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**FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF DEAN TRANSITIONS:
DOES TRUST MATTER?**

An Interpretive Case Study of Organizational Trust and Organizational Culture

by

Rebecca L. Woolston

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

University of San Diego

2001

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF DEAN TRANSITIONS: DOES TRUST MATTER? An Interpretive Case Study of Organizational Trust and Organizational Culture

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Chair: Daniel M. Miller, Ph.D.

This study looked for factors that might have influenced faculty perceptions of new deans at a professional school in the western part of the United States. More specifically, the study explored the question of how organizational trust may have influenced perceptions of new deans and faculty willingness to trust new deans. A single case study used guided interviews as data for the interpretive analysis. The study sought to provide insight into the phenomenon of dean transitions. The study also endeavored to add new dimensions to current conceptualizations of organizational trust and culture by highlighting a previously underexplored but potentially relevant connection between trust and culture at the organizational level.

The study describes faculty perceptions of the effects of decanal turnover at the school. The study also describes faculty perceptions of the school's cultural environment, as well as faculty perceptions of relations between the dean and the faculty. The study's findings suggest that respondents perceived that trust played a critical role in their perceptions of new deans at the school. The findings also suggest an overlap between the factors that respondents cited as contributing to positive perceptions of new deans and the strategies a new dean might use to build and maintain trust among the school's faculty.

The evidence from the study provides tentative support for the premise that respondents' expectations concerning the preservation of cultural norms may have

influenced their assessments of the trustworthiness of new deans. The findings suggest that respondents expected new deans to maintain such norms as consultation, building consensus, and establishing rapport with faculty members. The findings further suggest that respondents based their assessments of a new dean's trustworthiness, in part, on whether or not the new dean upheld these norms. The study suggests that additional research is needed to investigate individual awareness of expectations concerning cultural norms and to further explore the ways in which cultural norms may influence assessments of trust within organizational environments. Finally, the study outlines a conceptual framework that allows for the possibility of a synergistic relationship involving organizational trust, such facets of organizational culture as psychological presence, and optimism about the future.

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To Michael and Annie

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I wish to thank my colleagues and friends who provided encouragement along the way, with special thanks to Kathy, Deb, and Kay-Marie.

I am also indebted to my respondents, who shared their time and insights with me during the course of the study. They, too, provided frequent doses of encouragement and offered constructive criticism and alternative viewpoints. Their good humor and anecdotes about their own experiences as doctoral students and scholars provided an additional source of inspiration.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The following study explores a practical concern confronting a professional school on the campus of a major research institution in the western part of the United States. Following the decision of the school's founding dean to step down after a period of ten years (1986-1996), the school had four new deans. Two of the deans, who were hired as a result of national searches, resigned due to personal reasons or expressions of no confidence from the faculty between 12 and 18 months into their tenure. The other two deans served in an interim capacity following the resignation of the permanent deans. At the time the write-up of this study was completed, the current interim dean had been in office for 7 months and was nearing the end of his interim appointment. A search for a new permanent dean was underway. This lack of continuity among the school's deans resulted in what some faculty members viewed as "stop-start leadership." One of the prevailing questions facing the school concerned how to make the next dean transition successful.

In an effort to respond to this question, it seemed practical to undertake a study of dean transitions at the school. By exploring the phenomenon of dean transitions from the perspective of faculty members, the study sought to identify factors that led faculty to form positive or negative perceptions of new deans. Another goal of the study was to draw lessons from previous dean transitions that might contribute to the success and longevity of future deans at the school. The study incorporated a theoretical framework that draws upon previous research on organizational trust and organizational culture and

that explores the ways in which trust and culture might influence an understanding of dean transitions.

Conceptual Framework

Executive transitions are a routine occurrence in contemporary organizations. The succession process brings with it an interval of time when members of an institution must forge new working relationships with the incoming executive – whether or not they have previous experience with this individual. At the same time, the new executive must forge viable working relationships with organization members. In the process of establishing new working relationships, organization members may define both conscious and unconscious expectations surrounding the role of the new executive (Barber, 1983; Gabarro, 1978). Their expectations may be shaped by both tangible and unspoken cultural norms that guide behavior within the organization.

Previous research suggests that trust is an important element of organizational relationships (Barber, 1983; Hosmer, 1995; House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995; Jones & George, 1998; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998; Sitkin & Roth, 1993). It was an underlying theoretical premise of this study that organizational trust would be identified as a nontrivial ingredient in the ability of a new dean to gain the support of faculty and ultimately to succeed. A second theoretical premise of the study was that faculty expectations concerning the preservation of cultural norms in place at the school might have a profound influence on whether or not faculty members placed their trust in a new dean.

Background to the Study

The topic of executive transitions, in general, has received relatively little attention in the literature. The literature on executive transitions includes studies that focus on the demography of executives (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992, 1993); the role of socialization in executive succession and decisions to implement strategic change (Fondas & Wiersema, 1997); the need to cultivate future successors (Kotter, 1998); the management of the process of executive succession (Gilmore, 1988; Vancil, 1987); and executive exit (Austin & Gilmore, 1993). My review of the literature yielded very little work that explores transitions from the perspective of organization members, who are participants in the process.

Despite an eighteen-month period of surveying the literature, it was only near the end of the research process that I finally found an article that specifically addresses the issue of dean transitions within academic environments (Hall, 1995). Hall's was the first study I discovered that explores executive transitions from the perspective of an individual dean (in this case, Hall himself) who experienced the transition. In a self-study based on a personal journal, notes, and public documents, Hall compares his own experience as a new dean to theories of subidentity change and executive succession. He details his own difficulties adjusting to his role as an acting dean and offers his reflections on interim administration. Hall notes that "our academic writings about transition processes provide only a pale image of how the experience is felt and seen by the acting incumbent" (Hall, 1995, p. 91). He calls for further research that incorporates such tools of inquiry as journals, interviews, and similar structured reflection processes (p. 91). Although Hall's focus is on the experience of the incumbent dean rather than on

the experience of faculty members who interact with the dean, his study represents an insightful example of single-case study research that focuses on individual experience and perceptions. The following study was intended to represent a beginning step in focusing attention on the phenomenon of dean transitions as experienced by organization members.

Within the literature on organizational trust, scholars have drawn upon insights and theoretical models from disciplines as diverse as economics, psychology, and sociology in an effort to understand the role of trust in interpersonal and organizational behavior. Researchers have identified various dimensions of trust (Barber, 1983; Granovetter, 1985; McAllister, 1995; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995); debated the relationship between trust and distrust (Bigley & Pearce, 1998; Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Sitkin & Roth, 1993); and documented the economic and social benefits that trust bestows on interorganizational – and intraorganizational – relationships (Coleman, 1990; Deutsch, 1962; Gambetta, 1988; Zucker, 1986). These scholars have addressed the challenge of building trust in new organizational relationships by focusing primarily on the various bases of trust, such as calculus-based, character-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust. However, previous research has not made explicit the possible connection between organizational trust and culture or the specific ways in which organizational culture may influence the bases on which trust is established, maintained, or eroded.

In the field of organizational culture, scholars have examined the influence of cultural norms on organizational behavior, the resistance of cultural norms to change, and the implications of different institutional cultures for organizational performance (Deal &

Kennedy, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985). At a macroanalytical level, researchers have studied cultural differences among various societies across the world, as well as cultural differences that exist within individual societies. Scholars such as Fukuyama (1995) and Doney, Cannon, and Mullen (1998) have pioneered studies of the propensity to trust among different major cultural traditions, suggesting a clear linkage between culture and trust. Such research efforts have remained limited, for the most part, to the national level as a unit of analysis. Although a few studies have examined the role of social or professional networks in promoting trust among previously unacquainted individuals (Granovetter, 1985), a preliminary review of the literature uncovered little work that explores whether or not a linkage between trust and culture may exist on the organizational level, or what the implications of such a linkage might be. In addition to addressing the practical concerns facing the particular school that served as the research site, the following study sought to respond to this perceived gap in the theoretical literature on organizational trust and culture.

The study was conducted in tandem with an ongoing review of the literature. An initial survey of the literature focused on several strands of research that seemed especially germane to the study, including research on executive transitions, organizational trust, and organizational culture, as well as studies that focused more specifically on academic culture. As I moved into the data collection and analysis phases of the study, I began to explore in more depth those bodies of literature that seemed relevant to the study. Due to the fact that the data collection, analysis, and the review of the literature were simultaneous and mutually informative processes, I made the decision

to incorporate my investigation of the literature into two separate parts of the write-up. Chapter 2 offers an overview of the literature that provided an empirical or theoretical basis for the study. However, I also chose to integrate some of the literature that informed particular facets of the findings in chapter 4, which presents the results of the study. Although somewhat nontraditional, this format was designed to illustrate the “conversation” that unfolded between my simultaneous and mutually informative analysis of the data and my review of the literature during the research process.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to explore the factors that influence positive or negative faculty perceptions of dean transitions at the school that served as the research site. The study, in particular, sought to explore the role that trust may have played in the context of dean transitions at the school and to identify factors that facilitated or hindered a new dean’s ability to build and maintain trust. It was my hope that the findings might shed light on the phenomenon of dean transitions at the school and the factors that may have contributed to positive or negative perceptions, as well as to assessments of the trustworthiness of new deans by faculty members who participated in the study.

Finally, the study attempted to explore the question of how organizational trust may have been shaped by expectations surrounding the preservation of cultural norms within one particular site during a particular phenomenon: dean transitions. In investigating the phenomenon of dean transitions at the research site, the study sought to add new dimensions to current conceptualizations of organizational trust and culture by

highlighting a previously underexplored but potentially relevant connection between trust and culture at the organizational level.

Research Questions

The following exploratory research questions guided the study:

- 1) What factors did faculty members identify as contributing to positive and negative perceptions of dean transitions at the school?
- 2) What role did trust and distrust play in the formation of positive and negative perceptions of dean transitions?
- 3) What expectations did faculty members hold concerning the role that a new dean would play in preserving the cultural norms in place at the school?
- 4) What role did cultural norms appear to play in faculty perceptions that a new dean was trustworthy or untrustworthy?

As I began my research, it was my hope that even tentative answers to these questions that resulted from the study might represent progress toward a better understanding of the relationship between organizational trust and culture. I also hoped that the study's findings might provide additional insight into the largely unexplored topic of dean transitions and might suggest strategies for responding to the dilemma facing the school that served as the research site for the study.

Methodology

The research involved an interpretive, single-case study. Although guided interviews served as the primary data source for the study, school documents provided a means of verifying information elicited from the interviews. In addition, respondents' review of their interview transcripts as well as of the findings and conclusions of the

study provided an additional means of confirming the accuracy of the data and the interpretive analysis. The study also drew upon a second tradition of inquiry, that of grounded theory, in an effort to better understand dean transitions and generate theoretical insights about the relationship between organizational trust and organizational culture. A professional school on the campus of a research university in the western part of the United States served as the site for the study. The school was selected as the research site because it offered a rich environment for studying dean transitions. Following the tenure of the original dean (who served from the school's founding for a period of 10 years), the school had four new deans in as many years.

Ladder-rank faculty members at the school served as respondents for the study. I was able to interview 10 of the school's 24 faculty members, including the founding dean, three former deans, and six other faculty members. During the course of the study, I was invited to assume a staff role in the school that allowed me to conduct the study on site. Although my role as an observer-participant eventually transformed into a role that more closely resembled that of an empirical researcher, my affiliation with the school facilitated my ability to establish a rapport with faculty respondents and to collect data for the study through guided interviews. The evolution of my role at the research site is considered in greater detail in the final chapter.

This study focused on an intentionally small number of respondents in a single educational environment. Drawing upon a rich tradition of single-case study research in such fields as psychology, anthropology, and education, this study sought to illuminate human experiences surrounding the phenomenon of dean transitions. The study also sought to investigate the role that organizational trust and culture may have played in

faculty perceptions of dean transitions at the research site. The study represented an initial investigative foray designed to generate, rather than test, hypotheses.

The third chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research site and respondents for the study, access to the research site, the researcher's role in the study, data collection and analysis methods, the phases of the study, and the study's limitations.

Significance of the Study

The study attempted to move beyond traditional studies that measure executive transitions in corporate settings in terms of demographics and strategic change by expanding the exploration of transitions to the academic environment as an organizational setting. In a practical sense, it was my hope that the findings of the study might prove useful to the school that served as the research site. I also hoped that the research might generate new ways of thinking about organizational trust, as viewed through the lens of dean transitions. Finally, the study was intended to represent a modest breakthrough in exploring the possible connection between organizational trust and organizational culture.

Anticipated Findings and Actual Findings

As I began the study, I anticipated that trust would emerge as an influential factor in faculty perceptions of dean transitions. I posited a theoretical link between the emergence of trust and positive perceptions of a dean transition. I also posited a connection between organizational culture and trust, insofar as I anticipated that faculty would be more likely to perceive a new dean as trustworthy if they perceived that he or she operated within established cultural norms governing faculty-dean relations at the institution. My beliefs arose in part, from my own experience in a variety of academic

institutions in the United States. In my conceptualization of the study, I also drew upon my exposure to the literature on organizational trust and culture, as discussed above. My review of the literature led me to reflect on the possible role that trust might play in perceptions of dean transitions in academic institutions, as well as on the possible connection between organizational trust and culture.

The actual findings from the study matched my expectations in some ways and exceeded or fell short of my expectations in other ways. The various factors that respondents identified as influencing their perceptions of new deans and their assessments of trustworthiness were not, for the most part, surprising, and appeared similar to findings in the literature on organizational trust. Although the findings lent some support to the premise that faculty expectations regarding the maintenance of cultural norms influenced their willingness to trust a new dean, the study did not yield as much evidence as I had anticipated. However, the study does suggest a potentially useful rearticulation of the conceptual premises that guided the research, which is discussed in the final chapter.

What I did not anticipate at the outset of the study were the variety of perspectives respondents would offer concerning dean transitions or the willingness respondents would demonstrate to share very personal insights about their experiences with dean transitions. What emerged from the study was a portrait of the experiences of faculty members at one educational institution that was both more revealing and, in some ways, more intimate, than I ever could have imagined I might capture and share with potential readers. In investigating the experience of respondents, I simultaneously endeavored to explore alternative theoretical insights, search for empirical evidence of competing

premises, and provide a vehicle to accurately convey the stories of those faculty respondents who chose to share their experiences with me.

The following chapter provides an overview of the literature that laid the foundation for the study and informed my research. The third chapter provides a detailed discussion of the methodology that guided the research process for the study. The fourth chapter summarizes the results of the study. The final chapter provides an interpretive assessment of the study, discusses the implications of the study, offers a critical examination of whether or not the study achieved its original objectives, and suggests a revised conceptual framework as well as possible avenues for future inquiry.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Four bodies of literature had particular relevance to the study. These areas of scholarship included research on executive transitions, organizational trust, organizational culture, and the culture of the academy. From the outset of the research process, the apparent absence of studies on dean transitions in the literature and the lack of attention paid to organizational trust within academic environments seemed to lend support to the potential significance of the research.

Rather than providing an exhaustive review of the literature, this chapter focuses more selectively on pivotal works, as well as on the strands of research that influenced my approach to the study and the research process itself. As I undertook the study, I frequently revisited the literature to explore conceptualizations that might prove more useful and compelling in understanding the data that resulted from the study.

Executive Succession

Although a considerable amount of literature examines executive succession, the focus of this work was not particularly relevant for my study of faculty perceptions of dean transitions. First, with the exception of a handful of studies that examine succession among college presidents (Bensimon, 1989a, 1990; Birnbaum, 1989), the executive succession literature focuses almost exclusively on succession processes and outcomes within corporate arenas. Second, at the time this write-up was completed, I could locate no studies that specifically examined the perceptions that organization members hold concerning succession processes – other than the perceptions of the chief executive him-

or herself. The existing literature on executive succession focuses primarily on the demography of authority figures (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992, 1993), the role of socialization in executive succession and decisions to implement strategic change (Fondas & Wiersema, 1997), the need to cultivate future successors (Kotter, 1998), managing executive succession processes (Gilmore, 1988; Vancil, 1987), and executive exit (Austin & Gilmore, 1993).

Fondas and Wiersema (1997) use socialization theory as a framework for examining the link between executive succession and strategic change. Taking issue with past research that focuses on the influence of insider versus outsider succession, Fondas and Wiersema argue that socialization theory and a constellation of personal and situational characteristics offer a more robust explanation of why some new executives undertake strategic change and why others conform to existing practices.

In two separate studies, Wiersema and Bantel (1992, 1993) focus more closely on management teams, rather than individual executives, as their primary unit of analysis. The 1992 study links top management team demographic characteristics to the phenomenon of strategic change. The authors conclude that those top management teams characterized by relative youth, relatively short organizational tenure, high team tenure, high educational levels, academic training in the sciences, and heterogeneity in academic specialization are most likely to undertake strategic change. In the second study, the authors examine the impact of the corporate environment on top management team turnover and conclude that environmental capacity to permit growth, instability, and complexity exert the most significant effects on turnover among the top management

team. In their concluding remarks, Wiersema & Bantel discuss the importance of paying attention to executive replacement processes.

Kotter (1998), too, emphasizes the importance of executive succession. In an analysis of the underlying reasons for the failure of change efforts in organizations, Kotter warns against underestimating the difficulty of gaining the cooperation of others in a change process. In conclusion, he argues that successful change efforts require institutionalizing change in the corporate culture – including paying careful attention to the process of executive succession and ensuring that future leaders personify the culture of change.

In two works intended primarily for practitioners, Gilmore (1988) and Vancil (1987) focus on the process of executive transitions. Gilmore (1988) argues that many organizations fail to make strategic use of executive transitions and, as a result, frequently mishandle transitions (p. xi). Gilmore examines the various phases of a transition, including the identification of a need for new leadership, the selection process, and the arrival of the new executive. He presents a model of executive searches that is designed to assist organizations in managing the transition process successfully.

Vancil (1987) focuses more exclusively on the process of CEO succession in corporate arenas. In interviews with 48 incumbent CEO's, former CEO's, CEO candidates, and external corporate directors, Vancil examines the issues that arise during executive succession. Using the metaphor of CEO succession as a relay race, in which the lead runner passes the baton to the next runner, Vancil outlines the benefits of having the incumbent CEO design and manage the succession process and groom his or her

successors during the race. Vancil also examines the role of corporate boards of directors and management teams in the succession process.

Austin and Gilmore (1993) focus on the process of executive exit, which has received little attention in the literature on executive succession. The authors find that the exit process is frequently poorly managed. Further, its value as an opportunity to reassess organizational health and priorities is usually underestimated and ignored.

Although these studies by no means represent an exhaustive survey of the literature on executive succession, they do reflect some of the primary analytical foci within research on the topic. They also serve to illustrate the relative lack of attention to the experience of organization members during transitions. Finally, an overview of the literature points to the absence of work that explores the potential relevance of organizational trust to executive succession and the possible influences of organizational culture on the development of organizational trust.

Executives and Executive Transitions in Higher Education

While there are several works that focus on deans in higher education (Appleton, Briggs, & Rhatigan, 1978; Austin, Ahearn, & English, 1997; Kolodny, 1998; Morris, 1981), only one study explores the issue of succession among deans (Hall, 1995). As noted in the introduction, Hall's study is a self-analysis of his adjustment to his new role as acting dean in the context of subidentity theory. Hall's work provides a unique example of interpretive case-study research in which the author serves as the case study.

Most works that examine succession in academic environments focus more narrowly on leadership and the presidency in institutions of higher education (Bensimon 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Birnbaum 1988b, 1989; Cohen & March, 1974; Tierney 1988b). A

brief discussion of these works demonstrates the diversity of scholarly opinion that exists concerning the nature of organizational culture within the academy. However, none of these studies – including Hall (1995) – focuses primarily on faculty perceptions of executive transitions in academia or addresses the question of whether or not trust plays an important role in the formation of faculty perceptions of transitions.

In a series of articles published in the *Journal of Higher Education*, Birnbaum (1988b, 1989) studies the relationship between presidential succession and institutional goals at U.S. colleges and universities. In a survey of more than 90 colleges and universities in the United States, Birnbaum (1989) finds that despite turnover in the presidency, many institutions fail to effect any substantive change in strategy or goals. Birnbaum concludes that colleges and universities must change as their presidents change if their leadership is to make any significant difference. In the earlier of the two studies (1988b), Birnbaum characterizes the search process for college presidents as a largely symbolic but valuable means of clarifying and redefining institutional goals and values. Birnbaum's work focuses more on the effects of leadership succession in academia than on exploring the perceptions of organizational participants or the ways in which they assess a new executive in an academic institution.

