was the Dean of Admissions, to travel to Washington, DC and present on Bucknell's success.

They were starting another roll out and they wanted us to talk to the new universities about our model, and why we were so successful at that point four years in. We were already seeing that we were getting about 18-20 transfer students out of [a cohort of] 30. Unbeknownst to Raymond, JKCF had an additional motive for inviting him and Davies.

At the end of our discussion with the group, the president [of JKCF] said, "Mark and Robert, come in, I want to talk to you for a few minutes." And Mark and I were thinking, "Please just let us finish the grant. Please don't make us pay everything back. We thought this was what you wanted." And he basically said to us, "Do you want another year of

funding?” And we said, “Yeah. Yeah,” because we were already seeing great success here by that point.

Bucknell received an additional \$100,000 from JKCF to continue BCCSP for another year (2011). But during that year, Raymond and Mark Davies were already planning ahead. Bucknell had gotten another new president, John Bravman, in the summer of 2010, and Raymond and Davies knew that the JKCF money would be gone quickly. Raymond explains how both he and Davies, the “two main folks,” were both “strategic thinkers” when it came to BCCSP. They invited Bravman to a luncheon to meet with the 2011 BCCSP cohort because they knew that the students would make an impression on him.

We had this luncheon [and] I’ll never forget a student from Philadelphia, Dave Lackford, an ex-marine who was a barber...had four kids trying to support. [He was] a brutally honest guy, and he said to President Bravman, “[Raymond] tells us that the funding for this program is running out and that would be a real mistake for Bucknell. So, I don’t know what you can do as president, but you probably should try and work to see what else could happen.”

Raymond and Davies were also “very vocal” about the program around campus, but especially with the Board of Trustees. At either full Board meetings or meetings of the Board’s academic affairs committee, Raymond noted that they would always bring a group of BCCSP students for Board members to meet. “We would make sure that there was...a community college student in addition to the traditional Bucknellian so that our Board could understand how we’re diversifying Bucknell.” For James, a longtime faculty member and champion of community college transfer at the institution, the work of Mark Davies was invaluable in ensuring the success of BCCSP. “A huge piece,” according to James, “was Mark Davies. He loved these

students, and he loved getting them here and staying connected with them...He spent a tremendous amount of time” figuring out how to make the program happen.

In the end, the hard work and strategic thinking of Raymond and Davies paid off. Bravman approached them at a celebration for BCCSP scholars the day before their graduation from the program. Raymond explains how he and Davies were sitting together before the ceremony when Bravman says to them, “I had the chance to meet some of these students who are graduating and I’m so impressed.” Then Bravman says, “This program is too important for Bucknell. It’s the future of Bucknell. It will have full University funding. The vice president for finance will make it happen.” Raymond explains his and Davies’ response to the news, “I burst into tears,” he admits. “Mark burst into tears. There was a lot of emotion.” Since that point, BCCSP has been fully funded by the institution.

BCCSP Now: Program Features and Factors

Unlike the above sections, which focus on the development of the STEP program chronologically, the following sections focus on features of BCCSP. They do so because there is not much more chronological development to the program; once consistent funding was guaranteed by the institution, the program became firmly established and has remained relatively stable since. The following sections discuss aspects identified by current staff and faculty as significant to the way in which the program runs. These aspects include the role of the faculty, the role of the students, the cohort model, and partnerships between Bucknell and area community colleges. These aspects connect back to the promising practices and lessons learned outlined in the CCTI report and discussed in Chapter Two; they also will be reconsidered in terms of distinctiveness with the application of the organizational saga lens in Chapter Five.

The Role of Bucknell Faculty: Champions and “Curmudgeons.” It is clear from the above discussion about the institutional commitment to BCCSP, that the hard work of a few administrators helped to secure the future of BCCSP. These administrators also knew they needed the support of the faculty, however, to ensure programmatic success. Raymond explains that not all faculty members were easy to convince, especially in the initial years of the program. One of the greatest hurdles, he says, was getting faculty on board with regard to credit transfer. Bucknell faculty had a difficult time accepting an equivalency between community college courses and similar courses at Bucknell.

In the early, days literally I was going to department chairs who have the power to transfer courses to say, “Show me where on this syllabus, which I’ve matched up with your department’s syllabus, why this is not Soc 101? You’re saying it’s not SOC 101, it’s SOC 1TR, which at Bucknell means we’ll transfer it, but it’s not going to be equivalent.” And oftentimes when they’re forced, [they can’t explain it], it’s nothing. It’s just, “We didn’t teach it.”

In one case, Raymond convinced a faculty member to agree to enroll a transfer student in two beginner courses on a trial basis until the first final exams in both courses. Raymond explains how this student, who had just transferred in,

...took both courses plus three other courses. She was carrying five, and that’s an overload for us. At the end of the first exams, and luckily they were in days of one another, she had the highest score on both. I said to the faculty member, “She’s ready,” and the faculty member said, “Oh my God...she could teach this course. Both courses...Where do I get more students like this?!”

Raymond admits that this kind of action put a lot of pressure on the student, which was not something he was entirely comfortable with. But, he claims, “it was at that point...I know my faculty colleagues well enough to know that I needed to convince them.”

Faculty concerns about the program are not just a thing of the past, however. Carla, the current administrator of BCCSP, notes that some faculty still need convincing that the program is worthwhile. “It’s internal bias,” she says, “and yes, it exists here, too.” Part of her role is to encourage faculty members to become mentors in the program, but some faculty members, whom she calls “curmudgeons,” are “ill-disposed to do so because they do not feel it’s a good use of their time.” Carla admits that she has not hear any faculty member say those exact words out loud, but she knows they feel this way because they decline to participate, which makes her wonder why. “It’s low-hanging fruit,” she says, “it does not require them to do anything other than have lunch that we will pay for, send an email to check in and invite them to talk about their aspirations.” To counter the sense that mentoring transfers is a waste of time, part of what Carla does is “infiltrate certain spaces to elevate the profile” of the students. “One of our Scholars this past year just won a Goldwater Scholarship award. And I think it’s the first time ever [at Bucknell]. And you bet that we are lauding that student left and right because that’s extraordinary.”

Of course, not all faculty members needed or need to be convinced. For Carla, the ones “who are committed to diversity and social justice, to leveling the playing field. Those are the ones who are coming out in droves.” Some departments are just now beginning to see the possibilities with transfer students. Carla explains that Bucknell’s acclaimed College of Engineering is the most recent part of the University interested in working with community college transfers:

The College of Engineering...is a very traditional kind of bastion, and it's filled with a lot of traditional faculty. But the Dean and other faculty are saying, "We want more of these students in our classrooms because they elevate the learning."

Raymond, another administrator, adds that he now has "faculty lobbying us on the phone. They'll say, 'I'm thinking about a student from this summer [in the residency program]. I really hope you're going to bring so-and-so back.'" According to James, the program administrators "found kind of a neat way" to engage faculty through the mentoring piece especially. The faculty who have been involved with the program "have had wonderful experiences [mentoring] these transfer students," he says. Faculty have developed such close and meaningful relationships that they ask, "Can I be a mentor again this year?" For James, this means that Bucknell now has an important group of "people aware that something would be lost if [the program] were to go away."

For some faculty members, having such students at Bucknell is necessary for them to maintain their commitment to the institution. Carla notes that the transfers at Bucknell tend to be students "who do not take [their education] for granted. And who are not engaging in unproductive behaviors" unlike their native, non-transfer peers. The kinds of intellectual connections faculty can make with transfers helps sustain them as teachers. One member of the faculty, claims Carla, "shares that this [program] is the thing he does that allows him to remain focused at Bucknell. Having the summer program and knowing that the students are about campus really provides him with a sense of relief." James reports a similar sentiment, admitting to Bucknell's reputation as a "heavy drinking place," the result, he says, of having a Division I sports program and a very active Greek life. "Binge drinking...[has been] the problem," he claims, but the community college transfers represent a different kind of student, they "have

already had those experiences.” Thus, for James and many other faculty members, bringing in such students has been much “more rewarding for the faculty.” He notes that when faculty “have one or two folks who are staying after class or coming to their office to chat about stuff. Gosh, that makes [it] a lot more rewarding than having none.”

The Role of BCCSP Scholars: Diversifying and Educating an Elite Campus. Some of the discussion above shows how the community college transfers at Bucknell play an important role on campus, including in helping administrators advertise the success of BCCSP and in helping some faculty remain interested in their jobs. But the role transfers play seems to also extend to other Bucknell students, especially those who come from privilege, and to the institution as a whole. For Bucknell’s more traditional students, says Carla, the program provides “such an incredible opportunity to interact with [the transfers]; to recognize the privilege that they do have; and to realize that [transfers] are performing better than them.”