Cohen and March (1974) offer a model of the American college presidency as an “organized anarchy.” In the course of their study, the researchers conducted structured interviews and administered judgment assessments, time allocation studies, and newspaper coverage studies of college presidents at 42 different colleges and universities in the United States. Interviewees included the presidents' “major coworkers” (p. 238) and students at each institution. Based on their research, Cohen and March conclude that

American colleges and universities reflect the defining features of organized anarchies: They pursue inconsistent and poorly defined goals; they operate on the basis of trial and error and lack an understanding of their own internal processes; and their major organizational participants “wander in and out” of the organization (p. 3) with little consistency or longevity in the organization. Cohen and March conclude that college presidents face ambiguities of purpose, power, experience, and success, the latter being particularly hard to measure. Cohen and March offer a very brief discussion of the elements that contribute to the success of college presidents, such as campus growth, quality of the student population, and the reputation of faculty members. The authors compare the college president to “the driver of a skidding automobile,” acknowledging that many of the factors that contribute to presidential success remain obscure and largely beyond a president’s control (p. 203). Their analysis focuses on providing portraits of individual college presidents over a period of time rather than on tracing the succession of multiple presidents at one or more institutions of higher education.

Bensimon has authored several works that examine the college presidency and that offer prescriptives for new presidents (1989a, 1989b, 1990). Bensimon explores the challenge that new presidents confront as they attempt to acquaint themselves with their institution (1989a) and emphasizes the need for new college presidents to view academic institutions as cultural entities (1990). Drawing upon the work of Smircich, (1983b), Gioia (1986), and Bolman and Deal (1984), Bensimon argues that as a new president tries to make sense of his or her institution, a variety of personal (and sometimes unconscious) theories about the nature of academia and leadership come into play (1989b). Bensimon

concurs with Dill (1982) in her assessment that the ability to manage meaning is a skill that is critical to the success of a new college president (Bensimon, 1990, p. 76).

Tierney offers a critical, postmodernist assessment of academic culture. In an ethnographic study of the college presidency, Tierney (1988b) examines the influence of action and discourse on leadership in educational institutions. Tierney rejects models that posit “Great Person” theories of the college presidency (Brown, 1969; Dodds, 1962; Stoke, 1959). He likewise disagrees with the “organized anarchy” model of college administration (Cohen & March, 1974). Focusing on time, space, and communication as elements of a systemic power structure, Tierney argues that it is the dialectical relationship between historical structures and individual interpretation that defines power and guides change within educational institutions. Tierney does not, however, devote a significant amount of attention to presidential succession or to a discussion of the factors that contribute to the perceived success of individual college presidents.

A number of scholars have explored the deanship in higher education. Most of these works focus on the responsibilities of deans and the various roles that they play in colleges, research universities, and professional schools (Allan, 1999; Appleton, Briggs, & Rhatigan, 1978; Austin, Ahearn, & English, 1997; McGrath, 1999; Morris, 1981). These works examine such issues as budgetary oversight, strategic change, staff training, curricular innovation, academic affirmative action, faculty promotion, managing stress, and student development.

Several recent studies focus on the personal experiences of deans and incorporate both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, and Sarros (1999) survey sources of stress among academic deans in the United States and

Australia. In a singly authored work, Gmelch (2000) presents a qualitative case study that focuses on the organizational socialization process of a new dean. The data sources for Gmelch's study included the dean's personal daily journal maintained over a 3-year period, records of the dean's daily schedules, and semistructured, open-ended interviews conducted by an outside researcher. Gmelch found that the socialization process of the dean involved five phases: taking hold, immersion, reshaping, consolidation, and refinement. The study recommends several strategies for a new dean, including writing an entry plan, building strong working relationships, establishing credibility, developing a leadership team, protecting scholarship interests, and treating the past with respect. Gmelch's (2000) work provides another example of a single-case study of deans in academic institutions.

Organizational Trust

The literature on organizational trust draws upon a number of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, economics, political science, organizational behavior, and anthropology. Although the lines that distinguish research on organizational trust in one academic discipline from another have become increasingly blurred (Rousseau et al., 1998), the primary differences among the various intellectual traditions are those of emphasis. Economists have focused on calculative decisions and rational choice; psychologists have studied the personal attributes that contribute to trust; and sociologists have concentrated on the properties of relationships among people and institutional arrangements as the basis for trust within organizations. The research on organizational trust incorporates multiple levels of analysis, including individuals, groups within

organizations, organizations themselves, and relationships between and among organizations.

Although my study focused on individuals as the primary unit of analysis, one of the major questions that guided the study concerned the possible influence of organizational norms on the formation of trust. In this sense, the study borrows from the suggestion of researchers (House et al., 1995) that trust should be treated as a “meso” concept that integrates psychological processes at the individual level with institutional arrangements and processes at the organizational level.

Scholars who have attempted to characterize the interdisciplinary literature on organizational trust demonstrate considerable diversity in their categorization schemes. Sitkin and Roth (1993) divide the literature into research that focuses on trust as an institutional arrangement, a behavior, a personal attribute, and a situational feature. Rousseau and her co-investigators (1998) categorize the literature according to four forms of trust discussed in the research: deterrence-based trust, calculus-based trust, relational trust, and institution-based trust. In their introduction to a special issue of the *Academy of Management Review* (1998), Rousseau and her co-authors further categorize the literature into research streams that view trust as a static or dynamic phenomenon; work that models trust as a cause, an effect, or a moderating condition within organizations; and research that incorporates differing units of analysis. Lewicki and Bunker (1995) divide the literature into work that treats trust as an individual trait; work that examines trust as an institutional arrangement; and research that views trust as based on one's expectations of others' behavior. Bigley and Pearce (1998) classify research on trust according to an analytical focus on interactions among familiar actors, interactions

among unfamiliar actors, and the organization of economic transactions. Bigley and Pearce further distinguish work that treats trust and distrust as polar opposites along the same continuum from work that treats trust and distrust as completely separate constructs.

Considerable diversity also exists among definitions of trust that appear in the literature. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) define trust as a “willingness to be vulnerable.” Similarly, Doney, Cannon, and Mullen (1998) define trust as a “willingness to rely on” others. In the work of Gambetta (1988) and Deutsch (1962), definitions of trust center on cooperative behavior. Other researchers (Hosmer, 1995; Jones & George, 1998; Lewicki et al., 1995; Mayer et al., 1995) incorporate the role of confident and positive expectations of others into their definitions of trust. Still other researchers (Coleman, 1990; Das & Teng, 1998) define trust in terms of the choice to engage in risk based on one’s expectations concerning the behavior of others. Similarly, Sheppard and Sherman (1998) define trust in terms of risk and levels of interdependence. Rousseau and her co-authors offer a definition of trust that synthesizes the cross-disciplinary discussions of trust in scholarship: “Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (1998, p. 395).

In conducting my study, I was interested in discovering how respondents conceptualized trust. As a result, I did not incorporate a formal definition of trust in the interview process. As the fourth chapter illustrates, some of the findings from the study resonate closely with existing literature on organizational trust, with one potentially notable exception.

As noted above, scholars of organizational trust have debated the static versus the dynamic nature of trust. In their overview of the literature on organizational trust, Rousseau and her co-researchers (1998) observe that most researchers whose work incorporates a dynamic view of organizational trust have focused on specific stages of the phenomenon of trust, such as the formation of trust, the maintenance of trust, and the dissolution of trust (p. 396). Prior to my own introduction to the literature, I incorporated a dynamic view of organizational trust in my original conceptualization of this study. The research questions for the study presupposed various stages of trust (formation, maintenance, and erosion), as well as an ebb and flow within stages.

The body of literature that is most relevant to the study reflects the sociological and social psychological traditions of research on organizational trust. These research traditions focus on individual attributes, properties of relationships among individuals, as well as on institutional arrangements. The specific strands of research that resonate with my analysis of the interview data include the work of a number of scholars who explore the bases and qualities of organizational trust. McAllister (1995) distinguishes between cognition-based trust and affect-based trust. Whereas cognition-based trust is grounded in cognitive assessments of competence, affect-based trust has its roots in the bonds that exist between individuals. Other researchers who identify competence as one of the bases of organizational trust include Sitkin (1995), Barber (1983), and Mayer et al. (1995). Larzelere and Huston (1980) identify honesty and benevolence as additional bases or qualities of trust. Sitkin (1995) and Mayer et al. (1995) also include benevolence as one of the bases of trust identified in their research. Rotter (1971) argues that trust is based on the ability to rely on another's word.

Several studies that explore knowledge-based trust also have relevance for the findings presented in this study. Granovetter (1985) discusses the role that knowledge of others plays in the formation of trust. Knowledge becomes a powerful means of prediction of another's behavior. Other works that examine knowledge-based trust, with a specific focus on third-party input, include Milliman and Fugate (1988) and Burt and Knez (1996). Finally, a collection of studies that focus on the role that expectations and values play in the formation of trust have relevance for my interpretation of the findings. Hosmer (1995), Zucker (1986), and Barber (1983) discuss trust in terms of expectations regarding the behavior of others. Sitkin (1995), Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1992), and Fukuyama (1995) offer analyses of trust that are grounded in shared values. The fourth chapter will explore the linkages between the afore-mentioned strands of research on organizational trust and some of the findings from the study in greater detail.

Organizational Culture

The literature on organizational culture is vast and cannot be covered in its entirety in the scope of a single literature review. This section first considers the pivotal scholarly works on organizational culture, in general, and then examines some of the major works on academic culture that had some relevance to the study.

A variety of emphases characterize the literature on organizational culture. Many studies posit a connection between organizational culture and performance (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985, 1992, 1999; Tierney, 1988a; Wilkins & Ouchi 1983). Other studies focus on the interpretive dimensions of organizational culture (Louis, 1980; March, 1984), including the role of symbolic and cultural communication (Feldman & March, 1981; Gioia, 1986; Hirsch &

Andrews, 1984; Smircich, 1983b). Several studies outline various frameworks for understanding organizational culture and behavior (Bolman & Deal, 1984, 1997; Lessem, 1990; Ouchi, 1981). Scholars have also devoted considerable attention to the impact of organizational culture on organizational change efforts (Schein, 1992) and to the phenomenon of cultural change (Schein, 1999; Tierney, 1988a; Trice & Beyer, 1993) and organizational learning (Senge 1990). Finally, a growing number of studies encourage the interpretation and study of organizational culture as a tool for critical reflection (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Smircich, 1983a; Tierney, 1991).

Culture and Performance

Some of the best-known studies on organizational behavior assume a relationship between organizational culture and performance. Ouchi's (1981) pathbreaking work on Theory Z organizations also highlights the connection between organizational culture and performance. In his bid to learn how American businesses could benefit by modeling Japanese management practices, Ouchi argues in favor of an organizational culture that he labels "Theory Z." Theory Z culture emphasizes the importance of trust, egalitarian and holistic human relationships in the workplace, and the willingness to take personal responsibility for collective decisions (Ouchi, 1981, p. 79). Ouchi assigns particular importance to the role that trust between managers and employees – and among employees – plays in enhancing productivity and performance. Ouchi's work compares Japanese to American styles of management, but also presents case studies of Type Z and more authoritarian Type A corporations within the United States. Throughout his work, Ouchi's focus remains on the link between organizational culture and performance.

One year after Ouchi's (1981) work was published, Deal and Kennedy (1982) completed their well-known study of corporate culture. Deal and Kennedy found that strong and cohesive organizational cultures contributed to success among 80 American companies that they profiled through interviews, biographies, and analysis of speeches and company documents. Deal and Kennedy examine the major elements of corporate culture, including the business environment, company values, heroes, rites and rituals, and the cultural network itself. The authors argue that organizational leaders need to understand culture in order to manage it. The authors emphasize the importance of company values and heroes who embody and transmit those values in shaping a strong corporate culture.

In the same year, Peters and Waterman published their classic work, *In Search of Excellence* (1982). Based on their study of performance and growth measures of 62 U.S. firms in six different functional sectors, Peters and Waterman identify eight dimensions of corporate excellence. The authors find that those companies that incorporate both centralized and decentralized management practices, demonstrate strong values, and exhibit respect for both their employees and customers are among the most successful companies.

In 1983, Wilkins and Ouchi provided an alternative, anthropological perspective on the possible link between organizational culture and performance. In contrast to Deal and Kennedy's findings that successful organizations exhibit unique cultures, Wilkins and Ouchi find little evidence of "local organizational cultures" or organization-specific cultures. Wilkins and Ouchi argue that local organizational cultures, or "clans," are only one form of organizational governance. Further, it is only under specific conditions (of

low uncertainty, for instance) that local organizational cultures may enhance organizational effectiveness and performance. The authors argue that most organizations incorporate three different governance models, including clans, markets, and bureaucracies, albeit to varying degrees. Each model of governance may result in enhanced performance under different conditions. Contrary to the assumptions of Deal and Kennedy, Wilkins and Ouchi find that organization-specific or local cultures may result in fewer organizational efficiencies than market or bureaucratic forms of control.

Schein's (1985) work, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, posits a similar link between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness. However, Schein's emphasis is on the creation and management of culture. Schein identifies three levels of culture, including artifacts, values, and basic assumptions. He explores the ways in which these levels of culture coexist within organizational cultures and subcultures. Throughout his work, Schein emphasizes the need to be conscious of both an organization's espoused values and its embedded values (or underlying assumptions) in order to understand and manage organizational culture.

In a subsequent work, Schein (1999) brings the arguments from his 1985 work to bear on the phenomenon of cultural change. Reiterating the link between organizational culture and performance, Schein explores the role of organizational culture in determining organizational strategy and goals. Schein argues that the essence of organizational culture embodies learned, shared assumptions. These assumptions are largely unconscious or "latent," but they drive organizational behavior.

Sensemaking and Symbolism

Another subset of literature on organizational culture that had potential relevance to the study is work that focuses on shared meanings and sensemaking. The work of Louis (1980) explores the relationship between sensemaking and surprise in organizational contexts. Louis develops a model of newcomer experience that illustrates how newcomers experience surprise when their expectations concerning a new organizational environment do not match their subsequent experiences in that environment. According to Louis, current organization members can provide valuable assistance to newcomers in the sensemaking process. Reciprocally, organization members can learn from newcomers in order to facilitate the sensemaking and socialization experiences of future newcomers.

In a later work (1983), Louis articulates the psychological and sociological dimensions of organizational culture. In this work, Louis shows the ways in which meaning exists at both the individual level and as shared values and codes of meaning among groups of individuals. Louis emphasizes the importance of studying not only the cultural processes within organizations but the “cultural aspects of organizational phenomena” and the perspectives of organization members (p. 516).

Other works explore the role of organizational symbolism and the role of symbols in the sensemaking process. In her research on organizational symbolism, Smircich (1983b) argues that organizations exist as systems of shared meanings that are created and perpetuated through symbolic processes. Focusing on the staff of an insurance firm, Smircich explores the ways in which organization members interpret their organizational experience. She also examines the relationship between these interpretations and action.

Smircich illustrates how rituals, ideology, language, and other symbolic processes shape the experience of organization members and encourage them to develop shared understandings. The resulting view that individual members develop of their organization may endure even after their departure.

Hirsch and Andrews (1984) examine the ways in which organizational symbols are used to achieve effective management, arguing that it is important to know which symbols to invoke in which circumstances. March (1984) examines the role of symbolic and cultural communication within organizations, arguing that organizations exist on two primary levels: the level of action, as reflected by behavior; and the level of interpretation or understanding. According to March, the administration of organizations centers on the management of such symbols as stories, myths, and rituals (March, 1984, pp. 31-32). I anticipated that these studies might be relevant to my research, which incorporated the premise that faculty respondents might suggest that it is important to them that a new dean maintain established rituals or customs in his or her interactions with the faculty.

Gioia (1986) examines the roles of symbols and scripts in the process that organization members use to make sense of organizational culture. According to Gioia, organization members ascribe meaning to their experiences, which become embodied in symbols. Symbols are retained in “webs of structured knowledge” or socially constructed scripts that serve as the basis for future action and understanding. Because the act of sensemaking is a social process that depends upon shared meanings – or symbols and scripts – sensemaking is dependent on organizational context, as well as on the individual members of organizations. However, Gioia does allow for the possibility of “introspective” sensemaking, or sensemaking that occurs within individuals as a result of

intuition and imagination. After outlining his conceptual framework, Gioia examines the ways in which organizational leaders can manage more effectively and facilitate change by using symbols that represent ideas that have relevance and appeal to organization members.

Weick (1995) examines the sensemaking process in organizations and shows how this process provides structure for organizations and their members. Weick explores the ways in which organization members engage in sensemaking in order to construct meaning and mutual understanding. Weick also draws upon the work of Louis (1980) to illustrate how organization members make sense of surprises within their environments. In contrast to Gioia, Weick disagrees that sensemaking can be future oriented. Whereas Gioia contends that sensemaking forms a critical component of planning for the future, Weick argues that sensemaking is a purely retrospective activity.

These works represent a small subset of research on organizational culture and are relevant to my work, in that they illustrate the many ways in which culture is manifested and sustained within organizations, as well as the enduring influence of cultural norms on organizational behavior. However, the literature does not fully address the influence that cultural norms may have on organizational trust or the role that trust may play in assessments of success or performance within organizations in general, and academic institutions, in particular. Nor do the methodological approaches of these works focus on the experience of organization members, as my study attempted to do.

Culture of the Academy

Until the 1970s, much of the scholarly literature on academic culture focused on student cultures (Becker, 1963; Bushnell, 1960). Burton Clark (1970) was one of the first

researchers to examine the unique culture of academic institutions. His pioneering work on organizational culture within the academy focused on the role of beliefs in bonding members to academic organizations (1971), the importance of organizational sagas and symbols in forging institutional identity (1980), and the system of higher education as a culture (1984). Clark (1962) was also one of the first scholars to focus on faculty culture and the American professoriate, although other scholars (Austin, 1990; Becher, 1981, 1987; Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Cohen & March, 1974; Finkelstein, 1984; Freedman, 1979; Gaff & Wilson, 1971; Ladd & Lipset, 1975; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996) later followed suit. By the early 1980s, however, some scholars were still criticizing the overall lack of research on organizational culture in higher education (Dill, 1982; Masland, 1985; Tierney, 1988a).

In the 1980s, scholars began to turn more attention to academic culture itself. Scholars such as Birnbaum (1983, 1988a) and Bergquist (1992) developed multidimensional theoretical frameworks for understanding the culture of academic institutions – suggesting the academic cultural counterpart to Bolman and Deal’s four frames for viewing organizational behavior. Birnbaum (1988a) outlines a typology of institutions that include bureaucratic, collegial, political, and anarchical institutions, as well as a fifth variant, the “cybernetic institution,” which integrates the previous four models. Despite the precision of his theoretical models, Birnbaum concludes that there are no academic institutions that represent any of his models in their pure form (1988a, p. 175). Drawing upon the work of Weick (1979) and Schein (1985), Birnbaum argues that it is critical to remain attentive to the differences in basic assumptions and beliefs among

institutions and to unlearn “cause maps” of meaning that one may have acquired at a previous institution where one may have worked (Birnbaum, 1988a, pp. 54-55).

Birnbaum (1983) also gives some consideration to the question of whether academic cultures are characterized by consistency or diversity. He identifies three separate cultural systems within academia, including the national education system, the academic profession, and individual academic disciplines. He identifies forces operating in these various systems that contribute to both consistency and diversity among academic cultures. On the one hand, the strength of such core academic values as commitment to disseminating knowledge, intellectual honesty, and academic freedom has resulted in a fair measure of consistency across various academic institutions on the national level and within the academic profession. On the other hand, as Clark had argued as early as 1962, the specific goals and research methodologies embodied in different academic disciplines and different types of academic institutions contribute to cultural fragmentation within academia (Birnbaum, 1983, pp. 74-75).

Despite the evidence of fragmentation among the American professoriate, other scholars of academic culture – including Clark – identify a number of academic values or norms that appear to cross disciplinary boundaries and are enduring. These values include academic freedom or autonomy, the pursuit of knowledge or truthseeking, and collegiality (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Clark, 1987; Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

Like Birnbaum, Bergquist (1992) presents a typology of academic cultures. Based on previous case studies and consultations with faculty and administrators at 300 colleges and universities, Bergquist develops four models of academic institutions, including those with collegial, managerial, developmental, and negotiation cultures. Also

similar to Birnbaum, Bergquist acknowledges that most institutional cultures combine several of his models and that even if one of the cultural models is dominant, the others are always present. In Bergquist's view, this cultural diversity does not imply weakness in the cultural fabric of an institution. However, failure to recognize the cultural differences within institutions can thwart effective leadership of academic institutions. Echoing the work of Schein (1985), Bergquist argues that it is critical that we attempt to understand the basic cultural assumptions of our institutions of higher learning (Birnbaum, p. 2). In Bergquist's view, it may be necessary to view individual institutions through all four lenses in order to understand the cultural dynamics at play (pp. 229-230).

In an article that focuses on organizational culture in higher education, Tierney (1988a) offers a framework for diagnosing culture in academic environments that has relevance to noneducational organizations, as well. Central to Tierney's work is the importance of shared meanings among organization members. Drawing upon the work of cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) and the concept of "webs of significance," Tierney argues that organizational culture involves the study of webs of significance that exist in an organization. Tierney characterizes organizational culture as interpretive in nature because it is grounded in shared stories, language, norms, and institutional ideology.

Tierney identifies six critical components of organizational culture, including environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership. He warns that organizational cultural analysis cannot solve an organization's problems. However, cultural awareness provides valuable insights to managers as they choose which of many alternatives to pursue in response to problems. Through the analysis of a case study,

Tierney emphasizes the critical role that symbolism and socialization play in creating and sustaining organizational culture. In his conclusion, Tierney suggests that cultural analysis may produce insights that empower managers to effect change in their organizations while minimizing conflict and disruption. Thus, although Tierney's work emphasizes the symbolic and interpretive aspects of organizational culture, his arguments parallel those of other scholars who perceive a causal relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance.

In a co-authored work that presents cultural case studies of seven American educational institutions, Chaffee and Tierney (1988) explore the link between culture and strategy through a combination of ethnographic research techniques and statistical analysis. The authors view American colleges and universities as becoming increasingly fragmented and complex and call for leaders of educational institutions to adopt a view of their institutions as cultural entities as they implement strategies that are appropriate for their institutions (p. 8). Chaffee and Tierney are critical of researchers who though slowly filling the gaps in studying the organizational culture of academic institutions, as of the late 1980s were still focusing on defining effective managerial techniques for institutions of higher education. Chaffee and Tierney attempt to move beyond this focus to use organizational culture as a lens for understanding the complexity of organizational life in academic institutions (p. 12). Nonetheless, as in Tierney's singly authored work (1988a), Chaffee and Tierney maintain that the success of an educational institution depends, in large part, on the congruence and strength of its culture.

In his 1997 work on academic culture, Tierney explores the process of socialization within higher education. On the basis of a two-year empirical study of

tenure and promotion involving interviews with more than 300 individuals, Tierney contrasts modernist and postmodernist frameworks for understanding organizational socialization within the academy. Tierney argues that socialization is an interpretive process that centers on the creation of meaning, rather than a one-way process of discovery and incorporation of organizational cultural norms by newcomers. Drawing upon research on learning organizations, Tierney recommends an expansion of current definitions of organizational fit and reconsideration of the significance of including new members in an organization. Rather than focusing on the assimilation of cultural norms, Tierney issues a challenge to honor individual differences and creativity and to acknowledge newcomers as active participants in the evolution of organizational culture. Tierney's 1997 work seemed potentially relevant to my study, insofar as the study sought to investigate whether faculty respondents expected new deans to maintain preexisting cultural norms.

Summary

The preceding overview does not cover the entire collectivity of research in the fields of executive transitions, organizational trust, organizational culture, and the culture of the academy. The studies included in the discussion represent some of the classic works in their respective fields, as well as particular niches within the literature that informed my study of faculty perceptions of dean transitions. An overview of the literature demonstrates that while previous studies have great relevance to dimensions of the study that I conducted, insufficient attention has been paid to executive transitions within academic institutions. Furthermore, no studies appear to have investigated the influence that organizational trust may have on perceptions of dean transitions within the

academy or the ways in which cultural norms may influence organizational trust. An overview of the literature appears to support the rationale for my study of faculty perceptions of dean transitions within a particular educational institution.

Whereas this chapter has examined previous research that is relevant to the study, the following chapter outlines the methodology that guided the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The research involved a single, interpretive-case study that incorporated qualitative methods of inquiry and that drew upon grounded theory. The following sections discuss the research site and respondents for the study, access to the research site, the researcher's role in the study, the data collection and analysis methods, the timeline for the research, and finally, the limitations to the study. Before outlining the specific steps that I followed in completing the research, some discussion of the reasoning for my selection of a qualitative mode of inquiry is in order.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

In undertaking the study, I wished to gain access to the perspectives of individual faculty members who had experienced dean transitions. I also hoped to use the data collected during the study to generate theoretical insights concerning the relationship between organizational culture and trust. These objectives could best be accomplished through qualitative inquiry, with its emphasis on inductive reasoning and understanding phenomena as respondents give meaning to them within specific contexts (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). The study endeavored to allow the reader to share the experience of respondents and gain an in-depth view of dean transitions at the school that served as the research site (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.51). The study therefore required a research design that would remain open to new meanings and perspectives in an effort to generate theory rather than a design that tested existing theory. A positivist-influenced methodology that emphasized researcher neutrality seemed oddly discordant with my

efforts to understand the personal experience of individual respondents at the research site.

Case-Study Approach

I selected a case-study approach as the primary research methodology for the study. In the course of the research, I completed an analysis based on interviews with respondents. To a lesser degree than I had anticipated at the outset of the study, observations and a review of documents at the research site also served as sources of data for the study. A case study allows the researcher to use multiple sources of information to focus on phenomena as they occur in a specific context, which is bounded in time or place (Creswell, 1998, pp. 36-37). I conducted a within-site study of an organizational system that was bounded by both time (1986 to the present) and space (the organization itself).

My selection of a single-case study approach was also consistent with my goal of generating new ways of thinking about and understanding dean transitions as a result of in-depth examination of a particularly rich and purposefully selected case (Donmoyer, 1990). Creswell (1998), too, acknowledges the loss that occurs in depth of understanding as a researcher increases the number of cases under study. In his discussion of the merits of studying a single case, Stake defines a case as “one among others” (Stake, 2000, p. 436) and asserts that “case study method has been too little honored as the intrinsic study of a valued particular” (p. 439). In Stake’s view, not all research should establish generalization as its ultimate objective. By focusing exclusively on generalization, we are apt to miss the complex intricacies that make a given case unique and worth studying in the first place.

The study of a single case may not contribute to generalizability in the traditional, positivist sense of the word. Nonetheless, ideas generated by the study of a single case may very well have applicability to other organizational settings. Building upon well-established traditions of single-case-study research in such disciplines as anthropology, psychology, and, more recently, education, the study of a particularly rich case was intended to contribute to a better understanding of dean transitions and to generate theoretical premises about the possible relationship between organizational culture and organizational trust. It was my hope that the findings from the study would not only be of use to the school that served as the research site, but that they might serve as the basis for future studies conducted in other organizational environments.

Influence of Grounded Theory

While the study sought to achieve the in-depth understanding of a phenomenon within a specific context that a case study can yield, it also endeavored to generate data that might illuminate the possible connections between organizational culture and trust. In this sense, the study sought to generate theoretical understanding of the sort that grounded theory produces. In a grounded theoretical approach, the researcher focuses on the development of theory rather than on the confirmation of hypotheses derived from theory (Merriam, 1998, p. 18). The study did not incorporate such formal components of grounded theory as open coding and the creation of a conditional matrix or a coding diagram (Creswell, 1998, p. 34). What the proposed research did have in common with the tradition of grounded theory – and many other forms of qualitative research, for that matter – was the identification of common categories and disconfirming evidence that resulted from the comparison of portions of the data to one another.

Site and Respondents

Site

As noted earlier, a professional school on the campus of a research university in the western part of the United States served as the site for the study. The university has a national reputation for excellence in research and many of its graduate schools and departments consistently rank among the top 20 schools and departments in the United States. The school offers a 2-year multidisciplinary professional degree. Although it has a doctoral program, no students have been admitted to the doctoral program in recent years.

The school was selected as the research site because it offered a rich environment for studying dean transitions. Following the tenure of the original dean (who served from the school's founding for a period of 10 years), the school had four new deans in as many years. Two deans (with tenures of 1 and 2 years, respectively) were hired as a result of national searches. A founding faculty member served as interim dean for 1 year between the national searches (as well as for a brief interval between the time that the original dean stepped down and the first new dean was hired). At the time the write-up of this study was completed, the current interim dean had been in office for 7 months and was nearing the end of his interim appointment. A search for a new permanent dean was underway.

Respondents

In conducting the study, I employed a purposeful sampling strategy for the selection of respondents (Patton, 1990). The respondents for the study were drawn from the ladder-rank faculty members at the school. In selecting faculty respondents for the study, I focused on those faculty members who had experienced at least two deans

transitions. As a result of their extensive personal experience with and knowledge of dean transitions, each of the respondents represented an “information-rich,” or intensive case (Patton, 1990, p. 171). A total of ten faculty members were available for interviews, including the founding dean, three former deans, and six other faculty members, some of whom had served on search committees for previous deans.

Before I began the write-up of the study, I consulted respondents regarding their preferences on the style of the write-up. I secured their approval to include in the methodology chapter a description of the roles they had played in the school, such as that of the founding dean and three former deans. However, in the write-up, respondents and I agreed that I would refer to all faculty participants in the study simply as “respondents.” In only one case did a former dean specifically request that I associate his comments with his role as a former dean.

Negotiations with respondents also resulted in the reference to all respondents by the masculine pronoun “he” throughout the study. This decision was made at the suggestion of respondents who expressed concern about possible identification on the basis of their gender.

Access and Researcher Role

I secured the consent of the current administration to conduct the study and interview members of the faculty. Prior to beginning the research, I was invited to assume a staff role in the school that would allow me to conduct the study on site. I began the study with the intention of assuming an observer-participant status at the school, which would hopefully facilitate my ability to collect data for the study, not only through guided interviews but through observations and analysis of documents.

As is discussed in greater detail below and in the concluding chapter, my role ultimately evolved into more that of a conventional researcher than an observer-participant. My affiliation with the research site assisted me in establishing a rapport with respondents. However, there was very little opportunity for participant observation as a means of data collection.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews

Interviews served as the primary means of data collection. I adopted a combination interview approach for the study that included both informal conversational interviews and a general interview guide approach (Patton, 1990, p. 287). At the outset of each interview, I introduced a grand tour question (Spradley, 1979, pp. 86-87), asking faculty respondents to construct organizational timelines that spanned their years at the school. I also asked respondents to identify the events that they considered key occurrences in the school's history. My objective in opening with a grand tour question was to discover whether or not respondents independently identified dean transitions as important events in their organizational timelines. In cases in which respondents independently discussed dean transitions, an informal conversational approach provided me with the flexibility to ask them to elaborate on their responses, which then opened the door for the interview to move in directions that I had not anticipated (Patton, 1990, pp. 282-282).

I then adopted an interview guide approach, in which I posed questions that asked respondents to discuss their perceptions of dean transitions at the school. I wished to maintain a conversational style in the interviews so that I could maintain maximum flexibility to respond to new ideas generated by interviewees. Therefore, I did not pose

the questions in a specific order (Patton, 1990, p. 283). Rather, I used my interview guide as a means of ensuring that I asked each respondent to address the same issues, which I hoped would provide some degree of consistency among the interviews. The interview guide appears in Appendix A.

Although the interview guide approach equipped me with the flexibility to respond to unanticipated comments from respondents, it also posed two challenges that I had not anticipated at the outset of the study. First, I discovered that I risked running out of time during six interviews. Several respondents provided me with much more detail than I had anticipated. They also raised issues that seemed particularly germane to the research questions. As the interviews moved in new and unexpected directions, I had to make very quick decisions about the potential salience of conversation topics and whether or not to continue with a particular stream of conversation or move on to another question that might ultimately prove less salient for purposes of the study.

Many of the questions were open ended, giving respondents the flexibility to reply in ways that were as personally revealing or oblique as they desired. Some respondents commented on very personal experiences, while others provided answers that were perhaps less candid. If respondents appeared reluctant to answer a particular question, I did not push them to do so. However, at the same time, I found myself gauging respondents and attempting to anticipate whether posing a particular question might result in the respondent retreating from enthusiastic participation in the interview. During at least three interviews, I opted to rephrase questions in ways that I sensed would put respondents at greater ease.

In order to capture respondents' comments as accurately as possible, I audiotaped each interview (with the permission of the respondents). Although I had intended to use the counter as a means of indexing relevant topics, I found it too distracting and abandoned the practice after the first interview. I instead opted to transcribe each interview in its entirety. Although my goal was to transcribe the interviews and make written, reflective notes within 24 hours of the interview, it was not always feasible to perform the transcriptions within this time frame. On one occasion, I had to schedule three interviews in one day in order to take advantage of the temporary availability of two respondents who were preparing to leave on extended research trips. As it took approximately 1 hour to transcribe every 20 minutes of recorded conversation, it was not possible to transcribe all three interviews in a single day. In fact, it took the rest of the week for me to complete the transcription of the three interviews from that day. As a general rule, however, I was able to complete the transcriptions no longer than 72 hours following each interview.

I also took notes on respondents' key points as a safeguard against the possibility of technical malfunctions in the recording process. This proved a wise decision, as the quality of one tape was not very clear. In this case, I had to enlist the help of the respondent in deciphering the words in several sections of the recording. However, I was fortunate in that no major malfunctions occurred in the recording process.

One unexpected pattern that occurred several times during the interview process was that respondents volunteered to take responsibility for testing the audiotape, making sure that the recorder was properly positioned, and flipping the tape as it neared the end of the first side. It became clear early on in the study that my respondents, all of whom

were accomplished interviewers, had much more experience conducting interviews than did I.

The other observation I made during the interview process was that it might prove beneficial to use a battery-controlled recorder in future research endeavors. At least half of the interviews began with a flurry of activity, as both the respondents and I searched for available electrical outlets in respondents' offices.

As an additional check on accuracy, follow-up interviews and respondents' review of interview transcripts allowed me to confirm responses and seek feedback on my accounts of the data (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 151). I found that it was somewhat difficult to schedule follow-up interviews with respondents. Although respondents expressed their willingness to participate in such interviews, time constraints in their schedules ultimately precluded my ability to schedule second interviews with them. Instead, I followed up with several respondents by phone, e-mail, or typewritten notes.

In other cases, respondents discussed their own perspective on the interview process as one that required "getting it right the first time." As several of my respondents were accustomed to forgoing the luxury of conducting follow-up interviews in their own work, I concluded that it was important to respect their understanding of the norms of interviewing and did not request follow-up interviews with these particular respondents.

Documents and Archival Records

A review of the school's archival records allowed me to confirm the chronology and occurrence of significant events in the history of the organization. Documents such as correspondence and press releases also served as a means of verifying specific dates and events cited by respondents during interviews. The proposal to create the school proved

especially useful in providing information on the historical context in which the school was established. In consultation with the school's administration, I ultimately decided not to use the minutes of faculty meetings as a data source, for two reasons. Respondents and nonparticipants in the study might have been uncomfortable with my review of faculty meeting minutes for purposes of the study. In addition, the minutes of faculty meetings would likely have been of little use in confirming anything that could not already be confirmed through a review of other documents in the school's archives. Inclusion of any substantive commentary from the meeting minutes would not have been appropriate, as such data would have been accessed outside the context of informed consent.

Observations

Through my intended role as participant-observer at the research site, I had hoped to record any potentially relevant observations I made during the course of the study. Unfortunately, there were very few substantive observations to record, aside from my own interactions with respondents in the study. In consultation with the school's administrators, the decision was made that it would be preferable that I not use attendance at faculty meetings as a potential data source, again, due to privacy concerns and the comfort of respondents and nonparticipants alike. My observations of my interactions with respondents are presented in chapter 4, which outlines the findings of the study.

Data Analysis Methods

My initial analysis of the interview data resulted in two parallel activities: the construction of a chronology of significant events in the school's history that respondents identified during interviews; and the identification of themes in the interview transcripts. Assembling a single timeline of events based on data from all of the interviews allowed

me to compile the data into chronological order. In constructing the chronology of significant events, it became apparent that respondents focused on three categories of occurrences: those surrounding the creation of the school, the arrival and departure of some of the school's founding faculty members, and the turnover among deans at the school. As my primary research interests concerned dean transitions, it is significant that the respondents independently cited dean transitions as major events in the school's history. One significant observation that resulted from my analysis of the interview transcripts is that eight out of ten respondents identified the decision by the founding dean to step down as a pivotal event for the school. Most respondents expressed difficulty constructing a timeline that included events other than the school's founding, faculty appointments and resignations, and the dean transitions. Although I originally intended to include the timeline of events in the write-up, I ultimately decided to omit it. Respondents agreed that inclusion of the timeline might make the research site more easily identifiable to potential readers.

I then coded the transcripts to identify general categories and themes. Using my initial research questions and the questions from my interview guide as a starting point, I grouped the interview data into six major categories: perceptions of the effects of decanal turnover; perceptions of faculty culture; perceptions of faculty-dean relations; factors contributing to positive or negative perceptions of dean transitions; factors relating to trust; and perceptions regarding the maintenance of cultural norms at the school. During the categorization process, I identified several subcategories. Within the category of trust, I created one subcategory concerning the importance of trust, a second subcategory for different elements of trust, a third subcategory for the ways in which trust is built and

maintained or eroded, and a fourth subcategory for indicators of trust. When I coded the interview data for factors that led to positive or negative perceptions of dean transitions, I identified seven primary subcategories: consultation, consensus building, academic values, vision, the ability to understand others, reputation, and managing expectations. In addition, I originally created several secondary categories of data that were of peripheral relevance to the study. These included advice that respondents might give a new dean and qualities that respondents might seek in a new dean. Ultimately, data in these secondary categories were subsumed by other categories.

The process by which I coded the data was fairly straightforward. I coded major categories and subcategories by highlighting the interview data and assigning codes that corresponded to the first initial of each respondent's name and the page number on which the data appeared. Multiple data on the same page were assigned lower-case letters in alphabetic order. I marked portions of the data that might be incorporated as supporting quotations with an asterisk. I ultimately included only those quotations that respondents approved for use in the write-up.

In analyzing the coded data from each interview, I was able to identify overall patterns, recurring themes, and anomalies in the data. Subsequent reviews of the data and the categorization schemes helped illuminate the relationships between categories of data and assisted me in generating observations concerning the possible relationship between organizational trust and culture in the context of dean transitions. In this sense, the research approximated the intentions of grounded theory. The following chapter will examine the major themes in the data in greater detail.

Throughout the process of analyzing the data and writing the findings from the study, I maintained close contact with respondents and invited them to read successive drafts of the write-up. My incorporation of a strategy of member checking yielded a number of advantages and disadvantages, as discussed in the paragraphs that follow. Following respondents' review of their interview transcripts, I began the first draft of the write-up. As I identified portions of the transcripts that I might wish to include as quotations in the write-up, I reviewed the quotations with respondents and secured their approval to include the quotations in their original or edited form. In some instances, I made suggestions for changes in the quotations to eliminate phrases or word patterns that might reveal the identity of individual respondents. In other cases, respondents offered their own suggestions for changes. The advantage of this process of negotiation with respondents was that it permitted me to include particularly rich portions of the interview data in the write-up without compromising the confidentiality of respondents.

As I wrote my summary of the findings, my primary concern remained that of protecting the identity of respondents. At the same time, I tried to approach my work with a sensitivity to the feelings of potential readers among the faculty. I sought to achieve a portrayal that was both accurate and not unduly hurtful to any reader. This concern was the subject of discussions that I had with several respondents, some of which I initiated and some of which were initiated by respondents. In instances when respondents felt strongly about including a passage in the write-up, I deferred to respondents' wishes.

As a result of my concern with the maintenance of confidentiality, I ultimately chose to exclude some portions of the data from the write-up. Although some of the omitted data provided historical or political contextual information, respondents and I

agreed that inclusion of the data jeopardized their confidentiality. Although inclusion of the material might have added richness to the write-up, none of the omitted data altered the findings in substantive ways.

As noted above, I encouraged respondents to take part in reviewing various drafts of the write-up. In addition to reviewing their interview transcripts for accuracy and approval of passages for inclusion in the write-up, respondents provided feedback on the categorization scheme and my interpretation of the study's findings. Respondents' review of the write-up resulted in my subsuming some subcategories of data under other categories of data, but did not result in the omission of any data that had relevance to the research questions that guided the study. The strategy of member checking that I adopted offered the compelling advantage of providing a check on the accuracy of my presentation and analysis of the study's findings.

In writing the findings from the study, I endeavored to include the views of all respondents, even if only a single respondent voiced support for a particular view. The inclusion of these perspectives provided important points of contrast for considering the findings, as well as their implications.