Raymond also notes the role transfers play in expanding native students’ learning experiences. In speaking about what they tell potential recruits from the partner community colleges, Raymond explains:

We do place some expectations on them. Nothing quantifiable, but [we tell them], “Your job at times is to educate the other students here and to educate faculty and that’s going to be hard and we’re going to help you with that. It’s not your main job, but on occasion, I do want you to make sure that folks know you’re a community college scholar because that may be particularly relevant to the discussion that you’re having in that class.”

When asked if the students who end up transferring to Bucknell find that they have to do this kind of work, Raymond replied, “They do a lot of educating.” He adds that he thinks it is a necessary part of the role because “they enrich everyone’s educational experience...”

Carla finds that transfer students can also help to change the stigma about community college. The success of the transfers at Bucknell, claims Carla, is helping to debunk “a lot of perceptions, a lot of mythology around what community college is and how they provide for and prepare students to come into a elite, rigorous institution.” For Raymond, this change has meant that conversations about students’ and even staff and faculty members’ social positioning are becoming easier to have. BCCSP, according to Raymond, has “created space for additional first-generation, working-class students at Bucknell,” which has increased awareness overall of these populations on campus. Raymond claims that the program has allowed Bucknell to tell “a more accurate story based on data that we’ve always had that we just never looked at. You know, actually, 15% of our students are first generation.”

The change in perception of social positioning on campus has been helped by Bucknell’s Communications Department, which, according to Raymond, has worked hard to “craft these stories,” in a way that can have wide appeal:

We had a feature several years ago in *Bucknell World* about several of us who are first-generation academics [from a working-class background]. They did a feature story to inform the rest of the alumni community and the rest of campus that there are lots of successful first-generation folks, and they’re even your colleagues, including President Bravman. He tells a very powerful story about being this kid from Long Island and getting accepted to Stanford. The first time he ever got on a plane was to go to Stanford. You see students, then, and families reacting to his narrative to say, “Wait a second. You’re the president of Bucknell and your dad was a plumber?”

For Raymond, BCCSP is the kind of program that can change the very nature of Bucknell. BCCSP students, according to Raymond, “are actually the face of higher education and our future, and those are the folks we need to be working with.”

Creating Community Through the Cohort Model: “A Beautiful Thing.” One of the most important features of BCCSP, the part of the program that surfaces over and over as key, is the cohort model, which was also central to the earlier STEP program. The “learning community that gets established [in the cohort]...is a beautiful thing,” notes James. “They’re dining together, they’re taking classes together, and then they’re doing these co-curricular kinds of things as well...it just creates a learning environment that I wish we had throughout [the institution].” Carla uses the word “family” to describe the cohort aspect of the program. “We do a lot to build this cohort,” claims Carla, “and they all comment that they feel like it’s family. They haven’t had that at the community college...They say, ‘I’ve never had friends and now I have bonded with these folks for life.’” By establishing a cohort, Carla thinks that Bucknell is “creating bridges in ways that [these students] had never experienced either in high school or within their communities or during their community college experience.” Raymond notes how fun it is to watch the BCCSP scholars who end up transferring to Bucknell “re-bond and reconnect” when they return to campus for their first semester. “I can’t stress enough the support of the cohort,” he says.

Raymond also admits that not all cohorts bond in the same way. For him, it is sometimes a matter of numbers: “30 is hard at times to build the cohesion necessary for a cohort. And we’ve had some cohorts where we had to say, ‘Okay, this is not working. This is cohesion for this group.’” James, who has been involved in the program for at least two decades, has also seen some cohorts create more cohesion than others. He also notes that not all BCCSP scholars

necessarily need the cohort to be successful. Community college transfer students often “are in a life position where, although having the cohort is nice, they don’t need to have it either. They’ve got this focus.”

In terms of the big picture of the cohort model, though, everyone agrees that it is a necessary part of the program. The biggest advantage for James is that it helps students make connections with one another. He remarks, “there’s a big enough cohort of [BCCSP] students who have come through [over the years] that the number of people that you can point to” for help with a particular pathway or problem is now really large. James gives the example of a student who came through the program who had been a heroin addict. After BCCSP, “he went on and got into three masters programs in drug counseling,” and so he became a source for others who might be in a similar situation. “We had another person,” says James, “who had been living on the streets of Philadelphia, a vet who was a drunk, who got involved in AA, and is now a 55-year-old living in the dorms,” and he became a resource for other BCCSP participants in similar circumstances. The cohort model provides BCCSP participants with “an additional set of resources,” according to James, “beyond the resources that our typical student doesn’t have.” For Carla, these kinds of connections can make the difference between a student deciding to transfer to Bucknell or somewhere else. She thinks the cohort that gets created “certainly flavors the desire to want to come here because they know they have support...they have built-ins that they may not necessarily find at other institutions.”

Carla also speaks to the ways in which the support from within the cohort can help with students in their transition to Bucknell. Even though BCCSP participants have the summer residency program, which helps them to acclimate, those students who transfer in realize they

had been in a kind of “bubble.” Carla goes on to say that Bucknell does “a great job providing for them,” but then explains how most transfers feel like imposters:

I just met with one of our transfer scholars [and] she shared with me that a lot of our scholars are having transitional issues. They’re thinking that they don’t belong. They’re wondering, “Why am I here?” I anticipate that and with each subsequent cohort that I work with I’m putting a lot more emphasis on getting them to begin thinking through their mindset before arriving here...I say, “Once you’re here in the fall, the training wheels are off and you are a Bucknell student. And you need to cope with what that looks like and feels like for you because you’re going to be confronted with everything that makes you ‘other’ in this environment.”

The cohort helps transfers counteract feelings of otherness, says Carla, who speaks to the closeness of the cohort and how they continue to support one another. She also explains how another student-run group that has been kind of on and off again, the Bucknell University Student Transfer Association (BUSTA), has been a way for “transfers to congregate together for social purposes.” This group is designed to intentionally include transfers who are not BCCSP scholars. This is a group that Carla would like to “resurrect,” since she thinks BUSTA could assist her in developing a peer mentor program.

Community College Partnerships: Strategic Diversification. Another key feature of BCCSP is partnerships that Bucknell has established with area community colleges. As noted above, one of the main ways that BCCSP was reimagined was to include other schools beyond the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). Bucknell now partners with an additional five area community colleges: Harrisburg Area Community College, Montgomery County Community College, Garrett College, Lehigh Carbon Community College, and Reading Area

Community College. Reading was added as a BCCSP partner in 2018. Bucknell and Reading had previously had a memorandum-of-understanding, but it was “not gaining any traction,” according to Carla. Reading is an important partner though, says Carla, because it primarily services “the Latinx population,” which is a population that Carla would like “to see more of” at Bucknell. Carla explains her strategy with regard to intentionally crafting a BCCSP cohort from the six partner schools:

I began looking at it from a strategic point for enrollment management and really seeing this as an opportunity to begin promoting and elevating certain populations that may not have necessarily always been represented in previous cohorts...Latinx was one of them...nontraditional moms also. I was looking at how we might change the narrative of those students on this campus.

Carla remarks further on the continued need to diversify the student population at Bucknell and the ways in which the partner colleges, via BCCSP, help do so: “I would say when I entered the program, what I was witnessing was that we were very attractive to international students. My first year in the program, probably a third of the cohort was international.” But Carla wanted to see more non-international diversity, particularly “African American males.” She began reaching out directly to the program coordinators at the partner schools. “Last year, I said, ‘I need some more men of color,’ and they delivered.” Diversity, for Carla, is her main goal. She took the job, she says, because she saw it “as an opportunity to transform this campus.”

For Raymond, the partnerships are also about strategic enrollment, but he takes more of a “financial perspective.” He claims, “Adding Reading Area Community College was actually a two-year discussion, and part of it is because we don’t want to create unrealistic expectations.” He explains how when they began talks with Reading, they needed to inform the other

community college partners, who subsequently expressed concern. According to Raymond, the program coordinators at the partner schools “immediately said, ‘You’re not going to cut the number of my slots, right?’ We had to remind them, ‘Whoa, remember we said on average you’d have six [students] and sometimes you send us four so two slots didn’t get used.’” Raymond also references Garrett College in McHenry, Maryland, whose partnership with Bucknell came about because of a connection with a member of the Board of Trustees. “They continue to have poor participation,” notes Raymond, which he attributes to location (McHenry is over three hours from Lewisburg, Pennsylvania). He notes that this partnership might have “outlived its usefulness,” and adds, “we’re good with that because” Bucknell could then “open discussion with another community college in the area.”