Throughout the write-up, I presented the findings at an intentionally general level of analysis. Although the comments of individual respondents provided the substance of the findings, the goal of the study was to achieve a synthesis of respondents' views rather than to portray the stories of individual faculty members or deans. This strategy served both to protect the confidentiality of participants in the study and to encourage a macro-analytic understanding of dean transitions at the school.

During the entire research process, I maintained a legal pad of notes and reflections I made concerning my work. The notes included suggestions for improvements in conducting interviews, concerns that arose regarding methodological issues, new works to consult in connection with my literature review, and insights about patterns and anomalies in the data.

Phases and Time Period of the Study

I received approval from the institutional review board at the research site and the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Diego in mid-November 2000. The first set of interviews was conducted in December 2000 and early January 2001, with preliminary coding and analysis beginning simultaneously. In February 2001, I undertook more intensive examination of the coding and categorization schemes and completed follow-up communications with three respondents from whom I sought clarification regarding portions of their interviews. By mid-February, all of the respondents had completed a review of the transcripts from their interviews and provided me with feedback and editorial suggestions. By late February, I completed the data analysis and a draft of the write-up, which I circulated to interested respondents for their feedback. Only three respondents requested copies of the entire findings and discussion. Three other respondents reviewed portions of the write-up. The remaining four respondents declined to review the write-up. I completed the final write-up in March 2001, and shared it with interested respondents. This was an ambitious production schedule and it demanded the generous cooperation of my respondents and members of my dissertation committee, alike.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Delimitations

This study focused on an intentionally small number of respondents in a single educational environment. Although the small sample selected for inquiry imposes limits on the value of the study as measured by its external validity, I anticipated that what might be compromised in breadth would be more than offset by achievements in richness of data and analytical depth. The research site offered a uniquely rich case for examining dean transitions, and it was my belief that a thorough and in-depth study of this case was worthwhile.

Limitations

The study's results cannot be generalized to other contexts in the manner desired by the positivist tradition of inquiry. However, as a member of my committee observed, the ideas generated by the study may be more generalizable than its findings (Donmoyer, personal conversation, November 7, 2000). Readers may find that the study helps generate ideas that may have relevance to other educational or organizational settings. The case study that I have completed may enable researchers to approach other cases with ideas that they may not have had in the absence of reading my work – whether or not they agree with my findings.

In the tradition of grounded research, this study sought to take the first steps in examining a topic that, to my knowledge, had not yet been explored in depth at the time I began my research. The study sought to generate data that illuminate human experiences surrounding the phenomenon of dean transitions at the school that served as the research site. The study also represented an initial investigative foray designed to generate, rather

than test, hypotheses concerning the role that organizational trust and culture may have played in faculty perceptions of dean transitions.

During the course of the research, I succeeded in establishing a rapport with my respondents. It is possible that this rapport opened the door to subjectivity on my part, and this subjectivity may have flavored my analysis. While my initial role as participant-observer may be viewed as a liability in the tradition of positivist inquiry, it is, in fact, considered a strength in contemporary social science research. In recent decades, an increasing number of scholars in the humanities, the social sciences, and educational research have concluded that neither research agendas nor research techniques are ever neutral (Lincoln, 1989, 1993; Peshkin, 1988). The most ethical stance for researchers to take may be to acknowledge their subjectivity in their work (Peshkin, 1988) and engage their respondents in the process of ensuring that the researcher has conveyed respondents' experience as accurately as possible.

In addition, respondents who served as former deans may (either consciously or unconsciously) have cast their responses in terms that placed them in the most favorable light possible. Respondents may also have concealed their true feelings about their experiences out of concern that their colleagues, who had the right to review successive drafts of the text, might ultimately discern their identities. Or, respondents may have self-selected: those who agreed to participate may have done so for reasons that impacted the outcome of the study in ways that I could not recognize.

Finally, limitations arise concerning the analysis itself. It may be difficult to assess the validity of patterns and anomalies that I have identified in my analysis. I was disappointed that my review of documents in the school's archives and observations I

made at the school did not enable me to triangulate the data in ways that I had anticipated. As discussed earlier, the school's archival documents proved very useful in confirming the dates of events that respondents mentioned during their interviews. However, the documents could not provide either confirming or disconfirming evidence of respondents' perceptions.

The observations I made during the course of the study provided some evidence of its potential benefit to some respondents. It was rewarding to hear three respondents comment that they found their participation in the study both helpful and informative. The comments of these respondents were unsolicited, making them all the more meaningful as an indicator of the potential usefulness of the study.

The process of triangulation occurred primarily through comparison of portions of the data to one another. The comparison of respondents' comments provided a means of triangulation, as demonstrated by the considerable overlap among respondents' perceptions. I compared data from the interview transcripts to establish categories of information and to look for instances of disconfirming evidence. That as many as seven or eight respondents shared similar perceptions of phenomena appears significant. Although perhaps not the triangulation method common in social scientific or natural scientific inquiry, the triangulation strategy ultimately adopted in the study follows an established tradition of qualitative case-study research, in which interviews serve as the primary source of data (Stake, 2000). Respondents' review of their transcripts and the participation of some respondents in a review of the findings and the analysis provided additional means of triangulating the data and lent credibility to my interpretations.

No research methodology is without its pitfalls. Research designs that have their roots in positivist inquiry bring their own limitations, by risking the imposition of theoretical frameworks masked in claims of objectivity and neutrality. It is the burden of the researcher to approach his or her study with as much candor and awareness of potential limitations as possible. Having done this, it then falls to the researcher to convey respondents' comments in a manner that captures their experience as accurately as possible. I have done this to the best of my ability. The reader may judge my analysis and interpretations for him- or herself.

Chapter 4: Findings

The following section considers the major themes that I identified in my analysis of the transcripts from interviews with the founding dean, three former deans, and six other faculty members at the school. These include respondents' perceptions of the impact of dean transitions on the school; their perceptions of faculty culture and faculty-dean relations; factors that respondents identified as leading them to form positive or negative perceptions of various new deans; and respondents' perceptions of the role that trust played in their assessments of dean transitions. Finally, this section considers the question of whether or not respondents expected new deans to uphold the cultural norms in place at the school and what influence this may have had on their willingness to place their trust in a new dean. Throughout the discussion, I have endeavored to identify those categorical themes that respondents discussed spontaneously and independently, as well as those themes that I, as the researcher, constructed in my analysis of the interview transcripts. The discussion also juxtaposes various bodies of literature with the findings from the study, reflecting the "conversation" that unfolded between the study and my review of the literature.

Perceptions of Turnover among Deans at the School

When asked to consider the most significant events that had occurred at the school since their arrival, eight out of ten respondents cited the decision by the founding dean to step down as a pivotal event for the school. The two remaining respondents arrived following the tenure of the founding dean. Several respondents focused on

structural issues that faced the school rather than on specific events that occurred in the history of the school. Eight of the ten respondents commented on the turnover among deans independently of my introduction of the topic into the interview. Three of the respondents cited their own decision to step down as dean as events that were especially significant to them personally.

Near the beginning of each interview, I also asked respondents to comment on what the turnover among deans meant to the school and to them, personally. Although these questions were not the primary focus of the study, I thought they were important questions to ask in order to create a contextual landscape for the remainder of each interview. Respondents were uniformly negative in their views on the effects of decanal turnover. Respondents identified such effects as leadership instability, a poor external reputation, a decline in faculty participation in the school, lower faculty morale, loss of a social core, and personal stress.

Leadership Instability

Five respondents expressed concern about leadership instability at the school. One respondent observed that the turnover among deans had resulted in “stop-start leadership” and little change. Another commented:

In the last four years we’ve had four deans. And that hurts. There’s no consistency across time. It hurts in terms of external reputation. Each one of these was a peculiar, unique circumstance. Yet when other people outside, who don’t understand the individual circumstances, look and they just see, you know, So-and-So Dean, So-and-So Interim Dean, So-and-So Dean, So-and-So Interim Dean in four years, it gives the impression of leadership instability, which is true.

A third respondent observed that the turnover made long-term planning difficult, and a fourth expressed his belief that:

For the school, there's a disaster. There's no strategy. There's no strategic leadership. We've been at this for years and years and years. I mean, we've been discussing it at retreats and faculty meetings. You know, where do we want to be? And the discussions always end in nothing. Nowhere.

These five respondents expressed concern with what they perceived as a lack of continuity in the school's leadership and the appearance of instability that arose from the turnover among deans at the school. Respondents voiced their belief that circumstances warranted most instances of turnover. However, respondents also believed that the turnover among deans had the resulting negative consequence of instability.

External Reputation

Four respondents expressed concern about the effect that the turnover among deans had on the school's external reputation. One respondent commented:

The best thing is to have the long tenure of a very good dean. The worst thing is to have the long tenure of a very bad dean. And so in some sense, we haven't had the worst outcome, but clearly having a lot of turnover at the top is not good for the organization. It's not good for the public profile of the institution. It suggests an inability to arrive at stable leadership, I think, to the outside world, at least. And it's certainly very difficult for long-term planning and long-term development efforts inside the school.

Two respondents concluded that the school's reputation would make it difficult for the school to attract outside candidates for the deanship. These respondents expressed their

concern that the school may have developed a reputation as having a particularly difficult faculty, as being beset with possibly insurmountable problems, or as being extraordinarily hard on deans. The comments of respondents reflect not only a concern about internal growth and planning in the school, but concern about the image that the school projected to the outside world.

Decline in Faculty Participation in the School

Three respondents stated their belief that faculty participation in the school had declined as a result of the turnover among deans. Two respondents suggested that faculty were burned out and were not interested in administration. One reflected on the changes he had observed since his arrival at the school, commenting, "People have withdrawn. I feel the temptation to do that, too. People have withdrawn into doing their own thing and doing their own research. There's something went [sic] out of the school." He later added, "Much of the enthusiasm that I sensed when I came here for participation in administrative stuff by the faculty has dissipated." Another respondent spoke of "the ratio of the people who care over the shirkers," adding:

And I think what has happened with these shifts in deans and the lack of leadership and lack of guidance and lack of principles that we abide by, that that ratio is getting smaller and smaller. And there's more and more about, you know, just make sure that you yourself are OK – and don't give a damn about teaching.

Four other respondents commented on the dependence of the dean on the goodwill of the faculty and their sense of civic duty in rendering service to the school. The comments of these respondents suggest the importance of active faculty participation

in the school and helped me to better understand the significance of other respondents' concern with the decline in faculty participation that they perceived had occurred.

Decline in Faculty Morale

Four respondents suggested that the turnover among deans had eroded faculty morale and had raised concerns about the long-term viability of the school. One respondent acknowledged that he wondered about the future of the school and “whether it will continue to be the kind of place that you want it to be, whether it will be successful, whether it will solve its problems, whether it will be healthy and grow.” Another respondent reflected on the turnover among deans and observed:

So not only was there no leadership. There was a little bit of back and forth. One day we stand for this. The next day we stand for that. And I think that this has contributed greatly to the decline of morale among the faculty and the students – and the staff. Everyone. And the donors. And the entire community. There's no vision. It's actually not clear where this place is going to be next year. And we're not doing anything to make this better.

A third respondent reflected:

In the medium to longer term, I think we are very much affected by the quality of institution that we are members of. And once again, I think it begins to have an effect on faculty morale if there isn't stable leadership in the institution and one doesn't get the sense that an institution is moving forward, sort of onwards and upwards. So I think it does, over time, have a kind of demoralizing effect on the faculty.

The comments of these respondents suggest on the one hand, a real regard or affection for the school and, on the other hand, a sense of frustration over the detrimental effects respondents perceived that decanal turnover had had on faculty morale.

Loss of a Social Core

Two respondents shared their perception that the school had lost its social core or social cohesion in the years since the founding dean stepped down. Both respondents pointed to an array of social activities in which faculty participated during the tenure of the founding dean and noted that these activities had lapsed, to varying degrees, under subsequent deans. Some activities, such as holiday parties, were organized by the founding dean. Other activities included spontaneous gatherings of the faculty and ranged from lunches to soccer games. One respondent observed, "I think there's a spirit gone out of the school since I came here. The founding dean was the core of the school and there's no center now one of the things I've noticed about this school is that there ain't much social life anymore." He later added, "The first founding dean and his wife used to provide that, I got the impression, since I came here. Since he stopped being dean...there's something gone out of the school. It's indefinable. I can't put my finger on it."

The second respondent reflected on his arrival at the school with a cohort of other new faculty arrivals. He commented:

And so our friends are in many cases our colleagues. And that always made this place special. And we played soccer and so forth. And it's becoming increasingly difficult to get people onto the soccer team. You know? I mean, we're still friends and we still have parties and things. . . . But I'm worried about it.

Although only two respondents commented on the social environment of the school, their perspectives offered additional insight into what at least some faculty members valued about the school. Respondents' comments on the social environment also suggest that there were personal, as well as professional, dimensions to respondents' perceptions of dean turnover.

Stress

In addition to effects that respondents perceived that the turnover among deans had had on the school, respondents also indicated that they had experienced personal and professional stress as a result of the turnover. Reflecting on their experiences with two transitions at the school, respondents discussed the stress that they had experienced as they contemplated what action they should take in response to problems they perceived at the school. One respondent felt that the stress continued to persist among the faculty, despite the passage of time, commenting that the turnover had involved a period that was "one of the most stressful professionally – probably the most stressful of my life." He later added, "I think all of us have been paying the price, personally too. I'm noticing this in my colleagues and I certainly know it in myself." The acknowledgment that at least one respondent experienced stress as a result of the dean turnover provided another window into the personal dimensions of respondents' experiences at the school.

Structural Issues

One respondent approached the issue of the turnover among deans not in terms of the consequences for the school but as the direct result of a structural reality that characterized the school: its relative youth. This respondent observed that the school had very little experience making any appointments other than academic appointments and

that this lack of experience accounted for some of the challenges that the school had experienced as it made decanal appointments. This respondent commented, “I always attributed it [the difficulties with decanal appointments] as being a symptom of the interesting problem that an adolescent school would have.”

Two other respondents spoke of the impact of inadequate resources and the constraints that the university imposed on the deanship. One respondent attributed the lack of innovation at the school to budgetary constraints and a lack of decanal autonomy, commenting, “And part of that was because you had a weak deanship, because the institution didn’t have a lot of resources or levers.” Another respondent spoke of a mismatch between decanal authority and responsibility, noting that the university system made it difficult for a new dean to bring about changes that might benefit the school and its faculty.

Respondents’ discussion of structural issues stood in sharp contrast to the focus of other respondents on the connection between the faculty and the school and relationships among faculty members.

Perceptions of Faculty Culture

I then asked respondents to tell me a story that captured the essence of faculty culture or to share their thoughts about the cultural norms or quirks of the school’s faculty. The portrait that arose seemed to vary by degrees of intensity in terms of respondents’ convictions, but was surprisingly consistent from one interview to the next. Respondents spoke of a culture that was collegial but lacking warmth, although some respondents expressed their wish that there were more collegial synergy at the school. Respondents further described the culture as unique, insofar as it was characterized by a

large amount of consensus, with surprisingly little contention or personal animosity. Some respondents also commented on what they perceived as a lack of awareness or concern with the day-to-day operation of the school. Two respondents cited structural issues as significant influences on faculty culture.

Collegiality and Lack of Warmth

The first category of cultural information that I identified in the interview transcripts was respondents' concern that the culture of the school lacked warmth – or was at least less warm than it appeared to be under the founding dean. Half of the respondents commented that something seemed to be missing in personal or professional interactions among the faculty. Only one respondent expressed his belief that there was sufficient collaboration among the school's faculty. The other four expressed their concern that faculty were narrowly focused on their individual research, to the detriment of collegial interaction, involvement in the school, or personal interactions with other faculty members. One respondent commented, "It's a very collegial culture. It's not a warm culture." He later added, "I have to say, I find the culture here rather cold. Not that everybody isn't friendly, and not that everybody isn't collegial, and not that everybody isn't committed to the school. It's a wonderful, collegial professional culture."

Two respondents shared their observations that there seemed to be very little personal memory of or concern for faculty who had been integral, active participants in the school but who had since left. One respondent reflected on the departure of a former colleague, commenting, "I find there's very little personal memory. I have not heard a person mention this guy's name since he left." He later added, "Nobody talks about that

– you know, him, anymore. He’s gone. It’s like he died.” Thinking ahead to his eventual retirement, the respondent observed:

We don’t have any personal friends – the only place we have ever been we have no personal friends. And I think what happened to these other guys who have left or retired. And I think to myself, “Screw it! Hah! There’s not going to be anything to keep me here. The minute I retire, I’m dead – as far as the organizational culture’s concerned.”

Both respondents commented that there was less socializing among the faculty than there was under the founding dean. Although respondents differed in their views, the data suggest that some subset of respondents assessed faculty culture in both personal and professional terms.

Consensus

The next major theme that I identified in the interview data involved respondents’ perception that consensus existed among the faculty and that there was little personal contention or animosity. Three respondents commented that the faculty culture was remarkable for its lack of divisiveness. One respondent commented, “The fact is, we have never, to my recollection, had a faculty meeting at the school which ended with deep divisions in the faculty that led to personal animosities that persisted over time.” He later added:

But over all the years, I would say there has been a very broad consensus on the faculty about the general direction of the school and has never been a factionalized or divisive sort of place. And that is very unusual . . . for many

departments, divisions, and schools. So I think it's really that there has not been a story about the faculty being at each other's throats.

Another respondent seemed to agree, noting, "But I have to say, one of the things I admire about the faculty is rarely do the differences become personal or factionalized. People will disagree on specific issues, often very strenuously. But you know, it doesn't carry over to personal relations." He later added, "And that's very good. That's what's kept this place together, I think."

A third respondent characterized the cultural ethos as one of consensus, but acknowledged that he perceived a little more division among the faculty than he had observed when he first arrived at the school:

One would think that with the disciplinary divisions among us – people range from writing books on constitutional reform to writing papers on the mechanics of allocating assets across different asset classes. You would think that the room for having huge political divisions would be enormous. And for most of my time here there's been none of that. Well, there's a little of that now. We haven't changed in size but we still feel bigger and more bureaucratic to me. And less bureaucratically effective.

Although the literature on the academic profession is divided on the question of whether there are more similarities than differences among academics, scholars have paid increasing attention to the existence of sharp divisions that have arisen among the American professoriate along disciplinary lines (Ladd & Lipset, 1975; Light, 1974; Ruscio, 1987). This research contrasts with earlier work that portrayed the academic profession and the "academic man" as relatively homogenous, despite the existence of

disciplinary influences (Clark, 1984; Wilson, 1942). It appears significant that a number of disciplines are represented within one professional school and that nearly all of the respondents perceive that there is consensus.

Decreasing Awareness and Involvement

Four respondents commented on what they perceived as a growing lack of awareness and involvement on the part of the faculty in the administrative life of the school. One respondent noticed a lack of institutionalization, observing that the faculty appeared somewhat removed from the school. He commented, “With some exceptions, [the faculty] demonstrated limited allegiance to the institution.” He added that there seemed to be:

a small group of faculty who are at the core of the administration of the school and are interested in the school – in the administrative side – and seem to be informed about what’s going on in the dean’s office. I would say the rest of the faculty are only tangentially concerned about what’s going in the dean’s office. I mean, obviously they become suddenly interested when they’re up for review.

Other respondents voiced concern with what they perceived as faculty withdrawal from active participation in the school’s administration. One respondent expressed his concern in terms of a continuum of “group-oriented people and independently minded people,” noting that “the culture is to produce research and do what you’re good at – at the expense of administration and teaching.” Commenting on the increasing number of faculty who seemed to focus on their own research, he later added, “And I think that reflects this ratio of people who really care over people who just care about themselves.”

Although respondents cited decreasing faculty involvement as one consequence of the turnover among deans, respondents also discussed the lack of faculty involvement and awareness as they shared their perceptions of faculty culture. I therefore felt it was important to include these concerns in the category of effects of decanal turnover as well as in the category of data on faculty culture.

Structural Influences on Faculty Culture

Two of the respondents pointed to structural influences on faculty culture. One respondent attributed the lack of institutionalization to the absence of information flow and the geographical isolation of the school on the campus. Citing limited opportunities for faculty to interact with university administrators or faculty from other departments, he commented:

So there's almost no information flow to the average faculty member. They're very removed from – certainly from the university as a whole – as well as from any sort of decision making, the decision making that's going on within the school itself.

Another respondent discussed the paradox inherent in what he perceived as a disjuncture between the mission of a professional school and the research aspirations of the faculty. He observed, “The faculty are absolutely first-rate disciplinary scholars. And they're teaching in a two-year professional program. Now, without a Ph.D. program to go with it, that's a schizophrenic existence.” He later added:

And so what I find interesting about the faculty is how successful they've been at living with that tension between their disciplinary life and their need to teach in a

professional program. I admire that. I'm not quite sure I can do that as successfully as they have been able to do that.

Referring to the perceived tendency of the school's faculty members to withdraw into their research, he added:

I do understand that because I think it's structural in this school. We've got so many different disciplines, so many different interests. And this, as I call it, schizophrenia between the teaching role and the research role. You have to protect yourself somehow. You're just going to get chewed up.

I was initially surprised when this respondent articulated his belief in the "schizophrenic existence" led by the school's faculty. Although his view may represent a minority opinion among respondents, there is considerable evidence in the literature on the academy that such "schizophrenia" poses a tangible structural dilemma within professional schools (Halpern, 1987; Light, 1983). As in the case of respondents' perceptions of the effects of decanal turnover, respondents' identification of structural influences on faculty culture offered an alternative frame within which to view the cultural environment.

Perceptions of Faculty-Dean Relations

After asking respondents to share their perceptions of faculty culture at the school, I asked respondents to tell me a story that described relations between the dean and the faculty, as well as the norms that characterized those relations.

Lack of Decanal Autonomy and Power

Eight out of ten respondents emphasized the lack of independent autonomy and power of the dean vis-à-vis the faculty. Commenting on the nature of relations between the dean and the faculty, one respondent suggested:

I think the essence of those relations is that the dean is really first among equals here. *Prima inter pares*. The dean has very little autonomous power in this faculty. He very much is a creature of the faculty, serves at their pleasure. . . . He can be removed by the faculty if he's bad enough as dean.

Five respondents told stories about the founding dean or described actions that the founding dean had taken during his tenure at the school. One reflected:

He had a technique of lining up support for what he wanted to do in advance, informally, among key faculty members. And then the invisible hand would operate. . . . He could always pretend to be somewhat aloof and objective. But he had pulled all the wires behind. He was a big puppet master, you know. And in fact, it worked great.

He later added:

It's a very hard faculty to please, but it pretty much runs the show. . . . It's not the kind of culture where the dean comes in with autonomous power, comes in, leads, and you know, everybody follows. No way. You know, a smart dean is a facilitator, a manipulator, and a quiet one – behind the scenes – in this school. The worst thing you can do is come in and exert overt administrative leadership and tell the faculty, "This is the way it's going to be because I want it that way." . . . It does not work.

One respondent stated simply, “The power is very much located in the faculty.” Another referred to relations between the dean and the faculty as one of herding cats, commenting that “Because the dean doesn’t really have any power . . . the primary necessary skill is the skill of persuasion.”

That eight out of ten respondents identified the faculty as the source of decanal power suggests that the lack of decanal autonomy is a defining feature of faculty-dean relations at the school.

Personal Ties

Four respondents discussed the personal nature of relations between the dean and the faculty. One respondent described the tone of close dean-faculty relations that the founding dean had established. He commented:

So generally speaking, I would say the dominant ethos was set early on, which is kind of a close collaboration between dean and faculty. And the faculty sort of came to expect that, I think, as the way things would be run. And that wasn’t always fulfilled under later deans and their deanships. But I think that was the tone that was set at the start.

A second respondent commented on the strength of the personal ties that he noticed when he first arrived at the school, adding that “It [the school] worked entirely on the basis of personal ties.” This respondent observed, “You had a situation under the founding dean in which he hired almost the entire faculty – except for those who were here at the very outset. He hired them all. So there was an unusual linkage there.”

One former dean reflected on his belief in the personal nature of faculty-dean relations, commenting:

These relationships tend to be very personal. When I was the dean, I always thought of myself as a faculty member who happened to be serving in the dean's office for a period of time. But that I was primarily representing the faculty. . . . It does then personalize the relationships.

Although some respondents appeared to view the relationship between the dean and the faculty in terms of power or autonomy, some of these same respondents perceived that the essence of faculty-dean relations was also personal in nature. However, not all respondents agreed that this should be so.

Factors that Influenced Respondents' Perceptions of New Deans

During the interviews, I asked respondents to identify factors that contributed to either positive or negative perceptions of new deans at the school. Although I identified numerous factors in my coding of the interview transcripts, the factors that influenced positive or negative perceptions fell into seven primary categories: consultation, consensus building, academic values, vision, the ability to understand or build rapport with others, reputation, and managing expectations.

Eight out of ten respondents cited both consultation and building consensus as important factors that led them to form positive perceptions of some deans at the school. One other respondent, when asked what advice he would give a new dean, discussed the importance of consultation and building consensus. Three respondents referred to consultation and building consensus as examples of political behavior. Although I originally considered including consultation and building consensus in the category of "political skills," I later decided to treat them as separate categories, at the suggestion of respondents.

Consultation

Nine respondents indicated that communication, in the form of consultation with faculty colleagues, was one of the factors that led them to form positive perceptions of a new dean. One respondent, reflecting on his experience with dean turnover at the school, noted:

I do feel as though I've drawn some general conclusions from this process because I've certainly seen more leadership change from sort of a relatively consistent vantage point during the last five years at [the school] than I have in the rest of my life put together. And there's really two obvious things that jump out for me. One is how essential it is that a new leader come in and consult with the existing people in the organization and how painless and cheap and easy that is to do. I mean, you're in a situation where everybody wants to be consulted and they don't even necessarily care that you actually do what they say you should do. I mean, they just want the person coming in to acknowledge that they're important and touch base with them. So that it's actually essential just to make people sort of feel good – that is, taking the standpoint of somebody who's coming in. It would be absolutely essential to do that, even if you didn't learn anything from it. It would be essential just to sort of make everybody feel good about your new leadership.

Other respondents emphasized the value of networking among faculty colleagues and soliciting a wide range of ideas from all stakeholders. Half of the respondents cited this as a factor that led them to form positive perceptions of a dean. One respondent referred to a dean – of whom he had particularly positive perceptions – as a “marvelous academic

politician.” Elaborating on the political acumen of one dean, the respondent later added that a new dean has to be “very astute” and has to “sense the way the winds are blowing.” This political acumen was sharpened by the dean’s habit of consulting the faculty.

Three respondents spoke of the practice of “arranging decisions” and “wiring meetings.” Commenting on the value of consulting, one respondent observed:

I guess in principle I believe it might be possible though I haven’t seen this. It might be possible not to network and wire meetings in advance – and just have people come in cold and have the discussion go on for as long as necessary for as many weeks as necessary. And everyone do it there and then in the room, collectively in front of each other with no prior private, quiet conversations having taken place. I guess I leave open the possibility that that might be possible. I’ve just never seen it, and it’s not my instinct. My own instincts are very much the way [the founding dean] ran the place, which was based on all kinds of informal communications with opinion leaders or with people with different opinions across the scope.

Another respondent described one dean’s practice of consulting the faculty, commenting:

He would ask for opinions. This is how you manage faculty. You ask for their input and opinions. And then they feel they’re important. They tell you what they’re thinking. They feel they’ve aired it. . . . And the dean knew this. He really knew this.

This respondent further cited the ability to run faculty meetings as one of several factors that led him to respect one dean in particular. Commenting on the factors that led him to

form positive perceptions of a new dean, the respondent stated, “The first is respect. Do I think that this individual is a fair, level-minded person who can run faculty meetings and herd these cats?”

In reviewing the interview transcripts, respondents were almost unanimous in the value they appeared to place on consultation as a factor that influenced their perceptions of new deans at the school. The importance of consultation among faculty may be one of the most significant findings of the study. As the discussion will suggest, consultation appears to have played an influential role in respondents’ perceptions of new deans and their willingness to trust a new dean.

Building Consensus

Alongside consultation, eight respondents identified consensus building as a factor that led them to form positive perceptions of a new dean. Respondents contrasted the dynamics of power and the decision-making processes in place at the university with hierarchical power and decision-making structures in other institutions. They noted that within the school and university culture, decisions are reached by consensus. Noting that people perceive that deans are more powerful than they really are, one respondent described the relationship between the dean and the faculty as a “committee of peers.” In his comments on the decision-making culture in the school, this respondent observed that deans need to respect the group process:

Faculty meetings are consensual meetings among peers. You do take votes, but many people don’t like decisions to come out 8 to 7. That’s Congress. In Congress, 8 to 7 is as valid as 14 to 1. It makes no difference for the legality of it. But in a university, that matters a great deal. And in many institutions in our

society, it matters a lot. You see, you have to understand the nature of the institution and you have to understand the psychology of consensual culture decision making.

Respondents noted that there needs to be consensus on critical issues. One respondent shared the following reflection:

This university's unusual in being very, I don't know if I want to use the word *democratic*, very participatory. In this university, faculty members have a lot of power. Here, you just can't last if you don't have people behind you. You don't have to have a majority with you all the time. You can go against them some of the time – and win. But you can't be out of step with them, certainly on the big issues, for more than a short time.

Two respondents referred to the Japanese word *nemawashi* as they shared their reflections on what advice they would give to a new dean to help him or her succeed. Explaining the meaning of the word (*ne* means “root,” while *mawashi* means “circling” or “covering”), respondents described the process of transplanting a tree. One digs carefully around the roots of the tree, taking care not to damage the roots. The roots are then covered and the tree is moved to its new location. The tree is placed in its new hole and the protective covering surrounding the roots is removed. Respondents used the reference to *nemawashi* to illustrate the importance of listening to everyone carefully and modifying one's proposals to achieve consensus before taking action. The word *nemawashi* also refers to a style of management, although the term has its linguistic roots in the traditions of anthropology and sociology and was historically used to refer to a style of governance in small Japanese villages. Respondents explained that the term's

counterparts in English include the expressions “getting your ducks in a row” or “maneuvering behind the scenes.”

Four respondents cited inadequate consultation, not taking advice, and failure to build consensus as factors that led them to form negative perceptions of a new dean. Respondents shared their reflections on instances in which they felt that a dean had made insufficient attempts to consult the faculty. One respondent described an occasion when a dean raised an issue at a faculty meeting – an issue on which the faculty had not reached consensus. The respondent commented:

He walked into a meeting and got totally sandbagged on an issue which he had been warned there was no consensus on. And he walked in and did it anyway.

And he got sandbagged and then you never heard about the issue again.

Relaying another instance in which a dean failed to consult the faculty, a respondent observed:

He pretended. But everybody could tell it was a pretense. He pretended to consult the faculty. That doesn't go here. You really have to consult the faculty here and you gotta get your ducks in a row before you walk into a meeting.

These comments by respondents underscore the importance of both consultation and consensus building in faculty perceptions of new deans at the school. It may be the case that consultation and consensus building were the most significant influences on respondents' perceptions.

Academic Values

Four respondents cited “academic values” as a factor that led them to form positive perceptions of a new dean. When asked to elaborate on what they meant by

"academic values," respondents suggested that the term signified that a dean was a visibly recognized scholar who commanded the intellectual respect of his or her colleagues. However, two respondents suggested that academic values also involved some understanding of what it meant to be an academic. One respondent referred to this quality of understanding academia as "academic sensibilities."

Two respondents told the story of a dean who seemed to lack this critical understanding of academic culture. When asked how many staff members he had, the dean replied that he had about twenty-five faculty members. The question was rephrased, adding the qualifying remark, "No, no, no, no. Staff. Your faculty are your equals. They're not members of your staff." Both respondents concluded that the dean did not understand this aspect of academic culture or how the school operated.

Respondents were mixed in their assessments of how much stature or world renown an individual needed to have achieved in his or her field prior to being appointed as dean of the school. While respondents expressed a strong belief that the dean needed to demonstrate scholarly excellence and command a high degree of intellectual respect from his or her colleagues, they suggested that it might not be advantageous for the dean to be a leading authority in his or her field. One respondent observed:

There will always be people who want a Nobel Prize winner. And there will always be people who say, "Nobel Prize winners get Nobel Prizes. They don't run faculty." It's silly to get a rocket scientist and want him to engage successfully in the nitty-gritty of an administration of this size. It's not gonna work.

However, nearly half the respondents concurred that it was important for a new dean to be a respected scholar and understand the identity of the school as an academic institution.

Vision

Vision was the fourth factor that respondents identified as influencing their perceptions of a new dean. Two respondents indicated that it was important for a new dean to create a vision for the school. One respondent commented:

I guess I feel like in a successful transition, you feel like there's some existing strength or vision or mission of the school. And there's some new vision or sense of mission of the leadership – as somehow these have grown together. So you feel that there's a new entity that's a kind of an organic creation of the two sides of it.

This respondent described vision as linking past, present, and future. Vision leads the school into the future while preserving something of its past and present essence.

Although some respondents indicated that it was important to them that a new dean articulate a vision for the school, some of these same respondents expressed their concern that there did not appear to be any coherent vision for the school.

Understanding and Building Rapport

The fifth factor that appeared to influence respondents' perceptions of new deans was understanding. Five respondents indicated that they felt it was important for a new dean to understand situations, the school, and its people. One respondent assessed new deans in terms of their ability to “get the lie of the land and start asking the right questions.” Another commented on the favorable impression one new dean made when he displayed an understanding of what the school was about. A third respondent, who

cast his comments in the terminology of multiple forms of intelligence, asserted that a new dean needs to have a cognitive understanding of problems that are discussed:

I think you have to have an ability to understand. I think there's some intellectual side to this. It's not enough to be warm and fuzzy. You can be warm and fuzzy, but if you don't understand, it's not going to work. I think you have to have an ability. Listening to and understanding people has a cognitive side to it. What is that person saying? I pay very careful attention to what people say. Being a good listener isn't just being sympathetic. You have to understand what they're talking about. You have to understand the issues. You have to understand.

However, alongside a cognitive capacity to understand the concerns of faculty and critical issues facing the school, respondents expressed positive perceptions of new deans who understood people, too. One respondent voiced his belief that a new dean needs to understand how to read people and what motivates them:

There's this idea that there are multiple forms of IQ, and I actually believe that. I think that is quite true. I mean, one of the forms of IQ is a certain intelligence about human beings: the ability to observe, and see who's upset and who isn't upset, who feels they're being heard, who's not being heard.

This respondent pointed to the need for a new dean to be a sincere listener, commenting:

I think you have to show some ability to mean it. I mean, you see leaders who do their ritual. You know, they talk to you, but you can tell they're not paying any attention. So the person being listened to has to feel that they're being heard.

One respondent emphasized the importance of personal linkages, sharing his observation that:

It was important that the link between the dean and the faculty be very personal.

So, a new dean coming, I would say the first thing you've gotta do is go sit down in each faculty member's office, go to lunch, have a beer after work, whatever.

But establish a real personal rapport and make sure that your door is open.

In their comments on the factors that contribute to positive perceptions of new deans, one respondent identified the act of showing appreciation as important. This respondent noted that a dean who understands what motivates faculty can give them forms of appreciation that appeal to them. The respondent also observed that expressing appreciation is an important part of leadership.

Respondents' comments suggest that understanding needs to occur on both analytical and interpersonal levels. The interview data suggest, once again, the coexistence of professional and personal dimensions of respondents' perceptions of new deans at the school. As will be discussed shortly, understanding also appeared to be an important factor in respondents' assessments of whether or not a new dean was trustworthy.

Reputation

Two respondents suggested that the reputation of a new dean influenced their formation of positive or negative perceptions of that dean. Although I had expected the respondents to discuss the dean's reputation among his or her faculty colleagues, both respondents mentioned that they paid particular attention to the reputation of the dean among the staff. One respondent commented, "I found that a dean who was highly respected by staff members was a good dean." Another respondent emphasized the need

to pay attention to the way a new dean managed the staff and whether or not the dean treated the staff with respect, regardless of their position within the school.

Alongside consultation, consensus building, and understanding, a new dean's reputation was a key theme that respondents identified as influencing their perceptions. However, unlike the first three factors, the reputation of a new dean was a factor that, at least to some extent, preceded his or her arrival.

Managing Expectations

The final factor that one respondent cited as indirectly influencing his perceptions of a new dean was the dean's ability to manage expectations. This respondent expressed his belief that it might be easier for a new dean to gain the support of the faculty now than it was in the past because the expectations of the faculty and other key constituencies had changed. This respondent observed, "Now we are much more realistic about the essential qualities a dean must have, in part because of our experience with so much turnover and in part because of the current and future challenges confronting the school."

Nearly all of the other respondents discussed expectations that they had had of new deans or expectations that they, as deans, had had of the school, its faculty, and themselves. It therefore seemed important to include the management of expectations in the discussion of the interview data.

Trust

One of the primary questions that guided the study concerned the role that trust may have played in faculty assessments of new deans. Building upon research that posited a relationship between trust and the positive performance of organizational teams,

I set out to investigate first, whether the presence or absence of trust had any bearing on faculty perceptions of new deans; and second, the ways in which trust was built or eroded during dean transitions. I therefore incorporated several questions concerning trust in my interviews and paid particular attention to respondents' comments on trust as I coded and analyzed the interview data.

Only one respondent independently raised the issue of trust during the interviews. I introduced the topic in the other interviews. Another respondent discussed the concept of respect, which he later explained overlapped to a considerable extent with his ideas about what trust meant. However, once I asked respondents about trust, they offered substantive comments on the matter and indicated that trust was extremely important to them in their assessments of new deans. It may not be possible to determine any explanation for the fact that the majority of respondents did not mention trust independently of my questions – and it may be significant that they did not do so. However, respondents' comments unanimously support the suggestion that trust was important in the context of dean transitions at the school.

The interview questions were designed to elicit respondents' comments about four different aspects of trust. These included the importance of trust in organizational relationships, elements of trust, ways that trust can be built or eroded, and indicators of trust or distrust.

Importance of Trust

When asked whether or not trust was important in contributing to positive perceptions of new deans at the school, respondents unanimously answered in the affirmative. One respondent commented that trust was “tremendously important.”

Another asserted, “It’s everything. I mean, if you’re not trusted, you might as well go home.” He later added:

Academics work on trust, because we’re all self-driven, self-motivated. We operate out of our own minds, on our own agendas. And if there isn’t a very high degree of trust that what you’re doing will contribute to the school, to your own academic reputation, to the students, and all that . . . there’s no way you can monitor academics. You just can’t. . . . And so you’ve got to establish this degree of trust.

A third respondent said of trust, “I think it’s the whole deal.” Using an analogy to the New York Stock Exchange, he added:

The commodity they sell, the good or service they sell is trust. If you don’t trust that that market place is a fair place to trade – in senses where you define specifically what you mean by that – you’re just not going to do business there. And if people lose trust, it doesn’t matter how big a market share they’ve had.

The place goes down the toilet. It goes out with the bath water really, really fast.

He concluded, “I think that trust is extremely easily broken, hard to build, and almost impossible to repair.”

Elements of Trust

When asked how they went about deciding whether or not they trusted a new dean, respondents seemed to identify seven different elements of trust, including competence, honesty, openness, integrity, confidentiality, fairness, and representation. Respondents’ comments were remarkably consistent on the topic of trust, in general, and the elements of trust, in particular. As explored in further detail throughout the

discussion, there was also considerable evidence of overlap between respondents' comments and the findings in the literature on organizational trust.

Competence.

Four respondents identified competence as an element of trust. They noted that competence has to do with the ability of a new dean to perform the basic functions of the job. Competence also concerns whether or not the dean actually performs the duties expected of him or her. One respondent spoke of competence in terms of results: Is the new dean implementing changes that he or she intended to implement? Another respondent, commenting on competence as an element of trust, observed, "If you start to doubt the basic competence of the people who are leading you, then that's it. You're in big trouble. And there have been times when that happened."

A third respondent, elaborating on the intersection between respect and trust, mentioned that he looked to see whether or not a new dean could run effective faculty meetings. Reflecting on his perceptions of one dean, he commented, "The first faculty meeting that he ran was a disaster. And it got worse from there. And so he could not run meetings."

A fourth respondent identified competence as an element of trust, but also pointed to aspects of trust that have to do with interpersonal interactions and relationships. This respondent observed:

I think trust is ultimately built on – in part – impersonal judgments about performance and behavior and very personal relationships. And in an institution of this size, probably the latter is more important than it would be in a very big institution, perhaps.

The comments of respondents on the effects of decanal turnover, faculty-dean relations, and their perceptions of new deans suggest that personal relationships may be extremely important in the context of the school. At a minimum, the apparent value that respondents placed on personal relationships was stronger than I had anticipated at the outset of the study.

Honesty.

Two respondents identified honesty as an element of trust. When asked to clarify what they meant by honesty, respondents indicated that they wanted to know whether or not a new dean was truthful in his or her interactions with faculty members. One respondent indicated that he paid attention to how the dean summarized disagreements with others and whether or not the disagreements were portrayed accurately. He observed, "Something happens. You report back on it. People have ways of finding out does it correspond to their own experience." Another respondent said that he watched to see whether or not the dean was consistent in what he said to others.