Carla also spoke about the financial end of the program, but in relation to the more ground-level work with the partner schools. She often visits the community colleges to “celebrate the incoming transfer scholars...to congratulate them and to speak to the [staff] just to say this partnership is working.” She has found it important for her to maintain these relationships especially since the program switched from being funded by JKCF to being funded by the University. The program coordinators at the partner community colleges, she says, “will often reference the money that was available and things that they were able to do on their campuses as a result of having [JKCF] funding.” She continues, “Certainly, over the course of the three years that I’ve been in this role, we’ve had to fight on some of the campuses to maintain some of the celebratory events.” But, Carla notes that Bucknell is “willing to maintain support and belief in [BCCSP] because” it is “producing tremendous outcomes.”

Baccalaureate Completion: The “Heart” of the Program. For the staff and faculty interviewed, the outcomes of the program, the accomplishments of the BCCSP students, make

the work they do worth it, even though many BCCSP completers do not end up at Bucknell. Raymond explains that BCCSP “has always been about transfer to a four-year institution...that’s always been the heart of our program.” For some participants, this means Bucknell, but for many others it does not. Often it is a Bucknell faculty mentor who helps BCCSP students see that Bucknell might not be the right fit. One participant, according to James, was accepted into every college he applied to, including Amherst, Bucknell, Cornell, Pomona, and Trinity. “He got in everywhere,” James says. “And I said, ‘You got into Amherst...Go to Amherst.’” For Raymond, advising against transfer to Bucknell is just part of the mentoring role. “We make sure,” he says, “that the mentors understand that this is about degree completion. This is not about identifying out of our cohort the 15 top students and bringing them to campus.” Instead, Raymond explains, “It’s about supporting roughly 30 people and focusing on completion for each cohort.”

Carla reiterates this point. “The messaging for me,” she states, “is about bachelor’s degree completion. If not at Bucknell, then someplace.” Carla goes on to discuss one student who “was extraordinary,” and said she planned to apply Bucknell, to which Carla replied, “Bucknell is great, but don’t stop there.” She told the student to apply to Harvard and to other Ivy League schools. Carla explains, “She looked at me like, ‘What are you talking about?!’ But she did, and she’s at Yale this year. With everything covered for her.”

Many BCCSP participants, however, do transfer to Bucknell. And, Raymond claims, they do well academically; they graduate and go on to graduate and professional schools; they become leaders in their professional fields. Raymond figures the number of participants who have transferred to and graduated from Bucknell since 2007 is between 300-325. “I’ve got folks out in industry...I’ve got attorneys and doctors and artists. One of my favorites is an amazing artist” in Chicago and “folks are commissioning her work.” Raymond then references Dave

Lackford, the ex-Marine whom he credits with helping to secure University funding for BCCSP. Dave also transferred to Bucknell, and now, says Raymond, “he’s a district attorney in Kentucky.” James talks about a BCCSP participant who transferred to the College of Engineering at Bucknell, and who cried every day in his office because of how difficult it was. “And now she has a master’s degree in engineering and is working at a think tank,” he adds. “We have lots of those stories,” adds Raymond.

Looking Toward the Future

There is little doubt among the staff and faculty that BCCSP is secure for the foreseeable future. The move to have the program funded by the University seemed to ensure its place at the institution. Raymond explains, “Throughout the institution now, there are folks who are saying [that this program] is part of the fabric of Bucknell,” that if anyone “were to say to our Board, ‘We’re thinking about saving some money [by] reducing Community College Scholars,’ they would say, ‘You’re crazy.’” But it is not just the Board who would resist. Raymond also thinks the faculty would balk:

If I were to go out now and poll my 400 colleagues on the faculty, I can’t imagine anybody saying, “I don’t want to work with them. Bucknell shouldn’t be doing that.” As opposed to the very beginning when I felt like I had maybe five allies on campus. And so for me, it’s been a game-changer.

James, a faculty member, remains enthusiastic even after over two decades teaching first in STEP and now in BCCSP. “Would I keep doing it,” he asks himself, “absolutely.”

For Raymond, the reasons for why the program should continue are twofold. The first is for the students. Bucknell has seen such success with BCCSP, which many at Bucknell continue to find inspiring. Raymond states, “It’s about the Dave Lackfords and the Ashley Freebys of the

world. And [for the students] I'll throw my whole being into it." Raymond is also interested in how BCCSP might start reaching out to student veterans. "I keep saying to folks [that] there's another body of folks that we could work with...who understand what a cohort it." But reaching out to such groups also shows how Raymond advocates for the future of BCCSP for the institution. "Those of us in the senior administration," he says "need our colleagues to understand that this is the future. And we had a wake-up call. Our target enrollment for the first-year class was 980. But we're short of that." He explains that his colleagues at first thought it was just a "blip," but Raymond said, "We knew this was going to happen. It's just happening actually a couple of years before we thought it was, and this is what our future looks like."

James also seems aware of the challenges facing Bucknell in terms of enrollment. "Given the shrinking pool of students seeking college and the relatively limited endowment that Bucknell has, I think the institution is putting more emphasis on how we can enhance our transfer program, whether from community college or not." James's last comments have a sense of foreboding to them. And they sound eerily similar to the enrollment concerns that Bucknell was facing in the late 1980s when it began its first initiative for community college transfers. Only time will tell what continued enrollment dips and continued pressures on the nation's LACs will bring. In the meantime, Bucknell will keep enrolling community college transfers and sending them out in the world to realize their educational goals.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four detailed the case study findings from researching the development of Bucknell University's longstanding support for community college transfer students, from the early days of Bucknell's STEP program to Bucknell's present day support initiative, BCCSP. This chapter began by describing BCCSP. It then worked its way back in time to consider briefly

the context of higher education and then Bucknell as an institution in the late 1980s, and the role of Bucknell's leadership therein. From there, the chapter began moving forward by detailing chronologically Bucknell's story about community college transfer, isolating moments in time, personnel, decisions, and reactions to program development. Chapter Four then took the same approach to tell the story of Bucknell's more recent initiative, BCCSP, concluding with a look at how the institution thinks about the future of its support for community college transfers.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Chapter One of this dissertation established the reasons why examining Bucknell University's initiatives for transfer support are warranted. Elite institutions are under increased scrutiny for failing to provide equitable access, particularly for low-income students, and community college transfer seems to be a viable option for elite institutions to do so. Bucknell University is one of the only elite institutions in the nation to have long-established initiatives to support community college transfers and, thus, is an institution with deep knowledge of this function. Researchers of community college transfer to elite institutions have called for in-depth case studies of successful institutions. The present study answers that call by examining Bucknell's past and present initiatives. The research questions that guided this inquiry, which were adopted from Clark's (1970) study of institutional distinction, were: *How is it done? How has it been done?*

The first part of Chapter Two reviewed philosophical scholarship on distributive justice as it pertains to elite higher education. This scholarship has established that elite institutions are (a) obligated to provide equitable access and (b) are justified in doing so assuming they provide necessary compensatory support once students are enrolled. This line of thinking was then applied specifically to the function of community college transfer. This section also introduced ways of thinking about organizational decision-making around who gets in and who gets left out of elite higher education. The second part of Chapter Two explored what is known about community college transfer to elite higher education. The extant research about community college transfer to elite colleges largely considers what kinds of institutional conditions are necessary for the development of successful transfer programs. The last part of the literature

review connected these two banks of literature to the concept of organizational saga, which Clark (1970) developed as a way to understand institutional distinction. Clark identified specific contexts within which saga can be initiated as well as aspects of the fulfillment of saga. This study proposed that the concept of saga can be applied to singular programs and considered how such an application is justified.

Chapter Three discussed the present study's methodological choices, including case selection, and data collection and analysis procedures. This section justified the use of a single case, Bucknell University's support for community college transfers, and described the process of selecting intrinsic case study as a method. Chapter Three also described the site and unit of analysis in detail. Lastly, this chapter addressed reliability and validity, detailing the steps taken to increase both, and ethical considerations. It also described my positionality as the researcher.

Chapter Four detailed the case study findings from researching the development of Bucknell University's longstanding support for community college transfer students, from the early days of Bucknell's STEP program to Bucknell's present day support initiative, BCCSP. This chapter began by describing BCCSP. It then worked its way back in time to consider briefly the context of higher education and then Bucknell as an institution in the late 1980s, and the role of Bucknell's leadership therein. From there, the chapter began moving forward by detailing chronologically Bucknell's story about community college transfer, isolating moments in time, personnel, decisions, and reactions to program development. Chapter Four then took the same approach to tell the story of Bucknell's more recent initiative, BCCSP, concluding with a look at how the institution thinks about the future of its support for community college transfers.

Chapter Five reconsiders the narrative presented in Chapter Four within the lens of organizational saga. It considers STEP and BCCSP together as one long development, which

shows how STEP and BCCSP are actually two ends of the same initiative. When viewed this way, BCCSP is no longer a stand-alone program detached from its history as STEP. And STEP is no longer a failed program, but a necessary step in the development of a distinctive program; a plan that Bucknell had to “test and reform...actively over a number of years” (Clark, 1970, p. 234) before it could become an integral part of the organization’s functioning. In short, putting STEP and BCCSP side-by-side reveals an organizational saga. The following sections discuss the development of this saga in detail.