Openness.

Three respondents suggested that it was important that a new dean not withhold information from faculty members, whether during faculty meetings or in individual or small group meetings. One respondent commented, "Can we trust him if he's coming to the [faculty] meetings but he's not bringing us the most important stuff?"

Five respondents indicated that they look for frankness or transparency in a new dean. One respondent referred to this quality as being representative of a "straight shooter." Two respondents cited examples of whether or not a dean had been candid with them about the prospects for their review file as a factor that influenced whether or not

they believed the dean to be trustworthy. Three respondents stated that it was important that a new dean be open or transparent in delivering bad news to them or letting them know what the dean could – or could not – do in response to a request for assistance.

One respondent indicated that it was not only important that a new dean be willing to relay bad news to faculty members, but that the dean should be open to receiving bad news. This respondent stated that he could not trust a new dean who avoided listening to bad news.

Integrity.

Respondents identified integrity as another important element of trust. When asked to clarify what they meant by integrity, respondents varied considerably in their replies. One respondent indicated that integrity signified that the dean meant what he or she said. A second respondent expressed his belief that integrity meant that the dean was a person of his or her word. For this respondent, integrity also meant that a new dean had the best interests of the school at heart. (The question of a dean having the school's interests at heart is discussed in further detail in the section on "representation," which appears in a later section of this chapter.) A third respondent spoke of "credible commitments" and a demonstrated track record of following through on one's promises. Both this respondent and a fourth respondent defined integrity in terms of one's convictions or the set of principles by which one lives. Integrity, in this sense, involved abiding by one's principles on a consistent basis.

A fifth respondent commented, "I think there has to be a high level of trust that when you say you're going to do something or not do something, that this is what happens – to the best of your ability." This respondent did not mention the word *integrity*.

However, his statement is consistent with the explanation that two other respondents offered for integrity.

Fairness and consistency.

Two respondents identified fairness or consistency as an element of trust. Three others cited fairness as a means of building trust, as will be discussed below. One respondent who cited fairness as an element of trust said that it was important to him that a new dean allocate responsibilities fairly among the faculty and not ask some faculty members to assume a heavier administrative or teaching load than others. Another respondent commented:

And are they consistent? I mean, do they say one thing to one person, one thing to another? Is there a tendency to degrade other people in their absence? The whole backstabbing thing. You start to distrust someone you see doing that. You say, “Well, they’re going to do it to someone else, they’re going to do it to you.”

The comments of these respondents suggest that it is important for a new dean to treat faculty members equitably and with equal amounts of respect.

A third respondent referred to fairness in a slightly different way. He commented that he pays particular attention to how the dean delivers bad news: “What are you like in explaining difficult things to people? Suppose somebody’s tenure is turned down. What are you like in communicating that? Are you able to communicate clearly with a sense of fairness? Do you understand?” The comments of this respondent suggest that fairness may also involve a new dean assuming a position of neutrality or objectivity in his or her interactions with faculty members. This respondent seemed to suggest that a dean should be able to see “both” or all sides of a story.

Maintaining confidentiality.

One respondent indicated that it was important to him that a new dean maintain the confidentiality of conversations with faculty members. This respondent clarified that it would not bother him so much if the dean repeated what he said, as long as the act of disclosing the confidence fulfilled a higher goal. He later added that trust meant that “You know you won’t be taken to the cleaners by a person you just confided in. And not even unconsciously.” This respondent indicated that he looked for a “conscious understanding of what the individual situations of the players are and a carefulness with their statements and feelings.”

An interesting facet of the interviews was that half the respondents joked about whether or not I, as the researcher, would maintain the confidentiality of their comments. In three of the interviews, respondents cited their willingness to trust that I would protect the confidentiality of their statements as one of the reasons for their decision to disclose their thoughts in a personal or revealing manner. As discussed in the methodology chapter, the issue of maintaining confidentiality was revisited with each of the respondents as we explored ways to edit their comments so that their identities would not be revealed to other readers. Thus, the maintenance of confidentiality became a parallel theme in both the findings and the research process.

Benevolent representation.

Three respondents indicated that they paid attention to where the dean’s interests appeared to lie or whose interests the dean appeared to represent. Two respondents referred to the dean as the representative of the faculty. I therefore chose to use the term *representation* to refer to this particular element of trust. However, as respondents stated

that it was important that the dean place the interests of the school and the faculty at the forefront of his or her agenda, I have also included the term *benevolence* to identify this element of trust. Benevolence, as it appears in the literature on trust (discussed in greater detail below), suggests that an individual – the benefactor – behave in ways that further the interests of those individuals whom he or she serves or represents.

One respondent defined the concept of representation in terms of whether or not the new dean is likely to do what faculty members want him or her to do. Using the metaphor of the faculty as political constituents, the respondent expressed the need for the faculty to trust that the dean will represent them fairly and represent their interests in meetings with the vice chancellor and in other forums where the dean serves as the representative of the faculty. Two respondents stated that it was important that a new dean have the “interests of the institution at heart.” One of the respondents explained that he did not entirely trust a dean who seemed to have his own agenda:

And until it is clear that that agenda is the school’s agenda rather than the dean’s agenda . . . people are going to be a little careful before they buy in entirely, until they see how far the dean’s vision as a world-class academic translates into leadership of a professional school.

The concept of benevolence in the literature on trust shares some commonalities with the concept of representation as articulated by at least one respondent. The respondent who discussed the importance of representation expressed an expectation that the dean represents the interests of the faculty. Fair representation of the faculty’s interests suggests that the dean has the faculty’s best interests at heart and seeks to maximize joint gain for both the dean and the faculty. Although respondents did not use

the term *benevolence*, it seemed that their articulation of representation as a dimension of trust encompassed the concept of benevolence. Deans play an important representational role, in that they represent their institutions to vice chancellors, university presidents, students, donors, and the community at large. The concept of benevolence suggests that a dean should seek maximum gain for the school during his or her interactions with others.

Summary.

Respondents' identification of such elements of trust as competence, honesty, integrity, and representation is consistent with findings in the literature on organizational trust. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) isolate ability as one of several factors that contribute to trustworthiness. The authors use ability as a synonym for competence, arguing that both ability and competence are specific to task, domain, and situation (p. 716). In his discussion of the meanings of trust, Barber (1983) identifies three types of expectations that actors have of one another. One of these is an "expectation of technically competent role performance" (Barber, 1983, p. 9). Competence, in Barber's assessment, may involve technical expertise or intellectual mastery in a given area. Or, it may simply involve the consistent performance of routine tasks (p. 14). Respondents' comments in the interviews resonate with the arguments these scholars make for competence as a basis for trust within organizational contexts.

A review of the literature on organizational trust supports the finding that honesty is a critical dimension of trust. In a study of trust in close interpersonal relationships, Larzelere and Huston (1980) identify honesty as one of two fundamental bases of trust. The authors distinguish between dyadic trust (based on the benevolence and honesty of a significant other or close associate) from generalized trust (based on beliefs about the

character of people, in general). Larzelere and Huston argue that "trust exists to the extent that a person believes another person (or persons) to be benevolent and honest" (p. 596). Similarly, Burt and Knez (1996) argue that evidence that corroborates (or refutes) an individual's statements is an important factor in establishing one's reputation as being honest and therefore trustworthy (p. 73). These findings from empirical research are consistent with respondents' identification of honesty as a dimension of trust.

A study on expectations of trust among college students by Rotter (1971) demonstrates that the ability to rely on the words of an individual is a factor that contributes to the decision to trust that individual. Rotter defines interpersonal trust as "an expectation held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal, or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on" (p. 444). According to Rotter, reliability encourages others to develop expectations of consistent behavior across situations. The development of such expectations engenders trust. The concept that Rotter articulates closely parallels the dimension of integrity that respondents in my study identified. Whereas Rotter does not specifically use the term *integrity*, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) explicitly identify integrity as a factor of trustworthiness in their model of organizational trust. In their analysis, "Such issues as the consistency of the party's past actions. . . and the extent to which the party's actions are congruent with his or her words all affect the degree to which the party is judged to have integrity" (p. 717). This argument mirrors the discussion of integrity by respondents in my study.

Similarly, respondents' identification of representation as an element of trust is largely consistent with previous studies on organizational trust. A number of scholars have examined a concept that has relevance to the suggestion by one respondent that

representation is a key dimension of trust. This concept is that of benevolence. As noted previously, Larzelere and Huston (1980) as well as Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), identify expectations of benevolence as one of the fundamental bases for trust. In their discussions of benevolence, these scholars refer to the genuine concern on the part of one individual or group for the welfare of another individual or group. Benevolence also refers to the motivation of an individual to seek joint maximum gain for all concerned, rather than individualistic gain.

Building and Eroding Trust

When asked how a new dean might build trust, respondents' comments echoed several of the observations they made in their discussion of factors that contribute to positive or negative perceptions of new deans. Respondents identified six primary ways a new dean could either build trust or avoid eroding trust among the faculty. These included consultation, building consensus, establishing rapport, fairness, optimism, and reputation. Respondents also identified several structural issues that served as obstacles to a new dean's ability to build trust among the faculty.

Consultation.

Six respondents indicated that consultation was an important way that a new dean could begin to build trust among the faculty. Respondents indicated that the dean should spend a lot of time simply talking to people and listening to their views, thus demonstrating his or her receptivity to a wide range of opinions. One respondent indicated that it was essential that a new dean consult the faculty, keep them informed, and seek their approval. Describing the ways in which one dean had built trust, another respondent commented, "And that's by talking to people and listening to them." A third

respondent emphasized the importance of ensuring that the decision-making process remained transparent through communication. He noted:

So I think it's very important that the decision-making process be transparent and that people not think that there is some small group of people who are colluding to run the school behind their backs or they don't know what decisions are being taken. It's very time consuming to raise the level of transparency. But I think in an academic institution it's extremely important.

A fourth respondent commented on the need to allow ideas to "percolate back up through the faculty." He later added, "So you want something to happen? You better let the faculty discover that that's what they want to have happen."

In commenting on the erosion of trust, four respondents identified failure to consult with the faculty as the primary cause of eroded trust. One respondent warned, "Don't be imperial with any of your constituencies, unless you're bringing a lot of stuff in right away." Another respondent commented that a new dean "cannot just proceed as if the faculty are passive observers of what's going on. That's just never going to work, I don't think." Another warned, "I would avoid making policy statements in public, especially in the community, without having the faculty on board first."

Failure to take the advice of colleagues and refusal to heed their warnings were also cited as significant factors in the erosion of trust. Reflecting on the reasons for his loss of trust in one dean, one respondent commented:

And I think people close to him and sympathetic to him tried to explain things for quite some time, but then concluded that he didn't understand or that he was not understanding and that he was not heeding warnings. I remember telling him that

senior faculty were becoming concerned. Not responding, seeming deaf to advice, I guess I figured that he couldn't survive long on that basis. . . . So my trust was completely gone. Not my affection, not my regard for him as a human being who was trying hard. But my trust in his ability to succeed as dean was shot completely. In fact, it was eroded from early on.

Building consensus.

Eight respondents identified a dean's efforts to build consensus as one of the ways a new dean might build and maintain trust among the faculty. One respondent discussed the need to "ensure that something that should begin as a consensual process continues to be a consensual process." Two other respondents described how they had lost trust in deans who did not make an effort to build consensus among the faculty on major issues.

Throughout the interviews, respondents emphasized the importance of building consensus, citing consensus building not only as a feature of faculty-dean relations, but as a factor that influenced their perceptions of new deans, as well as a means of building trust.

Establishing rapport.

Two respondents suggested that a new dean might build trust by making efforts to establish a rapport with others. One respondent commented:

It's possible to establish some degree of a personal relationship with at least some fairly large subset of the staff, faculty, and others in the school. So I think working on that is very important. And I think some of the failures we've seen at the school have dealt with precisely that dimension. Kind of a lack of personal rapport and understanding.

Another respondent suggested that one way a new dean could establish trust was to build a sense of community through social activities. He commented, “You don’t have to have a lot of them, but you need to have a Christmas party and you need to have one other party during the year to give people a sense they belong to a community. And I think that’s been lacking for some time.”

Respondents’ identification of rapport as a means by which a new dean might build trust echoed their emphasis on rapport or understanding as a factor that contributed to positive perceptions of new deans and as a characteristic that they perceived was lacking in the school’s cultural environment.

Fairness.

Whereas two respondents identified fairness as an element of trust, as noted previously, three other respondents cited fairness as a means of building trust. One respondent suggested that it was important that the dean show an equal amount of interest in various individuals or groups among the faculty. This respondent suggested:

A new dean wants to come across as evenhanded. You want to be interested in all of the different subgroups of faculty members. . . . If you’re perceived as heavily favoring one of the factions, the other factions might become unhappy and become distrustful.

The comments of this respondent illustrate the ways in which fairness or consistency functioned as both an element of trust and a means of building trust.

Optimism.

One respondent identified optimism as a way that a new dean might build trust among the faculty. This respondent suggested that while it was important to recognize

problems, he looked to see “if somebody accentuates the positive or the negative. There are leadership styles which can play upon fears and distrust. But that’s not a good leadership style and it doesn’t build cohesion – institutional cohesion, teamwork, and trust.”

Another respondent did not discuss optimism as a means of building trust, but expressed his hope that a new dean would bring a sense of optimism to the school.

Reputation.

Four respondents discussed the powerful influence that a dean’s reputation has on his or her ability to build trust among the faculty. One respondent suggested that a new dean could establish trust, in part, by having “a reputation for making credible commitments, for being a person who has good judgment and smarts.” Another respondent observed of trust:

I think it depends a lot on professional reputation, what you know about somebody. If you know their work, you almost feel like you know them. And in that sense, it’s easier than it would be where publications are not the currency of the realm. So academics, I think, are a little bit different. I think it’s fairly easy to establish a high degree of trust if you know somebody’s work. If you know their work, you know how their mind works. If somebody is a real asshole in the profession, it’s pretty widely known. And you know to be very careful with them. And every profession has them. So my sense is unless you already come with a very negative reputation, I think you can establish trust pretty quickly.

As in the case of respondents' perceptions of new deans, reputation appears to have been an equally potent factor in respondents' assessments of whether or not a new dean was trustworthy.

Structural challenges to building trust.

One respondent cited several structural aspects of the school and the campus environment that served as obstacles to a new dean's ability to build trust among the faculty. These included the absence of such "levers" as financial resources and the power to determine salaries. However, the other structural obstacle that this respondent identified was the relative lack of teamwork among the faculty. When asked to comment on whether or not he thought it was difficult for a new dean to build trust at the school, he observed:

In a corporate setting, there's teamwork. For any given project, people work together to produce a product. And so that builds trust and teamwork, right? In academia, there's not very much of that because each faculty member is off doing their own research, literally isolated in their own cubicles. So the amount of personal interaction among faculty members is anecdotal, you know – haphazard.

None of the other respondents cited any ways for a new dean to build trust that could be considered primarily structural in nature. However, this respondent's comments represented an alternative viewpoint that seemed important to include in the discussion.

Indicators of Trust

In the final part of each interview, I asked respondents to tell me what I could look for to determine whether or not trust existed between the faculty and the dean, if I were the proverbial fly on the wall. Respondents' comments proved diverse, but can be

seen as focusing on six areas: gossip, silence, rapport, humor, the behavior of faculty at faculty meetings, and the activity (or lack thereof) of faculty committees.

Gossip.

Five respondents indicated that evidence of gossip among the faculty would be one likely indicator of the presence or absence of trust. One respondent suggested that it would be important to pay attention to corridor conversations, as well as to what other people had to say about the dean:

I want to know if I trust them [the dean] or not. And that depends on my interactions with them and my observations of them in various situations - and hearing what other people say about them.... An organization is full of corridor conversations. What are people gossiping about? Well, there's gossip whether things are going wonderfully well or dreadfully. There's always gossip. It's the social nature of people. But what are they gossiping about? Are they gossiping about shortcomings of the dean or are they gossiping about substantive issues: Should we do this? Should we do that? If they're gossiping about the substantive policy questions, rather than about the dean, then I think that tells you something. And certainly if they're gossiping about the dean, that tells you something.

Another respondent commented that one of the first signs of a lack of trust is when "You begin to sense there's some discussions going on that are not about research. That there's a very quiet buzz building up in the building that the dean is never part of." A third respondent echoed the suggestions of the previous respondents, commenting:

I'd say if trust is absent, what I would look for at this school is lots of little knots of two or three faculty members congregating on the bridges and whispering

among themselves and telling stories, anecdotes. That's what I'd look for if trust were not present. . . . That's what I'd look for, first off. The little knots on the bridges.

Characterizing gossip as "the perfect sign," a fourth respondent commented, "But this is true of all human societies. To know the best gossip . . . is always the best way to find out about anything."

Half the respondents viewed gossip as a potentially reliable indicator of the presence or absence of trust. Two respondents suggested that the reliability of the gossip depended, in part, on the reputation of those individuals who were the source of the gossip. This observation provided an interesting point of overlap with respondents' identification of the role that reputation played in their assessment of an individual's trustworthiness.

Although I had anticipated that respondents might identify gossip and reputation as factors in their determination of whether or not a new dean was trustworthy, I was surprised by the emphasis that respondents placed on these factors. Yet there is considerable empirical support in the literature for gossip and reputation as important determinants of an individual's trustworthiness. In fact, there exists a substantial niche in the literature on organizational trust that focuses specifically on the phenomenon of transference or third-party input in the process of trust formation. Doney, Cannon, and Mullen (1998) identify trust transference as one of five processes by which "trustors" come to trust "trustees." Through the process of transference, the trustor "transfers trust from a known entity to an unknown one" (p. 606). This transfer of trust may occur as a result of the unknown actor's affiliation with a known actor, whom the trustor trusts on

the basis of competence, faith in intentions, or reliability. McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany (1998) discuss a variant of this process, which they refer to as “reputation categorization” (p. 480). The reputation of the known actor as a trustworthy individual is extended to an unknown actor in whom the trustor becomes willing to place his or her trust. Other works that examine the phenomenon of transferring trust on the basis of third-party input include Burt and Knez’s (1996) study of third-party gossip, Strub and Priest’s (1976) study of trust among groups of marijuana users, and Milliman and Fugate’s (1988) study of persuasion techniques in industry. Although two of these studies focus on the transfer of trust in settings that are far outside the research setting for my study, it is interesting to observe possible evidence of trust transference in the context of dean transitions.

Granovetter (1985) suggests that the existence of mutual acquaintances or professional contacts may encourage trust among individuals who have little or no prior experience with one another. Granovetter articulates a theory of embeddedness, in which he argues that concrete personal relations and social networks generate trust among individuals who do not know one another (p. 490). According to Granovetter, “Better than the statement that someone is known to be reliable is information from a trusted informant that he has dealt with that individual and found him so” (p. 490). The comments of several respondents in the study are consistent with Granovetter’s arguments concerning the role that social networks play in the formation of trust.

Silence.

Three respondents identified silence in group activities as an indicator of the absence of trust. One respondent suggested, for instance, that “a faculty meeting where a

dean has an agenda and you get through it with almost no comment – that’s a very bad sign.” He later added:

It’s silence in all the venues. There’s a form of that silence for everybody in the organization. The donors who don’t show up. The people who declined to be on your advisory boards. . . . You see that. You know, the staff people who, all of a sudden – these people who you know were grossly underpaid and overworked and happy at [the school] are getting better jobs on the rest of the campus that you know they could have had before.

I found this respondent’s observation particularly insightful, in that it extended beyond the arena of faculty behavior to include silence among other constituencies in the school.

Rapport.

Two respondents identified personal rapport between the dean and the faculty as an indicator of the presence of trust. One respondent noted that one could pay attention to the amount of time a new dean spent “establishing a level of personal rapport with the faculty as a group or individually.” He warned, “And if you don’t see that taking place, especially in the initial stages . . . then I suspect there’s trouble ahead on the trust front.”

Another respondent noted that if trust were present, “You’d see the dean, again, in the faculty’s offices, talking about ideas and the future.” As in respondents’ comments on their perceptions of new deans and ways that new deans could build trust, the issue of building rapport surfaced as a theme in respondents’ assessments of a new dean’s trustworthiness.

Humor.

Two respondents identified humor or jokes as indicators of the presence of trust. One respondent noted that people do not tend to tell jokes or engage in humor if trust is absent. He commented, “Unless you trust somebody, you cannot express humor. . . . And I think – even in this kind of administrative situation – having fun working together is, I think, an important indicator of the existence of trust.” Another respondent suggested that one could observe whether or not the faculty laughed at the dean’s jokes at faculty meetings.

Faculty meetings.

Four respondents said that the behavior of the faculty at faculty meetings would be a good indicator of the presence or absence of trust. One respondent suggested that one should pay attention to the types of questions the new dean receives at faculty meetings. He suggested that the harder the questions, the more likely that trust is lacking. He commented:

If it was there, people wouldn’t ask many questions. If it’s there, you’d cut somebody much more slack and give them a longer rope. The more you know that you like what they’re doing, the longer the rope you give them. The less sure you are you like what they’re doing, the shorter the rope is. The more intensively you seek information, the more intensively you grill them. Now some things have to be discussed intensively just for informational purposes. But I think when things are going well, the dean can get away with a lot, with relatively short discussion. And when there are doubts, people want to ask questions. And where there’s

fundamental loss of trust, they're just openly hostile and they refuse to consent to whatever the issue is.

Two respondents noted that if faculty members do not attend faculty meetings or routinely arrive late for meetings, this may be evidence that trust is absent. Two respondents suggested that one might detect the presence or absence of trust by paying attention to body language during faculty meetings and by noting whether or not faculty members appeared to be positive and engaged. Finally, one respondent suggested that the amount of work and reading material that faculty members brought to meetings (and actually worked on or read) would be a good indicator that trust is absent.

Faculty committees.

Finally, two respondents indicated that one could gauge the presence or absence of trust by watching the activity of faculty committees and the enthusiasm with which faculty willingly helped the school. Respondents noted that in the university system of which the school is a part, faculty receive few rewards for service. It is therefore important to pay attention to whether or not faculty members fulfill their service obligations on faculty committees. One respondent noted that if trust is present, faculty members are more likely to do what the dean asks them to do. "You may have Committee X, which has an important job. But if it isn't meeting, something's wrong." Another respondent used the metaphor of the dean as supplicant and the faculty as prima donnas. Casting himself in the role of a new dean and commenting on the relationship of the dean to the faculty, he joked, "I've got a bunch of prima donnas and they all think they're pretty great. And it doesn't really work to order them around much." To the contrary, this respondent noted that the dean must ask the faculty for their assistance and

their service to the school. He argued that in the absence of negative sanctions, there is little to motivate the faculty to perform committee service. However, if trust is present, faculty are more apt to contribute and lend their assistance.

Summary.

The indicators of trust that respondents identified may be unique to the school that served as the research site for the study. This is difficult to determine, as the literature on trust devotes little attention to empirical evidence or indicators of trust in organizational environments, either academic or nonacademic. An evaluation of the significance of such indicators as punctuality and attention levels at meetings, body language, humor, and the activity of faculty committees proved impossible, as none of these activities could be examined retroactively over the course of the school's history. However, the evaluation of such indicators may be a potentially useful component of a research design for future investigation at other sites.

Expectations Concerning the Preservation of Cultural Norms

One of the primary questions that guided the study concerned the relationship between organizational culture and organizational trust. More specifically, the study set out to investigate whether or not faculty members' willingness to trust a new dean may have been influenced by faculty expectations that the dean would maintain cultural norms at the school – and especially the norms of faculty-dean relations. The interview questions asked respondents to comment on their perceptions of cultural norms among the school's faculty, as well as the norms that governed faculty-dean relations. Later in the interviews, respondents were asked whether or not they thought that a new dean would have to uphold these norms in order to build or maintain trust among the faculty.

As discussed in the earlier sections on respondents' perceptions of new deans and their perceptions of faculty-dean relations at the school, respondents' comments focused on stories about the cultural norms established by the school's founding dean. To summarize the findings, these norms included consultation, communication, "wiring" meetings in advance, and establishing personal linkages or rapport with others.

Respondents were divided in their views on whether or not a new dean needed to encourage the maintenance of these norms in order to build and maintain trust among the school's faculty. Five respondents felt strongly that in order to build trust, a new dean would have to maintain the norms that governed faculty-dean relations at the school. One respondent commented:

You have to have the faculty on board before you make any major changes. [You] must have them on board. And that means two things. That means on the one hand, open, transparent information being provided. You don't just spring a major change on this faculty. You lead 'em up to it through several faculty meetings ... warning them that this is coming, that you'll keep them informed and that you'll be consulting with them. Then you consult. You bring in on an informal basis and consult with the key four or five faculty members. And then you come back to the faculty and you get official approval. That's the only thing that works.

He later added, "You have to...have an image of being a strong leader, but the real leadership style is actually very consultative, facilitative. First among equals. You gotta recognize that."

Reflecting on the question of whether or not it was important for a new dean to maintain cultural norms, another respondent commented:

I think it would be easier, probably. Yeah, I think it's easier because there's more communication on either side and more understanding on either side of what people are about, how they're motivated, why they're doing what they're doing. And if it's a more distant relationship, I think the possibility that there'd be a breakdown in trust is much higher, probably. You have to think about ways of establishing trust that are different than the ones we've used up to this point.

Asked if he thought a new dean would have difficulty building trust if he or she did not maintain the cultural norms governing faculty-dean relations at the school, this respondent added, "I think that's true. Some have already. And in an institution of this size, with the number of faculty we have, there's no reason not to, because there isn't a scale problem."

Three respondents disagreed with the suggestion that a new dean would need to uphold the cultural norms in place at the school in order to build trust. However, one of the respondents appeared to contradict his statement – at least in part – by affirming the need for a new dean to consult the faculty or risk loss of trust. It is possible that this inconsistency in the respondent's statement resulted from my having encouraged respondents to define "cultural norms" for themselves rather than having provided them with a clear sense of what I meant by cultural norms.

One of the three respondents acknowledged that a new dean would likely succeed in building trust if he or she maintained the cultural norms that the founding dean had established. However, this respondent believed that this strategy might be only one of several successful strategies that a capable dean could pursue. A second respondent commented, "My sense is this faculty has been through enough deans and realizes that

every dean is different.” He later added, “The one qualifier to that is nobody’s going to come in here as dean who doesn’t care about the school and take seriously its agenda.”

Reflecting further on the question, he offered the following statement:

I think no dean’s going to come in without some of that connection, which is to say you buy into some of the norms and values. But in terms of the day-to-day running of the school and the relationship, the day-to-day relationship between the faculty and the dean, how the staff are gonna be in the interface between that . . . every dean does it their own way and my guess is the faculty don’t have a clue until you actually see it in action – how the dean’s going to play that out. And that’s what’s really important. I mean, it’s one thing to buy into the vision of the mission of the school. But it’s another thing to have to live day by day with how you implement the administrative operations. Most people feel that it’s the day-to-day stuff that really matters.

A third respondent offered an entirely different perspective. This respondent argued that the suggestion that a new dean needed to uphold the cultural norms governing faculty-dean relations confused cause with effect. Referring to the school as a young institution, this respondent suggested that it was the faculty’s inexperience appointing deans with essential leadership qualities that explained why some new deans experienced difficulty building positive perceptions and trust. I did not anticipate such a response. It is unfortunate that this respondent was among the last I interviewed, for it would have been useful to probe the respondent’s argument, cast in structural terms, with other respondents.

As will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter, respondents' views on the possible connection between their expectations concerning cultural norms and trust displayed a variety of perspectives. These perspectives included structural arguments and viewpoints that emphasized other considerations, such as a new dean's need to consult the faculty, build consensus, and establish rapport.

Document Analysis

An analysis of documents in the school's archives proved of only limited use during the study. My review of such documents as correspondence and press releases provided a helpful means of confirming the dates and occurrence of key events that respondents cited during the construction of their timelines. The proposal to create the school and the accompanying correspondence were particularly useful in providing background information regarding the reasons for the founding of the school. However, none of the documents proved useful in triangulating other data in the interview transcripts. For instance, the documents provided no means of confirming or disconfirming respondents' perceptions of the turnover among deans, faculty culture, faculty-dean relations, factors that contributed to positive or negative perceptions of deans, trust, or the maintenance of cultural norms. In retrospect, I likely should have anticipated that the school's documents would not contain any substantive comments regarding any of these topics.

Observations and Interactions with Respondents

At the outset of the study, I had hoped to observe faculty meetings and possibly even some meetings of the search committee for a new dean. Shortly after beginning the study, the decision was made (in consultation with administrators at the school) that my

use of observations from faculty meetings as a potential data source would likely create discomfort for both respondents and nonrespondents alike. In addition, the dean's search committee had not yet begun meeting at the time I completed the interviews, the data analysis, or even the write-up of the study. Complications surrounding the privacy of the committee's discussions made it unlikely that I would be permitted to observe meetings of the committee. For this reason, I chose not to postpone the data analysis and the write-up until the committee convened. As a result of these developments, the research process did not yield any of the observations that I had hoped I might make.

During the course of the study, I had a series of informal conversations with respondents about their thoughts concerning the upcoming search for a new dean. However, these conversations were confidential and did not occur under explicit conditions of informed consent. I therefore have not reported them as findings. Although their inclusion might have added to the richness of the data by revealing more information about respondents' perceptions, the data from these conversations would not have altered the findings in substantive ways.

Despite the lack of direct observations, my interactions with respondents proved somewhat more substantive and useful. One observation that struck me as particularly significant was that seven respondents commented that they found my questions difficult and challenging. Two respondents, in particular, expressed their enthusiasm about their interviews. One respondent noted that he had not previously thought about dean transitions the way he did after answering the interview questions. A second respondent commented on two separate occasions that he found my research interesting. He expressed an interest in sharing a copy of his interview transcript with other faculty

members, as he thought the information it contained might prove informative and useful as the school considered candidates for a new permanent dean. A third respondent suggested that the findings should be “required reading” for all faculty members at the school.

These observations did not assist in my efforts to triangulate the data. Nonetheless, I found respondents’ feedback extremely rewarding, insofar as it provided reassurance for the rationale of conducting the study and suggested that some respondents perceived a benefit to their participation in the study.

Summary

A number of findings have resulted from the study of faculty perceptions of new deans at the school. First, the findings suggest that respondents had overwhelmingly negative views of the effects of decanal turnover. These effects included, but were not limited to, leadership instability, damage to the school’s external reputation, faculty withdrawal, and decline in faculty morale. Respondents voiced similar concerns about the state of faculty culture at the school, particularly about what they perceived as a lack of faculty involvement in the school and declining personal and (to a lesser extent) collegial synergy.

Considerable similarities were also evident in respondents’ identification of factors that influenced their perception of new deans and ways that new deans might build trust among the faculty. Four of the six factors that respondents identified as ways to build trust were the same as the factors they identified as contributing to positive perceptions of new deans. These include consultation, building consensus, understanding others or building rapport, and reputation. Of all the factors that respondents identified as

having influenced their perceptions of new deans and their assessments of a new dean's trustworthiness, consultation and consensus building appeared to be the most significant influences for respondents.

The findings suggest that both the elements of trust (as identified by respondents) and the various indicators of the presence or absence of trust are diverse. Throughout the findings, a variety of perspectives on dean transitions at the school are apparent, including those that emphasize professional, personal, and structural dimensions of respondents' experiences. The following chapter explores the possible connections among the key themes in the study and offers practical lessons for the school that served as the research site for the study. In addition, the following chapter reassesses the conceptual framework articulated in the study and suggests various implications for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study has focused on the phenomenon of dean transitions as experienced by faculty members at a single educational institution. More specifically, this work has explored the role that organizational trust played in shaping faculty perceptions of dean transitions and the possible influence of organizational culture on trust. Interviews with ten faculty members, including four previous deans, at the research site yielded a wide array of observations and themes relating to organizational culture, organizational trust, decanal turnover, and relations between the dean and the faculty. This chapter provides an integrative view of the study's key themes and considers the lessons that may be extracted from the research. Finally, this chapter offers a critical assessment of the study's success in achieving its objectives and explores the conceptual framework that emerges from it, as well as its implications for future research.

The Relevance of Organizational Trust

Perhaps the most significant observations from the study concern the importance of organizational trust in the context of dean transitions at the school. Respondents were unanimous in their belief that trust was a critical factor in a new dean's ability to build positive perceptions among the faculty. All of the respondents indicated that it was important to them that they be able to trust a new dean.

The findings from the study also suggest that trust existed on multiple levels within the school. At the individual level of analysis, trust appears to have depended upon

individual assessments and expectations concerning the behavior of other individuals. However, trust also appears to have been influenced by the existence of social networks within the school and between the school's faculty and the larger scholarly community to which faculty members belonged. Finally, the findings suggest that trust may also have been influenced by factors operating at the level of organizational structure, such as opportunities (or lack thereof) for teamwork and the lack of "levers" that might have been used to encourage trust.

The concept of trust may provide a useful reference point from which to consider the major themes visible in respondents' comments on the effects of decanal turnover, faculty culture, faculty-dean relations, and perceptions of new deans at the school. The concept of trust appears to bear some relation to each of the study's key findings. This possible relationship, articulated in further detail below, may provide some coherence to an otherwise complex and potentially disparate array of evidence.

One of the most striking aspects of the interview data concerned faculty respondents' reactions to the turnover among deans at the school. In their interviews, respondents expressed their concern about the decline in faculty involvement in the school, decreasing collegial collaboration and interpersonal connection, and damage to institutional stability and credibility that they attributed to the turnover among deans at the school. Respondents further suggested that some of these effects, including faculty disengagement and personal isolation, seemed to have taken root in the cultural landscape of the school. Respondents appeared to suggest that in contrast, faculty culture in the school's early years was characterized by greater social cohesion and more active participation in the life of the school, and that the school as a whole enjoyed greater

stability and credibility. Alongside their concerns, respondents' comments suggested a genuine fondness for the school and a sincere wish for its future growth and success. Some respondents appeared to be at a loss as to how to recapture or reinvent the sense of vibrancy and social and intellectual integration that they felt were defining features of the school in its early years.

As respondents shared their reflections on what led them to form positive perceptions of new deans, they made frequent references to the example set by the school's founding dean. They called particular attention to his practices of consultation, building consensus, establishing rapport with faculty members, and demonstrating an ability to understand others. Several respondents later identified these types of behaviors or practices as ways that new deans might build and maintain trust among faculty at the school.

It may be the case that trust was the essential ingredient, although perhaps not the only ingredient, in the vitality of the school during its early years. Respondents' comments appear to suggest that they had a fairly high level of trust in the founding dean. Perhaps this trust helped promote more active faculty participation in the school, as well as personal and professional engagement with other faculty members. The presence of trust and faculty involvement in the school may have been mutually reinforcing in a way that contributed to the overall vitality or organizational synergy of the school under the founding dean. There may be a synergistic relationship among the presence of trust, the active and enthusiastic engagement of faculty in the school, their sense of belonging to the institution, as well as optimism about the future of the school itself. Conversely, the apparent lack of optimism about the future, as well as the withdrawal and possible

estrangement of some faculty from the school and from one another may bear some connection to the periodic lack of trust that some respondents perceived during the years of decanal turnover.

The suggestion that respondents' experience of trust may have reinforced (and been reinforced by) their perceptions of higher levels of faculty morale, social cohesion, professional collaboration, and engagement in the school during the institution's years under the founding dean draws upon concepts elaborated by Hirschhorn (1997). Elaborating on the concept of the "personalization of work," Hirschhorn argues that "work creates opportunities for relating in depth to others" (p. 128). By promoting a culture of openness, in which organization members may freely share ideas, accountability, and a sense of community, Hirschhorn suggests that organizations can encourage their members to be more psychologically present, ultimately contributing to the overall health of the organization.

Although my study did not attempt to assess whether or not any of the school's deans promoted a "culture of openness," Hirschhorn's analytical construct may illuminate what appears to be missing in respondents' experience of dean transitions at the school. It may be the case that in the absence of trust under some deans, some faculty respondents were not able or were not willing to give more of themselves to the school or to their colleagues. Respondents' comments on the importance of openness in communications and interactions between the dean and the faculty may bear some resemblance to Hirschhorn's concept of a culture of openness. In addition, respondents' observations on organizational silence may signal the absence not only of trust, but of a culture of openness within the school.

In his research on psychological presence and the systemic implications of personal engagement in organizations, Kahn (1990, 1992) outlines an argument that has similarities to the concepts elaborated by Hirschhorn (1997). Kahn (1992) suggests that psychological absence in work environments is connected to alienation, withdrawal, and estrangement from one's work, as well as from others. Kahn notes that "the experience of being fully present is also the experience of being vulnerable, taking risks, and feeling anxiety" (1992, p. 324). It may be the case that in the absence of trust, individuals may be more reluctant to take the risks associated with psychological presence. Although the study does not offer conclusive evidence of a relationship between organizational trust and psychological presence, the suggestion that these phenomena may be interrelated appears reasonably consistent with the study's findings.

Huy's (1999) research on the organizational resource of emotional energy offers a partial correlate to the work of Hirschhorn (1997) and Kahn (1990, 1992). Huy argues that such elements as individuals' identification with an organization, their freedom to express their ideas and emotions with authenticity, and the organization's ability to inspire hope among its members contribute to the emotional capability of an organization and its capacity to sustain radical change. Extending Huy's arguments to the findings from my study, it is possible that the presence of trust may have had some bearing on respondents' identification with the school and their hope and optimism for its future during various points in the school's history. Perhaps it is the case that when trust was absent, respondents were not able to sustain high levels of emotional energy and experienced lower morale, pessimism, and a sense of disconnection from the school.

The work of Jones and George (1998) may offer the best articulation of the possible synergistic effects of trust within organizations. Jones and George suggest that trust contributes to increased exchange of information, involvement, confidence, and cooperation among organization members. It is possible that the presence of trust contributed similar benefits to the relationship between respondents in the study and the school that served as the research site for the study. This interpretation is not definitive, but it appears consistent with respondents' perceptions of higher faculty morale, more active engagement in the school, and greater interactions with one another that appear to have coincided with a period in the school's history when trust may have been present.

A final point worth considering is the definition of trust that is suggested by the study's findings. The interview data suggests that trust involves confident or positive expectations of others. Of all the literature on organizational trust that I surveyed during the research process, the definition of trust as "an individual's optimistic expectation about the outcome of an event," which Hosmer (1995) attributes to Deutsch (1958), seems to capture the essence of respondents' experience. This definition may also provide a useful conceptualization of the construct of trust for future inquiry.

Understanding the Data from Multiple Frames of Reference

The concept of trust offers a conceptual lens through which to consider the various themes in the study's findings. At another level of analysis, a multiple-perspectives approach may provide an even more valuable means of interpreting the findings from the study, including the issue of trust itself. The study suggests that the best way to understand the role that organizational trust and culture may have played in dean transitions at the school is by considering the constructs of trust and culture from a

variety of perspectives. As noted in chapter 4, respondents' comments clearly suggest that they thought about the role of the dean and the dean's relations with the faculty from a variety of perspectives.

In many ways, respondents' perspectives mirrored the model of organizational frames posited by Bolman and Deal (1984, 1997). In their classic work in the field of organization theory, Bolman and Deal present a four-frame model for analyzing organizational behavior. The authors assert that multiframe thinking – examining a given situation from a variety of frames, including structural, political, symbolic, and human resource – provides a richer understanding of organizational phenomena. According to Bolman and Deal, multiframe thinking can facilitate organizational management and leadership.

An analysis of the data in the interview transcripts provided clear illustrations of all four frames in Bolman and Deal's work. The diversity of perspectives offered by respondents illustrates how organizational trust and cultural norms may have intersected with structural, political, symbolic, and interpersonal dynamics in shaping respondents' perceptions of dean transitions at the school. Together, these perspectives offer a view of dean transitions that is both richer and more complex than any single perspective could provide.

The structural frame was evident in respondents' discussions of information flow, the school's geographic location, the lack of decanal autonomy over the salary structure, fiscal resources, the "schizophrenic existence" of the faculty, and the relative youth of the school. Although I had considered the possibility that there might be structural issues that contributed to the turnover among deans at the school, I did not anticipate that

respondents would attribute any of their perceptions regarding new deans to structural factors at the school. Instead, I anticipated that respondents would focus on behavioral aspects of their experiences with new deans. Respondents' identification of such structural issues as a mismatch between decanal authority and responsibilities and the lack of sufficient budgetary resources is significant. Such factors suggest the possibility that new deans at the school may face challenges beyond those of building positive perceptions and trust among the faculty. The fact that there may exist structural challenges within the school and the university may not only contribute to the difficulty facing a new dean, but may also make the deanship less appealing to prospective decanal candidates.

The possible "schizophrenia" that characterizes the school may also be an important structural aspect that is critical to fully understanding the school as an institution. The mandates of generating theoretical knowledge and providing professional training to students, which is to some extent driven by their career aspirations, may have an inherent tension that affects the cultural landscape of the school. This "schizophrenia" may contribute to the challenges a new dean faces in encouraging faculty members to render service to the school in ways that may be at odds with the sorts of scholarly endeavors they might prefer to pursue, such as teaching doctoral students or working with postdoctoral scholars on projects that intersect with their research interests.