The Initiation of Bucknell University’s Transfer Saga

As discussed in Chapter Two, Clark (1970) contends that saga develops under one of three conditions, which he calls the new, the revolutionary, and the evolutionary contexts. In his study, Clark fits the three colleges he examined within one of those contexts (Antioch in the new, Reed in the revolutionary, and Swarthmore in the evolutionary). However, I found when applying the lens of saga that Bucknell did not fit neatly into just one context, that the conditions in which the saga of transfer support developed could not be defined so easily. In Chapter Two, I claimed that Bucknell at the time of STEP straddled the revolutionary and evolutionary contexts, it was a stable institution, but that stability seemed precarious given the external changes in the higher education environment at the time. Bucknell needed to respond to the shifting student demographics to remain a viable and relevant institution.

What is interesting about this dual context in which Bucknell’s transfer saga was initiated is how it influenced the actions of different institutional constituents, which is not something Clark (1970) considered in *The Distinctive College*. Clark focused on charismatic leadership during the initiation of saga, arguing that such a leader is integral to holding up the vision of change and getting the faculty to “swing into line” to support it (p. 246). Faculty, because of their

lengthy commitment to an institution, are seen by Clark as more important to fulfilling than initiating saga. In Bucknell's case, though, both the leader at the time, Gary Sojka, and the faculty had visions for the community college transfer program. Sojka's vision fits more with the revolutionary context. An analysis of the internal documents shows Sojka's nearly constant concern about enrollment. For him, bringing minority students to campus via transfer helped to solve the twin problems of declining enrollment and a lack of diversity on campus. The faculty's vision fits more in the evolutionary context. Seemingly shielded from the administrative concerns of declining enrollment, the faculty saw transfer as a way for the institution to evolve by enacting the democratic ideal of equity in access. As might be expected, these dual visions were not always compatible.

Nowhere in the documentation is Sojka's concern about enrollment clearer than in his correspondence with Sue Ann Wise, the alumnae who was quite critical of STEP after reading about it in the Philadelphia Inquirer. Sojka response to Wise is worth reiterating in part here:

Though we at Bucknell have been exceptionally fortunate again this year in that we will be one of only a small number of colleges that will hit its target with regard to both number of enrollees and the academic preparation of its incoming freshmen, we must look to new markets in the future if we are to continue to prosper.

Later in the letter, Sojka discusses the program's social justice mission, but even that is positioned as necessary for institutional relevance. "It is my impression," he states, "that colleges will fare better if they are perceived to have a serious commitment to social justice."

For the faculty, concerns about Bucknell's place within the changing market of higher education never surfaced. Instead, the faculty seemed quite driven by the need for Bucknell to change demographically, and they understood such changes as potentially beneficial for all

students and for the institution generally. These sentiments are evident in the grant application to the Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer, which was written by faculty. Bucknell, they wrote, is interested in “the richness that diversity gives to the academic culture.” They are also evident in faculty responses to STEP. Marsh noted that the program offered an “extraordinary opportunity to learn about the needs and perspectives of urban, African-American students, in regard to both their cultural circumstances and to the limits of their educational preparation.” Similarly, Keen saw the program as a way for Bucknell’s very consciousness to evolve. Bucknell, he claimed, must start “participating in the centuries-long project of creating equality of opportunity in human society.”

For Karabel (2005), Sojka’s rhetoric about enrollment and the need for new markets would serve as evidence of an institution acting with organizational self-interest. The decision to recruit and potentially admit community college transfers via STEP seemed to be driven by a diversity or equity ideal, as stated in most of the program materials. However, much like Princeton’s and Yale’s decision to admit women in the late 1960s discussed earlier, Bucknell’s interest in minority community college students seemed equally driven by a need to boost enrollment generally and/or to increase the sheer numbers of minority students on campus, without regard for why doing so might be important beyond fulfilling an enrollment quota. For Gutmann (1987), however, whether an institution is acting with self-interest or not is not altogether relevant, as long as the outcome is positive in terms of meeting the democratic ideal of equal opportunity.

Both Karabel’s (2005) and Gutmann’s (1987) viewpoints are interesting to think about in relation to the case of Bucknell’s transfer saga initiation. The key question that arises is, does it matter if Sojka was driven organizational self-interest while the faculty were driven by a social

justice ideal? Under Sojka's leadership, STEP became a programmatic reality. It had its inaugural run in the summer of 1990, and successfully brought 20 CCP students to campus for what seemed to be a fairly life-changing program for them. But how did the dual visions play out in terms of saga initiation? Clark (1970) argues that community is central to the development of saga and that "singularity of purpose" is integral to the "existence of a community" (p. 256). Certainly, the exchange between Sojka and Geography Professor Ben Marsh after the first STEP cohort left campus, shows little evidence of singularity of purpose. Marsh even referred to the inaugural STEP program as "P.R. scam." He flatly asked Sojka whether the program "was for the students or for Bucknell?"

If this conflict is situated within Clark's (1970) understanding of saga initiation, Bucknell's transfer saga should have been doomed from the start. And yet, I found through my analysis that the opposite was true. That in the end, the organizational self-interest behind Sojka's choices about STEP did not matter much. In fact, it seems as though the conflict between Sojka's more revolutionary-bound decisions and the faculty's more evolutionary-bound vision was what helped Bucknell's transfer saga move from initiation to fulfillment because the conflict gave the faculty something to fight for.

The Fulfillment of Bucknell University's Transfer Saga

As noted above, the ways in which Bucknell's transfer saga became initiated is informed by but also complicates Clark's (1970) understanding of saga initiation. This section moves from the beginnings of the development of saga to its fulfillment by considering, and also complicating, the five aspects Clark identified in *The Distinctive College*—Personnel Core, Program Core, Social Base, Student Subculture, and Ideology—and how they played out in the development of Bucknell's transfer saga.

Personnel Core

In moving from initiation to fulfillment, Clark (1970) underscores the important role that faculty play. As noted above, Bucknell faculty at the time of the development of STEP had developed a clear vision in terms of transfer program development, which made them not only tolerant of change, but eager to seek it out. This level of faculty involvement is necessary, claims Clark, who saw saga as much more likely to develop when faculty are “devoted to the idea” (p. 240). Part of the power of faculty lies in their ability see the idea or vision through internal and external pressures. Clark is worth quoting at length here for his understanding of the role faculty play in the development of saga, particularly at small LACs where faculty “wield considerable power in institutional decision-making” (Burack & Lanspery, 2014, p. 24; see also Dowd, 2011):

In the presence of an innovating leader, the faculty may need only believe and work, but the years soon come when they need to believe and work *and* have the muscle to ward off pressures to deflect the college from its chosen path. The leader tires, or his capital of influence is spent, or he is gone from the setting. The, faculty authority comes into its own, serving creatively while serving conservatively. It protects the experiment, the plan, the idea from the quick erosion that could otherwise take place after the early years of trial as a new president comes sweeping into office. (Clark, p. 247, emphasis in original)

Notably, the power that faculty wield at small liberal arts colleges is different than at larger institutions where it tends to be more diffuse. In the case of Bucknell at the time of STEP, the faculty involved with the development of the program appeared to be a cohesive group that was deeply involved in all aspects of bringing STEP to life: attending meetings; composing grant applications; coordinating, and teaching and advising in the program; and connecting personally with STEP participants. After STEP “just sort of died” under the presidency of “Bro” Adams, it

was the faculty who resurrected it as BCCSP with funding from JCKF. They kept what worked well with STEP but built a program that was more aligned with the vision of equity faculty had long held on to.

A discussion of the personnel core in relation to transfer saga fulfillment at Bucknell would be incomplete without highlighting the work of transfer champions. As explained in Chapter Two, transfer champions often make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful program (Burack & Lanspery, 2014; Gabbard et al., 2006). Champions are those who can garner support from all constituents, from trustees and senior leaders to faculty, staff, and even students. Burack and Lanspery and Dowd (2011) show how transfer champions, especially at small LACs often come from the faculty, whose buy-in is necessary for change to come about. In the case of Bucknell, transfer champions did the bulk of the heavy lifting when it came to program development. Gary Sojka could be seen as a champion, despite his more revolutionary-bound reasons for bringing a community college transfer program to campus. He indeed proved quite capable in rallying faculty and staff to meaningfully engage in the project for a number of years. Tom Greaves, the provost at the time, could also be seen as a champion for his seemingly endless efforts in project coordination. Professors, in particular Ben Marsh and Ernie Keen, can be seen as champions for their persistent work to get the vision of the program right.

However, I think the best example of a transfer champion at Bucknell was the person who was a major force behind re-envisioning STEP as BCCSP. Raymond, who is a professor-turned-senior administrator worked tirelessly with staff in admissions and other departments to develop BCCSP. He has long been committed to deep, internal change at Bucknell, noting in his interview that when he first got to Bucknell over 30 years ago he thought, “This place needs a lot

of work.” As a transfer champion, he persuaded his professor colleagues to give community college transfers a chance when they objected to the idea that community college courses could not be on par with Bucknell courses. He worked “strategically” with colleagues in admissions to persuade senior leadership that BCCSP was worth the financial commitment necessary for program institutionalization. Raymond’s dedication to the vision of equity made the difference between Bucknell simply hosting a four-year community college transfer program with CCTI funding and ensuring an institutional commitment to community college transfer for the foreseeable future.

The transfer champion role that Raymond played seems to rise above the roles identified by Clark (1970) in the personnel core, which challenges the idea that a leader in the development of saga need only be a college president. When applying saga to program development, as opposed to organizational development more broadly, it seems that leaders can emerge from various parts of the institution. Although Clark argued that asking “who is most important in the making of a distinctive college...[is] not a useful question,” I found Burack and Lanspery’s (2014) understanding of the role of transfer champion in the making of a distinctive transfer program particularly relevant. It is nearly impossible to imagine that BCCSP would be the distinctive program it is today without the work of Raymond.

The Program Core

Notably, the personnel core is not often the most visible aspect of saga fulfillment because often the work of the individuals takes place “behind the scenes.” Clark (1970) understood this phenomenon, noting that the program core is often “easiest to identify” (p. 240) in terms of its role in saga fulfillment. In other words, it is through the program core that the institution is most often recognized as distinct. In Clark’s study, the program cores at the three

LACs included “curricular practices,” such as a “work-study scheme” (p. 249) or honors program, or teaching practices, such as the widespread use of the Socratic method in the classroom. These practices helped to form into a “set of symbols and rituals” (p. 249) that institutional members could easily point to at the thing that set them apart from others.

In the case of Bucknell’s transfer saga, the most distinctive claim is the program’s goal of baccalaureate completion. This goal is one of the programmatic aspects that was not changed when STEP was reimagined as BCCSP. It shows up as a programmatic goal in much of the documentation about STEP, and it is *the* aspect of the program that was repeated most often by faculty and staff in interviews about BCCSP. “It’s always been about baccalaureate completion,” they all said in one form or another, with Raymond adding that it is the “heart of the program.” According to Clark (1970), such notions, when they reach the point of institutional pride, become symbols “to prospective students as well as those on campus [that the institution cares] about learning for learning’s sake (p. 250). As a result, the extent to which organizational, or in this case programmatic, outcomes are actually reflective of such a viewpoint (learning for learning’s sake) is immaterial because by the time the program component or way of operating reaches a symbolic state, it has moved beyond its instrumental status and has become “part of the general institutional legend” (p. 250).

One of the more interesting aspects of baccalaureate completion as program legend is its alignment with the faculty vision of the program from the beginnings of STEP. Baccalaureate completion is an equity ideal; it provides access for transfer students who complete BCCSP to elite higher education in general, not just to Bucknell. And it runs counter to the enrollment mechanism narrative. Further, it ensures the future of Bucknell’s transfer saga. As more elite colleges become interested in community college transfers and develop programs to support

them, Bucknell's commitment to baccalaureate completion generally will continue to set Bucknell apart from other institutions.

The Social Base

Clark (1970) adequately shows that even with a strong personnel core and a distinct program core, a saga would go nowhere without people who believe in what the organization is doing. The social base is where the organization gets its range of supporters, from donors to alumni to current and future students. Small colleges, like LACs, can be challenged by having to rely on a "relatively monolithic base" of alumni who "share a common definition [of the organization] based on past experience" (p. 250). Notably, claims Clark, alumni also tend to grow more conservative after leaving an institution, which makes convincing them of necessary change particularly difficult. Students already on campus also form the social base, as do faculty and staff. Both groups have power in shaping the institutional narrative of distinction, but both can also develop a fairly narrow view of the institution, much like alumni. To counter this narrowing, Clark recommends diversifying both student and faculty bodies so that outside, more expansive perspectives are brought to campus.

Bucknell's challenges with the social base in the fulfillment of its transfer saga can be seen playing out to a greater extent with STEP than BCCSP, which is likely due to the marked change in the perception of higher education's responsibility toward underserved students from the 1980s to the early 2000s. Evidence from STEP documentation reveals pushback from Bucknell alumni who read about the program in the national news. These letters, laced with thinly-veiled racism and classism, illustrate an intolerance to the kind of innovative change Bucknell was attempting with STEP. For these alums, STEP was a threat to *their* Bucknell, the institution they knew and loved as undergraduate students. In other words, Bucknell's transfer

saga, initiated with STEP, was attempting to coexist with an alternative, perhaps more mainstream saga of Bucknell as an institution itself—one that was built on elitist notions of exclusivity and exclusion. Interestingly, Clark does not fully address what might happen at the institution when alternative sagas collide, but it is clear in the case of transfer students at Bucknell, that such a collision can threaten the fulfillment of both sagas.

Certainly, BCCSP exists in a more tolerant higher education environment, but it is not without its challenges from the current social base. In particular, interviewees spoke of the struggles community college transfers face with integrating into a still fairly homogeneous campus. BCCSP students often feel imposter syndrome, and the expectation that BCCSP participants will act as teachers of tolerance to other Bucknell students likely exacerbates these feelings. There was no evidence that the native (non-transfer) students at Bucknell consider BCCSP a program not worth supporting, but there also was not a sense from the interview data that the presence of BCCSP students is having much effect on native students' openness to change. Thus, there is some indication that Bucknell has not yet amassed "an extended external family of believers" (Clark, 1970. p. 251) in its transfer program despite increased tolerance overall. Anderson (2007) would argue that the small number of students who come through BCCSP and eventually transfer to Bucknell is unlikely to do much beyond provide token representation. Instead, Anderson would argue for a much more robust transfer program or the addition of more concerted efforts to diversify the student body overall.

In terms of external funders as part of the social base, STEP struggled far more than BCCSP has. An historical analysis of STEP's documentation shows a nearly constant worry about program funding despite the obvious hard work of the administration to secure it. The initial \$25,000 grant from the AAC/Vassar national transfer program was a matching grant, but

Bucknell failed to find a matching source and ended up having to move institutional funds around to cover the costs. Bucknell, under the leadership of Adams, finally received support funds from CCP, but such a small amount barely made a dent. Securing the support of a base of donors remained elusive for the entirety of the STEP program.

With the money from JKCF, though, STEP, reimagined as BCCSP, finally was able to connect with a secure external source. This move meant that the program could operate with a fair amount of autonomy, at least for a handful of years. The program Bucknell was able to develop with JKCF grant money proved to be extraordinary enough that JKCF offered an additional year of funding; for once, the program did not have to hustle to prove its worth to the social base. The extra year of funding allowed BCCSP to enter into a “protected position” (Clark, 1970, p. 250) while faculty and staff strategized ways to secure more consistent, long-term funding. That the institution reallocated endowed funds to absorb the cost of BCCSP is interesting. This internal taking over has released administrators from the time and energy needed to secure external funds, but it also has the potential to limit autonomy, although it does not appear to be doing so yet.

Student Subculture

Clark (1970) contended that the students, while obviously important as the “material for much of [the organization’s] work,” have a relative amount of freedom that can also lead them to “manipulate the system” (p. 252). Compared to members of other “people-processing” organizations, such as prisons, students can “alter the intensity of their participation” (p. 252). In other words, students can go to class or not; they can become close to a professor or staff member or not; they can play sports or try out for orchestra or participate in student government, but they do not *need* to do any of these things. The relative freedom students experience and the

extent of power that accompanies that freedom means that students play a distinct role in “defining the institution” (p. 253). Further, the way students experience the institution influences how the institutional legend moves from one generation of students to the next.

Arguably, the student subculture is probably less influential at the programmatic level than it is at the organizational level. And yet, the student subculture created at STEP seemed particularly important for the institution. From the early days of STEP, there was an effort to control the kind of cohort that would develop during the six-week summer residency. This control was evident in the creation of the enrichment activities for students when they were not in class, such as the ropes course, which many STEP students wrote about that first year. There was also the expectation, or demand, that students would live in a dormitory and eat in the dining hall. Bucknell Provost at the time, Tom Greaves, even went as far as to say that STEP students should be isolated from their families and friends as well as any other outside influences. It was, he claimed, part of what made Vassar’s transfer program so successful.