The metaphor of the school as a youth or adolescent, which one respondent offered as an explanation of the school's difficulties in appointing deans, offers a novel perspective – and one that I did not anticipate. As a counterpoint, it may have been useful to poll other respondents about their previous experience appointing deans at other

institutions. Had this been possible, I would have done so. Unfortunately, due to the difficulties in scheduling follow-up interviews, I was not able to pursue this line of inquiry. Despite the possible merits of the “youth” argument, the argument may lose its weight if it is the case that there are other structural issues that serve as obstacles for a new dean. It may be the case that lack of decanal autonomy in the university system and lack of budgetary resources may serve to undermine faculty perceptions of – and trust in – a new dean, no matter how much experience the faculty gain in making decanal appointments.

The political frame was illustrated by respondents’ discussion of the need for consultation, consensus, politicking or networking in advance of faculty meetings, and the sources of decanal power. The study suggests that there are political dimensions to respondents’ perceptions of the construct of trust, at least in the environment of the school. Respondents based their assessments of a dean’s trustworthiness, in part, on whether or not the dean communicated and consulted with the faculty and attempted to build consensus among the faculty.

Respondents’ emphasis on personal linkages, understanding, the lack of social cohesion, and instances of stress reflect Bolman and Deal’s human resource frame. Of all the frames, I was particularly struck by the numerous ways in which the human resource frame seemed to encapsulate respondents’ comments. I was surprised by the extent to which faculty respondents expressed concern with interpersonal connections and feelings in their comments on the effects of dean turnover on the school and their perceptions of faculty culture at the school. I had not anticipated that a new dean’s ability to understand and form personal linkages with others would play as significant a role as it appears to

have played in faculty perceptions of the dean. Nor had I anticipated the extent to which respondents would discuss the effects of personal and professional stress or their desire for increased social interaction among the faculty as significant aspects of their experience.

Finally, the symbolic frame was represented by the stories that respondents told about the founding of the school, pivotal events in the school's history, and various successor deans at the school. One striking feature of respondents' comments about the school's culture concerned the influence of the founding dean. As noted in the findings, eight out of ten respondents cited the decision by the founding dean to step down as a pivotal event in the school's history. Half the respondents told stories about the founding dean when asked to describe faculty-dean relations at the school. All the respondents (except for the founding dean) who were present at the time the founding dean stepped down told one or more stories about the founding dean during their interviews. Of the respondents who were not present at the time the founding dean stepped down, one spoke of the lasting influence that the founding dean had on the school.

Despite one respondent's belief that "the whole point of an institution is to be personality free," this does not seem to be true of the school that served as the research site for the study. Instead, the influence or imprint of the founder on the cultural ethos of the school appears to have been both strong and enduring. This observation does not appear to be unique to the school. Previous research has explored the influence of the founder on organizational culture and has found that influence to be profound (Martin, 1998; Schein, 1985; Spector & McCarthy, 1995). Schein (1985) concludes that founders were instrumental in creating organizational culture and that the founder's assumptions

and beliefs had the most significant impact of all potential influences on the culture of an institution. In case studies of three companies, Schein finds that the imprint of the founder on company culture endured long after the founder ceded responsibility for the company to his or her successors. In the case of the school that served as the research site for this study, the founding dean appears to have had a lasting influence on the culture of the institution and on the views that individual faculty members have of the school.

In addition to the value of considering the study's findings from multiple theoretical perspectives, respondents' comments suggest that it may also be useful to consider the phenomenon of dean transitions from both a multicultural and a multidisciplinary perspective. I had not anticipated that respondents would draw parallels to management concepts from other cultures – such as the Japanese concept of *nemawashi* – to describe factors that they believed would help a new dean build positive perceptions among the faculty. This was surprising to me because I had expected that respondents would limit their comments to factors such as collegiality, consensual decision making, and scholarly excellence. As noted in the findings, *nemawashi* is commonly used to refer to a style of management and has made its way into the management literature. However, the word *nemawashi* has its linguistic roots in the traditions of anthropology and sociology. Respondents' discussion of *nemawashi* in the context of a dean transition suggests the value of examining organizational phenomena from a variety of disciplinary and cultural perspectives.

Finally, it may be useful to consider the study's findings from the perspective of systems theory. Respondents' comments on decanal turnover, faculty culture, and faculty-dean relations suggest that the school illustrates some of the defining features of

an underbounded system, as articulated by Alderfer (1980). Alderfer argues that underbounded systems are characterized by a lack of clear goals, the absence of clear lines of authority and communication, economic challenges, fragmentation and disorder, diffuse human energy, negativity, and a lack of confidence in the system as a whole. Several respondents suggested that both clearly defined goals and vision for the school had been lacking in recent years. Respondents also commented on the fiscal constraints under which the school operated, as well as the lack of clear channels of communication they perceived during various times in the school's history. With the power of the dean emanating from the faculty, as respondents suggested, a breakdown in cooperation between the some deans and the faculty may have signaled a weakening of the lines of authority and the ability to take action on important issues. Finally, respondents' concern about such perceived effects of decanal turnover as leadership instability, poor external reputation, lack of social cohesion, and lower faculty morale suggest a possible lack of confidence in the school during recent years. Together, these observations suggest that the school exhibits at least some of the characteristics of an underbounded system. Considering the data in the context of systems theory offers an alternative perspective that may add another dimension to an understanding of dean turnover at the school.

Potential Lessons for New Deans at the School

The study suggests a number of lessons for new deans at the school that served as the research site. Some of these lessons are directly related to organizational trust, while others are general lessons that new deans at the school might draw from the study. While these lessons have particular relevance to new deans at the school, the lessons may also have some degree of applicability to other institutional settings.

One lesson that seems clear is that the issue of trust is highly relevant to a significant number of faculty at the school. The study suggests that a new dean should make it a priority to establish and maintain trust among the school's faculty in order to elicit their support. The findings suggest that the single most important step a new dean can take to begin building trust is to consult the faculty on a consistent basis. A new dean might also establish trust by attempting to build consensus among the faculty, establishing rapport with faculty members, and by trying to maintain a solid reputation among his or her colleagues both at the school and in the larger scholarly community to which he or she belongs.

The reverse side of the equation is that a new dean should be prepared to accept the consequences of not consulting the faculty. In a work written 23 years ago, Appleton, Briggs, & Rhatigan (1978) identify underconsultation as one of 18 "kisses of death" for an academic dean. The authors' advice appears to have enduring relevance, at least for the school that served as the research site for the study. The comments of respondents suggest that failure to consult the faculty and refusal to heed their advice on critical matters may result in an erosion of trust that, once damaged, may be irreparable.

A second lesson is that a new dean should not underestimate the value of forging not only professional but personal connections to the school's faculty. It appears that the interpersonal dimensions of a dean's interactions with the faculty have the power to deepen faculty trust in and support for a new dean. This may be due to the fact that the school and its faculty are relatively small. Although the school's faculty members represent a number of different academic disciplines, there are no departmental divisions within the school.

Another potentially important lesson can be drawn from the suggestion of one respondent that a new dean's ability to manage faculty expectations indirectly influenced the respondent's perceptions of the dean. The comments of this respondent provided tangible evidence of a concept that I had incorporated in my approach to the study, but only in an abstract form. In a 1980 article, "Surprise and Sensemaking," Louis examines the ways in which a newcomer's experience in a new organizational environment may or may not match that person's expectations about the environment. The comments of one respondent in my study suggest that not only does a new dean (particularly a new dean hired from the outside) need to manage his or her expectations regarding the school and the position, but may also need to take an active role in managing the expectations placed on him or her by the faculty. This finding from the study suggests that it may behoove a new dean to actively seek out information about faculty expectations of the dean, rather than to assume that he or she already has sufficient knowledge of these expectations.

A fourth lesson that one may draw from the study concerns the importance of a new dean providing some array of social activities to help foster a sense of community. Several respondents indicated that they valued the opportunity to gather with the dean and other faculty members at formal and informal social events. It may benefit a new dean to encourage and provide occasions for social interaction among the school's faculty.

A fifth lesson that is implicit in the study is that a new dean needs to strike a balance between burdening the faculty with the minutiae of day-to-day administration and including them in the process of running the school. There does not seem to be any easy prescription for striking this balance. However, it appears that a new dean needs to

develop the capacity and creativity to encourage the faculty to render service to the school in ways that do not make the faculty feel as if they are being told what to do. The study suggests that a new dean at the school needs to avoid being imperial and, above all, needs to demonstrate finely tuned skills of persuasion in order to elicit the active participation of the faculty in ways that benefit the school. As one respondent observed, if a new dean wants the faculty to do something, he or she needs to allow the faculty to reach the conclusion that that is what they want to do.

Drawing upon the structural facets of the findings, the study suggests a sixth lesson. It appears that a new dean should develop as clear an understanding as possible of the available resources and existing constraints on those resources. Similarly, a new dean should investigate and consider how pending developments in the school, the campus, and the larger university system might affect available resources and the authority that the dean may have over the use of those resources.

A seventh lesson that may be drawn from the study concerns the importance for a new dean to view the school as a cultural entity and to make an effort to understand the cultural facets of the school that the faculty value. More importantly, the dean should recognize that culture is a socially constructed phenomenon that involves all stakeholders and that therefore the dean should act in concert with the faculty in assessing, nurturing, and, when appropriate, changing the culture of faculty-dean relations.

Finally, the study suggests that a new dean should view the school as an entity with structural, political, symbolic, and social dimensions. Just as multiple frames of reference provide a coherent means of interpreting the data from the study, a new dean can gain a broader view of the school as an organization and the faculty as organizational

members if he or she approaches the deanship with an openness to multiple and potentially conflicting perspectives.

A Critical Assessment of the Study's Success

This study set out to explore a number of questions. To refresh the reader's memory, the primary questions that guided the study included the following: 1) What factors did faculty members identify as contributing to positive and negative perceptions of dean transitions at the school? 2) What role did trust and distrust play in the formation of positive and negative perceptions of dean transitions? 3) What expectations did faculty members hold concerning the role that a new dean would play in preserving the cultural norms in place at the school? And 4) What role did cultural norms appear to play in faculty perceptions that a new dean was trustworthy or untrustworthy?

The study succeeded in achieving its objectives, but in varying degrees. First, it is important to consider how well the study succeeded in exploring the phenomenon of dean transitions. During the interviews, respondents expressed greater comfort focusing on issues of process in dean transitions rather than on individual deans. However, despite attempts to remain focused on the transition process, most respondents cited specific examples of actions that various deans took that led respondents to form positive or negative perceptions of the deans. Thus, the study may more accurately have captured respondents' perceptions of new deans than of dean transitions. If viewed in the context of existing research on executive transitions, the study might be credited with focusing on one stage of dean transitions: the period following a new dean's arrival to office. However, a critical examination of the study reveals a primary focus on new deans rather

than on dean transitions. Coming to terms with this limitation was an important lesson that I learned from conducting the study.

Another lesson that I learned during the study was that my role had evolved from that of participant-observer in an anthropological sense to more that of a conventional researcher. Throughout the course of the study, I remained a participant-observer in the research site. However, my primary role as a researcher changed in significant ways as a result of a series of decisions that were made shortly after I began my research. First, as noted in chapter 4, in consultation with the school's administration, I decided to forgo observation of faculty meetings as a means of data collection. This decision resulted from a concern that both respondents and nonrespondents might feel uncomfortable with my use of faculty meetings as a potential data source, even if I limited my use of such data to observations of respondents who participated in the study under conditions of informed consent. It is also likely that observation of the school's faculty meetings would not have provided a means of triangulating the data generated by interviews with respondents. By making the decision to limit the study to guided interviews with respondents and an analysis of documents such as press releases, correspondence, and the proposal to create the school, I redefined my role as a researcher from that of participant-observer to that of a more conventional researcher.

The study succeeded in generating data on the factors that contributed to faculty perceptions of new deans and in exploring the dimensions of faculty trust and distrust of new deans at the school. The study clearly suggests that organizational trust played an instrumental role in faculty perceptions of new deans. It appears significant that four of the six factors that respondents identified as ways to build trust were the same as the

factors they identified as contributing to positive perceptions of new deans. These include consultation, building consensus, building rapport, and reputation. When asked to identify other ways to build trust, respondents expressed difficulty thinking of ways that differed from the behavior that deans could adopt to encourage positive perceptions of transitions. The factors that respondents identified as contributing to the erosion of trust mirrored the behaviors that contributed to negative perceptions of new deans, including failure to consult, failure to heed the advice of faculty colleagues, and failure to build consensus. In sum, the study showed that trust played an important role in the context of dean transitions at the school that served as the research site.

However, the study may have been less successful in illuminating the possible connections between organizational culture and organizational trust. An analysis of the interview data appears to support – but does not provide absolute clarity regarding – the premise that respondents expected a new dean to uphold the cultural norms of the school and, in particular, the norms that govern faculty-dean relations. In addition, the data lend partial support for – but do not provide definitive evidence of – the premise that respondents' expectations concerning the maintenance of cultural norms influenced their willingness to trust a new dean.

An analysis of the interview data suggests that faculty respondents expected a new dean to consult with them and to seek consensus before making decisions or taking action. The analysis also suggests that faculty respondents did not trust new deans who did not consult the faculty or strive for consensus. The norms of consultation and consensus building appear to have been inviolable from the perspective of most faculty respondents. To a lesser degree, respondents' comments suggest that there was an

expectation on the part of some faculty members that a new dean would uphold the cultural norm of close faculty-dean relations. There is also some evidence that a new dean's efforts to establish a personal rapport with others contributed to the willingness of some faculty members to trust that dean.

Yet the interview data appear to contain some inconsistencies. Of the nine respondents who asserted that it was essential for a new dean to consult the faculty, three later stated that they did not believe that it was necessary for a new dean to uphold the cultural norms of the school in order to build or maintain trust. Not all of the nine respondents identified consultation as a cultural norm. It is therefore difficult to interpret the implications of the data for the premise that respondents' expectations concerning the preservation of cultural norms may have influenced their willingness to trust a new dean. This possible inconsistency may be due to a lack of clarity in the way the interview questions were posed, as respondents had the flexibility to define the constructs of "trust" and "culture" for themselves. Or, it may be the case that consultation is one norm that respondents considered inviolable, but that there are other cultural norms that some respondents viewed as dispensable or malleable.

Through no fault of the respondents, it proved difficult to get them to identify the expectations they may have had concerning which cultural norms a new dean did or did not need to preserve. Clearly articulated linkages between respondents' expectations and assessments of trust also proved elusive. If it is indeed the case that many aspects of organizational culture operate at the unconscious level, it may not have been realistic to assume that respondents would be fully cognizant of their cultural assumptions or expectations concerning new deans. However, such a conclusion begs the question, at

least to some extent, and appears to call for carefully crafted interview questions that might probe respondents' cultural expectations more successfully than I did.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

The study incorporated a conceptual framework that rested upon two distinct premises. The first conceptual premise suggested that organizational trust might be an important factor in respondents' perceptions of new deans and in the ability of a new dean to gain faculty support. A second theoretical premise was that faculty expectations concerning the preservation of the school's cultural norms might influence whether or not faculty members placed their trust in a new dean. The study's findings lend strong support to the first, and tentative support to the second, premise.

These observations suggest that the premises offer a useful conceptual framework for understanding faculty perceptions of new deans at the school – or for understanding one particular stage of dean transitions at the school. This conceptual framework may also lend itself to studying the role of organizational trust and culture in executive transitions in other organizational contexts. Further research is needed to determine whether similar connections between organizational culture and trust exist at other research sites and to explore why some cultural norms appear to exert greater influence on assessments of trustworthiness than others.

Nonetheless, the findings suggest that a modest rearticulation of the conceptual framework may enable researchers to explore in greater depth the possible connection between organizational trust, organizational culture, and organization members' perceptions of executive transitions. Not only may organizational culture have influenced respondents' assessments of trust, but organizational trust may in turn have influenced

such facets of organizational culture as psychological presence, as well as respondents' willingness to participate in the life of the school and their confidence in the institution's future. The conceptual framework that emerges from the study and that might inform future research allows for the possibility of a synergistic relationship involving organizational culture, organizational trust, and the connections that individuals form with organizations.

Implications for Future Research

The study's findings suggest several implications for future research. As noted above, it appears that the possible connections between organizational trust and organizational culture and how these connections may manifest in different organizational environments may need to be explored in greater depth. It would also be helpful to probe individuals' awareness of cultural norms to investigate how individuals assess which norms they value as vital aspects of their organizational experience. Such research might facilitate efforts to study the possible reciprocal influence of organizational culture on trust.

On a more microanalytic level, future research might explore new dimensions of organizational trust. One respondent in the study identified optimism as an element of trust or a basis on which he determined that a new dean was trustworthy. This finding appears to be significant, in that previous research on organizational trust has paid little attention to optimism as a possible element of trust. Such scholars as Barber (1983) and Jones and George (1998) have examined the role that moods and emotions play in individuals' experience of trust. Although their work does not specifically address the construct of optimism, Jones and George (1998) suggest that an individual's positive

mood may be transmitted to others in ways that affect judgments about that individual's trustworthiness. While it is possible that the observation of one respondent is simply anomalous, it may be the case that exploring optimism as a potential basis for trust may represent a fruitful line of inquiry for future research.

A practical offshoot of the study might involve a systematic examination of the indicators of trust in different organizational environments. As noted in the findings, respondents suggested a number of empirical ways in which one might determine whether or not the faculty trusted a new dean at the school. However, as the researcher, I was not able to incorporate these indicators into the analysis of the study due to the retrospective focus of the data generated by the study. A new dean at the school might find it both informative and useful to pay attention to the various behaviors and activities that respondents cited as indicators of trust. Similarly, if further research in other organizational environments is successful in generating reliable indicators of the presence of trust, such data might assist executives and organization members alike to be more cognizant of the presence or absence of trust within their organizations. Increased awareness of trust or distrust might assist individuals in making decisions and embarking on strategies that contribute to the overall development and health of organizations.

Conclusions

This study has attempted to explore the role that organizational trust played in faculty perceptions of dean transitions at a single educational institution. The study has also attempted to reveal facets of the school's organizational culture and the possible influence that organizational culture may have had on respondents' experience of trust. It is my hope that the insights of respondents, as well as my analysis of those insights, will

contribute to an understanding of how respondents experienced dean turnover. It is also my hope that this understanding might prove useful to new deans.

Respondents' comments provided insight into the political, structural, symbolic, and interpersonal dimensions of their experience of trust and culture. The study suggests that those who try to understand organizational culture and organizations should not underestimate the significance of interpersonal or relational aspects of organizational experience. The study also suggests that a diversity of perspectives may provide the best tools for understanding organizational phenomena.

The study offers a revised conceptual framework that takes into account the possibility of a synergistic dynamic among organizational trust, manifestations of organizational culture (such as psychological presence), and optimism about the future. Assessments of trustworthiness appear to have influenced respondents' perceptions of new deans. Further, respondents' expectations that a new dean would preserve certain cultural norms at the school appear to have exerted some influence on respondents' assessments of the trustworthiness of new deans. Finally, organizational trust, psychological presence, and optimism about the future appear to have been mutually reinforcing constructs in the context of dean transitions at the school that served as the research site for the study. This rearticulation of the conceptual framework might provide a useful starting point for future research on dean transitions in academic institutions, as well as transitions in other organizational environments.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

I'm trying to construct a timeline of major events in the school's history. Can you tell me about significant events in the history of the school?

Which of these events were most meaningful to you, personally – and why?

What are some of the cultural norms or quirks that are particular to the school's faculty?

Can you tell me a story that captures the essence of faculty culture at the school?

Can you tell me a story that describes faculty-dean relations at the school and the norms that govern those relations?

Do you think the faculty expects that a new dean will uphold the cultural norms that you mentioned a few moments ago?

[For former deans only]: If your son or daughter were one day offered a position as dean at another institution, what advice would you have for him/her and why?

What advice would you have for a new dean at this institution?

The school has had significant turnover among deans during the last four years. What do you think this has meant for the school?

What has this meant to you as a faculty member?

What were the key factors or actions that led you to have positive/negative perceptions of new deans since you have been here? And negative perceptions (if follow-up is necessary)?

How important is trust in contributing to positive perceptions of a new dean?

What advice would you give to a new dean so that he or she might gain the trust of the faculty?

Can you tell me some of the reasons why you might choose not to trust a new dean?

If I were a fly on the wall, what could I look for to see if trust were present? What would be missing if trust were not present?

How might a new dean go about making changes at the school and still maintain trust among the faculty? Would the culture of faculty-dean relations need to remain unchanged?