To a great extent, STEP was isolating for participants. While some single parents were allowed to bring their small children, all participants were coming to Bucknell from Philadelphia, a good three-hours’ drive, and they essentially left their lives behind to experience an environment with which they were vastly unfamiliar. This is where the student subculture in STEP varies from that which Clark (1970) found in his study. Whereas Clark understood the student subculture to be one of freedom, as discussed above, the student subculture in STEP seemed to be one of confinement. They were not given much free time and went through each day having to make few choices. In this way, the students’ experiences at STEP were quite different from those of the typical student at Bucknell.

Either in spite of or because of the confinement of STEP, however, a fairly positive subculture emerged; it was, and still is, one of specialness. The specialness of STEP and now BCCSP is fairly unmistakable. To be sure, the student booklet created by the first cohort of STEPers exuded specialness. These participants felt special having been handpicked to participate in what they saw as the opportunity of a lifetime. They developed a special kinship with one another and with faculty and staff, which was likely the result of sharing an intense experience in a closed setting. BCCSP has included even more intentional efforts at ensuring a sense of specialness. BCCSP participants have been treated to special dinners in their honor, special completion ceremonies at which the president of the college speaks, designated time with members of the boards of trustees, and intensive one-to-one advising and support.

The subculture of specialness has no doubt affected the way that participants experienced the program and then talked about the program outside of the confines of Bucknell. However, it is difficult to discern the extent to which program ideals have transferred from one cohort to the next, as Clark (1970) suggested in his discussion of student subculture. The tendency Bucknell has to control the kind of culture created in BCCSP has likely inhibited a more haphazard transfer of ideals, but the mere fact that BCCSP partners with multiple community colleges, and not just one, certainly expands the likelihood that programmatic ideals reach a greater number of students than ever happened with STEP.

Ideology

Ideology is the final step in the fulfillment of a saga. It is also, by its nature, a difficult concept to grasp and explain. Organizations have certain ways of operating that can often be perplexing, especially to newcomers. Those who have ever heard the phrase, "That's just how we do things around here," can rest assured that ideology is hard at work. For Clark (1970),

ideology marks the moment that “faculty dedication...student values, administrative perspectives, and alumni sentiments” converge to become “a generalized tradition, a set of statues and ceremonies, an ‘air about the place’ felt by participants and some outsiders” (p. 254). Clark contends that the “more special the history or the more forceful the claim” (p. 254), the stronger the ideology, which is carried in organizational memory.

Ideology as it relates to programs is perhaps even more complex. Can a program even have an ideology? Answering this question in relation to the case at hand requires thinking about the elements described above—institutional context, leadership, personnel core, program core, social base, and student subculture—and considering how they might come together to form “a generalized tradition” (Clark, 1970, p. 254) that allows faculty, administrators, staff, students, and others inside and outside of the institution to feel an intangible *something* about the program.

Documentation about STEP, particularly the student-produced booklet by the first STEP cohort but also later documentation that illustrates, as discussed above, the specialness of the program, suggests that there is a certain feeling attached to transfer support initiatives at Bucknell. The students in the first STEP cohort describe the group that came together as “family.” And the ropes course they did together is something that nearly everyone mentioned. It was an experience that for some students had a kind of illogic to it; they never would have done that course otherwise. But they did it for group cohesion and it worked. In many ways, this experience is indicative of what would come in the STEP program and later in BCCSP. The cohort model became *the* central mechanism in both initiatives and, based on the research that came from the CCTI, earned the status of a best practice in the support community college transfers. The cohort piece is so much a part of the program that those who currently run the program would never consider doing away with it. It has become the way BCCSP is done, and

thus has become symbolic of the program as a whole. BCCSP means a group, and group cohesion and specialness.

The first thing students do when they arrive for the summer residency is gather for a group meeting, which illustrates to new students the program norm. When there are important issues to discuss or meetings with institutional leaders or space and time to share personal experiences, expectations, or worries, it all happens in the group setting. The cohort, then, has become the “unifying theme” (Clark, 1970, p. 254) of the initiative, and it is the one program aspect that gives students and outsiders alike an intangible feeling. So much so that when BCCSP completers think back on their program experiences, the one word that comes to mind is “family.”

Implications and Conclusion

Readers will recall that the purpose of intrinsic case study is neither to generalize nor to generate theory. Instead, intrinsic case study is undertaken when the case itself is of intrinsic interest. I studied the development of Bucknell’s community college transfer initiatives because I was interested in why BCCSP had been identified by Burack and Lanspery (2014) in the CCTI final report as such a distinct program. When I learned about STEP, I found that I needed to know more about Bucknell’s history of transfer support. I wanted to know what Bucknell had done and is doing to successfully support community college transfers. *How is it done?* I asked. *How has it been done?* Clark’s (1970) approach to studying organizational distinction proved pivotal in the development of my study; it provided a conceptual frame and an analytic road map to study Bucknell’s programmatic distinction.

Given the limitations of intrinsic case study, I cannot in this implications section lay out the specifics of Bucknell’s longstanding and continuous commitment to community college

transfer students and recommend that other elite colleges follow suit. Indeed, all institutions have their own way of operating, their own organizational idiosyncrasies to contend with, their own sets of internal and external pressures, all of which affect how an institution can develop and maintain programmatic structures. There are, however, aspects of Bucknell's story of community college transfer support that are transferable to other institutions, most notably similarly elite liberal arts colleges.

Implications

In terms of transferability, some of what the present study found is similar to findings from the final CCTI report by Burack and Lanspery (2014). For example, the role of transfer champion was found to be integral to the development of Bucknell's transfer support, as discussed above. Transfer champions of both STEP and BCCSP were able to garner the support necessary to move the program along on a path toward institutionalization. This finding is important for institutions, particularly small, residential LACs like Bucknell, where leadership roles often emerge from the faculty. STEP was initially driven by an institutional imperative from Sojka, which seemed to set the program up for conflicting visions between the senior administration and the faculty, who saw the purpose of STEP differently than Sojka. BCCSP, on the other hand, was the result of more of a bottom-up development, and was driven by a core group of faculty and staff that was able to focus on a singular vision. The bottom-up approach of BCCSP has had more success than the top-down approach of STEP, a finding which suggests that the former is necessary for program longevity.

Singularity of vision seems especially important for what Burack and Lanspery (2014) termed "institutional buy-in," or the level of commitment institutional constituents are willing to give to a particular programmatic venture. Although Sojka seemed capable of amassing a group

of faculty to work on STEP, the level of buy-in was not always consistent because of the conflicting visions of STEP. This finding illustrates that buy-in in and of itself does not equate to programmatic success, but that the level of buy-in is dependent on what different constituents consider to be the purpose of the program, with the more powerful constituents more able to sway decision making. For elite LACs, faculty are often the group that needs to buy-in to the programmatic idea for it to meet success.

Buy-in for Bucknell also surfaced in the form of financial commitment, and in this way can be connected back to Clark's (1970) ideas about the importance of the social base in programmatic institutionalization, or saga fulfillment. STEP struggled to gain footing in large part because Bucknell could not find consistent funding from outside sources. In other words, programmatic buy-in was important not just from the standpoint of internal constituents but from external ones as well. Without external funding and without an institutional commitment of support, STEP "just sort of died" by the mid- to late-1990s. In contrast, BCCSP was born with external buy-in. The funding from JKCF, an organization devoted to the advancement of students from less-advantaged backgrounds, helped to secure BCCSP for the four years of the CCTI plus a bonus year. By that point, BCCSP had become such an important part of the organization that Bucknell as an institution seemed left with little choice but to buy-in. To do away with the program at that point seemed untenable. Institutions similar in size and structure to Bucknell that might be interested in developing community college transfer programs can use these aspects of Bucknell's story as a cautionary tale. That is, financial buy-in is equally as important as constituent buy-in for programmatic success.

Other findings from the CCTI report and previous studies of community college transfer to elite institutions seemed not as relevant to programmatic success for Bucknell. In particular

there was not as much importance for the development of partnerships with community colleges as was found by Burack and Lanspery (2014) and others (e.g., Morphew, Twonbly, & Wolf-Wendel, 2001). Of course, these partnerships were essential in that they helped to provide the kinds of students Bucknell was interested in recruiting, but they did not seem to contribute greatly to the process of institutionalization, at least not the extent that leadership, vision, and buy-in did. This finding is interesting in light of Burack and Lanspery's emphasis on finding what they call the "right students." In the historical analysis of STEP materials and the analysis of contemporary documents and interview data, the students were consistently considered special to Bucknell. The only indication of concern that Bucknell might not be reaching the right students, surfaced in the interview with the current dean of transfer admission, who remarked on working with community college partners to reach specific demographics that were underrepresented at Bucknell. Unlike with the Smith College studies discussed in Chapter Two, Burack and Lanspery (2014) found that CCTI partners did not bother with official articulation agreements, and the same was true for Bucknell and CCP in STEP and for the six community college partners in BCCSP. Given this finding and that above, it seems that partnerships between community colleges and elite LACs interested in developing sustainable transfer programs can be fairly loose.

In terms of sustaining success, the final CCTI report had little to say that was different than what institutions did to initiate success. The present study, though, extends the conversation about program longevity, particularly in relation to organizational, or programmatic, saga. In short, saga greatly influences the extent to which a program can become an integral part of the functioning of an institution. Of course, saga can take decades of trial and error, learning from mistakes, and being open to rethinking and reworking. At Bucknell, it took years of convincing

internal and external constituents of the worth of supporting community college transfers, years before BCCSP, reborn from STEP, became, as Raymond put it, part of the “fabric of the institution.” This finding illustrates the need for deep institutional commitment to supporting transfer, that a one-off program responding to a national trend in higher education will do little to ensure that community college transfers have access to elite institutions.

Concluding Thoughts

I began this project by wondering how Bucknell as an institution had managed to institutionalize its programmatic support for community college transfers as a result of participating in the CCTI while other CCTI partners had not. I had a long journey through this project, one that brought me first to studying organizational culture, and then to the specific culture of the liberal arts college. I realized throughout these years of study is that there is an inherent tension between inclusion and exclusion that continuously plays out in elite higher education. Elite colleges have always operated with organizational self-interest, and elite LACs for the most part have had to in order to ensure their survival in an ever-shifting landscape of higher education, one that seems ever more concerned with marketplace viability. Seeing this tension between inclusion and exclusion play out in the development of Bucknell’s support for community college transfers was not surprising. To be sure, Bucknell’s worry about declining enrollment and minority student recruitment was not unique to the 1980s, nor is it unique to today. Such worries have plagued the LAC since the introduction of the research university in the United States.

Community college transfer holds great potential for elite colleges to reach low-income, first-generation students and students of color by the nature of the community college as an open and inclusive institutional type. This study offers but one glimpse into a transfer program that has

found success, but it is an important step forward in adding to the knowledge base about this function. Future research could consider other institutional types and how varying organizational factors might influence the development of transfer programs. It could also consider the student experience in programs, such as BCCSP or Vassar's Exploring Transfer program. Currently, there is little knowledge of how community college transfers experience the elite higher education environment generally, and the elite LAC specifically. As the idea of community college transfer as a way to expand access to the elites grows in popularity, additional case studies of this function will be increasingly necessary.

One area that seems fruitful for further exploration is considering transfer program development with other organizational lenses, including organizational field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), organizational culture (Kezar, 2014; Schein, 2004), and institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). These additional frames, which were all considered at one point or another for this dissertation, could help researchers identify trends within institutional types and the extent to which competition plays into decision making around transfer. That is, organizations feel pressure to respond to trends in order to stay relevant in the organizational field. These frames could also reveal how an institution's culture influences the extent to which the development of transfer policies and programs are developed and maintained. Institutional logics, a more recent development in the study of organizations, could help to show how the competing aspects of an organization influence transfer program development. That is, a transfer program might make sense from an economic standpoint, because the institution need only fund transfers for two years, but it might run counter to institutional ideals of community development since transfers do not have the same orientation to the institution. Looking at competing logics

with regard to transfer at elite institutions could reveal the ways in which transfer program development might be both productive and problematic for the institution.

Regardless of the ways future studies conceive of understanding transfer to elite institutions, this dissertation makes clear that much more needs to be done to understand how transfer from community college fits into how elite institutions operate. Lessons can be learned from Bucknell University's longstanding and continual community college transfer support that can help the field of elite colleges better understand how to develop transfer programs. Such programs seem especially important given their potential in reaching out to and providing upward mobility for students from low-income backgrounds, which has long been and will remain a democratic ideal in higher education.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

CATHERINE SANCHEZ, M.ED
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, EPRA DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

DISSERTATION TITLE: Developing and Sustaining Programs for Community College Transfer to Elite Liberal Arts Colleges: The Unique Case of Bucknell University

1. Tell me about Bucknell's support for community college transfer students
How did you get involved?
How did the development of support take place?
What were some of the challenges and triumphs to creating a program?
2. Tell me about the Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI) at Bucknell.
How did Bucknell get involved?
What kind of role did you play in bringing the CCTI to campus?
Did you play a role during the CCTI? If so, what kind of role?
3. How did Bucknell prepare for the CCTI?
What kinds of structures were already in place that helped in implementing the program?
What kinds of changes were necessary?
4. Tell me about current support structures for community college transfers
5. Tell me about Bucknell
What do you think makes Bucknell unique?
What makes Bucknell stand apart from similar schools?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher(s): Catherine Sanchez, Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education

Study Title: The Role of Institutional Culture in Developing and Sustaining Programs for Community College Transfer to Selective Liberal Arts Colleges

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This form is called a Consent Form. It provides you with information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participating in this research. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY THAT I SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

- 1) Participation in the study is voluntary; your consent is required for participation
- 2) The research is being undertaken to gain a better understanding of the role of institutional culture in the development and sustainability of support for community college transfers to your campus
- 3) You can expect to be interviewed once for 60 minutes; you can expect interviews to be audio recorded and transcribed, with transcripts being closely reviewed for and cleaned of any identifying information
- 4) The research project is expected to last for 1.5 years in total, but your participation, as noted above, is limited to one 60-minute interview; optional participation beyond these expected time parameters include reviewing interview transcripts and researcher notes for accuracy
- 5) The research to be conducted does not carry any inherent risks, but should you feel any discomfort during the interview, you can terminate the interview at any time and withdraw consent for participation at any time and without penalty
- 6) Your participation in this study may not carry benefits specific to you, but will help aid in building knowledge about the role institutional culture might play in supporting community college transfer to elite institutions

3. WHY ARE WE DOING THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

The overarching purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the role of institutional culture in institutional change. More specifically, the purpose is to understand how institutional culture might play a role in developing and maintaining support structures for community college transfer students to selective liberal arts colleges, such as your institution.

4. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

Participants will have been involved in the development and implementation of programming related to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), which ran from 2006-2010 at your institution. Alternatively, participants will be current employees who develop and/or implement support programs for community college transfers.

5. WHERE WILL THIS RESEARCH STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

3-4 participants from each research site (9-12 participants total) will be interviewed on their respective campuses at a location and time that is most convenient to them. Alternatively, interviews will take place electronically at a time most convenient to participants.

6. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO AND HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?

Prior to the scheduled interview, the Principal Investigator will forward you an electronic copy of this Consent Form for you to review. At the beginning of the interview, the Principal Investigator will review the Consent Form with you and you will be asked first if you have any questions and then to sign two copies. You will keep one signed copy and the Principal Investigator will keep one signed copy that will be stored in a locked cabinet that only the Principal Investigator has access to. Participants must consent to be audio recorded in order to participate in the study.

The interview will last for approximately 60 minutes, during which time the interviewer (Principal Investigator) will ask questions related to the CCTI and/or structures or programs in place to support community college transfers. You will also be asked more general questions related to institutional culture, such as the following:

- What makes your institution unique or stand apart from other similar institutions?
- What is your institution's educational philosophy?
- What institutional figures are remembered by your institution and why?

You will also be asked more specific questions about the Jack Kent Cooke Community College Transfer Initiative and/or support for community college transfer students, such as the following:

- What was your role in the Initiative?
- What was instrumental in bringing the Initiative to your institution?
- Were there any structural changes that were required by or emerged as a result of the Initiative? If so, what are they? If no, why not?

During the interview, you may skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering.

You will also be provided with the opportunity to review interview transcripts, when they become available, and researcher notes. Participation in the review portion of the study is completely optional.

7. WILL BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY HELP ME IN ANY WAY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, your participation in this study might provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your experiences supporting community college transfers on your campus, which subsequently might present opportunities for further thinking on the topic. This study will help build knowledge about community college transfer to elite liberal arts colleges, and specifically what role institutional culture of the liberal arts colleges might play in building support structures for community college transfers.

8. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

A risk of breach of confidentiality always exists; steps to minimize this risk are outlined below in Section 9. Other risks, including psychological risks, are minimal in this study, but please know that you can skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering, and you may withdraw your consent for participating at any time and without penalty to you.

9. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records (“study records” include contact information, audio files from interviews, and interview transcripts): The Principal Investigator will keep all study records, including any codes to your data in a secure location. Specifically, the audio files from recorded interviews will be uploaded to a qualitative software program called NVivo 12. The program will be password protected and will reside on the Principal Investigator’s laptop computer, which is also password protected. In both cases, only the Principal Investigator knows the password. Transcripts of the interviews will also be uploaded to NVivo 12 software. All audio files and transcripts will be labeled with a code so as not to include any personal identifiers and a master key that links names and codes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet that only the Principal Investigator has access to. The master key and audio recordings will be destroyed within three years of the study. All electronic files pertaining to the research, including researcher notes and memos that contain identifiable information will be stored on the Principal Investigator’s password-protected laptop computer. The hard copy of this Consent Form will be kept in a locked filing cabinet that only the Principal Investigator’s has access to.

Findings from this study may be published in academic journals and/or be presented at academic conferences. Any participant identifying information will not be included in research reports or presentations and original audio will not be used. If findings could potentially be linked to identifying information, the Principal Investigator will alter personal information to make it unidentifiable.

10. WILL I BE GIVEN ANY MONEY OR OTHER COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

Participants will not receive any form of compensation for participating in this research.

11. WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision about your participation. I am happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me at 413-429-6185 or cmlynch@educ.umass.edu. You may also contact my faculty sponsor, Ryan Wells, at rswells@educ.umass.edu.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

12. WHAT HAPPENS IF I SAY YES, BUT I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

13. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

14. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form, I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language that I use. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I have been informed that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Participant Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

By signing below, I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of Person
Obtaining Consent

Print Name:

Date:

**APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
CATHERINE SANCHEZ, M.ED
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, EPRA DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST**

DISSERTATION TITLE: The Role of Institutional Culture in Developing and Sustaining Programs for Community College Transfer to Selective Liberal Arts Colleges

Instructions:

(SCRIPT): Good morning (afternoon). My name is Cassie Sanchez and I am a doctoral candidate in higher education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I am here to learn more about the role that institutional culture might play in developing and sustaining support structures for community college transfer students to elite liberal arts colleges, such as [INSTITUTION]. One purpose for this interview is to learn more about the Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI) at [INSTITUTION]. I am particularly interested in why and how [INSTITUTION] became part of the CCTI, and how participation in that program helped develop or change support for community college transfers. The second purpose for this interview is to learn about [INSTITUTION'S] culture and will be asking questions related to institutional leadership and decision-making. Please know that there are no right or wrong answers, nor desirable or undesirable answers. I am really interested in your perspective on community college transfer to [INSTITUTION], specifically through the CCTI, and would like you to feel comfortable saying what you think and expressing how you feel. In addition, although I have a number of questions prepared, I do consider this to be a semi-structured interview, so I may shift gears and ask follow-up questions I haven't thought of ahead of time on topics that arise out of our conversation.

If it's okay with you, I would like to audio record our conversation today. It's very difficult to ask questions and take notes while giving you my full attention. Everything said in today's interview will remain confidential. I have an informed consent form here for you to sign. This form explains in detail the steps I will take to maintain confidentiality. Once the audio recordings have been transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review them, along with my researcher notes, to ensure that what you said is being accurately represented.

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to review the informed consent form. If you agree, please sign two copies of the form; one copy is for you to keep, the other copy I will take and store in a secure location. (Both the interviewer and interviewee will sign two copies of the informed consent form, and each will keep a signed copy.)

Background/warm up questions:

1. Tell me about your current role at [INSTITUTION]
 - How long have you been here?
 - What brought you to [INSTITUTION]?

- What do you like most about [INSTITUTION]?

Questions about implementing the CCTI at [INSTITUTION]:

1. Tell me about the CCTI at [INSTITUTION]
 - How did [INSTITUTION] get involved?
 - What do you think were the driving factors in bringing the program here?
 - What kind of role did institutional leadership play bringing the CCTI here?
 - What kind of role did you play in the CCTI?
 - How did you take on that role?
 - Why did you take on that role?
 - How was the CCTI viewed on campus?
 - Were people excited about it? What was exciting?
 - Were people concerned? What kinds of concerns?
2. **Background:** *In the final report on the CCTI by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, researchers found that successful program implementation depended on the extent to which the program aligned with institutional policies and practices, and that many extensive changes were necessary to ensure alignment (Burack & Lanspery, 2014). These changes included shifting admissions deadlines and increasing financial aid awards; developing summer bridge programs, extended orientations, and peer advising networks; allowing time and space for, and the support of, faculty collaboration and professional development; developing and sustaining strong partnerships between feeder schools (community colleges) and receiving institutions; and the addition of dedicated transfer support staff (see also Dowd et al., 2006; Handel & Herrera, 2006). Characterized as both structural-relational and cultural-informational (Dowd et al.), these changes were wide-ranging and far-reaching, and required the significant involvement of “transfer champions,” or senior-level staff who had decision-making power, and “transfer agents,” or mentors who could guide transfer students through the process (Gabbard et al., 2006; Pak et al., 2006).*

Given all of this, how did [INSTITUTION] prepare for the CCTI?

- What kind of preparation was needed to bring the CCTI here?
 - Which institutional players were involved in that preparation? *(Not looking for specific names here, but rather a sense of the kinds of roles necessary to prepare for the implementation of the program.)*
- What kinds of structures were already in place at [INSTITUTION] that helped in implementing the program?
- How was “alignment” achieved?
- What kinds of changes were necessary?
 - How were these changes viewed?
 - How were these changes made?
- How might you characterize the implementation of the CCTI?
 - What are some of the things you noticed?
 - What do you think was done well?
 - What were the main challenges?

- What are your thoughts about the roles of transfer champion and/or transfer agent at [INSTITUTION]?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say about the CCTI that we didn't cover?

Questions about current iteration of CCTI:

3. Tell me about current support structures for community college transfers
 - How did the CCTI set [INSTITUTION] up for success in supporting community college transfers?
 - What are some of the long-term changes that came about because of the program?
 - Can you explain a bit about the process of implementing those long-term changes?
 - What does that support look like now?
 - What do you think are the current drivers of that support?
 - What about leadership? Funding? Established structures and policies?
 - Is there anything else about the current programs/policies for community college transfer to [INSTITUTION] that you'd like to share?

Change direction of questions:

(SCRIPT): We are now going to switch course a little so that I can ask you just a few questions about institutional culture. Background: *As you might remember from my introduction, I am particularly interested in the implementation of the CCTI in relation to institution culture. Culture interests me because it is something that the final research on the CCTI by the Jack Kent Cooke foundation did not address, but research that looks at institutional culture, particularly as it relates to institutional change, has consistently found that (a) institutions have unique cultures (Berquist, 1992; Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Clark, 1970) and (b) culture shapes and is shaped by institutional change (Kezar, 2014; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Schein, 1995), including changes in leadership (Adserias, Charleston, & Jackson, 2017), academic integrity (Gallant, 2007), and the curriculum (Hrabowski, 2011). Kezar and Eckel (2002) in their study of change processes at varying institutions found a relationship between culture and every strategy for change undertaken by the institutions in their sample. They also found that “each campus enacted [change] strategies in different ways” and concluded that if strategies “violate cultural norms, change most likely will not occur” (p. 456), a finding that is evident in earlier research (e.g., Berquist, 1992). Given this, I'd like to try and get an understanding of the culture at [INSTITUTION] so that I can study the potential relationships between the implementation of the CCTI at [INSTITUTION] and culture.*

Questions about institutional culture:

1. Tell me about [INSTITUTION]
 - What do you think makes [INSTITUTION] unique?
 - What makes [INSTITUTION] stand apart from similar schools?
 - Why do you think that is so?

2. In your own words, tell me about the educational philosophy of [INSTITUTION]?
 - How do you know that? [Or] What makes you say that?
 - In what ways do you see this philosophy in action?

- How do new members to [INSTITUTION] come to understand this philosophy?
3. In your own words, tell me about the [INSTITUTION'S] mission?
 - How do you know that? [Or] What makes you say that?
 - How do you see the mission of [INSTITUTION] play out?
 - How do new members to [INSTITUTION] come to understand this mission?
 4. How would you characterize leadership at [INSTITUTION]?
 - What does [INSTITUTION] expect most from its leaders?
 - Tell me about informal and formal leaders at [INSTITUTION]
 5. Tell me about decision making at [INSTITUTION]
 - What are the most common decision-making processes?
 - Are institution-wide decisions generally seen as positive? Why or why not?
 6. Tell me about who is most celebrated at [INSTITUTION]
 - Who or what kinds of people does the organization remember most?
 - Why do you think that is so?
 7. Is there anything else might you say about the core beliefs of [INSTITUTION]?

Wrap up/good will:

(SCRIPT): We are just about out of time, and I want to be mindful of other things you are hoping to get done today. I want to thank you for your time and for your willingness to be interviewed. Before I go I want to give you the opportunity to say any last things that might be on your mind, or to ask me any questions you might have. [PAUSE FOR COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS.] You have a hard copy of the consent form, which has my contact information on it. If you feel the need to follow up or if you think of any questions you'd like answered, please feel free to contact me. I will be back in touch soon with the transcript of this interview along with my researcher notes so that you can have a chance to review them. Again, I appreciate your willingness to speak with me and I hope you have a good rest of your day.

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